

# Dear Padre,

***My Protestant friends asked me why we call priests “Father” when Jesus said not to. I don’t know how to answer.***

Jesus instructs his disciples, “As for you, do not be called ‘Rabbi.’ You have but one teacher, and you are all brothers. Call no one on earth your father; you have but one Father in heaven” (Matthew 23:8–9). Taken in context, Jesus is denouncing the scribes and Pharisees for bestowing honors and titles on themselves. If taken literally, this passage would also prohibit us from calling our biological fathers by that name, or our instructors “professor.”

Jesus assures us that God is Father of us all. The early Christian community adopted family terms—father, mother, brother, sister—to show their affiliation through baptism and their mutual faith in the Lord (See Luke 8:21, “My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and act on it.”)

Thus, St. Paul refers to Timothy as his “child in faith” (1 Timothy 1:2; Philippians 2:22). He also tells his Christian converts, “I am writing...to admonish you as my beloved children. Even if you should have countless guides to Christ, yet you do not have many fathers, for I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel” (1 Corinthians 4:14–15). Like St. Paul, who speaks of himself as a father in nurturing the faith, priests are called “Father” for their pastoral role in the Church. ●

**Fr. Byron Miller, CSSR / [DearPadre.org](http://DearPadre.org)**

## Do you have a question for the Padre?

Go to [DearPadre.org](http://DearPadre.org) to send your question and to learn more about *Dear Padre*.

### Monday

July 8  
Weekday  
Hos 2:16, 17c–  
18, 21–22  
Mt 9:18–26

### Tuesday

July 9  
Weekday  
Hos 8:4–7,  
11–13  
Mt 9:32–38

### Wednesday

July 10  
Weekday  
Hos 10:1–3,  
7–8, 12  
Mt 10:1–7

### Thursday

July 11  
St. Benedict,  
Abbot  
Hos 11:1–4,  
8e–9  
Mt 10:7–15

### Friday

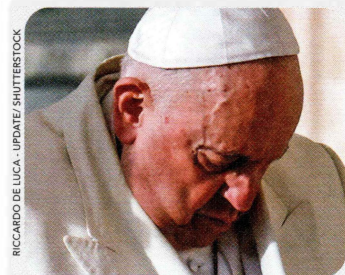
July 12  
Weekday  
Hos 14:2–10  
Mt 10:16–23

### Saturday

July 13  
Weekday  
Is 6:1–8  
Mt 10:24–33

### Sunday

July 14  
Fifteenth Sunday  
in Ordinary Time  
Am 7:12–15  
Eph 1:3–14  
or 1:3–10  
Mk 6:7–13



## A WORD FROM POPE FRANCIS

***The radical change Jesus brought about commits his disciples of both yesterday and today to a personal and community [self] examination.... Today, the Lord asks us to adopt an attitude of humble listening and docile expectation because God’s grace often manifests itself in surprising ways that do not match our expectations.***

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