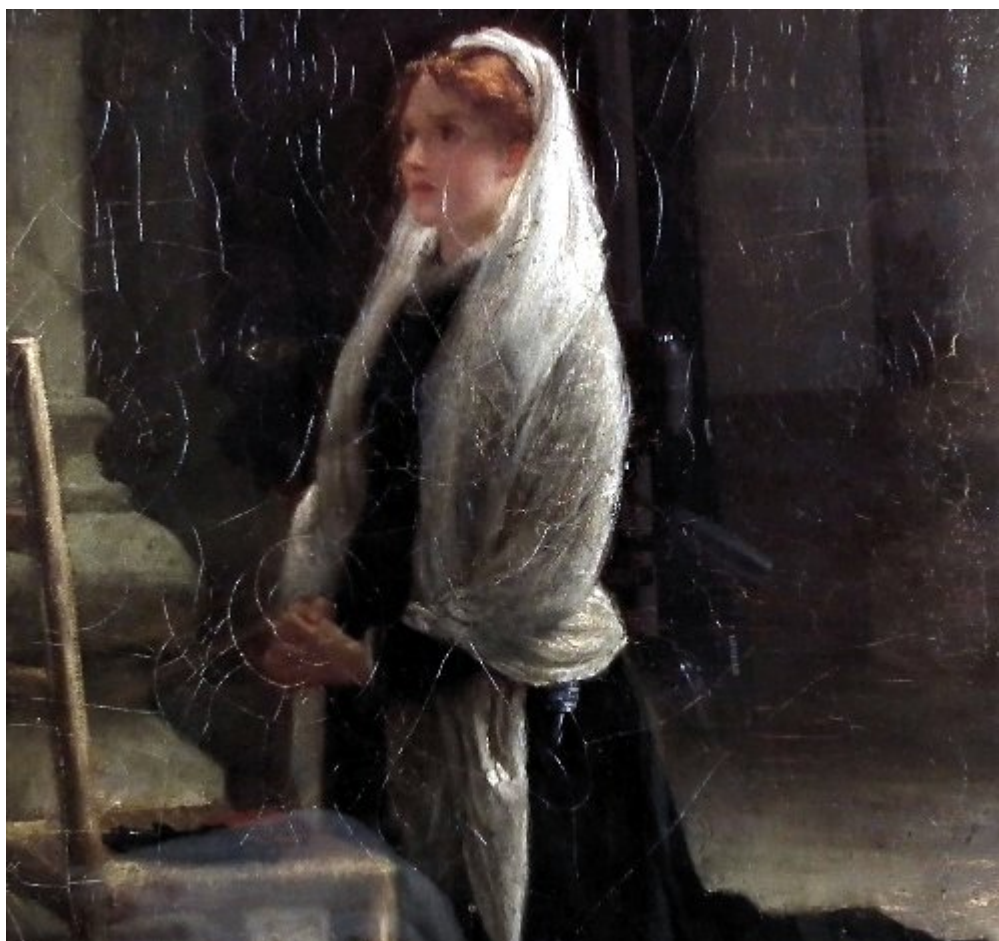


## **OUR FATHER AND AVE MARIA**



**SERMONS OF S. TOMÁS DE AQUINO**

**ELECTRONIC EDITION**

**Rio de Janeiro,**

**2003**

**ELECTRONIC EDITION PERMANENCE**

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#### **INTRODUCTION**

According to the testimony of his contemporaries, including many of his brothers of order, we know that a year before his death, that is, from the Sunday of the Sixtieth, February 12, 1273, until Easter Day, 9 April, Santo Tomás devoted himself, with great care, to the instruction of the faithful, in the Conventual Church of San Domingos, in Naples.

There he gave sermons, successively on the Symbol of the Apostles, the Sunday Prayer, the Angelic Salutation, on the two general precepts of charity and the ten commandments of the law.

At first glance, we do not see what unites these different subjects, but the Holy Doctor was careful to show it to his listeners: «Three things are necessary for man for his salvation. The first is the knowledge of what is to be believed; the second, knowing what to desire and the third, knowing what to accomplish. Man has the first such knowledge in the Symbol of the Apostles; Sunday Prayer instructs you on what to desire; and the two precepts of charity and the ten commandments of the law show what must be put into practice.

The set of these sermons constitutes a true pre-baptismal catechesis. Father Toco, a Dominican, who attended the practices, says that the number of assistants increased every day; the crowd listened to the Blessed with veneration, as if the word came directly from God. Only the physical aspect of Santo Tomás, already made a profound impression. According to João Blasio, judge of Naples, Santo Tomás delivered the two sermons on the Angelic Salutation, with eyes closed or raised to the sky, the ecstatic air.

The numerous listeners of the saint, in that Lent of 1273, belonged to all social classes and Saint Thomas addressed them in Italian, not Latin. The Latin texts that have come down to us are not, therefore, original texts, but only a summary of these. It is not certain that the Saint wrote them by hand or even that he revised them. However, all authors who spoke about these texts (Mandonnet, Michelitisch, Grabinan, Walz) are unanimous in affirming their authenticity. Everyone ensures that they express the Holy Doctor's thought faithfully.

The origin of the texts explains why obscurities are sometimes found in the expression and why the link that unites some thoughts is not always perfectly discerned. The quotations from the Sacred Scriptures are very numerous, but the relation between the quotations and the context is not always very clear.

To make the reading of the translation more current, we do not hesitate to delete some of these quotations, when their relationship with the context was not noticeable. For the same reason, whenever this seemed necessary, we tried to express Saint Thomas' thought explicitly, either by developing what the conciseness of the Latin text only suggested, or by changing the material order of the propositions.

It is true that man cannot do anything greater, or more necessary for his salvation, than to elevate his soul to God to bind it to His Majesty. Now, it is through prayer that man rises to God and joins Him. And the more perfect your prayer, the greater your union with God.

But what, in the world, will be the most perfect and most sanctifying prayer, if not the one that the Son of God, God Himself, composed to give us?

Therefore, it is of utmost importance to understand this sublime prayer well, in all your requests, to make it entirely ours.

May Saint Thomas' explanations of Sunday Prayer be carefully read to help us to better understand the different parts of this divine prayer.

Speaking about the Salutation, Angelica, in her Treatise on true devotion to the Blessed Virgin, St. Luiz-Maria Grignon de Montfort writes (§ 252, 253): The Hail Mary is the most beautiful of all prayers, after the Our Father : It is the most perfect greeting you can give to Mary, as it is the greeting that the Most High gave her through an Archangel, to win the heart of the Virgin of Nazareth. And so powerful were those words, because of the secret charm they contain, that Mary gave her full consent to the Incarnation of the Word, despite her profound humility. It is for this greeting that you too will unfailingly win your heart, as long as you say it as you must ... that is, with attention, devotion and modesty.

We can add: with intelligence, which forces us to make an effort to better understand the profound meaning of the words we pronounce. Reading Dr. Angelico's explanations will help us a lot in this.

According to the most accepted opinion, Pope Urban VIII is credited with introducing the name of Jesus into the Angelic Salutation. This pontiff reigned from 1261 to 1264. However, Saint Thomas, in his explanation of the Ave Maria, composed in 1273, makes no mention of the name of Jesus.

But he did it several times, especially in Summa Theológica (IIIa, q. 37, a. 2, c.). It also seems that he did not know the second part of the Ave Maria, which gradually formed. In the 12th century there is an outline of it, in a hymn attributed to Gottschalk, chaplain to the emperor Henry IV. In the 15th century, Saint Bernardino de Sena knew a summary of this second part: Santa Maria, pray for us, poor sinners. The current formula was put to use in the 16th century; and officially consecrated for its insertion, in the breviary of São Pio V, in 1568.

Like many scholastics of the 13th century, Saint Thomas thought, and thought until the end of his life, that the Holy Virgin had contracted original sin and that she had been purified by a special grace, from her mother's bosom. He says it twice in the explanation of the Angelic Salutation (No. 6 and 7). On these two points, our translation is purposely not a translation; for it does not express the meaning of the Latin text, but what is of faith, for the Holy Church and what the Holy Doctor contemplates in the beatific vision today, namely, the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

A monk from Fontgombault

## **PROLOGUE**

### **I. The five qualities required for all prayers.**

1. - Sunday Prayer, among all, is the prayer par excellence, because it has the five qualities required for any prayer. Prayer must be: confident, upright, orderly, devout and humble.

