

The Catechism of the Catholic Church

SECTION TWO: THE LORD'S PRAYER: "OUR FATHER!"

2759 Jesus "was praying at a certain place, & when he ceased, one of his disciples said to him, 'Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.'" ¹ In response to this request the Lord entrusts to his disciples & to his Church the fundamental Christian prayer. St. Luke presents a brief text of five petitions, ² while St. Matthew gives a more developed version of seven petitions. ³ The liturgical tradition of the Church has retained St. Matthew's text:

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, & forgive us our trespasses, 'as we forgive those who trespass against us, & lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

2760 Very early on, liturgical usage concluded the Lord's Prayer with a doxology. In the *Didache*, we find, "For yours are the power & the glory for ever." ⁴ The *Apostolic Constitutions* add to the beginning: "the kingdom," & this is the formula retained to our day in ecumenical prayer. ⁵ The Byzantine tradition adds after "the glory" the words "Father, Son, & Holy Spirit." The *Roman Missal* develops the last petition in the explicit perspective of "awaiting our blessed hope" & of the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁶ Then comes the assembly's acclamation or the repetition of the doxology from the *Apostolic Constitutions*.

ARTICLE I: "THE SUMMARY OF THE WHOLE GOSPEL"

2761 The Lord's Prayer "is truly the summary of the whole gospel." ⁷ "Since the Lord . . . after handing over the practice of prayer, said elsewhere, 'Ask & you will receive,' & since everyone has petitions which are peculiar to his circumstances, the regular & appropriate prayer [the Lord's Prayer] is said first, as the foundation of further desires." ⁸

I. AT THE CENTRE OF THE SCRIPTURES

2762 After showing how the psalms are the principal food of Christian prayer & flow together in the petitions of the Our Father, St. Augustine concludes:

Run through all the words of the holy prayers [in Scripture], & I do not think that you will find anything in them that is not contained & included in the Lord's Prayer. ⁹

2763 All the Scriptures - the Law, the Prophets, & the Psalms - are fulfilled in Christ. ¹⁰ The Gospel is this "Good News." Its first proclamation is summarized by St. Matthew in the Sermon on the Mount; ¹¹ the prayer to our Father is at the centre of this proclamation. It is in this context that each petition bequeathed to us by the Lord is illuminated:

The Lord's Prayer is the most perfect of prayers.... In it we ask, not only for all the things we can rightly desire, but also in the sequence that they should be desired. This prayer not only teaches us to ask for things, but also in what order

we should desire them.¹²

2764 The Sermon on the Mount is teaching for life, the Our Father is a prayer; but in both the one & the other the Spirit of the Lord gives new form to our desires, those inner movements that animate our lives. Jesus teaches us this new life by his words; he teaches us to ask for it by our prayer. The rightness of our life in him will depend on the rightness of our prayer.

II. THE LORD'S PRAYER"

2765 The traditional expression "*the Lord's Prayer*" - *oratio Dominica* - means that the prayer to our Father is taught & given to us by the Lord Jesus. The prayer that comes to us from Jesus is truly unique: it is "*of the Lord*." On the one hand, in the words of this prayer the only Son gives us the words the Father gave him:¹³ he is the master of our prayer. On the other, as Word incarnate, he knows in his human heart the needs of his human brothers & sisters & reveals them to us: he is the model of our prayer.

2766 But Jesus does not give us a formula to repeat mechanically.¹⁴ As in every vocal prayer, it is through the Word of God that the Holy Spirit teaches the children of God to pray to their Father. Jesus not only gives us the words of our filial prayer; at the same time he gives us the Spirit by whom these words become in us "*spirit & life*."¹⁵ Even more, the proof & possibility of our filial prayer is that the Father "*sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!'*"¹⁶ Since our prayer sets forth our desires before God, it is again the Father, "*he who searches the hearts of men,*" who "*knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.*"¹⁷ The prayer to Our Father is inserted into the mysterious mission of the Son & of the Spirit.

III. THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

2767 This indivisible gift of the Lord's words & of the Holy Spirit who gives life to them in the hearts of believers has been received & lived by the Church from the beginning. The first communities prayed the Lord's Prayer three times a day,¹⁸ in place of the "Eighteen Benedictions" customary in Jewish piety.

