

The Pater Noster Church of Jerusalem



The Lord's Prayer
by James Tissot

The “Our Father” According to the Gospel of Matthew:

⁵ “And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have their reward. ⁶ But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

⁷ “And in praying do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard for their many words. ⁸ Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. ⁹ Pray then like this:

*Our Father who art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name.*

¹⁰ *Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done,*

On earth as it is in heaven.

¹¹ *Give us this day our daily bread;*

¹² *And forgive us our debts,
As we also have forgiven our debtors;*

¹³ *And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.*

¹⁴ *For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you; ¹⁵ but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. (Matt 6:5-15)*

The “Our Father” According to the Gospel of Luke:

He was praying in a certain place, and when he ceased, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.”² And he said to them, “When you pray, say:

“Father, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come.³ Give us each day our daily bread;⁴ and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive every one who is indebted to us; and lead us not into temptation.”

⁵ And he said to them, “Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves; ⁶for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him’; ⁷and he will answer from within, ‘Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything’? ⁸I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him whatever he needs. ⁹And I tell you, Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ¹⁰For every one who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. ¹¹What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; ¹²or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? ¹³If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!” (Luke 11:1-13)

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Like many of the churches in Israel the *Pater Noster Church* is built upon the ruins of both Byzantine and Crusader churches which were destroyed long ago. The Byzantine Church, which was described by the 4th century pilgrim, *Egeria*, was known as the *Church of Eleona* (of olives in Greek). This church was built over a cave which the apocryphal book of *The Acts of John* mentions was a place where Jesus taught His disciples although it does not mention what exactly He was teaching them at the time. This Church did become associated at some point with Jesus’ Olivet Discourse (Matt 24-25; Mark 13; Luke 21). This may be due to *Egeria*’s description of her time spent at the *Church of Eleona* during Holy Week where she describes the reading of Matthew chapter 24 during the Holy Tuesday liturgy.

In the 7th century Persian invaders destroyed the Byzantine church. Some five to six hundred years later Crusaders built a small chapel on what remained of the Byzantine church’s ruins. This chapel, however, commemorated the *Pater Noster* (Our Father) prayer and not the Olivet Discourse. From this time on this location on the Mount of Olives became associated with Jesus teaching the “Our Father” to His disciples. The Crusaders completed a full size church in 1152, but it was heavily damaged by Saladin’s siege of Jerusalem in 1187. The Crusader church fell into such disrepair that it was abandoned in 1345.

The site remained dormant until the 19th century *Princess Aurelia Bossi de la Tour d’Auvergne* (1809-1889) of France purchased the land and began searching for the “cave” where Jesus was said to have taught His disciples. Princess Aurelia had a cloister built at the site in 1868 where four years later she established a Carmelite convent. A convent church was erected sometime in the 1870’s.

In 1910 the foundation of the Byzantine church were found underneath the cloister. The cloister was moved as an ambitious project was begun to reconstruct the Byzantine church. However, in 1927 the project ran out of funds and no further attempt to reconstruct the original church has been attempted.



Illustration of planned reconstruction of the Church of Eleona.

In 1957, the remains of *Princess Aurelia Bossi de la Tour d’Auvergne* were returned to The *Pater Noster Church* according to her final wishes where they lay now in a crypt at the entrance of the Church.



Picture taken from the site of reconstruction of the Church of Eleona looking towards the Pater Noster Church.



Cave where Jesus taught His disciples. Here pilgrims are praying the "Our Father."



One of 62 plaques in the cloister that record the "Our Father;" each in a different language. This plaque records the prayer in Aramaic and Hebrew.



Nave and sanctuary of the Church of the Pater Noster.



Crypt and tomb of Princess Aurelia Bossi de la Tour d'Auvergne.

Reflections

Jan's Reflection:

As I reflected on the Lord's Prayer I became aware of many of the treasures in this prayer. This is the prayer Jesus gave the disciples when they asked Him how they should pray. I've also become aware of the importance of saying this prayer slowly with intention; there is so much contained in it. And it can be prayed many times during the day. Our Lord also taught the disciples to pray in secret and not to pray in order to be heard by others.

One of the first things that struck me is that we have a Father we can pray to. This is our heavenly Father we can pray to and pour out our hearts to. It's a corporate prayer for us, the Church, too.

We pray and are commanded to hallow His name or glorify His name, by directing all of our thoughts, affections and actions toward Him.

We pray to seek and yearn for His Kingdom and His return while we are doing His will. And the Lord tells us to ask for our daily bread which is both spiritual and material. The word daily stands out here to me that we must ask Him to meet our needs daily.

Jesus tells us to ask for forgiveness as we forgive others. Our forgiving others is key to receiving our own forgiveness. We also pray that we are not led into temptation, but we are freed from it and delivered from evil. We need this each and every day.

We pray the Lord's Prayer at church and individually and we can pray it for others very simply. This prayer shields us from the evil one and makes us aware of His awesome glory. His complete provision for us and His desire to reunite with us. Yes, we pray for all of these things as Jesus taught.

Kevin's Reflection: Importunity, Reciprocity, Isometrics, and a Few Other Thoughts About Praying

⁵ And he said to them, "Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves; ⁶ for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; ⁷ and he will answer from within, 'Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything'? ⁸ I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him whatever he needs. (Luke 11:5-8)

I have to make a confession—I had to look up the definition of the word "importunity" in the dictionary. It means "persistence to the point of annoyance." We see this word being used in verse eight above when Jesus explains that the "friend" gives the man what he is asking for not because of their friendship, but because he has been annoyed to the point of action. In this parable it seems rather apparent that Jesus is suggesting that we in our praying are to become that importune person asking for "loaves of bread" and the Father is the annoyed friend. Is Jesus telling us that in order to get prayers answered we have to annoy the Father until He finally relents and then gives us what we want? Does this demonstrate the "meanness" (as in miserliness) of God? Certainly not, for the scriptures tells us just the opposite, God is so generous we can't even imagine what He has in store for us:

"Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him." (1Cor 2:9)

So when Jesus continues teaching His disciples about prayer He says:

⁹ And I tell you, Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ¹⁰ For every one who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. (Luke 11:9-10)

Given what Jesus told us about the importunity of prayer I think it would be okay, and perhaps even a better translation of the two verses above if they were written as:

⁹ And I tell you, Ask **and keep on asking**, and it will be given you; Seek **and keep on seeking**, and you will find; Knock **and keep on knocking**, and it will be opened to you. ¹⁰ For every one who **is persistent in asking** receives, and he who **is persistent in seeking** finds, and to him who **is persistent in knocking** it will be opened. (Luke 11:9-10, emphasis added to show the KDM version)

So what's the point of making us *keep on asking, seeking, and knocking*? Before we can examine this question we have to keep in mind what Jesus said next:

¹¹ What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; ¹² or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? ¹³ If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" (Luke 11:11-13)

The heavenly Father knows the good gifts we need, and sometimes those gifts might even be the very ones were asking for, although sometimes not. Mostly, the Father wants to give us the Holy Spirit, but to what end?

