

“Call no man on the earth your Father” [Matthew 23:9]

A biblical reminder

A guest document – by Ricardo de Valencia

PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to alert the faithful to the continuing and persistent violation, especially by the Roman Catholic Hierarchy and also by the community of faithful under its guidance, of Jesus' Gospel instruction that we are to call no one our Father except God.

DETAILS

First Part — Support in the Scriptures

Imagine that Saint Peter, after Jesus had ascended into Heaven, and while he was at the head of an important community of faithful, had allowed himself to be called “*The Holy Father*” by them, or that Saint John had allowed himself to be called “*The Father*” by the community of faithful around him.

Would that be coherent? After the apostles had heard Jesus refer to God Almighty, the One and Only, as “my Father” and “your Father” so many times?

Let's look at the direct support in the Gospel Books on this issue:

“My Father”

“Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing.” [Luke 23:34]

“Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!” [Luke 23:46]

“Take these things out of here! Don't make my Father's house a marketplace!” [John 2:16]

“The Father”:

Jesus therefore said to Peter, “Put the sword into its sheath. The cup which the Father has given me, shall I not surely drink it?” [John 18:11]

“For whoever will be ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory, and the glory of the Father, and of the holy angels.”
[Luke 9:26]

“... the hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father.” [John 4:21]

“Holy Father”:

“Holy Father, keep them through your name which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are.” [John 17:11]

“Righteous Father, the world hasn’t known you, but I knew you; and these knew that you sent me.” [John 17:25]

“Your Father”:

“Therefore be merciful, even as your Father is also merciful.” [Luke 6:36]

“For the nations of the world seek after all of these things, but your Father knows that you need these things.” [Luke 12:30]

“Pray like this: Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy. ...” [Matthew 6:9]

As if that weren't enough, he specifically gave us a very direct order:

1 Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to his disciples, ...

5 But they do all their works to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the fringes of their garments, 6 and love the place of honor at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, 7 the salutations in the marketplaces, and to be called ‘Rabbi, Rabbi’ by men.

8 But you are not to be called ‘Rabbi’, for one is your teacher, the Christ, and all of you are brothers. 9 **Call no man on the earth your father, for one is your Father, he who is in heaven.**

10 Neither be called masters, for one is your master, the Christ. 11 But he who is greatest among you will be your servant. 12 Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted. [Matthew 23]

“Call no man on earth your father” — this instruction, from the context, clearly warns against religious and spiritual attitudes or positions. It tells us that, in a community of disciples or followers of Christ, and in a religious context, ‘Father’ is a title reserved solely for God — “for one is your Father, he who is in heaven.”

“The Father” is God:

“Don’t work for the food which perishes, but for the food which remains to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For God the Father has sealed him.” [John 6:27]

“Jesus said to her, “Don’t hold me, for I haven’t yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brothers and tell them, <<I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.>>” [John 20:17]

Part Two — Infidelity to the Word of Jesus

Why would it be any different now, two thousand years later? Has Jesus changed His mind?

If a Christian leader knows that “The Father” is a title reserved for God alone, and yet allows his followers to call him by that title, is not he exalting himself as if he were God? Will not “*Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted*” apply to him? [Matthew 23:12]

If the generation following Saint Peter had called Saint Peter “the Father,” would that have been acceptable? What about the third generation? The fourth? ...

If that was not right then, why would it be right now to call a successor of Saint Peter “the Holy Father”? Or why would it be right now to call a religious leader at the head of any Christian assembly or organization ‘Father’?

Has anyone authorized a “constitutional amendment” to what Jesus constituted in the Gospel?

In particular, consider that if an organization within the Roman Catholic Church calls its leader “the Father”, they are receiving three spiritual fathers with the same divine title: “the Father” of the organization, “the Holy Father” referring to the bishop of Rome (“the Pope”), and “the Father, God”. Could there be any greater confusion?

Does anyone believe that human psychology will not cause them to transfer into their hearts what they persistently practice in word, placing a human being under the same title as God? Jesus knew and knows well the human mind and heart, and that is precisely why He warned us through Matthew 23:9 ! How can anyone dare to say now that this issue “is not so important”?