2768 According to the apostolic tradition, the Lord's Prayer is essentially rooted in liturgical prayer:

[The Lord] teaches us to make prayer in common for all our brethren. For he did not say "*my Father*" who art in heaven, but "*our*" Father, offering petitions for the common body.¹⁹

In all the liturgical traditions, the Lord's Prayer is an integral part of the major hours of the Divine Office. In the three sacraments of Christian initiation its ecclesial character is especially in evidence:

2769 In *Baptism & Confirmation*, the handing on (*traditio*) of the Lord's Prayer signifies new birth into the divine life. Since Christian prayer is our speaking to God with the very word of God, those who are "*born anew*"... through the living & abiding word of God"²⁰ learn to invoke their Father by the one Word he

always hears. They can henceforth do so, for the seal of the Holy Spirit's anointing is indelibly placed on their hearts, ears, lips, indeed their whole filial being. This is why most of the patristic commentaries on the Our Father are addressed to catechumens & neophytes. When the Church prays the Lord's Prayer, it is always the people made up of the "new-born" who pray & obtain mercy.²¹

2770 In the *Eucharistic liturgy* the Lord's Prayer appears as the prayer of the whole Church & there reveals its full meaning & efficacy. Placed between the *anaphora* (the Eucharistic prayer) & the communion, the Lord's Prayer sums up on the one hand all the petitions & intercessions expressed in the movement of the epiclesis &, on the other, knocks at the door of the Banquet of the kingdom which sacramental communion anticipates.

2771 In the Eucharist, the Lord's Prayer also reveals the *eschatological* character of its petitions. It is the proper prayer of "*the end-time*," the time of salvation that began with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit & will be fulfilled with the Lord's return. The petitions addressed to our Father, as distinct from the prayers of the old covenant, rely on the mystery of salvation already accomplished, once for all, in Christ crucified & risen.

2772 From this unshakeable faith springs forth the hope that sustains each of the seven petitions, which express the groanings of the present age, this time of patience & expectation during which "*it does not yet appear what we shall be.*"²² The Eucharist & the Lord's Prayer look eagerly for the Lord's return, "*until he comes.*"²³

IN BRIEF:

2773 In response to his disciples' request "*Lord, teach us to pray*" (Lk 11:1), Jesus entrusts them with the fundamental Christian prayer, the Our Father.

2774 "The Lord's Prayer is truly the summary of the whole gospel,"²⁴ the "*most perfect of prayers.*"²⁵ It is at the centre of the Scriptures.

2775 It is called "*the Lord's Prayer*" because it comes to us from the Lord Jesus, the master & model of our prayer.

2776 The Lord's Prayer is the quintessential prayer of the Church. It is an integral part of the major hours of the Divine Office & of the sacraments of Christian initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, & Eucharist. Integrated into the Eucharist it reveals the eschatological character of its petitions, hoping for the Lord, "*until he comes*" (1 Cor 11:26).

ARTICLE 2: OUR FATHER WHO ART IN HEAVEN"

I. "WE DARE TO SAY"

2777 In the Roman liturgy, the Eucharistic assembly is invited to pray to our heavenly Father with filial boldness; the Eastern liturgies develop & use similar expressions: "*dare in all confidence*," "*make us worthy of...*" From the burning bush Moses heard a voice saying to him, "*Do not come near; put off your shoes from your*

feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." ²⁶ Only Jesus could cross that threshold of the divine holiness, for "when he had made purification for sins," he brought us into the Father's presence: "Here am I, & the children God has given me." ²⁷

Our awareness of our status as slaves would make us sink into the ground & our earthly condition would dissolve into dust, if the authority of our Father himself & the Spirit of his Son had not impelled us to this cry . . . 'Abba, Father!' . . . When would a mortal dare call God 'Father,' if man's innermost being were not animated by power from on high?" ²⁸

2778 This power of the Spirit who introduces us to the Lord's Prayer is expressed in the liturgies of East & of West by the beautiful, characteristically Christian expression: *parrhesia*, straightforward simplicity, filial trust, joyous assurance, humble boldness, the certainty of being loved. ²⁹

II. "FATHER!"

2779 Before we make our own this first exclamation of the Lord's Prayer, we must humbly cleanse our hearts of certain false images drawn "from this world." Humility makes us recognize that "no one knows the Son except the Father, & no one knows the Father except the Son & anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him," that is, "to little children." ³⁰ The purification of our hearts has to do with paternal or maternal images, stemming from our personal & cultural history, & influencing our relationship with God. God our Father transcends the categories of the created world. To impose our own ideas in this area "upon him" would be to fabricate idols to adore or pull down. To pray to the Father is to enter into his mystery as he is & as the Son has revealed him to us.