²⁸ We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the first-born among many brethren. ³⁰ And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified. (Rom 8:28-30)

Although the Father is genuinely concerned that we receive "our daily bread," He is most concerned, and we should be too, that we are "conformed to the image of His Son." Our prayers should always be said in the context of gratitude for having been "called, and justified," and filled with the hope that we will be "glorified" in union with all the members of the Church, the Bride, who is to be holy and without blemish (Eph 5:27)

The Holy Spirit accomplishes this work in the Church through the liturgy and sacraments, but also in our personal prayer life. Remembering that "God works for good with those who love him" we must ask ourselves why does the Father delay in answering our prayer? Why do we need to ask and keep on asking, seek and keep on seeking, knock and keep on knocking? By faith we know that this must be for our good, but the process feels like the Wilderness, and the Dark Night of the Soul. What are we supposed to do?

First, we must persistent, yes even to the point of importunity. But at some point we need to stop, reflect, and ask ourselves, "Is my asking, seeking, and knocking consistent with the 'good' that God is working to do in my life, or in other words, is what I am praying for the will of God for me?" We need to remember the second sentence of the Lord's Prayer:

¹⁰ Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.

This must be the motive of every prayer that we say, that the Father's will be done on earth and that means in our lives too. We may ask for something, like Jesus did in the Garden of Gethsemane, but like our Lord we must qualify our want with the priority of the Father's will over our own:

"Father, if thou art willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done." (Luke 22:42)

Our reflection over the Father's delay in answering our prayers may not be because we our seeking our own will, but because of *how* we pray, and not so much *what* we are praying for. How so? In Matthew's passage on the Lord's Prayer, Jesus' shows His disciples that our prayerful focus must be on God "as the rewarder of those who diligently seek him" (Heb 11:6) and not on any sense that we deserve a response due to personal worthiness. This is what the hypocrite believes, and what they project this haughtiness to all those around them.

⁵ "And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have their reward. ⁶ But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

Pray in secret, go into your heart and shut the door so that you are alone with God who knows what you need before you even ask. This is the prayer of Theophan the Recluse, "...to stand before God with your mind in your heart" humble and naked of all worthiness save for the righteousness that He has clothed us with. We stand like the Publican beating our breast say, "Have mercy on me, Lord, a sinner."

⁹ *He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised others:* ¹⁰ *“Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹ The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ‘God, I thank thee that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. ¹² I fast twice a week, I give tithes of all that I get.’ ¹³ But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’ ¹⁴ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for every one who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted.”* (Luke 18:9-14)

Our reflection regarding God’s delay in answering our prayer may also lead us to discern that we place too much emphasis on the mechanics of prayer. Perhaps if my prayers were more eloquent they would be answered sooner? May be my prayers should be longer? May be shorter? I wonder what would happen if I said them in Latin? We are not arcane mages trying to manipulate some impersonal force in the cosmos to do our bidding, rather we are persons who stand before the divine Persons of the Trinity seeking communion with the *Magnum Mysterium* Who knows what we need even before we ask.

⁷ *“And in praying do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard for their many words. ⁸ Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.* (Matt 6:7-8)

We might also discern that the Father’s delay is a mercy for if we ask for forgiveness and do not give forgiveness, or if we seek financial security but do not give to those in need, or wisdom but do not live according to its precepts then we will be held accountable.

¹⁴ *For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you; ¹⁵ but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.* (Matt 6:14-15)

When we pray we must remember that to whom the Father gives much, much is required so we all need to take into account what we pray for; a delay in God’s answering of our prayers is an opportunity to take stock of what we have done with the gifts He has already given us and what our plans are should He grant our requests (Luke 12:41-48).

Then again, it is possible that what we are praying for is in the will of God, our prayers are spoken with simple humility, we ask for things for which we have shown reciprocity, and we have demonstrated that we have been faithful to the gifts that He has already given us (is there anyone still left this list?). In these cases it is not unreasonable to ask why, even when we persist in our prayers, God still delays? I believe that in situations like this the Father is affording us an opportunity to build up our spiritual muscles by doing “isometric” prayer.

Just what exactly is “isometrics” prayer? Perhaps before we answer that question I should clarify what is meant by “isometric.” The exact meaning for isometric comes from *iso* meaning “same,” and *metric* meaning “measure;” so isometric means “same measure.” We see the term isometric often being used in the context of physical exercise in which muscular contraction against a resistance is done without significant shortening of the muscle fibers with the result of marked increase in muscle tone. To do this one simply needs to press against an immovable object (which according to Newton’s Laws of Motion means that the immovable object pushes back with an equal and opposite force, hence “isometric”). That may be more than you wanted to know, but in the case of isometric prayer the immovable object is God. Why would He do this? There is more than one answer to this question, perhaps there are many, but the first that comes to mind is that God wants to get us in spiritual “shape” for the task, at hand and the battle ahead.

Paul said, *“I can do all things in him [Christ] who strengthens me”* (Phil 4:13).

Now one thing we can be sure of and that’s Paul was in amazing spiritual shape. So how was it that he was able to do all things through Christ who strengthened him? Was it a gift that was spontaneously given him when he was knocked off his ass on the road to Damascus? No, he actually explains how he got to this place of powerful prayer in the two verses that preceded the verse above:

¹¹ *Not that I complain of want; for I have learned, in whatever state I am, to be content. ¹² I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound; in any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and want.* (Phil 4:11-12)

It was a process; He *learned*. Do you suppose that learning came from books or scrolls? I’m sure Paul learned a lot that way, but I suspect that the learning he is talking about in verse 11 and 12 came from experience—the experience of praying about situations in which he struggled in obtaining an answer—“isometric” prayer.