2. - Prayer must be confident, as Saint Paul writes to the Hebrews (4, 16): Let us confidently approach the throne of grace, in order to reach mercy and find grace to be helped in due time. Prayer must be done with faith and without hesitation, according to Saint James.

(Jas 1,6): If any of you needs wisdom, ask God ...

But ask it with faith and without hesitation.

For various reasons, the Our Father is the most secure and confident of prayers. Sunday Prayer is the work of our lawyer, the wisest of beggars, the owner of all the treasures of wisdom (cf. Col 2, 3), the one from whom St. John says (I, 2, 1): We have a lawyer together to the father: Jesus Christ, the Just. Saint Cyprian wrote in his Treatise on Sunday Prayer: "Since we have Christ as an advocate with the Father, for our sins, in our requests for forgiveness, for our faults, let us present in our favor, the words of our lawyer".

Sunday Prayer also seems to us to be the most heard because the one who, with the Father, listens is the same as he taught us; as Psalm 90 states (15): He will cry out for me and I will listen to him. It is saying a friendly, familiar and pious prayer to address the Lord in your own

words, says St. Cyprian. One never fails to draw any fruit from this prayer which, according to Saint Augustine, blots out venial sins.

3. - Our prayer must, secondly, be straight, that is, we must ask God for the goods that are convenient for us. «Prayer, says Saint John Damascene, is the request to God for gifts that should be asked».

Often, prayer is not heard because we have implored goods that do not really suit us. «You asked and you did not receive, because you asked badly», says São Tiago. (4.3).

It is so difficult to know with certainty what to ask for, as to know what to desire. The Apostle recognizes, when he writes to the Romans (8, 26): We do not know how to ask as it should, but (he adds), the Spirit himself intercedes for us with ineffable groans.

But isn't it Christ who is our doctor? Didn't he teach us what to ask for when his disciples said, Lord, teach us to pray? (Lk 11, 1).

The goods he teaches us to ask for in prayer are the most convenient. "If we pray in a convenient and fair manner, says Saint Augustine, whatever the terms we use, we will say nothing more than what is contained in Sunday Prayer".

4. - Thirdly, prayer must be ordered, as the desire that the prayer interprets.

The convenient order is to prefer, in our desires and prayers, spiritual goods to material goods, heavenly realities to earthly realities, according to the Lord's recommendation (Mt, 6.33): Seek first the kingdom of God and its justice and the rest - eating, drinking and dressing - will be given to you in addition.

In Sunday Prayer, the Lord teaches us to observe this order: first we ask for heavenly realities and then for earthly goods.

5. - Fourth, prayer must be devout.

The excellence of devotion makes the sacrifice of prayer pleasing to God. In your name, Lord, I will lift up my hands, says the Psalmist, and my soul is sated as with fine food.

The prolixity of prayer, in most cases, weakens devotion; the Lord also teaches us to avoid this superfluous prolixity: In your prayers do not multiply words; as pagans do, (Mt 6,7). St. Augustine recommends, writing to Proba: «Take the abundance of words out of prayer; however, be sure to plead, if your attention remains fervent ».

This is the reason why the Lord instituted the Our Father's brief prayer.

6. - Devotion comes from charity, which is the love of God and neighbor. The Our Father is a manifestation of these two loves.

To show our love for God, we call him "Father" and to show our love for our neighbor, we ask for all righteous men, saying: "Our Father", and pushed by the same love, we add: "forgive our debts", 7 - Fifthly, our prayer must be humble, according to what the Psalmist says (Ps 101, 18): God looked at the prayer of the humble.

A humble prayer is a prayer that will certainly be heard, as the Lord shows us, in the gospel of the Pharisee and the Publican (Lk 18, 9-15) and Judith, praying to the Lord, said: You have always considered the plea of the humble to be pleasant. of the meek.

This humility is present in Sunday Prayer, because true humility is found in those who do not trust their own strength, but expect everything from divine power.

## **II. The good effects of prayer.**

8. - Note that prayer produces three kinds of goods.

First, it is an effective remedy against all ills.

Deliver us from the sins committed: "You have remitted, Lord, the iniquity of my sin, says the Psalmist (Ps 31: 5-6) so every holy man will address his prayer to You". So the thief asked about the cross and got his forgiveness, because Jesus answered him: "Truly I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise". (Lk 23,43), In the same way the publican prayed and returned home justified (cf. Lk 18,14).

Prayer frees us from the fear of sins to come, tribulations and sadness. Is anyone sad among you? Pray with a calm soul (Jas 5,3).

Prayer frees us from the persecutions of enemies. It is written in Psalm 108, 4: In response to my affection, they hurt me; but I prayed.

9. - Second, prayer is a useful and effective means for the fulfillment of all our desires. Whatever you ask in prayer, says Jesus, believe, you will receive. (Mc 11,24) If we are not attended, it will be because - or we do not insistently ask: it is necessary to pray without rest (Lk 18,1) - or else we do not ask for what is most useful for our salvation. «The Lord is good, says Saint Augustine, he often does not grant us what we want, to give us the goods, which we would like to receive, if our will were in accordance with his divine will». São Paulo is an example of this, because, three times, he asked to be free of a strong suffering in his flesh and was not attended to (cf. II Cor 12,8).

10. - Thirdly, prayer is useful because it makes us familiar with God. May my prayer come up to you, like the smoke of incense, says the Psalmist (Ps 140, 2).

### **THE DOMINICAL PRAYER**

#### **OUR FATHER**

11. - We ask: how is God a Father? And what are our obligations to Him because of his fatherhood?

We call him Father, because of the special way in which he raised us.

He created us in his image and likeness, image and likeness, which he did not impress on any other creature inferior to man. Is it not your Father, your Creator that established you? (Deut 32, 6).

God also deserves the name of Father, because of his particular concern for men in governing the universe.

Nothing escapes his government, which is exercised differently in relation to us and in relation to creatures inferior to us. The lower beings are governed as slaves and we are masters. O Father, says the book of Wisdom (14, 3), your providence rules and guides all things; and (12, 18) governs us with indulgence.

God, finally, has the right to the name of Father, because he adopted us.

While he did not give other creatures but small gifts, he gave us the gift of his inheritance, and that is because we are his children. São Paulo says (Rm 8, 17): Because we are his children, we are also his heirs, and yet (vers. 15): You did not receive a spirit of servitude, to fall in fear, but you did receive a spirit of adoption, which he cries out: Abba, Father.

12. - In the first place, we must honor him. If I am a Father, says the Lord, for Malachi, (1,6) where is my honor?

This honor consists of three things: the first in relation to our duties to God; the second, our duties to ourselves; the third, our duties to others.

The honor due to the Lord consists, first, in offering the gift of praise to God, following what is written (Ps 49, 23): The sacrifice of praise will honor me. This praise must be not only on the lips, but in the heart. It is written in Isaiah (29,13): These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.

The honor due to God, second, consists in the purity of our bodies, for the Apostle wrote: (1 Cor 6, 20) Glorify and bring God into your body.

Finally, this honor consists in the fairness of our judgments towards others. Psalm 98, 4 says: To honor the king is to love justice.

13. - Second, we must imitate God, because he is our Father. The Lord says, in Jeremiah: (3, 9) You will call me Father, and you will not stop walking behind me.

Imitation to be perfect requires three things.

The first is love. Says São Paulo (Eph 5, 1-2): Be imitators of God, as well-loved children, and walk in love. This love must be found in our hearts.

The second is mercy. Love must be accompanied by mercy, according to Jesus' recommendation (Lk 6, 36): be merciful. And that mercy must be shown in the works.

The third is perfection, because love and mercy must be perfect. It was, in fact, after speaking of disposition and servile works, that the Lord says, in the Sermon on the Mount, (Mt 5, 48) Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

14. - Thirdly, we owe obedience to our Father. If our parents according to the flesh punish us and we respect them, for the strongest reason we must submit to the Father of spirits, says St. Paul (Heb 12,9).

Obedience is due to the heavenly Father because of his sovereign dominion, He being the Lord par excellence. The Hebrews, at the foot of Mount Sinai, declared to Moses (Ex 24, 7): Everything that the Lord said we will do and obey.

