

## Homily Seventh Sunday of Easter 2026

'Prayer is the living out of a relationship of a "Daddy" \* with his children.'

'Daddy', what a beautiful word when we hear it on the lips of our children and/or grandchildren. I have two sons John and James, and it is so beautiful to hear the voices of their 6 children utter the term 'Daddy' with complete confidence and trust they are safe in their dads' arms. I recall an incident when my younger son was about 4 or 5. We were sitting on the sofa watching TV when, out of the blue, James looked up at me and with absolute love in his eyes and asked, 'Daddy, when did we fall in love?'

When we pray this is the fundamental relationship we should have with God, 'Abba'. Although, when Jesus responded to the disciples request to teach them to pray, he replied, 'When you pray say, Our Father' he undoubtedly, used the more affectionate term 'Abba', 'Daddy'. In today's First Reading from Acts it states, 'All with one accord devoted themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers and sisters.' Prayer therefore to 'Our Daddy' should generally be, although not exclusively, communal. Jesus frequently withdrew by himself to 'a lonely place' but regularly states the importance of community worship and prayer, 'If two or three ask anything in my name, it will be given to you.' (Mt 18:2).

When I pray alone, I always try to use the Our Father as an instruction manual on how to prepare myself for prayer. I turn to God as my 'Daddy' with the attitude of a child. I try to enter the 'meeting' with respect and reverence in a spirit of obedience to God's holy will. I thank 'Abba' for the many, many blessings he has bestowed on me throughout my life. I apologise sincerely for the hurts I cause him by my treatment of others and finally, I thank him for the protection he constantly offers me, particularly from sin and harm. When I am truly in the zone, this state of mind of abandonment, I silently listen to what 'Abba' might wish to say to me. It is always he who directs our 'chats' and it is he who is in control.

In today's Gospel St John's Farewell Discourses continue with Jesus praying to his 'Abba' both with the disciples and for the disciples, 'I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours....' Jesus, in total confidence and trust, asks his 'Daddy' to protect the disciples from the ways of the world, that they may be light in what sometimes can be a dark place.

You might sit on the sofa and whilst having your 'chats' with God ask, 'When "Abba" did we fall in love?'. The answer is simple, '..because God loved us so much he sent his Son to suffer and die for us' (Jn 3:16) '...and being humbler yet he died on a cross (Philippians 2:8). Therefore, we like The Prophet Jeremiah can but only respond, 'You Abba, have seduced me (by your unconditional love) and I've let myself be seduced' (Jeremiah 20:7), 'Abba, Father, you are the potter, we are the clay.' (Jeremiah 18) In short, we are simply 'swept off our feet' by our Daddy's unconditional love. How stunningly beautiful is that?

\*All this could apply to the term of endearment, 'Mummy' 'Imma' ('How I have longed to draw you to myself, like a HEN covers her brood' (**Matthew 23:37**) or (Luke 13:34)