Before we can move a mountain, even if it's only a mountain of our own expectations, we have to move the immovable God (hence isometric prayer). When our faith is strong enough to trust that the Father knows and wants what's best for us, then our prayers include "thy will be done" and the unmovable God moves:

"Amen, I say to you, if you have faith and do not waver, not only will you do what has been done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, 'Be lifted up and thrown into the sea,' it will be done. ²² Whatever you ask for in prayer with faith, you will receive." (Matt 21:21-22)

Isometric prayer makes us strong enough to acknowledge our weakness and the sufficiency of His grace and power in our lives. Saint Paul experienced this:

⁷ And to keep me from being too elated by the abundance of revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, to harass me, to keep me from being too elated. ⁸ Three times I besought the Lord about this, that it should leave me; ⁹ but he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." I will all the more gladly boast of my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰ For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities; for when I am weak, then I am strong. (2Cor 12:7-10)

These times of isometric prayer may be times of the "wilderness" for us when the Holy Spirit tests us and even allows the devil to tempt us. We discussed this topic in the Photo-Journal entry about Jesus being driving into the wilderness:

And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan, and was led by the Spirit ² for forty days in the wilderness, tempted by the devil. (Luke 4:1)

You'll remember that all of this occurred before Jesus began His public ministry; I compared it to a Holy Spirit boot camp preparing Jesus for the trials that were ahead of Him. What did He do during this time? He fasted and prayed, and I suspect a good deal of that prayer was isometric; He needed to be in shape for the battle of the ages. So do we! We need to remember that our warfare is not against flesh and blood....

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. ¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹² For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore take the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. ¹⁴ Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵ and having shod your feet with the equipment of the gospel of peace; ¹⁶ above all taking the shield of faith, with which you can quench all the flaming darts of the evil one. ¹⁷ And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. ¹⁸ Pray at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, (Eph 6:10-18)

We must never underestimate the power of the devil, nor should we assume that God will do all the heavy lifting for us. Consider the apostles who tried, but failed to cast a demon out of a man.

¹⁹ Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast him out?" ²⁰ Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief. For truly I say to you, if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. And nothing will be impossible for you. ²¹ But this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting." (Matt 17:19-21)

In all of this, we discern that God is not only allowing us to participate with Him through prayer in His kingdom and will being done on earth as it is in heaven, but through our prayer He is also conforming us to the image of His Son. We, His Bride, will be with Him in the final battle to defeat Satan and his demonic horde:

¹⁴ It was of these also that Enoch in the seventh generation from Adam prophesied, saying, "Behold, the Lord came with his holy myriads, ¹⁵ to execute judgment on all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their deeds of ungodliness which they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." (Jude 1:14-15)

¹¹ Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! He who sat upon it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. ¹² His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems; and he has a name inscribed which no one knows but himself. ¹³ He is clad in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. ¹⁴ And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, followed him on white horses. ¹⁵ From his mouth issues a sharp sword with which to smite the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron; he will tread the wine press of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. ¹⁶ On his robe and on his thigh he has a name inscribed, King of kings and Lord of lords. (Rev 19:11-16)

Are we ready to fight the Final Battle with our Faithful and True who leads us into this conflict? We are being made ready every time we pray unrelentingly with importunity. God has great plans for us!

*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;
And forgive us our debts,
As we also have forgiven our debtors;
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.*



**The Lord's Prayer
From an illuminated manuscript by
Sister Olive Francis Rhineland.**

A Catechism in a Prayer

⁹*Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.*

Our Father...

When we pray, “Our Father,” we know we are not praying to an impersonal universal life force. God is a Person, and this Person created us in His image meaning we are persons also and as such we can be, and should be, in relationship with Him as evidence by “our.” “Our” means “belonging to or is association with.” We are in “association,” a relationship, with God. We “belong” to God, not as slaves, but as children for He is our parent, our Creator. And our Creator Parent is not generic because Jesus identifies Him as “Our Father.”

Is there any question as to why Modernism is at war with men, especially “fathers?” The underlying assumption of Modernism is atheism, and modernists are particularly at odds with God as Father. Good fathers are the lawgivers, the setters of red lines, and the establishers of expectations. At times they are judge and executioners of justice. A good father knows what his children need even before they ask. They also know what is not good for their children and are not afraid to say, “No.” The scripture does not command us to necessarily love our fathers, only that we respect them. Is it any wonder that Modernism rejects fatherhood for the modernist refuses the law, and its red lines and expectations, along with objective understandings of “good” and “evil.” The Modernist’s motto is “Do what thy wilt,” not “Thy will be done.” The faith of the modernist is the faith of the fatherless.

We, as Christians, are not fatherless for we are led by the Spirit of God and the Spirit Himself bears witness within us that we are His Children:

¹⁴ For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. ¹⁵ For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of sonship. When we cry, “Abba! Father!” ¹⁶ it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. (Rom 8:14-17)

Nor are we motherless. We have a mother, the *Theotokos*, the mother of God, Jesus, the Son of the Father. Jesus gave us His mother on the cross when He said,

²⁶ *When Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing near, he said to his mother, “Woman, behold, your son!”* ²⁷ *Then he said to the disciple, “Behold, your mother!” And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.* (John 19:26-27)

Mary is not a goddess, she is one of us, human and fallen; redeemed and glorified through the salvific work of her Son and her Lord, Jesus. She is, however, an extraordinary human, one of a kind, chosen from the beginning to be “the woman” whose seed would crush humanity’s enemy under His heel (Gen 3) and “the woman clothed with the sun,” the Tabernacle of the Bridegroom. She is mother of the Bridegroom and the mother of the Bride, the Church.

We are a Family, an expanded Holy Family, with a Father, a Mother, and a Son who is not ashamed to call us brothers and sisters:

In bringing many sons and daughters to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through what he suffered. ¹¹ *Both the one who makes people holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters.* (Heb 2:10-11; NIV)

...Who art in Heaven...

“Our Father who art in heaven...” *who alone has immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has ever seen or can see* (1Tim 6:16), *except him [Jesus Christ] who is from God; he has seen the Father* (John 6:46).

The religions of the East, Hinduism and Buddhism, believe in an impersonal divine whereby the divine cycles through periods of perfect unity of the One (Brahman or Nirvana) and imperfect plurality of the cosmos and all that constitutes it. The divine is immanent, present, within cosmos, and the world itself is made of god stuff (essence)—hence, all is divine.