The expression God the Father had never been revealed to anyone. When Moses himself asked God who he was, he heard another name. The Father's name has been revealed to us in the Son, for the name "Son" implies the new name "Father." ³¹

2780 We can invoke God as "Father" because *he is revealed to us* by his Son become man & because his Spirit makes him known to us. The personal relation of the Son to the Father is something that man cannot conceive of nor the angelic powers even dimly see: & yet, the Spirit of the Son grants a participation in that very relation to us who believe that Jesus is the Christ & that we are born of God. ³²

2781 When we pray to the Father, we are *in communion with him* & with his Son, Jesus Christ. ³³ Then we know & recognize him with an ever new sense of wonder. The first phrase of the Our Father is a blessing of adoration before it is a supplication. For it is the glory of God that we should recognize him as "Father," the true God. We give him thanks for having revealed his name to us, for the gift of believing in it, & for the indwelling of his Presence in us.

2782 We can adore the Father because he has caused us to be reborn to his life by *adopting* us as his children in his only Son: by Baptism, he incorporates us into

the Body of his Christ; through the anointing of his Spirit who flows from the head to the members, he makes us other "Christs."

God, indeed, who has predestined us to adoption as his sons, has conformed us to the glorious Body of Christ. So then you who have become sharers in Christ are appropriately called "Christs."³⁴

The new man, reborn & restored to his God by grace, says first of all, "Father!" because he has now begun to be a son.³⁵

2783 Thus the Lord's Prayer reveals us to ourselves at the same time that it reveals the Father to us.³⁶

O man, you did not dare to raise your face to heaven, you lowered your eyes to the earth, & suddenly you have received the grace of Christ all your sins have been forgiven. From being a wicked servant you have become a good son.... Then raise your eyes to the Father who has begotten you through Baptism, to the Father who has redeemed you through his Son, & say: "Our Father...." But do not claim any privilege. He is the Father in a special way only of Christ, but he is the common Father of us all, because while he has begotten only Christ, he has created us. Then also say by his grace, "Our Father," so that you may merit being his son.³⁷

2784 The free gift of adoption requires on our part continual conversion & new life. Praying to our Father should develop in us two fundamental dispositions:

First, *the desire to become like him*: though created in his image, we are restored to his likeness by grace; & we must respond to this grace.

We must remember . . . & know that when we call God "our Father" we ought to behave as sons of God.³⁸

You cannot call the God of all kindness your Father if you preserve a cruel & inhuman heart; for in this case you no longer have in you the marks of the heavenly Father's kindness.³⁹

We must contemplate the beauty of the Father without ceasing & adorn our own souls accordingly.⁴⁰

2785 Second, *a humble & trusting heart* that enables us "to turn & become like children":⁴¹ for it is to "little children" that the Father is revealed.⁴²

[The prayer is accomplished] by the contemplation of God alone, & by the warmth of love, through which the soul, moulded & directed to love him, speaks very familiarly to God as to its own Father with special devotion.⁴³

Our Father: at this name love is aroused in us . . . & the confidence of obtaining what we are about to ask.... What would he not give to his children who ask, since he has already granted them the gift of being his children?⁴⁴

III. "OUR" FATHER

2786 "Our" Father refers to God. The adjective, as used by us, does not express possession, but an entirely new relationship with God.

2787 When we say "our" Father, we recognize first that all his promises of love announced by the prophets are fulfilled in the *new & eternal covenant* in his

Christ: we have become "*his*" people & he is henceforth "*our*" God. This new relationship is the purely gratuitous gift of belonging to each other: we are to respond to "*grace & truth*" given us in Jesus Christ with love & faithfulness.⁴⁵

2788 Since the Lord's Prayer is that of his people in the "*endtime*," this "*our*" also expresses the certitude of our hope in God's ultimate promise: in the new Jerusalem he will say to the victor, "*I will be his God & he shall be my son.*"⁴⁶

2789 When we pray to "*our*" Father, we personally address the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. By doing so we do not divide the Godhead, since the Father is its "*source & origin*," but rather confess that the Son is eternally begotten by him & the Holy Spirit proceeds from him. We are not confusing the persons, for we confess that our communion is with the Father & his Son, Jesus Christ, in their one Holy Spirit. The *Holy Trinity* is consubstantial & indivisible. When we pray to the Father, we adore & glorify him together with the Son & the Holy Spirit.