Our obedience is also founded on the example of Christ who, being the true Son of God, became obedient until death (Phil 2: 8).

Finally, we obey out of self-interest. David said of God: I will play before the Lord who chose me (2 Kings 6,12).

15. - Fourth and always, because God is our Father, we must be patient when he punishes us. My son, say the Proverbs (3, 11-12), do not reject the Lord's correction; nor discouraged, when He corrects you. The Lord punishes him who loves and takes pleasure in him as a Father with his son.

16. - The Lord prescribed for us to address our Father in Sunday Prayer, not only as "Father", but also as "Our Father". In doing this, he showed us what our duties are to our neighbors.

We owe love to our neighbors first, because they are our brothers; we are all children of God. Who does not love his brother whom he sees, says St. John (I, 4,20), how can he love God whom he does not see?

Second, we owe respect to our fellowmen. We have a single Father, says Malachi (2, 10). Wasn't it one God who created us? Why should you despise your brother? And St. Paul writes to the Romans (12-10): Take care to respect one another.

The accomplishment of this double duty provides us with the most desirable fruits, since Christ, St. Paul writes to us (Heb 5,9) is, for all who obey him, the principle of eternal salvation.

### **WHO ARE IN HEAVEN**

17. - Among the provisions necessary for the one who prays, trust is of considerable importance. Whoever asks God for something, says St. James, (1,6) do it with confidence and without hesitation.

The Lord, in the beginning of the Prayer that he taught us, sets out the reasons that give rise to trust.

First, the Father's complacency: Our Father. Then, says the Lord (Lk 11:13): You who are evil, know how to give good things to your children; how much more will your heavenly Father, from on high in heaven, to those who ask him, his good Spirit.

Another reason for trust is the greatness and power of the Father, which makes us say to the Lord not only our Father, but our Father who art in heaven. The Psalmist also says: (Ps 122, 1) I raised my eyes to you who live in the heavens.

18. - The Lord used the expression that you are in heaven for three different reasons.

First of all, this expression has the purpose of preparing prayer, as the Ecclesiastic recommends (18, 23): Before prayer, prepare your souls. Surely, the thought that our Father is in heaven, that is, in heavenly glory, prepares us to address our supplications to him.

In the Lord's promise to his Apostles (Mt 5:12): your reward will be great in heaven, the expression "in heaven" also has the meaning of "in heavenly glory".

The preparation of the prayer takes place by imitating the celestial realities, since the son must imitate his father. Thus, St. Paul writes to the Corinthians (I, 15.49): As we cover the image of the earthly man, we must also cover the image of the heavenly man.

Preparation for prayer also requires the contemplation of heavenly things. Men are in the habit of frequently directing their thoughts to the place where their father is and where other beings, objects of his love, are found, according to the word of the Lord (Mt 6, 21): Where

your treasure is, there is also your heart. That is why the Apostle wrote to the Philippians (3,20): Our home is in heaven.

Finally, the preparation of prayer demands that we aspire to heavenly things. We must ask heavenly things from those in heaven, as Saint Paul tells us (Col 3: 1): Seek things from above, where Christ is.

19. - Secondly, the words "Our Father who art in heaven" can mean that God has the facility to hear our prayers, because he is close to us. Those words then mean: Our Father who art in the saints. Indeed, God dwells in the saints.

Jeremiah says (14, 9): Lord, You are in us. The saints are really called "heavens", according to these words of Psalm 18,12: "The heavens proclaim the glory of God".

Now God dwells in the saints by faith. Saint Paul writes to the Ephesians (3, 17): May Christ dwell in your hearts by faith.

God also lives in the saints for charity. He who dwells in charity, says Saint John (I, 4, 16), lives in God and God in him.

God still lives in the saints for the fulfillment of the commandments. If anyone loves me, declares the Lord (Jn 14:23), keep my word and we will come to him and make our home there.

20. - Thirdly, "who art in heaven" refers to the Father's effectiveness in hearing us. In this case the word "heavens" designates material and visible heavens; not that we want to say, with this, that God is enclosed in the corporeal sky, for it is written (2 Kings 18, 27): Behold, the heavens and the heavens of the heavens cannot contain you; but these words "which are in heaven" show: a) that God, by his gaze, is clairvoyant and penetrating, because he sees from above. He looked from his holy height, says Psalm 101,20; b) that God is sublime in his power, according to the word of the Psalmist (102, 19): The Lord has set his throne in heaven; c) that God is stable in his eternity, according to other words (Ps 101, 13 and 28): Lord, you remain forever and your years have no end. For this reason, it is said of Christ (Ps 88, 30): His throne is like the day of heaven, that is, without end, like the duration of what is heavenly. And the Philosopher confirms, with his authority, the correctness of this comparison, when he points out in his treatise "of heaven": "Because of its incorruptibility, heaven is seen by all, as being the abode of pure spirits".

21. - These words "that you are in heaven" addressed to the Father, at the time of prayer, give us a triple reason for confidence, which rests: a) on the power of God; b) on the friendship of God, which we invoke; c) about the convenience of our order.

a) The power of the Father that we implore is suggested to us by the expression: "that you are in the heavens", if by heavens we understand the material and visible heavens. Undoubtedly, God is not enclosed in the material heavens, for he tells us in Jeremiah (23, 24): I fill heaven and earth; it is said, however, "you are in heaven" to imply the virtue of your nature.

22. - Against those who claim that everything necessarily comes from the influence of heavenly bodies and deny the usefulness of asking God for anything through prayer - how foolish they are! - we say to God: «that you are in the heavens» and there, by virtue of His power, as Lord of the heavens and of the stars, following the word of the Psalm (102, 19): The Lord prepared his throne in the heavens.

23. - And also against those who in their prayers build and compose corporeal images of God, it is in their intention that we say: "that you are in heaven". This way: for the highest in sensitive things, we show them the sublimity of God, which surpasses everything, including the desire and intelligence of men, and thus everything that can be thought and desired is inferior to God. That is why it is written in the book of Job (32, 26): God is great and surpasses our knowledge, and in the book of Psalms (Ps 112, 4): The Lord has risen above all nations. And Isaiah declares (40, 18): To whom have you likened God?

24. - b) Many said that God, because he is so tall, does not take care of human things. On the contrary, we must think that He is close to us, and that He is intimately present in us. This familiarity of God with man is pointed out to us by the words of Sunday Prayer "who are in



heaven", if we understand them thus: "you who are in the saints". The saints are the heavens, according to the psalmist's words (18,2): the heavens show the glory of God and also Jeremiah (14,9): You are in the Lord.

25. - This intimacy of God with men inspires two reasons for trust when we pray to the Lord. The first is based on this divine closeness that the Psalmist shows in the words (14, 4, 18): The Lord is close to those who call on him.

For this reason, the Lord gives us the warning (Mt. 6, 6): When you pray, enter your room, that is, into your heart.

The second rests on the patronage of the saints. Through your intercession, we can get what we ask for. (Job 5, 1): Address any of the saints and St. James (5, 16): Pray for one another, that you may be saved.

26. - c) If, when we say to the heavenly Father ;: You who are in heaven, we think that heaven designates spiritual and eternal goods, the object of bliss, then our desire for heavenly things ignites. Our desire must lean towards where our Father is, for there is also our inheritance. São Paulo says to the faithful: Seek the goods from above (Cl 3, 1) and São Pedro (1, 1, 4) tells us about this incorruptible heritage, which is reserved for us in the heavens.

The thought that the Father is our eternal spiritual Good, the object of our bliss, invites us, with strength, to lead a heavenly life, in order to become like our Father. heavenly, declares the Apostle (1 Cor 15:18).

These two things, the desire for the bliss of heaven and to lead you to a heavenly life on this earth - undoubtedly predispose us to pray with devotion to the Lord and address a prayer worthy of His Majesty.

#### **SANCTIFIED BE YOUR NAME**

27. - This is the first request, in which we ask that the name of God be manifested in us and proclaimed by us.

Now, the name of God is, above all, admirable, because in all creatures works marvelous works. The Lord declares in the Gospel (Mk 16,17): In my name, they will drive out demons, speak new languages, and if they drink any deadly poison, it will do them no harm.

