

and if that was not sufficient, he and his wife and his children could be sold as slaves. The servant, knowing this, fell on his knees, and begged his master to be patient with him, and to give him time and he would pay all. Then his master was moved to, pity, granted not only what he asked, but freed him from the debt altogether. Afterwards when this servant, who had just been forgiven the large sum, was going out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a very small sum of money, and taking hold of him by the throat, demanded payment.

Now, this poor servant, having nothing to give just then, implored his assailant to be patient with him and he would pay all. But the hard-hearted servant—though he himself had a little while before asked and obtained the very same favor from his own master—would not listen to the request or wait longer, but went and had his fellow-servant cast into prison till he should pay the debt. The other servants, seeing how unforgiving this man was who had himself been forgiven, went and told all to their master, and he, being angry at such conduct, had the unforgiving servant brought back and cast into prison.

**"And lead us not into temptation."** "Temptation" means a trial to see whether we will do a thing or not. Here it means a trial made by some person or thing—the devil, the world, or our own flesh—to see whether we will sin or not. God does not exactly lead us into temptation; but He allows us to fall into it. He allows others to tempt us. We can overcome any temptation to sin by the help or grace that God gives us. Therefore we ask in this petition that God will always give us the grace to overcome the temptation, and that we may not consent to it. A temptation is not a sin. It becomes sin only when we are overcome by it. When we are tempted we are like

soldiers fighting a battle: if their enemy conquers the soldiers, they are disgraced; but if they conquer their enemy, they have great glory and great rewards. So, when we overcome temptation, God gives us a new glory and reward for every victory.

**"Deliver us from evil."** From every kind of evil, and especially the evil of being conquered by our spiritual enemies, and thus falling into sin, and offending God by becoming His enemy ourselves. It would be a sin to seek temptation, though we have a reward for resisting it when it comes.

**"Amen"** means, *so be it*. May all we have asked be granted just as we have asked it.

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Pamphlet 197

## **The Lord's Prayer**

**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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead, us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.**

This is the most beautiful and best of all prayers, because it was composed by Our Lord Himself (Matt. 6:9; Luke 11:2). One day when He was praying and explaining to His apostles the great advantages of prayer, one of them said to Him: "Lord, teach us to pray." Then Jesus taught them this prayer. It contains everything we need or could ask for. We cannot see its full meaning at once. The more we think over it, the more clearly we understand it. We could write whole pages on almost every word, and still not say all that could be said about this prayer. It is called "**the Lord's**," because He composed it, and sometimes the "Our Father," from the first words.

We say "Our," to show that we are all brethren, and that God is the Father of us all, and therefore we 'Pray not for ourselves alone but for all God's children.

We say "**Father**," because God really is our Father. We do not mean here by Father the First Person of the Blessed Trinity, but the Blessed Trinity itself—one God. What does a father do for his children? He gives them their natural existence, provides them with food and clothing, teaches, protects, and loves them, shares with them all that he has, and when he dies leaves them his possessions. Now, in all these ways, and in a much truer

sense, God is our Father. He created us and gives us all that is necessary to sustain life. He gives light, heat, and air, without anyone of which we could not live. He provides for us also food and clothing, and long before we need or even think of these things God is thinking of them. Moreover He protects us from danger; He teaches us by the voice of our conscience and the ministers of His Church, our priests and bishops. He loves us too, as we may learn from all that He does for us, and from the many times He forgives us our sins. He shares what He possesses with us. He has given us understanding and a free will resembling His own. He has given us immortality, i.e., when once He has created us; we shall exist as long as Him—that is, forever. When Our Lord died on the cross, He left us His many possessions—His graces and merits, the holy sacraments, and heaven itself.

It is, surely, then just and right to call God Father. Our natural fathers give us only what they, themselves, get from God. So even what they give us also comes from Him.

Before the time of Our Lord, the people in prayer did not call God Father. They feared Him more than they loved Him. When He spoke to them—as He did when He gave the commandments to Moses—it was in thunder, lightning, and smoke (Exodus 19). They looked upon God as a great and terrible king who would destroy them for their sins. He sent the deluge on account of sin, and He destroyed the wicked city of Sodom with fire from heaven (Genesis 7; 19.) They called Him Jehovah, and were afraid sometimes even to pronounce His name. But Our Lord taught that God, besides being a great and powerful king the Ruler of the universe and Lord of all things—is also a kind and good Father, Who wishes His children not to offend Him because they love Him rather than because they fear Him, and therefore He taught His

disciples and all Christians to call God by the sweet name of Father.

**"Who art in heaven."** The Catechism says God is everywhere. Why then do we say, "Who art in heaven," as if He were no place else? We say so to remind us, 1st, that heaven is our true home, and that this world is only a strange land in which we are staying for a while to do the work that God wishes us to do here, and then return to our own home; 2nd, that in heaven we shall see God face to face and as He is; 3rd, that heaven is the place where God will be for all eternity with the blessed.

"Hallowed" means made *holy* or *sacred*. Halloween is the name given to the evening before the feast of All Hallows or All Saints.

**"Thy kingdom come."** This petition contains a great deal more than we at first see in it. In it we ask that God may reign in our hearts and in the hearts of all men by His grace in this life, and that we and all men may attain our eternal salvation, and thus be brought to reign forever with God in heaven—the kingdom of His glory. As the Church on earth is frequently called the kingdom of Christ, and as all the labors of the Church are directed to the salvation of souls, we pray also in this petition that the Church may be extended upon earth, that the true religion may be spread over the whole world, that all men may know and serve the true God and cheerfully obey His holy laws; that the devil may have no dominion over them. While saying this petition we may have it in our minds to pray even for particular ways in which the true religion can be spread; for example, by praying that the missionaries may meet with success and all the missions prosper; that priests and bishops may be ordained to preach the Gospel; that the Church may overcome all her enemies everywhere, and the true religion triumph.

**"Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."** In heaven all the angels and saints obey God perfectly; they never offend Him; so we pray that it may be on earth as it is in heaven, all men doing God's will, observing His laws and the laws of His Church, and living without sin.

**"Give us this day our daily bread."** In this petition "bread" means not merely bread, but everything we need for our daily lives; such as food, clothing, light, heat, air, and the like; also food for the soul, i. e., grace. If a beggar told you that he had not tasted bread for the whole day, you would never think of asking him if he had eaten any cake, because you would understand by his word bread all kinds of food. We say "daily," to teach us not to be greedy or too careful about ourselves, and not to ask for unnecessary things, but to pray for what we need for our present wants.

**"And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us."** "Trespasses" means here our sins, our offences against God. When we trespass we enter places we should not, or where we are forbidden to go. So when we sin we go where we should not go, viz., out of the path of virtue that leads to God, and into the way of vice that leads to the devil.

**"As we forgive them."** We take this to mean: we forgive others who have offended us, and for that reason, God, You should forgive us who have offended You. Our Lord told (Matt.18:23) a beautiful parable, i.e., a story by way of illustration, to explain this. A very rich man had a servant who owed him a large sum of money. One day the master asked the servant for the money, and the poor servant had none to give. Now the law of the country was, that when any one could not pay his debts, all that he had could be sold and the money given to the one to whom it was due,