2790 Grammatically, "*our*" qualifies a reality common to more than one person. There is only one God, & he is recognized as Father by those who, through faith in his only Son, are reborn of him by water & the Spirit.⁴⁷ The *Church* is this new communion of God & men. United with the only Son, who has become "*the firstborn among many brethren*," she is in communion with one & the same Father in one & the same Holy Spirit.⁴⁸ In praying "*our*" Father, each of the baptized is praying in this communion: "*The company of those who believed were of one heart & soul.*"⁴⁹

2791 For this reason, in spite of the divisions among Christians, this prayer to "*our*" Father remains our common patrimony & an urgent summons for all the baptized. In communion by faith in Christ & by Baptism, they ought to join in Jesus' prayer for the unity of his disciples.⁵⁰

2792 Finally, if we pray the Our Father sincerely, we leave individualism behind, because the love that we receive frees us from it. The "*our*" at the beginning of the Lord's Prayer, like the "*us*" of the last four petitions, excludes no one. If we are to say it truthfully, our divisions & oppositions have to be overcome.⁵¹

2793 The baptized cannot pray to "*our*" Father without bringing before him all those for whom he gave his beloved Son. God's love has no bounds, neither should our prayer.⁵² Praying "*our*" Father opens to us the dimensions of his love revealed in Christ: praying with & for all who do not yet know him, so that Christ may "*gather into one the children of God.*"⁵³ God's care for all men & for the whole of creation has inspired all the great practitioners of prayer; it should extend our prayer to the full breadth of love whenever we dare to say "*our*" Father.

IV. "WHO ART IN HEAVEN"

2794 This biblical expression does not mean a place ("*space*"), but a way of being; it does not mean that God is distant, but majestic. Our Father is not "*elsewhere*": he transcends everything we can conceive of his holiness. It is precisely because he is thrice holy that he is so close to the humble & contrite heart.

"Our Father who art in heaven" is rightly understood to mean that God is in the hearts of the just, as in his holy temple. At the same time, it means that those who pray should desire the one they invoke to dwell in them.⁵⁴

"Heaven" could also be those who bear the image of the heavenly world, & in whom God dwells & tarries.⁵⁵

2795 The symbol of the heavens refers us back to the mystery of the covenant we are living when we pray to our Father. He is in heaven, his dwelling place; the Father's house is our homeland. Sin has exiled us from the land of the covenant,⁵⁶ but conversion of heart enables us to return to the Father, to heaven.⁵⁷ In Christ, then, heaven & earth are reconciled,⁵⁸ for the Son alone "descended from heaven" & causes us to ascend there with him, by his Cross, Resurrection, & Ascension.⁵⁹

2796 When the Church prays "our Father who art in heaven," she is professing that we are the People of God, already seated "with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus" & "hidden with Christ in God;"⁶⁰ yet at the same time, "here indeed we groan, & long to put on our heavenly dwelling."⁶¹

[Christians] are in the flesh, but do not live according to the flesh. They spend their lives on earth, but are citizens of heaven.⁶²

IN BRIEF:

2797 Simple & faithful trust, humble & joyous assurance are the proper dispositions for one who prays the Our Father.

2798 We can invoke God as "Father" because the Son of God made man has revealed him to us. In this Son, through Baptism, we are incorporated & adopted as sons of God.

2799 The Lord's Prayer brings us into communion with the Father & with his Son, Jesus Christ. At the same time it reveals us to ourselves (cf. GS 22 § 1).

2800 Praying to our Father should develop in us the will to become like him & foster in us a humble & trusting heart.

2801 When we say "Our" Father, we are invoking the new covenant in Jesus Christ, communion with the Holy Trinity, & the divine love which spreads through the Church to encompass the world.

2802 "Who art in heaven" does not refer to a place but to God's majesty & his presence in the hearts of the just. Heaven, the Father's house, is the true homeland toward which we are heading & to which, already, we belong.

ARTICLE 3: THE SEVEN PETITIONS

2803 After we have placed ourselves in the presence of God our Father to adore & to love & to bless him, the Spirit of adoption stirs up in our hearts seven petitions, seven blessings. The first three, more theological, draw us toward the glory of the Father; the last four, as ways toward him, commend our wretchedness to his grace. "Deep calls to deep."⁶³

2804 The first series of petitions carries us toward him, for his own sake: *thy*

name, *thy kingdom, thy will!* It is characteristic of love to think first of the one whom we love. In none of the three petitions do we mention ourselves; the burning desire, even anguish, of the beloved Son for his Father's glory seizes us:⁶⁴ "*hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done....*" These three supplications were already answered in the saving sacrifice of Christ, but they are henceforth directed in hope toward their final fulfilment, for God is not yet all in all.⁶⁵

2805 The second series of petitions unfolds with the same movement as certain Eucharistic epicleses: as an offering up of our expectations, that draws down upon itself the eyes of the Father of mercies. They go up from us & concern us from this very moment, in our present world: "*give us . . . forgive us . . . lead us not ... deliver us....*" The fourth & fifth petitions concern our life as such - to be fed & to be healed of sin; the last two concern our battle for the victory of life - that battle of prayer.

