

## ***The Catechism of the Catholic Church***

### **SECTION TWO: THE LORD'S PRAYER:**

#### **IV. 'GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD'**

2828 "Give us": The trust of children who look to their Father for everything is beautiful. *"He makes his sun rise on the evil & on the good, & sends rain on the just & on the unjust."*<sup>113</sup> He gives to all the living *"their food in due season."*<sup>114</sup> Jesus teaches us this petition, because it glorifies our Father by acknowledging how good he is, beyond all goodness.

2829 "Give us" also expresses the covenant. We are his & he is ours, for our sake. But this "us" also recognizes him as the Father of all men & we pray to him for them all, in solidarity with their needs & sufferings.

2830 "Our bread": The Father who gives us life cannot not but give us the nourishment life requires - all appropriate goods & blessings, both material & spiritual. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus insists on the filial trust that cooperates with our Father's providence.<sup>115</sup> He is not inviting us to idleness,<sup>116</sup> but wants to relieve us from nagging worry & preoccupation. Such is the filial surrender of the children of God:

To those who seek the kingdom of God & his righteousness, he has promised to give all else besides. Since everything indeed belongs to God, he who possesses God wants for nothing, if he himself is not found wanting before God.<sup>117</sup>

2831 But the presence of those who hunger because they lack bread opens up another profound meaning of this petition. The drama of hunger in the world calls Christians who pray sincerely to exercise responsibility toward their brethren, both in their personal behaviour & in their solidarity with the human family. This petition of the Lord's Prayer cannot be isolated from the parables of the poor man Lazarus & of the Last Judgment.<sup>118</sup>

2832 As leaven in the dough, the newness of the kingdom should make the earth "rise" by the Spirit of Christ.<sup>119</sup> This must be shown by the establishment of justice in personal & social, economic & international relations, without ever forgetting that there are no just structures without people who want to be just.

2833 "Our" bread is the "one" loaf for the "many." In the Beatitudes "poverty" is the virtue of sharing: it calls us to communicate & share both material & spiritual goods, not by coercion but out of love, so that the abundance of some may remedy the needs of others.<sup>120</sup>

2834 "Pray & work."<sup>121</sup> *"Pray as if everything depended on God & work as if everything depended on you."*<sup>122</sup> Even when we have done our work, the food we receive is still a gift from our Father; it is good to ask him for it & to thank him, as Christian families do when saying grace at meals.

2835 This petition, with the responsibility it involves, also applies to another hunger from which men are perishing: *"Man does not live by bread alone, but . . .*

by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God,"<sup>123</sup> that is, by the Word he speaks & the Spirit he breathes forth. Christians must make every effort "to proclaim the good news to the poor." There is a famine on earth, "*not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD.*"<sup>124</sup> For this reason the specifically Christian sense of this fourth petition concerns the Bread of Life: The Word of God accepted in faith, the Body of Christ received in the Eucharist.<sup>125</sup>

2836 "*This day*" is also an expression of trust taught us by the Lord,<sup>126</sup> which we would never have presumed to invent. Since it refers above all to his Word & to the Body of his Son, this "*today*" is not only that of our mortal time, but also the "*today*" of God.

If you receive the bread each day, each day is today for you. If Christ is yours today, he rises for you every day. How can this be? "*You are my Son, today I have begotten you.*" Therefore, "*today*" is when Christ rises.<sup>127</sup>

2837 "*Daily*" (*epiousios*) occurs nowhere else in the NT. Taken in a temporal sense, this word is a pedagogical repetition of "*this day*,"<sup>128</sup> to confirm us in trust "*without reservation.*" Taken in the qualitative sense, it signifies what is necessary for life, & more broadly every good thing sufficient for subsistence.<sup>129</sup> Taken literally (*epi-ousios*: "*super-essential*"), it refers directly to the Bread of Life, the Body of Christ, the "*medicine of immortality*," without which we have no life within us.<sup>130</sup> Finally in this connection, its heavenly meaning is evident: "*this day*" is the Day of the Lord, the day of the feast of the kingdom, anticipated in the Eucharist that is already the foretaste of the kingdom to come. For this reason it is fitting for the Eucharistic liturgy to be celebrated each day.

The Eucharist is our daily bread. The power belonging to this divine food makes it a bond of union. Its effect is then understood as unity, so that, gathered into his Body & made members of him, we may become what we receive.... This also is our daily bread: the readings you hear each day in church & the hymns you hear & sing. All these are necessities for our pilgrimage.<sup>131</sup>

The Father in heaven urges us, as children of heaven, to ask for the bread of heaven. [Christ] himself is the bread who, sown in the Virgin, raised up in the flesh, kneaded in the Passion, baked in the oven of the tomb, reserved in churches, brought to altars, furnishes the faithful each day with food from heaven.<sup>132</sup>

## NOTES

113 Mt 5:45.

114 Ps 104:27.

115 Cf. Mt 6:25-34.

116 Cf. 2 Thess 3:6-13.

117 St. Cyprian, *De Dom. orat.* 21 PL 4, 534A.

118 Cf. Lk 16:19-31; Mt 25:31-46.

119 Cf. AA 5.

120 Cf. 2 Cor 8:1-15.

121 Cf. St. Benedict Regula, 20, 48.

122 Attributed to St. Ignatius Loyola, cf. Joseph de Guibert, SJ, *The Jesuits: Their Spiritual Doctrine and Practice*, (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1964), 148, n. 55.

123 Deut 8:3; Mt 4:4.

124 Am 8:11.

125 Cf. Jn 6:26-58.

126 Cf. Mt 6:34; Ex 16:19.

127 St. Ambrose, *De Sacr.* 5, 4, 26: PL 16, 453A; cf. Ps 2:7.

128 Cf. Ex 16:19-21.

129 Cf. 1 Tim 6:8.

130 St. Ignatius Of Antioch, *Ad Eph.* 20, 2: PG 5, 661; Jn 6:53-56.

131 St. Augustine, *Sermo* 57, 7: PL 38, 389.

132 St. Peter Chrysologus, *Sermo* 67 PL 52, 392; Cf. Jn 6:51.