One can imagine a gradation of colors in the failure to comply with Jesus' instruction in Matthew 23:9, but it has reached extremes where the color is “red hot” — some, with two “Fathers” — others, with three ‘Fathers’ — and one of them “the Holy Father” but who is not God.

If someone declares that Jesus did not give the instruction “*Call no man on the earth your father*” not even in these extreme cases, is that not the same as declaring Jesus’ words to be empty?

And if someone disregards Jesus’ words, are they not separating themselves from Him?

“My mother and my brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it.” [Luke 8:21]

Part Three — Other uses of the word “father”

One might ask, in a religious context: Did not Zechariah (father of John the Baptist) call Abraham “our father”? Did not Jesus allow the Samaritan woman to speak of “our father Jacob”? Did not St. Matthew call Jesus “son of David” and “son of Abraham”?

*“... to remember his holy covenant, the oath which he swore to Abraham our father, ...”
[Luke 1:72-73]*

“Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his children and his livestock?” [John 4:12]

*“The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.”
[Matthew 1:1]*

According to the flesh, or according to the virtual lineage (in the case of Jesus), the word “father” has a correct use — that **is not** what Jesus was forbidding. Now, according to the spirit, there is only one “Father”— and Jesus' command in Matthew 23 refers to the latter.

The difference is very evident in the episode of the child Jesus in the Temple with the doctors, when He is found by Joseph and Mary, although they did not yet fully understand the issue:

*After three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the middle of the teachers, ... When they saw him, they were astonished; and his mother said to him, “Son, why have you treated us this way? Behold, **your father** and I were anxiously looking for you.” He said to them, “Why were you looking for me? Didn't you know that I must be in **my Father's** house?” They didn't understand the saying which he spoke to them. [Luke 2:46-50]*

The first followers of Jesus were, according to the flesh, descendants of Abraham. But note that even so, if someone simply said “the Father”, it was not assumed that they were talking about Abraham — they had to say “our father Abraham”, “our father Jacob”, “his father David”, “our fathers the prophets”...

In contrast to this, is not a very serious situation arising when, in a Christian assembly, someone simply says “the Father” or “the Holy Father” and everyone is thinking of a human being instead of God?

Part Four — The consequences of the breach

The gravity of this act is threefold. Firstly — and most obviously— because they are deifying a human being, exalting him with a sacred and divine name, “*setting himself up*

as God” — which is of the utmost gravity.

Secondly, the situation is seriously grave also because they are undermining the credibility of the Word of Jesus and of the Scriptures. See how...

(Phase 1) Virtually, the supposed administrators of the Christian faith are saying, “You can turn off that verse; it is as if Jesus never said such a thing”, which inevitably leads to...

(Phase 2) ... thinking that “you can selectively turn off certain verses, following the example of Church authorities”, which leads to...

(Phase 3) ... thinking that “some verses are valid and others are not; therefore, Scripture is not reliable in general, particularly the words of Jesus; you can put the Bible away and keep it as a decorative object.”

This leads to a state of denial which, if consciously expressed in words, would say: “I cannot bear the possibility that the Bible, which I have believed in all my life, is incoherent; to bury that fear, I will simply close the Bible, stop reading it, and listen only to what the Church authorities tell me, without questioning their word in the slightest.” Which means: blind obedience.

And thirdly, but of no lesser importance: By turning into a routine the act of calling “Father” a human religious figure who is not God, by turning this into a “normality that must be accepted”, the faithful have let down their guard and will not be well prepared to identify one of these religious leaders in particular, the “*man of sin, the son of destruction*” when he appears “*setting himself up as God*” [2 Thessalonians 3-4] — the final counterfeiting of Christ before His Second Coming.

Now, joining the dots: In such an environment of blind obedience, reinforced by a state of denial, if the evil one manages to infiltrate (or has already infiltrated) the Church authorities, he only has to convince those authorities for saying from that podium, <<‘*Look, here is the Christ!*’ or, ‘*Look, there!*’>> [Mark 13:21], and they will believe him. He only has to introduce himself as “the Father” — no one will be alarmed by this until it is too late. The falsification of the Second Coming of Christ is served.