28. - Second, the name of God is kind. "There is no other name under the sky, says St. Peter (Acts 4: 12), among those given to men, that can save us". And salvation must be sought by all. Saint Ignatius gives us an example of how much we should love the name of Christ. When Emperor Trajan demanded that he deny the name of Christ, Saint Ignatius replied: "You cannot take it out of my mouth." The tyrant threatened to cut off his head and thus take the name of Christ from his lips; replied the blessed: "You will never tear it out of my heart, for it is there that it is engraved, that is why I cannot fail to invoke it". Hearing these words, Trajan, desirous of verifying their accuracy, had the head of the servant of God cut off and his heart taken out.

And in his heart he found the name of Christ engraved in gold letters. The saint had this name as a seal on his heart.

29. - Thirdly, the name of God is venerable. The Apostle affirms (Phil 2: 10): That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven, on earth and in hell; in heaven, in the world of angels and blessed ones; on earth, both men, who want heavenly glory, and those who, out of fear of punishment, seek to avoid it; in hell, in the world of the damned, let them prostrate themselves in fear before Jesus Christ.

30. - Fourth, the name of God is inexpressible, in the sense that no language is capable of expressing all its wealth.

We try, however, to explain it by the creatures. Thus, the name of God is called rock, because of its firmness. And let us note that if the Lord gave Simon, the future foundation of the Church, the name of Pedra (Mk 3:16) was precisely because his faith, in the divinity of Jesus, (cf.

Mt 16, 18) was to make him share in his divine firmness.

God is also called by the name of fire, because of his purifying virtue. Just as fire purifies metals, God purifies the hearts of sinners. So it is in Deuteronomy (4, 24): Your God is a consuming fire.

God is also called light, because of his ability to illuminate. As the light illuminates the darkness, God illuminates the darkness of the spirit. The Psalmist, in his prayer, says to the Lord (17, 29): My God, enlighten my darkness.

31. - We ask that this name be manifested, known and considered a saint.

The word saint has three meanings: First, a saint who means firm, solid, unshakable. Thus, all the Blessed who inhabit the heavens are called saints, because they have become, through eternal happiness, unshakable. In this sense, there are no saints in this world, because men are here in constant movement. «Lord, said Saint Augustine, I have departed from you and wandered; I have moved away from your stability. » 32. - Holy, secondly, means: what is not terrestrial. For this reason, the saints who live in heaven have no affection for earthly things. I take everything into account for filth, to win Christ, said São Paulo (Phil 3, 8). By the word earth, sinners are designated.

First, because if it is not cultivated, thorns and thistles germinate in it, as it is written in Genesis (3, 8). Thus, also the sinner's soul, if not cultivated by grace, will only produce the thorns and thistles of sin.

Second, the earth is obscure and opaque, a symbol of sinners. Genesis (1, 2) says: Darkness covered the face of the abyss.

Third, the land, if it is not bound by water, divides, disintegrates, pulverizes, becomes dry, because the Lord established the land on the waters, as the Psalmist says (Ps 135: 6): God established the earth on the waters. So the moisture in the water remedies the dryness of the earth. The sinner's soul, deprived of water, is nothing but a dry and arid soul, as evidenced by Psalm 142, 6: My soul is like the earth without water.

33. - Finally, saint, thirdly, means "blood red".

The saints in heaven are also called saints, because they are red with blood, according to the Apocalypse (7, 14): These are the ones who came from the great tribulation and washed their clothes, in the blood of the Lamb. Revelation (1, 5) also says: Jesus Christ who loved us and washed us from our sins, in his blood.

### **COME WITH US YOUR KINGDOM**

34. - As has been said, the Holy Spirit makes us love, desire and ask for what is right for us to love, desire and ask for (no. 3). This Spirit produces in us, first, the fear that leads us to seek the sanctification of the name of God, and then to give us the gift of godliness. Piety is, properly speaking, a tender and devoted affection for a father and also for a man fallen into misery.

As God is our Father, we must not only worship and fear him, but we must also have a tender and delicate affection for him. It is this affection that makes us ask for the coming of the kingdom of God. Saint Paul declares in Titus, 2, 11-13: God's grace appeared to all men, teaching us to live in this sober, just and pious world, awaiting the blessed hope and the glorious coming of our great God.

35. - But we can ask: If the kingdom of God has always existed, why do we ask for his coming?

We must answer this question in three ways: a) First: the kingdom of God, in its finished form, presupposes the perfect submission of all things to God. A king will not be king, in fact, before all his subjects obey him.

Without a doubt, God for what he is and by his nature, is the Lord of the universe; and the Christ, being God and being a man, has, like God, the lordship over all things. Daniel says (7, 14): In the oldest of days he was given power, honor and royalty. Everything must be submitted to him. But this is still not the case and will take place at the end of the world. It is written (1 Cor 15:25): It is necessary that he reigns, until he puts all enemies under his feet. This is why we ask: Your kingdom come.

36. - In doing so, we ask three things, namely: - that the righteous be converted; - that sinners be punished; - that death be destroyed.

Men are subjected to Christ in two ways: either voluntarily or against their will. God's will, in effect, has such efficacy that it cannot fail to be fully accomplished. And since God wants all things to be submitted to Christ, it is necessary either that man fulfill the will of God, submitting himself to his commandments - what the righteous do - or that God carry out his will in those who disobey him, that is, in sinners and their enemies, punishing them. What will happen, at the end of the world, when He will put his enemies under his feet (cf., Ps 109, 1). That is why it is given to the saints to ask God for the coming of his kingdom, with the total submission of all to his royalty. But this request makes sinners tremble, for they will have to submit to the torments required by divine will.

Unhappy are those (sinners) who desire the day of the Lord (Am 5:18).

The coming of the kingdom of God at the end of time will also be the destruction of death. Christ is life; now, death - which is contrary to life - cannot exist in his kingdom, according to the word (1 Cor 15:26): The last enemy to be destroyed will be death, which means that in the resurrection, according to São Paulo (Phil 3:21), the Savior will transform our body from misery, and make it similar to his glorious body.

37. b) Second: the kingdom of heaven designates the glory of paradise. There is nothing astonishing about this, because the kingdom simply means government. A government reaches its highest degree of excellence, when nothing stands in the way of the will of those who govern.

Now, God's will is the salvation of men, for God wants all men to be saved (cf. 1 Tim 2: 4). This divine will had been carried out mainly in paradise, where nothing is contrary to the salvation of men, for the Lord says (Mt 13, 14): The angels will throw all scandals out of his kingdom. In this world, on the contrary, obstacles abound, for the salvation of men.

When, therefore, we ask God: "Your kingdom come to us", we pray that, triumphing over these obstacles, we will be partakers of his kingdom and the glory of paradise.

38. - Three reasons make this kingdom extremely desirable.

First, for the sovereign justice of this kingdom. Speaking of its inhabitants, the Lord tells Isaiah (60, 21) that everyone is just. Here, the bad are mixed with the good, but there will be neither bad nor sinners there.

39. - Second, for the perfect freedom of the elect.

Here on earth, everyone wants freedom without fully possessing it.

But in heaven one enjoys full and complete freedom, without the least bondage. Saint Paul tells us (Rom 8: 21): Creation itself will be freed from the bondage of corruption, for the glorious freedom of the children of God.

And not only will all the elect have freedom, but they will be kings, according to the Apocalypse: You have made us kings and priests and we will reign over the earth.

They will all be kings, because they will, like God, have only one will. God will want what the saints want and the saints will want what God wants. Thus all will reign, because they will do the will of all and God will be the crown of all, according to Isaiah (28, 5): In that day, the Lord of hosts will be the crown of glory and the wreath of exultation for the rest of his people.

40. - Third, for the wonderful abundance of your goods. Isaiah says to the Lord (64, 4): The eye has not seen, except you, O God, what you have prepared for him who is waiting for you. And the Psalmist (Ps 102, 5).

Fill with goods, according to your desire.

And it must be noted that "only in God" will man find excellence and perfection in what he seeks, "in this world". If you seek delight, in God you will find the supreme delight. If you seek wealth, in God you will find the abundance of everything you need and everything that is the *raison d'être* of wealth. The same is true for other goods. Saint Augustine recognized in

his Confessions: "The soul that fornicates, when it moves away from you, looking for the goods outside of you, will only find them limpid and pure if it turns to you".

41. - c) Third: because sin often reigns and triumphs in this world, we ask God for the coming of his kingdom. St. Paul stood up against this calamity (Rom 6, 12): May sin not reign in your hearts.