2806 By the three first petitions, we are strengthened in faith, filled with hope, & set aflame by charity. Being creatures & still sinners, we have to petition for us, for that "*us*" bound by the world & history, which we offer to the boundless love of God. For through the name of his Christ & the reign of his Holy Spirit, our Father accomplishes his plan of salvation, for us & for the whole world.

"HALLOWED BE THY NAME"

2807 The term "*to hallow*" is to be understood here not primarily in its causative sense (only God hallows, makes holy), but above all in an evaluative sense: to recognize as holy, to treat in a holy way. & so, in adoration, this invocation is sometimes understood as praise & thanksgiving.⁶⁶ But this petition is here taught to us by Jesus as an optative: a petition, a desire, & an expectation in which God & man are involved. Beginning with this first petition to our Father, we are immersed in the innermost mystery of his Godhead & the drama of the salvation of our humanity. Asking the Father that his name be made holy draws us into his plan of loving kindness for the fullness of time, "*according to his purpose which he set forth in Christ,*" that we might "*be holy & blameless before him in love.*"⁶⁷

2808 In the decisive moments of his economy God reveals his name, but he does so by accomplishing his work. This work, then, is realized for us & in us only if his name is hallowed by us & in us.

2809 The holiness of God is the inaccessible centre of his eternal mystery. What is revealed of it in creation & history, Scripture calls "*glory,*" the radiance of his majesty.⁶⁸ In making man in his image & likeness, God "*crowned him with glory & honour,*" but by sinning, man fell "*short of the glory of God.*"⁶⁹ From that time on, God was to manifest his holiness by revealing & giving his name, in order to restore man to the image of his Creator.⁷⁰

2810 In the promise to Abraham & the oath that accompanied it,⁷¹ God commits himself but without disclosing his name. He begins to reveal it to Moses & makes it known clearly before the eyes of the whole people when he saves them from

the Egyptians: "*he has triumphed gloriously.*"⁷² From the covenant of Sinai onwards, this people is "*his own*" & it is to be a "*holy* (or "*consecrated*": the same word is used for both in Hebrew) *nation*,"⁷³ because the name of God dwells in it.

2811 In spite of the holy Law that again & again their Holy God gives them - "*You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy*" - & although the Lord shows patience for the sake of his name, the people turn away from the Holy One of Israel & profane his name among the nations.⁷⁴ For this reason the just ones of the old covenant, the poor survivors returned from exile, & the prophets burned with passion for the name.

2812 Finally, in Jesus the name of the Holy God is revealed & given to us, in the flesh, as Saviour, revealed by what he is, by his word, & by his sacrifice.⁷⁵ This is the heart of his priestly prayer: "*Holy Father . . . for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be consecrated in truth.*"⁷⁶ Because he "*sanctifies*" his own name, Jesus reveals to us the name of the Father.⁷⁷ At the end of Christ's Passover, the Father gives him the name that is above all names: "*Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*"⁷⁸

2813 In the waters of Baptism, we have been "*washed . . . sanctified . . . justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ & in the Spirit of our God.*"⁷⁹ Our Father calls us to holiness in the whole of our life, & since "*he is the source of [our] life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, & . . . sanctification,*"⁸⁰ both his glory & our life depend on the hallowing of his name in us & by us. Such is the urgency of our first petition.

