In today's gospel Jesus teaches us how to pray the Lord's Prayer. Many people ask me, “why do Catholics and Protestants have different endings for the same Lord's Prayer?” … Ready? A great deal of irony and humor surrounds the answer.

1. The Catholic form of the Lord’s Prayer comes directly from the scriptures. The Protestants’ Lord’s Prayer does not come from the Scriptures even they emphasize the scriptures as the basis of faith.

2. The Protestant form of the Our Father comes from the Didache, a book written about 100 AD which contains the teachings of the Catholic Church.

3. The precise wording of the Our Father which Catholics use comes by way of King Henry VIII. He declared in 1541 that everybody in his kingdom must use this translation by the priest William Tyndale. By 1541, Henry was married already to his fifth wife, had been excommunicated from the Catholic Church, and had martyred almost 100 Catholics, mostly clergy. Yet Catholics use the translation which Henry ordered and Tyndale wrote.

4. The translation which the Protestants was verified by the great St. Jerome and St. Augustine, whose sainthood the Protestants don’t recognize.

5. The phrase “for thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory,” is a doxology, i.e., a customary poetic ending to a prayer. The Latin Rite customarily ends prayers with the doxology, “Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.” Catholics in the Greek Rite customarily end prayers with, “for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory.”

6. We Latin Rite Catholics in every Mass say the doxology, “for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory”. We say it, however, not immediately after the Our Father, but after we repeat the last of the seven petitions in the Our Father Prayer. In the Latin Rite and Eastern Rite, generally since the fifth century, special emphasis was given to the last two petitions of the Our Father: “forgive us our trespasses …” and “deliver us from evil …” In order to emphasize these two phrases priests and people would repeat the phrases, beat their breasts, and in some dioceses, priests would stop Mass, and kneel in front of the altar and beg God for mercy. Notice that the last petition, “deliver us from evil” is repeated just after the Lord’s Prayer and just before, “for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory.” Two thousand years after Christ, the Church, East and West, is still repeating the last phrase of the Lord’s Prayer, and still including the ancient doxology.

7. When did Protestants begin adding the phrase, “For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever.” Not when Martin Luther broke from the Church in 1520. Not until a half century later, in 1570, when the pope excommunicated Queen Elizabeth I of England. She then changed the liturgy to demonstrate her separation and difference from the Catholic Church.
May I share two more ironies from the tragic split of Protestants from the Catholic Church.

1. Do you know where we received the term “Roman Catholic Church”? ... From King Henry VIII. When he broke from the Catholic Church, he instituted the phrase “Roman Catholic Church” to distinguish it from his new “English/Anglican Catholic Church.” Ironically, many Catholic parishes today describe their affiliation as Roman Catholic, which is a Protestant term. Technically the Vatican describes us as Latin Rite Catholics.

2. King Henry VIII was succeeded by the son of his third wife. This son reigned just six years before dying from natural causes. A weeklong revolt occurred before Mary Tudor was named heiress to the throne. She reigned for five years before Queen Elizabeth I ascended to the throne. Mary was the only surviving child of Henry and his first wife. Elizabeth was the only surviving child of Henry and his second wife. Mary was Catholic and put to death 280 Protestants. Elizabeth was Protestant and put to death 230 Catholics. Demonstrating that history is written by the victors, Mary is known forever as “Bloody Mary,” and Elizabeth is remembered as “Good Queen Bess.”

In conclusion, let's pray for greater unity with and among our Protestant brothers. In 1900 in the USA, there were 1900 Protestant denominations. Today, in the USA, we have 44,000 Protestant denominations. Some of my Protestant minister friends kid that whenever a Catholic priest has a new idea, he forms a new religious order; and whenever a Protestant minister has a new idea, he forms a new church!

Also, we Christians need each other. We are facing a Christianophobia both from our secular government and from some Muslim extremists, not all Muslims but from those with a certain violent “reading” of the Quran. Christians, we need to support each other. Most of all we need God's help in these critical times. All the more reason, therefore, to pray as Jesus has taught us in his Lord’s Prayer.