This unhappiness is realized when man allows himself to be carried away without resistance, until the end of his inclination towards sin.

God must reign in our hearts and does so when we are ready to keep his commandments.

When we ask for the coming of the kingdom of God, we pray that sin does not reign in us, but that only God reigns there and forever.

42. - By this request for the coming of the kingdom of God, we will reach the beatitude, proclaimed by the Lord (Mt 5, 4): Blessed are the meek.

In effect, according to the first explanation of the request, your kingdom will come to us (n ° 35), man, because he wants God to be recognized as sovereign master of everything, does not take revenge for the injustice received, but leaves this care to God. . For revenge he is looking for his personal triumph and not for the coming of the kingdom of God.

According to the second explanation (n ° 37) if you expect the kingdom of God, that is, the glory of paradise, you must not be restless when you lose the goods of this world.

In the same way, by the third explanation, (No. 41) you ask that God and his Christ reign in you. Just as Jesus was very gentle, as he says it (Mt 11, 29), you must also be meek and imitate the Hebrews of whom Saint Paul says (Heb 10, 34): they accepted with pleasure the plunder of their goods.

#### **YOUR WILL BE MADE, EITHER ON EARTH, AS IN HEAVEN**

43. - The Holy Spirit produces in you a third gift, called the gift of Science.

The Holy Spirit does not only produce in the good the gift of Fear and the gift of Piety which, as we saw above (n ° 34), is a delicate love for God. The Holy Spirit makes man wise.

David asked for the gift of science in Psalm 118, 66, saying: Teach me kindness, doctrine and science. And it is this science of good living that teaches us the Holy Spirit.

Among the dispositions that contribute to the science and wisdom of man, the most important is that which prevents man from supporting himself. Do not lean on your prudence, recommends the book of Proverbs (3, 5). Indeed, those who rely on their own judgment, to the point of relying only on themselves and not on others, are considered foolish, and they truly are. The book of Proverbs (26, 12) states: More is to be expected of an ignorant person than of a man who is wise in his own eyes.

A man does not trust his own judgment if he is humble, as the Proverbs teaches (11, 2): where there is humility, there is also wisdom. The proud, on the contrary, put all confidence in themselves.

44. - Therefore, the Holy Spirit teaches us, through the gift of Science, not to do our will, but the will of God. And also when we ask God, that His will be done in heaven, as on earth, the gift of Science is manifested.

When we say to God: Your will be done, it is as if we are sick who accept the bitter medicine, prescribed by the doctor. The patient does not want such a remedy, but accepts the doctor's will, otherwise, following only his will, it would be foolish.

In the same way, we must not ask God for anything other than His will, that is, the fulfillment of His will in us.

The heart of man is upright, when it is in accordance with the divine will, just as Christ did: (Jn 6:38): I came down from heaven, not to do my will, but the will of the One who sent me.

Christ, as God, has only one will with the Father, but as a man his will is distinct from the Father's will. It was speaking of this will that he declared: I do not do my will, but my Father's.

That is why he taught us to pray and to ask: "Thy will be done".

45. - But what is the reason for this prayer: "Your will be done?" God is not said in Psalm 113 (v. 3): Everything you wanted, did you do? If God does everything he wants in heaven and on earth, why does Jesus say: Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven?

46. - To understand the cause of this request, it is necessary to know that God wants for us three things that we have done in this prayer.

a) First, God wants us to have eternal life. When someone does something for a particular purpose, he wants it to reach that end. Now, God did not make man without a definite end.

The Psalm says (88, 48): Have you created all the sons of men in vain? God created mankind, for a purpose other than voluptuousness, for animals also have them. God wanted man to attain eternal life. (cf. Jn. 3, 16; 10, 10).

47. - When something reaches its end, it is said to be saved; when it doesn't reach, it is said to be lost. Now, man is made by God for eternal life. When he gets there, he is saved; and this is God's will for him. This is the will of the Father who sent me: that whoever sees the Son and believes in him, has eternal life. (Jn 6, 40).

This will has already been fulfilled in the angels and saints, who live in the heavenly homeland, because they see God, know him and enjoy him. But we hope that, just as the will of God is fulfilled in the Blessed ones who are in heaven, it is also fulfilled in us who are on earth. That is why we ask in prayer: "Your will be done" in us, who are on earth, as in the saints, who are in heaven.

48. - b) As for us, His will is that we keep His commandments. When someone desires a good, he wants not only that good, but the means to obtain it. Also, the doctor, in order to achieve the patient's health, wants the diet, medicines and other things like that.

Now, God wants us to have eternal life.

To the young man who asks him: What must I do in order to have eternal life? Jesus replies: If you want to enter eternal life, keep the commandments (Mt 19, 17).

In this regard, St. Paul writes to the Romans (12, 19): And do not conform to this world, but reform yourself with a new spirit, so that you will experience what is the will of God, good, pleasant and perfect.

God's will is good because it is useful. I am the Lord your God, who teaches you what is useful. (Is 48, 17).

It is pleasant for those who love it. If God's will is not grateful to those who do not love it, it is delicious for those who love it. The light was born for the just, the joy for the upright in heart, says the Psalmist (Ps 96, 11).

God's will is also perfect, because it is a goodness above all. Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect, prescribed Jesus (Mt 5:48).

Thus, when we say, "Your will be done", we ask for the grace to observe God's commandments.

Now, God's will is fulfilled in the righteous, but not yet in sinners. The righteous are appointed by heaven and sinners by the earth.

We ask, therefore, that the will of God be done on earth, that is in sinners, as it is done in heaven, in the righteous.

49. - Let us note that Jesus, with the very way of formulating the third request of the "Our Father" gives us a teaching: Jesus does not make us say to our Father: "do your will", nor do we, "that we do your will ", but rather: "Your will be done ".

Indeed, two things are necessary for us to attain eternal life: the grace of God and the will of man.

Although God created man without calling him to cooperate in creation, he does not justify him, however, without his cooperation. "He who created you without you will not justify you without you" says Saint Augustine, in his commentary on Saint John. Indeed, God wants this cooperation from man. Convert to me, and I will convert to you, says He in Zechariah (1,3); and St. Paul wrote: (1 Cor 15, 10) By the grace of God I am what I am and his grace has not been in vain in me.

Do not be presumptuous, but trust in the grace of God; do not neglect your effort, but bring your cooperation.

That is why Jesus does not send us to say "that we do your will", otherwise it would seem that the grace of God has nothing to do. Nor does it prescribe "Do your will", otherwise it would seem that our will and our effort are useless.

But Jesus makes us say: Your will be done, by the grace of God, to which we add our work and our effort.

50. - c) thirdly, God wants us to be restored to the state and dignity in which the first man was created.

Dignity and state so high that his spirit and soul felt no opposition from the flesh and sensitivity.

While the soul was submissive to God, the flesh was submissive to the spirit and so perfectly that it experienced neither the corruption of death nor the alteration of disease and other passions.

But from the moment when the spirit and the soul, which were between God and the flesh, rebelled against God, through sin, the body also rebelled against the soul and began to have diseases and to die, and its sensitivity continuously revolted against the spirit. What makes São Paulo say: (Rm 7,23). I feel another law in my members, which is repugnant to the law of my spirit. E (Gal 5, 17) The flesh has desires against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh. Thus there is an incessant war between the spirit and the flesh; man becomes worse and worse for sin.

God wants man to be restored to his first state, that is, that there is nothing in the flesh that opposes his spirit; what St. Paul expresses in this way (1 Thess 4, 3): For this is the will of God: your sanctification.

51. - Now, this will of God, as far as our body is concerned, cannot be realized in this life. It will take place in the resurrection of the saints, when their bodies will rise again glorious, incorruptible and splendid, according to the Apostle's word (1 Cor 15:43): It is sown in vileness, but the body will be resurrected in glory.

However, God's will is carried out down here, in the spirit of the just, for his justice, science and life. Thus, when we say: "Your will be done", we ask the Lord to do his will in our flesh too.

According to this explanation, in the request, "Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven", the word heaven designates our spirit and the word earth designates our flesh. And the meaning of this request will be: that your will be done on earth, that is, in our flesh, as it is done in heaven, that is, in our spirit, for justice.