By whom is God hallowed, since he is the one who hallows? But since he said, "*You shall be holy to me; for I the LORD am holy,*" we seek & ask that we who were sanctified in Baptism may persevere in what we have begun to be. & we ask this daily, for we need sanctification daily, so that we who fail daily may cleanse away our sins by being sanctified continually.... We pray that this sanctification may remain in us.⁸¹

2814 The sanctification of his name among the nations depends inseparably on our *life* & our *prayer*:

We ask God to hallow his name, which by its own holiness saves & makes holy all creation It is this name that gives salvation to a lost world. But we ask that this name of God should be hallowed in us through our actions. For God's name is blessed when we live well, but is blasphemed when we live wickedly. As the Apostle says: "*The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.*" We ask then that, just as the name of God is holy, so we may obtain his holiness in our souls.⁸²

When we say "*hallowed be thy name,*" we ask that it should be hallowed in us, who are in him; but also in others whom God's grace still awaits, that we may obey the precept that obliges us to pray for everyone, even our enemies. That is why we do not say expressly "*hallowed be thy name 'in us,'*" for we ask that it

be so in all men.⁸³

2815 This petition embodies all the others. Like the six petitions that follow, it is fulfilled by *the prayer of Christ*. Prayer to our Father is our prayer, if it is prayed *in the name of Jesus*.⁸⁴ In his priestly prayer, Jesus asks: "*Holy Father, protect in your name those whom you have given me.*"⁸⁵

II. "THY KINGDOM COME"

2816 In the NT, the word *basileia* can be translated by "*kingship*" (abstract noun), "*kingdom*" (concrete noun) or "*reign*" (action noun). The Kingdom of God lies ahead of us. It is brought near in the Word incarnate, it is proclaimed throughout the whole Gospel, & it has come in Christ's death & Resurrection. The Kingdom of God has been coming since the Last Supper &, in the Eucharist, it is in our midst. The kingdom will come in glory when Christ hands it over to his Father: It may even be . . . that the Kingdom of God means Christ himself, whom we daily desire to come, & whose coming we wish to be manifested quickly to us. For as he is our resurrection, since in him we rise, so he can also be understood as the Kingdom of God, for in him we shall reign.⁸⁶

2817 This petition is "*Marana tha*," the cry of the Spirit & the Bride: "*Come, Lord Jesus.*"

Even if it had not been prescribed to pray for the coming of the kingdom, we would willingly have brought forth this speech, eager to embrace our hope. In indignation the souls of the martyrs under the altar cry out to the Lord: "*O Sovereign Lord, holy & true, how long before you judge & avenge our blood on those who dwell upon the earth?*" For their retribution is ordained for the end of the world. Indeed as soon as possible, Lord, may your kingdom come!⁸⁷

2818 In the Lord's Prayer, "*thy kingdom come*" refers primarily to the final coming of the reign of God through Christ's return.⁸⁸ But, far from distracting the Church from her mission in this present world, this desire commits her to it all the more strongly. Since Pentecost, the coming of that Reign is the work of the Spirit of the Lord who "*complete[s] his work on earth & brings us the fullness of grace.*"⁸⁹

2819 "*The kingdom of God [is] righteousness & peace & joy in the Holy Spirit.*"⁹⁰ The end-time in which we live is the age of the outpouring of the Spirit. Ever since Pentecost, a decisive battle has been joined between "*the flesh*" & the Spirit.⁹¹

Only a pure soul can boldly say: "*Thy kingdom come.*" One who has heard Paul say, "*Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies,*" & has purified himself in action, thought & word will say to God: "*Thy kingdom come!*"⁹²

2820 By a discernment according to the Spirit, Christians have to distinguish between the growth of the Reign of God & the progress of the culture & society in which they are involved. This distinction is not a separation. Man's vocation to eternal life does not suppress, but actually reinforces, his duty to put into action in this world the energies & means received from the Creator to serve justice & peace.⁹³

2821 This petition is taken up & granted in the prayer of Jesus which is present & effective in the Eucharist; it bears its fruit in new life in keeping with the Beatitudes.⁹⁴

III. "THY WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN"

2822 Our Father *"desires all men to be saved & to come to the knowledge of the truth."*⁹⁵ He *"is forbearing toward you, not wishing that any should perish."*⁹⁶ His commandment is *"that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another."*⁹⁷ This commandment summarizes all the others & expresses his entire will.

2823 *"He has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ . . . to gather up all things in him, things in heaven & things on earth. In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel & will."*⁹⁸ We ask insistently for this loving plan to be fully realized on earth as it is already in heaven.