Part Five

Illustrated cases

CASE 1

Image: Title “The Holy Father” on the Vatican’s official website
[img/vatican-holy-father-620.jpg]

Fig 1. Title “THE HOLY FATHER” on the Vatican's official website. (1)
(The red and yellow highlighting is ours)

CASE 2

Image: Title “EL PADRE” on the official website of Opus Balaguer, better known as Opus Dei
[img/opusdei-the-father-620.jpg]

Fig 2. Title “THE FATHER” on the official website of Opus Dei. (2)(3)(4)
(The red and yellow highlighting is ours)

NOTES

(1) https://www.vatican.va/holy_father/index.htm — Visited 20-May-2025 — In the reproduction, the red and yellow highlighting is ours.

(2) <https://opusdei.org/en/article/our-lady-of-peace-prelatic-church-of-opus-dei-guide/> — Visited 20-May-2025 — In the reproduction, the red and yellow highlighting is ours.

(3) A Spanish journalist (Luis Carandell) wrote in 1992, speaking of Josemaría Escrivá:
Source: [https://opuslibros.org/vida_milagros.pdf], p.2 (in Spanish)

«His public appearances were veritable crowd baths, with cheers of ‘Father, Father, Father!’. People who have visited the crypt of the Roman palace on Bruno Buozzi Street, the headquarters of Opus Dei, where his remains rest, have said that those in charge of the Work force visitors to crawl on their knees from the door of the crypt to the green-black marble tomb bearing the inscription EL PADRE (The Father).»

(4) According to one of the members of the founding period of Opus Dei (Rosario Badules López), also speaking about Josemaría Escrivá:

Source: [ODlopezEsp.html] (in Spanish)

«Back in 1944, before going in to greet him for the first time, I was warned that I should call him “Father.” ... He [Escrivá] was the one who told one of his closest collaborators to ask the General Congress that the official greeting to the Father be with the left knee on the ground and kissing his hand. ... **He couldn't stand being called Father Escrivá; he had to be addressed only as Father or Monsignor Escrivá.** The Central Secretary [of Opus Dei] told Pilar Salcedo, a journalist: “**The important thing is ‘the Father’ [Escrivá], because there are many popes, but only one Father.**”»

Related Documents

Jesus' Advice about Coherence
[cohePart3.html](#)

The Claim of Papal Infallibility – Who is like God?
[infallibility.html](#)

Testimony within the Work of Escrivá – “There are many popes, but only one Father [Escrivá]” (in Spanish)

[ODlopezEsp.html](#)

Literal or Symbolic Interpretation of the Bible – Part 1

[BiblicalLiteralism.html](#)

The Face and Name of the False Christ

[TheFalseChrist.html](#)

Prevention of Scandal within a Church

[Scandal.html](#)

Our Position on the Catholic Faith

[mgrPosition.html](#)

Our Position on the True Petrine Ministry

[rock.html](#)

Our Position on the Administrators of the Catholic Faith

[mgrPositionPart2.html](#)

Our Position on many other matters related to the Faith (Frequently Asked Questions)

[FAQ.html](#)

Digitally printed 2025-06-26

<https://www.mgr.org/NotTheFather.html>

<https://www.mgr.org/pp/NotTheFather.pdf>

In Spanish: *No llaméis Padre a ninguno de vosotros sobre la tierra – Un recordatorio bíblico*

[\[NotTheFatherEsp.html\]](#)

Published in Spanish on May 24 and June 26, 2025 • Published in English on June 26, 2025

© **Copyright 2025 by The M+G+R Foundation**. All rights reserved. However, you may freely reproduce and distribute this document as long as: (1) Appropriate credit is given as to its source; (2) No changes are made in the text without prior written consent; and (3) No charge is made for it.

[The M+G+R Foundation](#)

<https://www.mgr.org/>

<https://www.mgrfoundation.org/>

Disclaimer:

www.mgr.org/Disclaimer.html