Judeo-Christianity, through its Old and New Testaments, has given the world an entirely new vision of God that is, of a Personal Creator, the wholly Other; unapproachable and never seen by human eye. The cosmos and all its creatures are not God nor made of God’s essence, rather God created all that is *ex nihilo*, that is “from nothing.” Matter, space and time were created by a Word from the Word who is the Son of the Father. The cosmos exists in *chronos*, the “arrow of time” having a beginning and an end, but God exist in *kairos*, the “eternal moment” where the past, present, and future of the cosmos as well as human history are “present” before Him. God is omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent, but not in the sense of immanence, He remains Transcendently above the created realm.

⁴ *But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law,* ⁵ *to ransom those under the law, so that we might receive adoption.* ⁶ *As proof that you are children, God sent the spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying out, “Abba, Father!”* ⁷ *So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.* (Gal 4:4-7)

By bridging the gulf of the transcendent heavens and the immanent world through His incarnation this Son manifested that which was unknowable to us, as tangible and knowable.

⁸ *Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and we shall be satisfied.”* ⁹ *Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and yet you do not know me, Philip? He who has seen me has seen the Father; how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?”* ¹⁰ *Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority; but the Father who dwells in me does his works.* ¹¹ *Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me; or else believe me for the sake of the works themselves.*

¹² *“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I go to the Father.* ¹³ *Whatever you ask in my name, I will do it, that the Father may be glorified in the Son;* ¹⁴ *if you ask anything in my name, I will do it.* (John 14:8-14)

Hence, we pray “Our Father who art in heaven...” to our Father who is as close to us as the Spirit of Christ who is within us:

¹⁷ *And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near;* ¹⁸ *for through him [Christ] we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.* (Eph 2:17-18)

...hallowed be Thy name.

"A rose by any other name would smell as sweet." ~ William Shakespeare

Nominalism (the idea that words or "names" are only conventions without any corresponding reality) may rule the day in modern times, but it has not and does not rule the understanding of "names" for either Jews, or Christians. In ancient times, "names" were not mere convention; they participated in the "reality" of the thing they represented. A person did not give his name carelessly to a stranger. There is power in a name, power for good and for evil. To reveal one's name was to create a covenant of trust between parties. This was the reason why Moses asked God to reveal His name so that he could then share it with the children of Israel who were in bondage in Egypt. Moses knew that the "people of Israel" would not follow him to freedom unless they were confident that the "God of their fathers" would be with them. If God demonstrated that He would trust His people with His name, then they in turn would trust Him.

¹¹ *But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt?"* ¹² *He said, "But I will be with you; and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought forth the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God upon this mountain."*

¹³ *Then Moses said to God, "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?"* ¹⁴ *God said to Moses, "I am who I am."* *And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel, 'I am has sent me to you.'"* ¹⁵ *God also said to Moses, "Say this to the people of Israel, 'The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you': this is my name for ever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations. (Exo 3:11-15)*

The *name* which is above all other names, "I am," is what God gave to Moses to tell the people of Israel. I am reminded of what Winston Churchill said of Russia, "a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma," a name that is appropriate for the *Magnum Mysterium*. It is of course a great offense to use the name of the Lord in vain as the fourth commandment warns:

"You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain." (Exo 20:7)

"I am," a name so majestic, so powerful that a pious Jew to this day will not even utter it in prayer, but instead will say, *Baruch Hashem Adonai*, "Blessed be the Name of the Lord." Is it any wonder that the Jews tried to stone Jesus when He said,

⁵⁴ *Jesus answered, "If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing; it is my Father who glorifies me, of whom you say that he is your God."* ⁵⁵ *But you have not known him; I know him. If I said, I do not know him, I should be a liar like you; but I do know him and I keep his word.* ⁵⁶ *Your father Abraham rejoiced that he was to see my day; he saw it and was glad."* ⁵⁷ *The Jews then said to him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?"* ⁵⁸ *Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am."* (John 8:54-58, emphasis added)

Jesus not only spoke the unspeakable, but also identified with the One Who spoke it from the Burning Bush. As the eternally begotten Son of the Father, the Logos, and second Person of the Trinity He shares in the divine *I am* with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Jesus also has a "human" name, given to His mother by an angel from the Father:

²⁸ *And he came to her and said, "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you!"* ²⁹ *But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and considered in her mind what sort of greeting this might be.* ³⁰ *And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God."* ³¹ *And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus."* (Luke 1:28-31, emphasis added).

Jesus' name in Hebrew, as He would have been called, is *Yeshua*, which means "God saves," or "God is our salvation." Jesus' name is also powerful.

⁹ *Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name,* ¹⁰ *that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,* ¹¹ *and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Phil 2:9-11, emphasis added)*

When I was a boy growing up as a Catholic I was taught by the nuns at my elementary school and by my parents that whenever I said the name of Jesus, I should bow my head slightly in reverence. What a good thing to do to honor the

name of Jesus! I wish I had faithfully maintained this habit from childhood. Too many times I have used God's name in vain, and too many times have I slighted the name of my savior and Lord, Jesus Christ, as if it were a mere adjective to be used in an exclamation. Lord, may I only "hallow" your name all the days of my life.

¹⁰ *Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.*

Thy kingdom come...

The phrase "Thy kingdom come..." is the first intercessory prayer in the *Pater Noster*. This suggests a couple of things. First, it suggests that the Father's kingdom has yet to be established on earth, and second, because it is the first petition should take priority in our prayers also. Are we ready to really pray "Thy Kingdom Come" and mean it? Here's the thing though, the Father's kingdom expands until it takes over every other kingdom:

¹⁸ *He said therefore, "What is the kingdom of God like? And to what shall I compare it? ¹⁹ It is like a grain of mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his garden; and it grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air made nests in its branches."* ²⁰ *And again he said, "To what shall I compare the kingdom of God? ²¹ It is like leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till it was all leavened."* (Luke 13:18-21)

And of course that's how it all begins. We are baptized and the Holy Spirit plants that tiny little mustard seed of faith in our hearts and it begins to grow until it starts pushing against that space and time of our own kingdom, then we are not so sure about "Thy kingdom come" anymore. We pray, "Thy kingdom come" all the time, but do we really understand what we are asking for? "Thy kingdom come" is an invitation for the Father's kingdom to take over our kingdoms for which we claim sovereignty. Are we willing to cast our crowns down before the throne of God?