2824 In Christ, & through his human will, the will of the Father has been perfectly fulfilled once for all. Jesus said on entering into this world: *"Lo, I have come to do your will, O God."*⁹⁹ Only Jesus can say: *"I always do what is pleasing to him."*¹⁰⁰ In the prayer of his agony, he consents totally to this will: *"not my will, but yours be done."*¹⁰¹ For this reason Jesus *"gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God & Father."*¹⁰² *"& by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."*¹⁰³

2825 *"Although he was a Son, [Jesus] learned obedience through what he suffered."*¹⁰⁴ How much more reason have we sinful creatures to learn obedience - we who in him have become children of adoption. We ask our Father to unite our will to his Son's, in order to fulfil his will, his plan of salvation for the life of the world. We are radically incapable of this, but united with Jesus & with the power of his Holy Spirit, we can surrender our will to him & decide to choose what his Son has always chosen: to do what is pleasing to the Father.¹⁰⁵

In committing ourselves to [Christ], we can become one spirit with him, & thereby accomplish his will, in such wise that it will be perfect on earth as it is in heaven.¹⁰⁶

Consider how Jesus Christ] teaches us to be humble, by making us see that our virtue does not depend on our work alone but on grace from on high. He commands each of the faithful who prays to do so universally, for the whole world. For he did not say *"thy will be done in me or in us,"* but *"on earth,"* the whole earth, so that error may be banished from it, truth take root in it, all vice be destroyed on it, virtue flourish on it, & earth no longer differ from heaven.¹⁰⁷

2826 By prayer we can discern *"what is the will of God"* & obtain the endurance to do it.¹⁰⁸ Jesus teaches us that one enters the kingdom of heaven not by speaking words, but by doing *"the will of my Father in heaven."*¹⁰⁹

2827 *"If anyone is a worshiper of God & does his will, God listens to him."*¹¹⁰ Such is

the power of the Church's prayer in the name of her Lord, above all in the Eucharist. Her prayer is also a communion of intercession with the all-holy Mother of God ¹¹¹ & all the saints who have been pleasing to the Lord because they willed his will alone:

It would not be inconsistent with the truth to understand the words, *"Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven,"* to mean: *"in the Church as in our Lord Jesus Christ himself";* or *"in the Bride who has been betrothed, just as in the Bridegroom who has accomplished the will of the Father."* ¹¹²

NOTES:

1 Lk 11:1.

2 Cf. Lk 11:2-4.

3 Cf. Mt 6:9-13.

4 Didache 8, 2: SCh 248, 174.

5 Apostolic Constitutions, 7, 24, 1: PG 1, 1016.

6 Titus 2:13; cf. Roman Missal 22, Embolism after the Lord's Prayer.

7 Tertullian, De orat. 1: PL 1, 1155.

8 Tertullian, De orat. 10: PL 1, 1165; cf. Lk 11:9.

9 St. Augustine, Ep. 130, 12, 22: PL 33, 503.

10 Cf. Lk 24:44.

11 Cf. Mt 5-7.

12 St. Thomas Aquinas, STh II-II, 83, 9.

13 Cf. Jn 17:7.

14 Cf. Mt 6:7; 1 Kings 18:26-29.

15 Jn 6:63.

16 Gal 4:6.

17 Rom 8:27.

18 Cf. Didache 8, 3: SCh 248, 174.

19 St. John Chrysostom, Hom. in Mt. 19, 4: PG 57, 278.

20 1 Pet 1:23.

21 Cf. 1 Pet 2:1-10.

22 1 Jn 3:2; Cf. Col 3:4.

23 1 Cor 11:26.