52. - This third request brings us to the beatitude of tears, which the Lord made known to us in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5, 5): Blessed are those who mourn, because they will be comforted. It is easy to demonstrate it by returning to the three points of our explanation.

First, God wants for us and makes us want eternal life.

For this love of eternal life, we are moved to shed tears. Woe is me, the psalmist sings, how long my exile is! (Ps 119.5). And this desire for eternal life, among the saints, is so strong that it makes them aspire to death, although in itself it is an object of aversion. We prefer to leave this body and be present in the Lord (2 Cor 5: 8).

Second, those who keep the commandments of God, in order to obey God's will, are also in distress, because if the precepts are sweet to the soul, they are bitter to the flesh, because they mortify it. Speaking of the flesh, and also of their souls, the Psalmist says of the just (Ps 125, 5): They sowed in tears, with joy they will reap.

Third, we speak of the incessant struggle between our flesh and our spirit. This struggle is also the object of our tears. It is impossible that in this fight the soul does not receive some wounds from the flesh, at least from venial sins. The obligation to atone for these faults is a reason for tears. Psalm 6.7: Every night, that is, in the darkness of my sins, I will water my

bed, that is my conscience. Those who cry like that will reach the homeland. May God deign to lead us to it.

### **OUR BREAD OF EACH DAY GIVES US TODAY**

53. - Often, the greatness of science and wisdom makes man shy, and then it is necessary to have strength in the heart, so that man does not get discouraged in the face of needs.

The Lord, says Isaiah (40, 29), gives strength to the tired and strength to those who are weak. And Ezekiel (2, 2) also says: The Spirit has come into me, and has established me on my feet. The Holy Spirit, on the one hand, gives strength to prevent man from fainting with the fear of not having what is necessary, and on the other hand, so that man firmly believes that God will provide him with everything he needs.

Thus the Holy Spirit, the dispenser of this strength, teaches us to say: Give us this day our daily bread. And we call him Spirit of strength.

54. - It is necessary to know, that in the three previous requests of the "Our Father", we ask for spiritual goods, whose possession begins in this world, but will only be perfect in eternal life.

Indeed, when we ask for the sanctification of God's name, we ask that we recognize His holiness; asking for the coming of His kingdom, we ask to attain eternal life; asking for God's will to be done is asking God to fulfill His will in us. All of these goods, partially realized in this world, will only be perfectly realized in eternal life.

It is also necessary to ask God for some indispensable goods, whose perfect possession is possible in the present life. For this reason, the Holy Spirit teaches us to ask for these goods, necessary for the present life and perfectly possessed down here.

At the same time it makes us show that it is God who provides for our temporal needs, when we say: "Give us today our daily bread".

55. - In these words, Jesus teaches us to avoid the five sins that are usually committed by an immoderate desire for temporal things.

The first of these sins is that man, insatiable, as to the things that suit his state and condition, and driven by an unruly desire, asks for goods that are above his condition. He acts like a soldier who wants to dress like an officer or a clergyman, like a bishop.

This addiction diverts man from spiritual things, because he attaches him excessively to temporal things.

The Lord teaches us to avoid such sin by ordering us to ask only for bread, that is, the goods necessary for each one in this life, according to his particular condition: under the name of "bread", all these goods are included. The Lord did not teach us to ask for delicate, varied and exotic things, but bread, without which man cannot live and which is the common food for all. The essential of man's life, says the Ecclesiastic (29, 28), is water and bread. And the Apostle wrote to Timothy (1,6, 8): So having to support ourselves and covering ourselves, let us be content with that.

56. - A second vice is to commit injustices and fraud in the acquisition of temporal goods.

This is a dangerous addiction, because it is difficult to return stolen goods and, according to Saint Augustine, "such a sin is not forgiven if we do not return what has been stolen".

The Lord teaches us to avoid this addiction, asking for us, not someone else's bread, but ours. Thieves eat other people's bread and not their own.

57. - The third sin is excessive concern for earthly goods. There are people who are never satisfied with what they have and always want more.

Lord, give me neither Poverty nor wealth: give me only what is necessary to live, say the Proverbs (30, 8).

Jesus teaches us to avoid this sin by the words: "Give us each day today", that is, the bread of a single day or a single unit of time.

58. - The fourth vice, caused by the excessive appetite for things here in downtown, consists of an insatiable greed for earthly goods, a real voracity.

They want to consume in one day, which is enough for many days.

They do not ask for the bread of the day, but the bread for ten. Spending without measure, they even dissipate all their goods, according to the word of the Proverbs (23, 21): Spending time drinking and eating they ruin themselves, and according to this other word (Ecl. 19, 1): The worker given wine will not enrich.

59. - Desire unruly in earthly goods engenders a fifth sin, ingratitude.

This is the deplorable vice of man who is proud of his riches and does not recognize that he owes them to God, author of all spiritual and temporal goods, according to the word of David (I Par. 29, 14): Yours is everything and the we received from your hand.

To dispel this addiction and to fix that all these goods come from God, Jesus makes us say: Give us our bread.

60. - We take the lesson from experience and from the Holy Scriptures regarding the dangerous and harmful character of riches.

How many times you have great wealth and you don't use it, but on the contrary, spiritual and temporal ills.

There are men who die because of their wealth. There is still an evil that I have seen under the sun, says Ecclesiastes (6, 1-2), and certainly ordinary among men: a man to whom God gave wealth, goods and honor; nothing is missing from his soul of everything he may desire, and God did not grant him the power to enjoy these goods, but a strange man will come to devour his wealth. And Ecclesiastes says (5, 12): There is still another very bad disease under the sun: the wealth accumulated to the detriment of its owner.

We must therefore ask God that our riches are useful to us. When we say: "Give us our bread", that is what we ask, that our goods are useful to us and that what is written with the evil man should not be verified with us (Jn 20, 14,15): the bread, in its entrails, will become gall of aspids. He will vomit up the riches he has devoured and God will bring them out of his bowels.

61 - Returning to the addiction of an excessive solicitude in relation to earthly goods, we see men who are concerned today with the bread of a whole year, and if they get to possess it, they do not stop tormenting themselves. But the Lord says to them (Mt 6: 31): Do not worry, therefore, saying, what will we eat or what will we drink or what will we wear? God also teaches us to ask for our bread for today, that is, what is necessary for the present moment.

62. - In addition to bread, there is food for the body, two other qualities of bread. The sacramental bread and that of the word of God.

In Sunday Prayer we also ask for our sacramental bread which is prepared every day in the Church and which we receive as a sacrament, as a pledge of our salvation.

Jesus declared to the Jews (Jn 6,5): I am the living Bread that came down from heaven. - Whoever eats this bread and drinks the Lord's cup unworthily, eats and drinks condemnation for himself (1 Cor 11:29).

We also ask in Sunday Prayer for this other bread that is the word and God. Jesus said of this bread (Mt 4: 4): Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.

We therefore ask you to give us bread, that is, the Word of God, from which comes the bliss of hunger and thirst for justice for man.

The more spiritual goods we have, the more we desire and this desire whets the appetite and hunger, which will be satisfied in eternal life.

### **FORGIVE OUR DEBTS AS WELL WE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS**

64. - We find men of great wisdom and strength, but those who trust in their own strength do not work with wisdom or carry to the end what they set out to do. They seem to ignore that the advice gives strength to the reflections. As the Proverbs teaches (20, 18).

But let us note that the Holy Spirit who gives strength, also gives advice; for any good advice concerning man's salvation can only come from the Holy Spirit.

Advice is necessary for man, when he suffers tribulations, as well as the advice of the doctor, when he is ill. When a man is spiritually ill from sin, he should ask for advice. And Daniel



shows that advice is necessary to the sinner, when he says to King Nebuchadnezzar (Dan 4: 24): Follow, the king, the advice that I give you, redeem your sins with alms.

The advice to give alms and to be merciful is excellent for blotting out sins. That is why the Holy Spirit teaches sinners this prayer asking: Forgive our debts, just as we forgive our debtors.

Furthermore, we truly owe to God what He is entitled to and which we refuse Him. Now, God's right requires us to do His will, preferring it to our will. We therefore offend your right when we prefer our will to yours, and this is sin. So sins are our debts to God. And the Holy Spirit advises us to ask God for the forgiveness of our sins and that is why we say: Forgive our debts.