⁹ *Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to the one who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, ¹⁰ the twenty-four elders fall down before the one who sits on the throne and worship him, who lives forever and ever. They throw down their crowns before the throne, exclaiming:*

¹¹ *"Worthy are you, Lord our God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things; because of your will they came to be and were created."* (Rev 4:9-11)

Speaking for myself—this is hard thing to pray! In fact, one has to do violence to the self with its desires and willfulness. The Father will not force His kingdom upon us (at least not for now); we have to want it with an intensity that cries out to Him, "Thy kingdom come in my life!"

...kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and men of violence take it by force. (Matt 11:12)

As difficult as this is to do we must remember that we are not doing this alone. Remember from our discussion of the first verse of the Lord's Prayer, we have a family starting with the Father, and a Mother (Mary), and a Son (Jesus) who is our brother. We also must remember, that our Lord has brought many sons and daughters to glory (Heb 2:10) which is the Church, both Triumphant and Militant. Even when we are seemingly alone, we are not for our Family is with us. When we pray, "Thy Kingdom Come," let us ask them to pray this prayer with us and for us; to intercede to the Father to give us the grace to "throw down our crowns before His throne."

...thy will be done...

Will is an amazing thing. I'm talking about Free Will, that is, a gift from our Creator, a mark from the divine that He has left on each of His children. In discussions over the years with my fellow colleagues in the sciences some of them have expressed surprise, and even consternation that I would still be a "believer" in the face of "incontrovertible" evidence of materialistic evolution. My defense of my faith would vary depending upon whom I was speaking to, but sometimes I might simply ask them, "Explain to me the evolution of free will." Generally they would come up with vague notions of "complex system" or use impressive phraseology such as "autopoietic emergence," but then I would remind them that a universe governed by chance and necessity does not leave room for molecules or neural networks to function outside of these laws to produce thoughts and actions that are truly and uniquely our own and for which we can be held responsible. Free will, I argued, was a gift from the Transcendent God and therefore can operate, when functioning correctly, above the physical constraints of chance and necessity.

Anyway, these were fun discussions, and sometimes my colleagues would be left wondering, while others would rather reject that there is any free will at all so as to prevent “a divine foot in the door.”

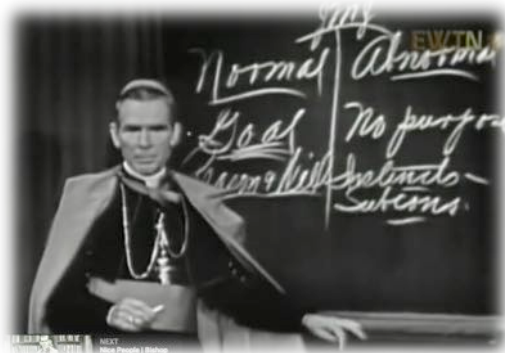
When we pray “Thy will be done...” we are aligning our wills with the will of the Father. In doing so we are following the lead of our Lord and Savior, Jesus, who said:

³¹ *Meanwhile the disciples besought him, saying, “Rabbi, eat.”* ³² *But he said to them, “I have food to eat of which you do not know.”* ³³ *So the disciples said to one another, “Has any one brought him food?”* ³⁴ *Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of him who sent me, and to accomplish his work. (John 4:31-34)*

and...

⁴¹ *And he withdrew from them about a stone’s throw, and knelt down and prayed,* ⁴² *“Father, if thou art willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.” (Luke 22:41-42)*

If we are going to do this we should understand the purpose of “will,” what it is, and how it works. First, our will is one of those special attributes that comprises the “image” of God in man. Sometimes it is referred to as *free* will meaning that our paths in life are not predetermined, but through the exercise of our freedom (another gift from our Creator) we can choose the course of our life’s decisions. This being said it must be noted that this freedom is greatly attenuated because of the consequence of the *Fall*. As a consequence of this Fall our tendency is to direct our will towards the needs and desires of the self, rather than that of our neighbor and even more importantly towards the destiny that the Father has ordained for us. We become, as Saint Paul describes, “slaves of sin.” But Catholics, Orthodox, and some Protestants believe that even with the Fall our wills are not completely overcome or that they are incapable of turning towards God; there is, as Saint August describes, that aching in our hearts that can, even in the midst of our *fallenness*, turn our will beyond ourselves in search for our Creator: “*Our hearts are restless, until they can find rest in you.*” This action of “finding” involves will, but it also involves other gifts that our Creator has bestowed upon, along with the grace He won for us on the cross.



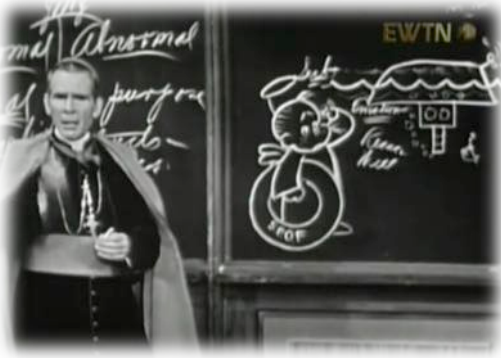
Will does not function alone, but is informed through Reason and Faith. Reason gives the will access to knowledge and the Natural Law while Faith offers the will the wisdom of the Revealed Law of the Holy Scripture and Tradition. Recently, I was watching an old video by Bishop Fulton Sheen and I thought we might benefit from a summary of his points in this reflection on “thy will be done.” The video is entitled, How to Psychoanalyze Yourself, and you can find it on YouTube using the following link: (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k3rhPa7h4ro>). I have summarized it below, most of it I have paraphrased, but when I write his words just as he spoke them I have put them in quotes.

Bishop Sheen begins his lesson with the question, “What is the difference between a normal and an abnormal person?” He answers by saying that the normal person has a goal, while the abnormal person has no goal, no purpose to his life. If you find a gadget in your house you immediately ask, “What’s it for?” This is also true of man for we too have a purpose. The ultimate purpose of man is to be happy. Happiness consists of three elements: (1) that we have an enduring life, (2) we want the truth, and (3) we want love. Ultimately, we want God, for this is the very definition of God, the Way, the Truth, and the Life. To seek happiness is to seek God.