24 Tertullian, De orat. 1: PL 1, 1251-1255.

25 St. Thomas Aquinas, STh II-II, 83, 9.

26 Ex 3:5.

27 Heb 1:3; 2:13.

28 St. Peter Chrysologus, Sermo 71, 3: PL 52, 401 CD; cf. Gal 4:6.

29 Cf. Eph 3:12; Heb 3:6; 4:16; 10:19; 1 Jn 2:28; 3:21; 5:14.

30 Mt 11:25-27.

31 Tertullian De orat. 3: PL 1, 1155.

32 Cf. Jn 1:1; 1 Jn 5:1.

- 33 Cf. 1 Jn 1:3.
- 34 St. Cyril of Jerusalem, Catech. myst. 3, 1: PG 33, 1088A.
- 35 St. Cyprian, De Dom. orat. 9: PL 4, 525A.
- 36 Cf. GS 22 § 1.
- 37 St. Ambrose, De Sacr. 5, 4, 19: PL 16:450-451.
- 38 St. Cyprian, De Dom. orat. 11 PL 4:526B.
- 39 St. John Chrysostom, De orat Dom. 3: PG 51, 44.
- 40 St. Gregory Of Nyssa, De orat. Dom. 2: PG 44, 1148B.
- 41 Mt 18:3.
- 42 Cf. Mt 11:25.
- 43 St. John Cassian, Coll. 9, 18 PL 49, 788c.
- 44 St. Augustine, De serm. Dom. in monte 2, 4, 16: PL 34, 1276.
- 45 Jn 1:17; Cf. Hos 2:21-22; 6:1-6.
- 46 Rev 21:7.
- 47 Cf. 1 Jn 5:1; Jn 3:5.
- 48 Rom 8:29; Cf. Eph 4:4-6.
- 49 Acts 4:32.
- 50 Cf. UR 8; 22.
- 51 Cf. Mt 5:23-24; 6:14-15.
- 52 Cf. NA 5.
- 53 Jn 11:52.
- 54 St. Augustine, De serm. Dom. in monte 2, 5, 18: PL 34, 1277.
- 55 St. Cyril of Jerusalem, Catech. myst. 5:11: PG 33, 1117.
- 56 Cf. Gen 3.
- 57 Jer 3:19-4:1a; Lk 15:18, 21.
- 58 Cf. Isa 45:8; Ps 85:12.
- 59 Jn 3:13; 12:32; 14:2-3; 16:28; 20:17; Eph 4:9-10; Heb 1:3; 2:13.
- 60 Eph 2:6; Col 3:3.
- 61 2 Cor 5:2; cf. Phil 3:20; Heb 13:14.
- 62 Ad Diognetum 5: PG 2, 1173.
- 63 Ps 42:7.
- 64 Cf. Lk 22:14; 12:50.
- 65 Cf. 1 Cor 15:28.
- 66 Cf. Ps 111:9; Lk 1:49.
- 67 Eph 1:9, 4.
- 68 Cf. Ps 8; Isa 6:3.
- 69 Ps 8:5; Rom 3:23; cf. Gen 1:26.
- 70 Col 3:10.
- 71 Cf. Heb 6:13.
- 72 Ex 15:1 cf. 3:14.
- 73 Cf. Ex 19:5-6.
- 74 Ezek 20:9, 14, 22, 39; cf. Lev 19:2.

- 75 Cf. Mt 1:21; Lk 1:31; Jn 8:28; 17:8; 17:17-19.
 76 Jn 17:11, 19.
 77 Cf. Ezek 20:39; 36:20-21; Jn 17:6.
 78 Phil 2:9-11.
 79 1 Cor 6:11.
 80 1 Cor 1:30; cf. 1 Thess 4:7.
 81 St. Cyprian De Dom. orat. 12: PL 4, 527A; Lev 20:26.
 82 St. Peter Chrysologus, Sermo 71, 4: PL 52:402A; cf. Rom 2:24; Ezek 36:20-22.
 83 Tertullian, De orat. 3: PL 1:1157A.
 84 Cf. Jn 14:13; 15:16; 16:24, 26.
 85 Jn 17:11.
 86 St. Cyprian, De Dom. orat. 13 PL 4, 528A.
 87 Tertullian, De orat. 5: PL 1, 1159A; cf. Heb 4:11; Rev 6:9; 22:20.
 88 Cf. Titus 2:13.
 89 Roman Missal, Eucharistic Prayer IV, 118.
 90 Rom 14:17.
 91 Cf. Gal 5:16-25.
 92 St. Cyril of Jerusalem, Catech. myst. 5, 13: PG 33, 1120A; cf. Rom 6:12.
 93 Cf. GS 22; 32; 39; 45; EN 31.
 94 Cf. Jn 17:17-20; Mt 5:13-16; 6:24; 7:12-13.
 95 1 Tim 2:3-4.
 96 2 Pet 3:9; cf. Mt 18:14.
 97 Jn 13:34; cf. 1 Jn 3; 4; Lk 10:25-37.
 98 Eph 1:9-11.
 99 Heb 10:7; Ps 40:7.
 100 Jn 8:29.
 101 Lk 22:42; cf. Jn 4:34; 5:30; 6:38.
 102 Gal 1:4.
 103 Heb 10:10.
 104 Heb 5:8.
 105 Cf. Jn 8:29.
 106 Origen, De orat. 26 PG 11, 501B.
 107 St. John Chrysostom, Hom. in Mt. 19, § PG 57, 280.
 108 Rom 12:2; Cf. Eph 5:17; Cf. Heb 10:36.
 109 Mt 7:21.
 110 Jn 9:31; Cf. 1 Jn 5:14.
 111 Cf. Lk 1:38, 49.
 112 St. Augustine, De serm. Dom. 2, 6, 24: PL 34, 1279.