

père, n.

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Pronunciation: Brit. /pɛː/ , U.S. /pɛ(ə)r/

Forms: 16– **pere**, 18– **père**.

Etymology: < French *père* [FATHER](#) *n.*... [\(Show More\)](#)

This entry has been updated (OED Third Edition, September 2005).

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per(e, n.(4) in Middle English Dictionary

1. Used before a name as a title for a (usually French) priest; = [FATHER](#) *n.* [7c\(b\)](#).

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The title is officially applied only to a priest belonging to a religious order, as opposed to one belonging to a diocese, although in practice the distinction has now largely been eroded.

- 1619 J. CHAMBERLAIN *Let.* 30 Oct. (1939) II. 270 The Jesuites hold a chapter of theyre order at Rome whether Pere Coton is sent out of France.
- 1699 M. LISTER *Journey to Paris* (new ed.) 96, I bought the works of Pere Pezaron, a Bernadin, now Abbot de Charmoyse near Rheims.
- 1763 T. SMOLLETT *Let.* 15 Aug. in *Trav.* (1799) 19 There was among the monks one pere Charles, a lusty friar.
- 1777 P. THICKNESSE *Year's Journey France & Spain* I. xx. 174 Nor did the whole community afford but a single member (pere tender, a Fleming) who could speak French.
- a1845 R. H. BARHAM *Lord of Thoulouse in Ingoldsby Legends* (1847) 3rd Ser. 187 Honest Père Jacques was inclined to spare diet.
- 1879 R. L. STEVENSON *Trav. with Donkey* 119 There was Père Apollinaire hauling his barrow.
- 1914 S. LEWIS *Our Mr. Wrenn* vii. 95 It's just as Pere Dureón said at the atelier.
- 1978 *Times* 3 Nov. 7/1 (*adv.*) The Sayings of Père Patriarche... 'To buy wine with uncertainty lacks any amusement.'
- 1991 *Conjunctions* 17 277 Père Nicolas was always unlucky.

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2. Used after a surname to distinguish a father from a son or sons of that name; senior. Cf. [FILS](#) *n.*¹

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- 1802 M. EDGEWORTH *Let.* 8 Dec. in *M. Edgeworth in France & Switzerland* (1979) 58 M. Delessert père at a card table with another gentleman.
- 1858 O. W. HOLMES *Autocrat of Breakfast-table* i. 28 Raspail, père, used to date every proof he sent to the printer.
- 1893 E. DOWSON *Let.* c28 Nov. (1967) 299, I am dining with Horne & Horne Père at the Constitutional tonight.
- 1907 M. A. VON ARNIM *Fräulein Schmidt* xxxiii. 120 Collins père is a person who makes nails in Manchester.
- 1948 E. S. TURNER *Boys will be Boys* v. 80 It will be seen that there was a Harkaway père and a Harkaway *fil*s.
- 2003 *Scotl. on Sunday* (Nexis) 18 May 7 The early musical inventiveness and skill that was to lead Strauss père to global success.

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