The normal person is governed by Reason and Will; the abnormal person is governed by instinct, impulses, and the subconscious. A reasonable human being is very much like a ship. The pilot has a destination, a port, and he directs himself with the stars. The pilot has reason, he is interested in truth; he has a will. When he sees a certain destination or goal then he wills to do it. The normal person is not controlled by his emotions or the subconscious mind although they may affect him in a limited way.



The abnormal man is like a upside down ship where his reason and the will are submerged and the subconscious and its emotions become primary in his thinking and decision making. He is determined to be what he is because of something buried in the depths of the mind, perhaps its part of his heritage or the collective subconscious of the human race. What role does reason play? Reason is there to justify, to find excuses for the way one acts. The will is



just the arena where the conflict takes place. The abnormal man is not concerned about objective things, a star, a post; the abnormal man is only interested in finding out his own depths. When he hears a fine piece of music, he is not interested in the music itself, but only on how it makes him feel. The objective world and reason are not important to the abnormal. They are not interested in listening to the reasons, the evidence, for a person's belief in God, rather they want to find the odd reason why they believe in God.

The third attribute of the normal person is that he believes in repressing the excesses of the lower instincts in order to express his reason and his will and its potential for divine grace. Repression in the abnormal is not of the lower instinct, but the repression of the

reason and the will in order to give an outlet for the lower instincts. The normal person represses out of love for that which is nobler.

“There are certain conflicts that are inevitable in human nature simply because we are composed of body and soul, matter and spirit and therefore there is always a struggle. There is a cross in the very center of human life. No man is ever really happy on the inside until he is at war with himself. At war with that which is base; that would destroy his Godward tendencies. The Lord said I came not to bring peace, but the sword. Not the sword that points outward to destroy the neighbor, but the sword that thrust inward in order to destroy one's egotism, and one's lust, and avarice, and all the things that destroy peace of mind. The greatest cross in the world is to be without a cross. And love makes peace.”



[End of video]

Reason, will, and the grace that comes by faith, these are the tools by which we can pray, “Thy will be done.” And we must not forget “repression” of our egotistical and baser instincts which is not a very popular thing to do in our culture these days. How much do we want the will of the Father done in our lives? Do we want it enough to fall on the sword of the Word of God?

¹² For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. ¹³ And before him no creature is hidden, but all are open and laid bare to the eyes of him with whom we have to do. (Heb 4:12-13)

I wish I could do it once and be done with it, but this is the “cross in the very center of human life,” our struggle against the flesh. Yet, the Venerable Bishop Fulton Sheen said something very extraordinary about this cross: “No man is ever really happy on the inside until he is at war with himself.” This is the war between the spirit and the flesh of a man that Paul describes:

²¹ So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. ²² For I delight in the law of God, in my inmost self, ²³ but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin which dwells in my members. ²⁴ Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? (Rom 7:21-24)

What happiness can be found in this? Paul tells us in the next verse:

²⁵ Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I of myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin. (Rom 7:25)

This is the happiness of grace in the knowing Jesus Christ. There is happiness to be found in knowing that I am still in this war with myself, and that I have at the least not yet surrendered; that I am still fighting the good fight.

¹² Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. ¹³ Brethren, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but one thing I do, forgetting what

lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵ Let those of us who are mature be thus minded; and if in anything you are otherwise minded, God will reveal that also to you. ¹⁶ Only let us hold true to what we have attained. (Phil 3:12-16)

So let us be happy while straining forward while we pray, “Thy will be done, recognizing that while our strength is not sufficient, His is.

...On earth as it is in heaven.

Thy kingdom come, they will be done, *on earth as it is in heaven*. The Kingdom of God is manifested in heaven because the Father’s will is done in heaven. The Kingdom of God is manifested in our lives to the extent that we do the Father’s will.

*“...The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: ²¹ Neither shall they say: Behold here, or behold there. For lo, the kingdom of God is **within** you. (Luke 17:20-21; Douay-Rheims)*

We do His will not in isolation, but with other believers, the Church. Others translations of the same scripture above demonstrates this:

*“The coming of the kingdom of God cannot be observed, ²¹ and no one will announce, ‘Look, here it is,’ or, ‘There it is.’ For behold, the kingdom of God is **among** you.” (Luke 17:20-21; NABRE)*

To the extent that every member of the Body of Christ does the will of the Father, to that extent the Kingdom of God is manifested on earth through the Church militant.

So how are we doing? Is the Kingdom of the Father being manifest on earth as it is in heaven? Not even close. We’re not even manifesting the kingdom in our Churches let alone to the world. I’m I being too harsh? I don’t think so. It is He who sets the standard by which we must judge ourselves and the Church and He makes it very clear what the Father’s expectation are for His Son’s Bride:

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, ²⁶ that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷ that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. (Eph 5:25-27)

Some might also protest that such exacting expectations will only be met in their eschatological fulfillment, that is, the so-called “end of the age.” That may indeed be true, but are not all of us “wise” virgins supposed to be on the look out for the return of the Bridegroom:

“Then the kingdom of heaven shall be compared to ten maidens who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. ² Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. ³ For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them; ⁴ but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. ⁵ As the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. ⁶ But at midnight there was a cry, ‘Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ ⁷ Then all those maidens rose and trimmed their lamps. ⁸ And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ ⁹ But the wise replied, ‘Perhaps there will not be enough for us and for you; go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.’ ¹⁰ And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast; and the door was shut. ¹¹ Afterward the other maidens came also, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open to us.’ ¹² But he replied, ‘Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.’ ¹³ Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour. (Matt 25:1-13)

Five of the virgins didn’t make it into the wedding feast. Fifty percent would have been a fail in any one of the classes I taught. And while I may hope that God “grades on the curve” none of us should be so presumptuous to assume that He will. So what should we do? How about praying the “Our Father” like we really mean it!

“Thy kingdom come, they will be done...” If we really meant what we prayed we would be looking forward to the establishment of the Kingdom of God not just sometime in the “sweet by-and-by,” or when that sweet chariot swings low enough to carry us home, no we would be expecting “on earth as it is in heaven” and the sooner the better! This desire for the Lord’s return should put everything in perspective for us and set us, and the Church, on the path of right priorities:

² *Beloved, we are God's children now; it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when **he appears** we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.* ³ *And every one who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.* (1John 3:2-3; emphasis added)

If His appearing is our hope, we will purify ourselves of every desire that is contrary to the will of the Father. If we are not eagerly awaiting His return and His Kingdom we need to ask ourselves whether or not we are placing our “kingdoms” and our “crowns” before His. We need to trust that if we put His Kingdom ahead of our own He will look out for us.