65. - On these words we can make three considerations:

a) First, why do we make this request?

b) Second, when will it be carried out?

c) Third, what must we do to make God carry out our request?

a) From the first, we learn two necessary teachings for man in this life.

One, that man should always fear God and be humble. There are those who are presumptuous enough to say that we can live in this world in order to avoid sin. But this was not given to anyone, except to Christ who possesses the Spirit in all its fullness; and to the Blessed Virgin, full of grace and immaculate, of which Saint Augustine used to say: «Of this (Virgin) I do not want to make the slightest mention when I speak of sin». But no other saint was allowed not to fall into sin, or at least not to incur any venial sin.

In his Epistle, St. John says: If we say that we are without sin, we deceive ourselves, and there is no truth in us. (I, 1.8).

And this is all proven by the order itself. We therefore affirm that the Holy Father should say to everyone, holy or not, with the request: Forgive our debts. Therefore, each man recognizes himself and confesses to being a sinner and undoubtedly a debtor. If therefore you are a sinner, you must fear and humble yourself.

The other teaching is that we always live in hope. Even though we are sinners, we must not despair. Despair leads us to other and more serious sins, as the Apostle tells us (Eph 4:19): Despairing, they gave themselves up to dissolution and all manner of impurities.

It is therefore very useful that we always hope. Man, however sinful he may be, must always expect God's forgiveness, if his repentance is true, if he has been converted perfectly.

Now this hope is strengthened in us when we ask: Our Father, forgive our debts.

67. - The Navatini heretics denied this hope, saying that whoever sins after baptism does not attain mercy. Now, this is not true, if what Christ says is true (Mt 18:32): I have forgiven the entire debt, because you asked me.

Thus, on any day you ask, you will be able to obtain mercy, if you pray repenting for having sinned.

If, therefore, through this request, fear and hope are born and every contrite sinner reaches mercy, we conclude how much it is necessary to do.

68. - b) As for the second consideration, it must be remembered that, in sin, there are two elements present: guilt, for which God is offended, and the punishment due for the offense.

Now, the lack is remitted by contrition, if it is accompanied by the purpose of confessing and satisfying it. The Psalmist declares (Ps 31: 5): I said: I will confess to the Lord against my injustice; and you have forgiven me the wickedness of my sin.

As we said, if the contrition of sins, for the purpose of confessing them, is sufficient to obtain their remission, the sinner must not despair.

69. - But someone can object: if the contrition of sin redeems guilt, why is confession to the priest necessary?

We will answer this question: God, by contrition, redeems sin, changing eternal punishment into temporal punishment; the contrite sinner is subjected to temporal punishment, so if the sinner dies without confession, not because he despised it, but because death surprised him,

he will go to purgatory where, according to Saint Augustine, he will suffer greatly. However, when confessing you, the priest absolves you from the temporal penalty by the power of the keys, to which you submit in confession; for Christ said to the Apostles (Jn, 20, 22, 23): Receive the Holy Spirit; those who forgive sins will be forgiven and those who retain them will be retained. Thus, when you confess once, some part of the penalty is forgiven and likewise, when you repeat the confession or confess, as many times as necessary, it will be totally forgiven.

70. - The successors of the Apostles found another way to redeem the temporal penalty: for the benefit of indulgences. For those who live in charity, indulgences have the value that the Pope can confer on them.

When the saints do good works, without having sinned, at least mortally, these works are useful for the Church. In the same way, the merits of Christ and the Blessed Virgin are gathered as a treasure. The Sovereign Pontiff and those to whom he has entrusted such care, can apply these merits, wherever there is more need.

Thus, therefore, sins are remitted, in terms of lack, through contrition, and in terms of penalty, by confession and indulgences.

71. - c) As for the third consideration: what must we do so that God can fulfill our request, God requires, on our part, that we forgive others for the offenses he has done to us. That is why it makes us say: just as we forgive our debtors. If we do otherwise, God will not forgive us.

The Ecclesiastical (28, 2-5) tells us: Forgive your neighbor for the evil that has done you and at your request, your sins will be forgiven you. Does the man guard his anger at another man and ask God for medicine? Have you no compassion for a man of your kind, and ask for forgiveness of your sins? Being flesh, does it hold a grudge and ask for atonement from God? Who will reach you for your crimes? Forgive, (Lk 6:37), and you will be forgiven.

That is why in this fifth request of the Father in Our Lord, the Lord places a single condition on us: forgive the other. If we don't, we will not be forgiven.

72. - But we could say: I will say the first words of the request, namely: forgive our debts, but not the last ones: how we forgive our debtors.

Do you want to deceive Christ? But you will certainly not deceive. Christ composed this prayer and remembers it well; how can you deceive him?

Therefore, if you say with your mouth, ratify with your heart.

73. - But, we ask, he who does not have the purpose of forgiving his neighbor must say: Just as we forgive our debtors?

It seems not, because I would be lying.

But I answer that I would not be lying, because he is not praying in his name, but in the name of the Church, which is not mistaken. That is why this request was put in the plural.

74. - We need to know that there are two ways to forgive others. The first is that of the perfect, which leads the offended to look for the offenders, as the Psalmist says: (Ps 33, 15): Seek peace.

The second way of forgiving is common to all, it is everyone's obligation; it is nothing more than to forgive those who ask for forgiveness, as the ecclesiastic says; (28, 2) Forgive your neighbor for the evil he has done to you and at your request your sins will be forgiven you.

75. - Blessed are the merciful, it is the fruit of this fifth request. Because it leads us to have mercy towards others.

#### **AND DON'T LET US FALL IN TEMPTATION**

76. - There are sinners who wish to obtain the forgiveness of their sins; they confess and do penance, but do not apply as they should, lest they fall into sin. They are inconsequential with themselves, for they cry and repent of their sins, and then fall into the same sins again and thus accumulate a reason for future tears. In this regard, says the Lord in Isaiah: (1, 16) Wash yourselves, purify yourselves, remove the malignancy of your thoughts from before my eyes: stop doing evil.

That is why Christ, as we said, teaches us, in the previous request, to implore the forgiveness of our sins and in this, the grace to avoid sin by saying: and do not let us fall into temptation, for it is truly the temptation that induces us to sin.

77. - In this request, three questions attract our attention: a) What is temptation?

b) How and by whom is the man tempted?

c) How do you get rid of temptation?

78. - a) What is temptation?

Trying does not mean more than: to test. Thus, tempting man is a test of his virtue. The temptation can be in two ways, according to the requirements of human virtue. One, as to the perfection of the work, and the other, that man should keep himself from all evil. This is what the Psalmist says: (Ps 33, 15) Avoid evil and do good.

The virtue of man will therefore be a trial, both from the point of view of the excellence of acting, and of his removal from evil.

79. - If you are tested to know, if you are ready to do good, such as fasting, and you are effectively ready for good, great is your virtue.

In this way God proves man, not because He does not know his virtue, but so that everyone may know him and have him as an example. In this way God tempted Abraham (Gen. 22) and Job. That is why God sends tribulations to the righteous; if they endure with patience, their virtue is manifest and they progress in virtue. The Lord your God is tempting you to make it manifest whether you love him or not, Moses said to the Hebrews (Deut 13: 3). Therefore God tempts man, provoking him to do good.

80. - The second way to try man's virtue is to incite him to evil. And if man resists strongly and does not consent, his virtue is great, but if he does not resist, where is his virtue?

God never tempts man in this way, for Saint James tells us: (1, 13): Nobody, when tempted, say that God is the one who tempts him, because He is unable to try for evil. But it is the flesh itself, the devil and the world that tempt man.

81. - b) How and by whom is the man tempted?

The flesh tempts man in two ways.

First, by instigating man to evil, by seeking carnal pleasures, which are always an occasion for sin. Whoever remains in carnal enjoyment neglects spiritual things. Saint James tells us: Each one is tempted by his own lust that draws and seduces him (Jas 1:14).

Second, the flesh tempts us, deviating from the good. For the spirit, by itself, is always delighted with spiritual goods; but the weight of the flesh entered the spirit. The body that corrupts makes the soul heavy, says the Book of Wisdom (9, 15) and Saint Paul writes to the Romans (7, 22): For I delight in the law of God, according to the inner man; I feel, however, in my members another law, which is repugnant to the law of my spirit and which binds me to the law of sin, which is in my members.

