

### C. The "Our Father"

- 673 The model of the Christian's prayer is the Lord Jesus Christ himself. The Saviour prayed often, be it alone in solitary places (see Lk 5:16) or together with his disciples (see Lk 9:18). Sometimes he prayed into the night (see Mt 14:23), and sometimes he rose to pray long before dawn (see Mk 1:35). Jesus also prays in special moments associated with important events in his life: at the time of his baptism in the Jordan (see Lk 3:21-22), in the desert as he struggled with temptations (see Mt 4:1-11; Lk 4:1-14), before the calling of the twelve apostles (see Lk 6:12f), on the eve of the recognition of his Messiahship by the apostle Peter (see Lk 9:18f), at the time of his Transfiguration on Mount Tabor (see Lk 9:28-29), before raising Lazarus (see Jn 11:41), at the Mystical Supper (see Lk 22:19; Jn 17), in the garden of Gethsemane before his Passion (see Mt 26:36; Mk 14:32; Lk 22:40f), and as he died on the Cross (see Lk 23:46).
- 674 The disciples, impressed by the prayerfulness of their Teacher, asked him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples" (Lk 11:1). Desiring to introduce his disciples into the mystery of his prayer to the Father, Jesus teaches them, and through them entrusts to his Church the pre-eminent Christian prayer. The evangelist Luke gives it to us in five petitions (see Lk 11:2-4), whereas the evangelist Matthew presents it in seven (see Mt 6:9-13). Matthew's text became the basis of the accepted liturgical form:

Our Father who art in heaven,  
hallowed be Thy name.  
by 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.

- 675 The "Our Father" is the core of Holy Scripture, an "epitome of the whole Gospel."<sup>411</sup> Located in the Sermon on the Mount—the teaching about the new life of the Christian—it unites within itself the revelation of God as Father, and our filial response of faith, in which "with confidence" we ask the Father for "that which we need" (see Mt 6:32; Lk 12:30). We call this prayer, which we received and learned from the Lord himself, the Lord's Prayer. Thus, he is both the Teacher and Model of our prayer.

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<sup>411</sup> TERTULLIAN, *On Prayer*, 1, 6: PL 1, 1153.

- 676 In the invocation "Our Father" we profess that God is Father, and that we are his children. Calling him "our," we embrace all people in this prayer—children of the one God, we become brothers and sisters among ourselves. The word "Father" is a word of grace and love. It may be pronounced only by the Father's sons and daughters in Christ: "Because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, `Abba! Father!' So, you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then an heir, through God" (Gal 4:6-7). In this first word of the prayer, and then in all the subsequent phrases, we pronounce our filial "yes" to God the Father and to our brothers and sisters in service to each other. Calling God, the Father who is "in heaven," Christ teaches us that heaven is the aim of our life: heaven is where the glory of God is manifested, and where the righteous will receive the eternal reward. Heaven is what we await in the "hope [in which] we were saved" (Rom 8:24).<sup>442</sup>
- 677 By the words "hallowed be Thy name" we confess that holiness belongs to God alone. At the same time, we ask that we who were sanctified through Baptism,<sup>443</sup> might be made partakers of God's sanctity, and that we would "be holy and blameless before him" (Eph 1:4). This is so that through our prayer and righteous life the Name of God may be hallowed among people (see Mt 5:16) and in all creation. In the petition "Thy kingdom come," we ask that the grace of God that is in us (see Lk 17:21) might grow and increase in the whole world. This petition, just like "Marana tha" (meaning Come, Lord), refers to the final coming of the kingdom of God, but it is also already answered: this kingdom is revealed in the Eucharist and is active in the new life of Christians as they live according to the commandments of the Beatitudes.
- 678 With the words "Thy will be done," we accept the Father's Plan concerning us. This is because we imitate Christ's prayer in the garden of Gethsemane: "Father ... not my will but yours be done" (Lk 22:42). In other words, we profess our faith that the will of the Father is the life and salvation of every person; God does not desire that any should perish (see 2 Pt 3:9), but that "everyone be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim 2:4). The Father, who in his will so loved the world that he gave us his Only-Begotten Son (see Jn 3:16), awaits from us in turn this same kind of love. He expects us to love one another as the Lord has loved us (see Jn 13:34). Fulfilling the will of the Father, we become like Christ, the Son of God, cultivating within ourselves the

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<sup>442</sup> See METROPOLITAN ANDREY SHEPTYTSKY, *Про молитву Отче наш в Божа Мудрість* [On the Lord's Prayer in The Wisdom of God] (1933).

<sup>443</sup> See CYPRIAN OF CARTHAGE, *On the Lord's Prayer*, 12.