³¹ *So do not worry and say, 'What are we to eat?' or 'What are we to drink?' or 'What are we to wear?'* ³² *All these things the pagans seek. Your heavenly Father knows that you need them all.* ³³ *But seek first the kingdom [of God] and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides.* (Matt 6:31-33)

This is the right order of our lives, His kingdom and His righteous first and then everything else will fall into place. In fact, the Lord's Prayer demonstrates this order.

- *Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.* → We begin by worshipping the Father.
- *Thy kingdom come, they will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.* → We set the Father's will and kingdom ahead of our own.

Then our needs will be taken care of:

Give us this day our daily bread;

In this past year (2018) a study was published entitled, “Religion as an Exchange System: The Interchangeability of God and Government in a Provider Role,” which posted the following theory:

“If people can get what they need from the government (be it health care, education or welfare) they're less likely to turn to a divine power for help, according to the theory.”

Another words, if people can get their “daily bread” from the state why bother asking it from God? An interesting idea and it may help to explain the precipitous decline of Christianity in the West. In order for this theory to work, however, there had to be two necessary antecedents in place before people would go along with this idea either consciously or unconsciously.

The first of these antecedents is the assumption that “scientific materialism” could explain the natural world. The principle doctrine of scientific materialism is Evolutionary Theory with its explanation that life on earth, including human life, could be accounted for through natural law and chance alone; another words it proposed a “creation without a Creator.” To be sure, many Christian believers still made room for a Creator's involvement through the use of varying theories such as Creationism and Intelligent Design, but on the whole most believers just maintain a vague notion of these things which did not help them to address the corollary ideas of Evolution that had led to utter wreckage of our Judeo-Christian tradition in the West. These corollary ideas have been dubbed the “Four Horsemen of the Philosophical Apocalypse: Skepticism, Relativism, Anti-Intellectualism, Scientific Materialism.” It is beyond the scope of this Photo-Journal entry to discuss this in detail except for me to say that these ideas have infiltrated every domain of human activity including the Church itself. This leads to the second antecedent:

The Church, to a great extent, has simply rolled-over on addressing the above stated ideas and has not offered a full-throated defense of the Christian worldview either to the world or to her flocks. This may be due to any of a number of reasons, but the results are the same, the Body of Christ has been inculcated by secular assumptions to the extent that many have chosen to exchange God for the State and its secular culture. One of the pernicious consequences of this is that too many in the hierarchy have come to believe that it is no longer possible for the Church to win back the world through Scripture and Tradition and thus have chosen the path of “accommodation” and “accompaniment.” This is a defeatist attitude, an insult to the power of the Gospel, and an abandonment of the belief that the deepest yearnings of the human heart are for the Sacred, not the Profane. It is here that the Church is rich beyond all other entities; no institution or state possesses such a rich treasury of the sacred than the Church, and it is this “bread” that the Father wishes to give us daily through His Church.

The Bread that the Father has given “for the life of the world” (John 6:51) is His Son:

¹⁶ For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. (John 3:16-17)

Jesus Christ accomplished the will of the Father through His life, death, and resurrection and He has left His abiding presence with us through His Word, Eucharist, and Spirit.

It is the spirit that gives life, the flesh is of no avail; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. (John 6:63)

⁴⁸ I am the bread of life. ⁴⁹ Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. ⁵⁰ This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that a man may eat of it and not die. ⁵¹ I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he will live for ever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh.” (John 6:48-51)

²⁵ “These things I have spoken to you, while I am still with you. ²⁶ But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. ²⁷ Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. (John 14:25-27)

Let us, therefore, not put our faith in human institutions, but in the daily Bread that the Father has given to us, His Son, through the Church. It is time to fight the good fight of faith and take back the ground that the Church has lost. We must remind our brethren and the world that we are called to a far greater destiny than the material needs that the state may provide; we are body, soul, *and* spirit destined to live eternally with God and the saints in His kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.

...and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

*All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have turned every one to his own way....* (Isa 53:6)

We have turned away from our Father, and have chosen our way over His. This is our trespass, not some “one off” event; it is built into our nature, the ancestral Original Sin of our “own way.” I can go to the sacrament of Reconciliation and confess my sins to the priest, and I should and do, but I will be back; it is my way. I am a sinner.

¹³ *But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’* (Luke 18:13)

This is the most recited prayer in the Orthodox faith:

“Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.” Some will say this prayer hundreds, if not, thousands of times a day. I say it frequently, but not enough.

Unless we acknowledge that this is our state before the Father we cannot hope to realize the salvific benefits of the verses that precede and follow verse six of Isaiah chapter 53:

*Surely he has borne our griefs
and carried our sorrows;
yet we esteemed him stricken,
smitten by God, and afflicted.
But he was wounded for our transgressions,
he was bruised for our iniquities;
upon him was the chastisement that made us whole,
and with his stripes we are healed.
All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have turned every one to his own way;
and the Lord has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.* (Isa 53:4-6)

Jesus, Himself sinless, was teaching us, sinners, how to pray; therefore He taught us to ask His Father for forgiveness for our trespasses. We take the position of the tax collector, humble, standing afar off, unworthy of lifting our eyes to

heaven, “God be merciful to me a sinner.” And the Father does forgive us when we acknowledge the salvific work of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

God forbid that it would be said of me, as Frank Sinatra was so proud to sing, “I did it my way.” Lord, give me the grace to do it Your way and the confidence to know that you are helping me to will Your will:

...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; ¹³for God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. (Phil 2:12-13)

And while You are at it, give me the grace to recognize that those who trespass against me are likewise struggling against that same Original Sin of doing it their way also. I am all too aware that the measure I measure with will be measured back to me.

¹*“Stop judging, that you may not be judged. ²For as you judge, so will you be judged, and the measure with which you measure will be measured out to you. (Matt 7:1-2)*

I would like to take just a moment to comment on one of the most taken out of context verses of Scripture, that is, *Stop judging, that you may not be judged*. This is not a prohibition from recognizing sin or error in others for there are many scriptures to exhort to correct others and of the consequence if we do not.

If I say to the wicked, ‘You shall surely die,’ and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, in order to save his life, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand. (Ezek 3:18)

But in judging we must do so with great care:

“Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment.” (John 7:24)

Right judgment requires three things, (1) a prior disposition of humility that recognizes our own faults and inclination towards sin, (2) that our judgment be motivated by love, informed by knowledge, and exercised with perception and discernment, so that (3) all may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ. (Phil 1:9-10)

We must never forget our mission which was given to us by Jesus before His ascension.

¹⁸*And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.” (Matt 28:18-20)*

We are to make disciples of all nations, and in doing so we are building His Church, His Bride. This is why we judge so that “all may be pure and blameless” because His Bride is pure and blameless (Eph 5:27) as she awaits the return of her Bridegroom on the Day of Christ.

And lead us not into temptation, and deliver us from evil.

This, the 6th petition in the Lord’s prayer, has come under some scrutiny lately when Pope Francis suggested that “lead us into temptation” was not a good translation:

“I am the one who falls. It’s not him pushing me into temptation to then see how I have fallen,” he said. “A father doesn’t do that, a father helps you to get up immediately. It’s Satan who leads us into temptation, that’s his department.” (from: “Pope Francis calls for Lord’s Prayer translation to be changed”, Catholic Herald, Dec. 8, 2017)

Although I’m pretty sure that I understand what the Pope is talking about, I might still quibble about his comment a bit. Perhaps it’s not the translation that is at fault, but rather that the word “temptation,” as it is used in the Scripture, can have several different meanings. First, I am reminded about what I wrote in my reflection about Jesus having been led into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit:

And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan, and was led by the Spirit ²for forty days in the wilderness, tempted by the devil. (Luke 4:1-2)

Here it seems very much like God (the Holy Spirit) led Jesus into temptation and I discussed in my reflection why I believe this was done. In short, I compared this time in the wilderness as a spiritual boot camp for Jesus before He

began His public ministry. Did the Father abandon Jesus in the wilderness? Does He abandon us in our wildernesses? Certainly not for the Spirit that led Him was no doubt present with Him through His temptations and He is with us. I believe that this is also reflected in the old Council of Trent discussion on the Our Father which I have excerpted below and will allow it to speak for itself without further comment on my part except to say that it is perhaps appropriate to end this reflection which I entitled, A Catechism in a Prayer, with a quote from a Catechism.

from the *Catechism of the Council of Trent*

“Temptation has a good purpose, when someone’s worth is tried, in order that when it has been tested and proved he may be rewarded and honoured, his example proposed to others for imitation, and all may be incited thereby to the praises of God. This is the only kind of tempting that can be found in God. Of it there is an example in Deuteronomy: The Lord your God tries you, that it may appear whether you love him or not.

“In this manner God is also said to tempt His own, when He visits them with want, disease and other sorts of calamities. This He does to try their patience, and to make them an example of Christian virtue....Thus also is it written of Tobias: Because thou wast acceptable to God, it was necessary that temptation should prove thee.

“... we are said to be led into temptation by him who, although he himself does not tempt us nor cooperate in tempting us, yet is said to tempt because he does not prevent us from being tempted or from being overcome by temptations when he is able to prevent these things. In this manner God, indeed, suffers the good and the pious to be tempted, but does not leave them unsupported by His grace. Sometimes, however, we fall, being left to ourselves by the just and secret judgment of God, in punishment of our sins.

“God is also said to lead us into temptation when we abuse, to our destruction, His blessings, which He has given us as a means of salvation; when, like the prodigal son, we squander our Father’s substance, living riotously and yielding to our evil desires. In such a case we can say what the Apostle has said of the law: The commandment that was ordained to life, the same was found to be unto death to me.

“But we ought carefully to notice a certain usage of Sacred Scripture, which sometimes denotes the permission of God in words which, if taken literally, would imply a positive act on the part of God. Thus in Exodus we read: I will harden the heart of Pharaoh; and in Isaiah: Blind the heart of this people; and the Apostle to the Romans writes: God delivered them up to shameful affections, and to a reprobate sense. In these and other similar passages we are to understand, not at all any positive act on the part of God, but His permission only.

“These observations having been premised, it will not be difficult to understand the object for which we pray in this Petition.

“We do not ask to be totally exempt from temptation, for human life is one continued temptation. This, however, is useful and advantageous to man. Temptation teaches us to know ourselves, that is, our own weakness, and to humble ourselves under the powerful hand of God; and by fighting manfully, we expect to receive a neverfading crown of glory.... Blessed is the man, says St. James, that endureth temptation; for when he hath been proved, he shall receive the crown of life, which God hath promised to them that love him. If we are sometimes hard pressed by the temptation of the enemy, it will also cheer us to reflect, that we have a high priest to help us, who can have compassion on our infirmities, having been tempted himself in all things.

“What, then, do we pray for in this Petition? We pray that the divine assistance may not forsake us, lest having been deceived, or worsted, we should yield to temptation; and that the grace of God may be at hand to succour us when our strength fails, to refresh and invigorate us in our trials.

“We should, therefore, implore the divine assistance, in general, against all temptations, and especially when assailed by any particular temptation. This we find to have been the conduct of David, under almost every species of temptation. Against lying, he prays in these words: Take not thou the word of truth utterly out of my mouth; against covetousness: Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness; and against the vanities of this life and the allurements of concupiscence, he prays thus: Turn away my eyes, that they may not behold vanity.

“We pray, therefore, that we yield not to evil desires, and be not wearied in enduring temptation; that we deviate not from the way of the Lord; that in adversity, as in prosperity, we preserve equanimity and fortitude; and that God may never deprive us of His protection. Finally, we pray that God may crush Satan beneath our feet.”

Final Comment: The *Pater Noster*, is the prayer of the Bride; a petition to the Father of the Bridegroom to send His Son so that the Wedding Feast of the Bride and Lamb might commence. This is the manifestation of the Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. She knows that this can only happen when her will is conformed to the will of the Bridegroom which is in perfect unity with the Father and therefore she prays, *They will be done* in the life of the Church and in every member of the Body of Christ. Like the woman from the city who was a sinner we sit at our Lord’s feet, weeping, washing His feet with our tears for we have played the harlot seeking our own will and desires, and not our Espoused. We are weak, Father, lead us not into temptation; deliver us from evil so that through the sacrifice of your Son we may be presented to Him pure and without blemish.