This temptation of the flesh is very strong because the flesh, our enemy, is linked to us. And as Boethius said, "No plague is as harmful as a familiar enemy." That is why it is necessary to be vigilant against the flesh. Watch and pray, lest you fall into temptation. (Mt 26, 41).

82. - Now, once the flesh is subdued, another enemy appears, the devil, against whom our struggle is enormous. São Paulo tells us: (Eph 6, 12) - we do not have to fight against flesh and blood alone, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of darkness, against the spirits of malice, scattered in the air . Whence the devil is expressly called the tempter, as Saint Paul shows us: (1 Thes 3,5): The one who tries has not tempted you.

The devil acts cunningly in temptations. Just as an army general, besieging a fortress, considers the weak points he wants to attack, the devil considers where the man is weakest to tempt him there. And that is why he tries it in the vices to which the man, subjugated by the flesh, is more inclined, such as the vice of anger, pride and other spiritual vices. Your adversary, the devil, like a roaring lion, walks around you, looking for whom to devour, Saint Peter tells us. (1 Pd 5, 8).

83. - The devil uses his tactics in his temptations. In the first moment of temptation, it does not propose to man anything declared bad, but something that still has the appearance of good. So, at first, it slightly deviates man from his general inner orientation, enough to then easily lead him to sin. About this the Apostle writes to the Corinthians: (2 Cor 11:14): Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.

After having induced man to sin, arrest him for not allowing him to be freed from his faults. So the devil does two things: he deceives man and keeps him deceived in his sin.

84. - The world in turn tempts us in two ways. First of all, for an excessive desire for temporal things. Cupidity is the root of all evils, says the Apostle (Tm 6, 10).

Second, the world incites us to evil for fear of persecution and tyrants. We are surrounded by darkness (Jn 37, 19) For all who want to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution, writes St. Paul (2 Tim 3: 12). And the Lord recommends to his disciples: (Mt 10, 20) Do not be afraid of those who kill the body.

85. - c) So far we have shown what temptation is and how man is tempted. Let us now see how man gets rid of temptation.

It is necessary to note that Christ taught us not to ask not to be tempted, but not to fall into temptation. Indeed, it is in overcoming temptation that man deserves the crown of glory.

(cf. 1 Cor 9,25); (Pd 5, 4) That is why St. James (1, 2) declares: My brothers, take into account the greatest joy you experience through various temptations. And the Ecclesiasticus warns us: (2, 1): Son, when you enter the service of God ... prepare your soul for temptation. Saint James says (1, 12) Blessed is the man who endures temptation; because after being tested, you will receive the crown of life.

So Jesus teaches us to ask the Father not to fall into temptation, giving our consent. Saint Paul tells us: (1 Cor 10, 13) No temptation has come upon you, which is not human. To be tempted is human, but to consent is to have a part with the devil.

86. - They may object: since Christ explicitly said: I did not lead us into temptation, that is, do not make us fall into temptation, it must not be deduced from that, that it is God himself, more than the devil, who actively pushes for evil?

I answer thus: It is because it allows evil and does not raise an obstacle against it that God, so to speak, leads man to do evil. Thus God will be said to induce man into temptation, when he withdraws his grace from him, because of the countless previous sins of this man; which will have the effect of making man fall into a new and worse sin. In order to be preserved from this evil, the Psalmist asks God in his prayer: (Ps 70, 90): When my strength fails, do not forsake me.

On the other hand, thanks to the fervor of charity, given by God, man is helped in such a way that he is not induced into temptation in the above sense (n ° 82, 83). Charity, however small, resists any sin. The many waters could not extinguish charity, says the Song of Songs (8, 7).

Just as God directs us by the light of intelligence, so by intelligence he shows us the works that we must do. According to Aristotle, every sinner is an ignorant. The Lord says (Ps 31: 8): Intelligence will give you and instruct you on this path. And David asks for this light, to act well (Ps 12: 4-5): Light my eyes, so that I never sleep in death. Lest my enemy say: I prevailed against him.

87. - This light comes to us through the Gift of Intelligence.

If we refuse our consent to temptation, we keep the purity of heart sanctified by Jesus: (Mt 5, 8): Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God; and we will come to the vision of God.

May God lead her effectively.

**BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL. AMEN**

88. - In previous requests, the Lord teaches us to implore the forgiveness of sins and shows us how to escape temptations. Here he teaches us to ask that we be preserved from evil.

This is a general request. According to Saint Augustine, it aims at different kinds of evils: sins, diseases, afflictions. We have already talked about sin and temptation; it remains for us

to deal with the other categories of evils: all the adversities and afflictions of this world. God delivers us from them in four ways.

89. - In the first place, God frees man from afflictions, away from him; which it rarely does. In this world, the saints are afflicted. All who want to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution, says São Paulo. (2 Tm 3, 12).

However, at times, God allows some not to be afflicted.

When God knows that a person cannot stand the test, he acts like a doctor who avoids giving violent medicine to a very ill patient.

Behold, says the Lord, (Ap 3,8) that I have set before you an open door that no one can close. In the heavenly homeland it is a general law that no one is afflicted. It is in Revelation: (7, 16-17) They will no longer be hungry or thirsty, nor will the sun or heat fall on them. For the Lamb, who is in the midst of the throne, will guard them and lead them to the springs of the waters of life, and God will wipe every tear from their eyes.

90. - Second, God delivers us from evil, sending us consolations in the time of afflictions. Without divine consolations, man cannot survive in the midst of trials. St. Paul tells us: (2 Cor 1, 8) We were treated badly beyond measure, in addition to our strengths, and adds: (2 Cor 7, 6) God, however, who comforts the humble, comforted us. And the Psalmist sings: (93, 19) According to the many pains that my heart tasted, your consolations rejoiced my soul.

91. - Thirdly, God accumulates the afflicted with so many benefits that they forget their ills. After the storm comes the calm, said Tobias (3, 32). So we must not fear the afflictions and tribulations of the world, which are easily endured because of the consolations that God mixes with them and also because of their short duration. Says São Paulo (2 Cor 4, 17) The slight tribulation of the present moment prepares for us an eternal weight of glory, beyond any measure. For it is the tribulation that makes us attain eternal life.

92. - Fourth - and to extend the idea of evil to all evils (n ° 88) - God takes good from all evils, temptations and tribulations.

Jesus does not make us say: deliver us from tribulation, but: deliver us from the risk of the evil that these tribulations bring.

Indeed, tribulations are given to the saints, for their good, so that they deserve the crown of glory. That is why, instead of asking to be released from tribulations, the saints make the Apostle's words their own: (Rom. 5: 3) We not only glory in the hope and glory of God, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulations produce patience. And repeat the prayer of Tobias: (3, 13) Blessed be your name, O God of our fathers, who in the time of distress, forgive the sins of those who call on you.

Thus God frees man from evil and tribulation, transforming evil into good, which is the sign of the greatest wisdom, since, in effect, it belongs to the wise to order evil for good. God achieves this goal, giving man patience in tribulations. The other virtues use goods, but patience is the only one that takes advantage of evils. They are the ones who make it necessary and that is why their need only appears in the midst of evils, that is, in adversity.

We read in Proverbs: (19, 11) Man's wisdom is known for his patience, which makes him order evil for good.

93. - That is why the Holy Spirit, through the gift of Wisdom, makes us address this request to the Father. Thanks to this gift, we will achieve bliss, for which peace commands us. In fact, patience ensures peace, in adversity. That is why the peacemakers are called children of God, because they are similar to God. To them, as to God, nothing can disturb, neither prosperity nor adversity. Blessed are the peaceful, for they will be called children of God. (Mt 5, 9).

94. - Amen is the general reaffirmation of all seven requests for Sunday Prayer.

## **RESUME**

95. - To get an overview of Sunday Prayer, just know that it contains everything we should desire and everything we need to escape and avoid.

Now, among the desirable goods, the most desired is also the most loved. For this reason, in our first request: hallowed be your name, we ask for the glory of God.

From God you expect for yourselves three goods.

The first is the eternal life that you ask for when you say: Thy kingdom come.

The second is that you do the will of God and his justice, and ask for it saying: your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

The third good is to have the things necessary for your life, and you ask for them like this: give us our daily bread today.

Of these three objects of our desires that are: - the kingdom of God or eternal life; - the will of God and his justice; - the goods necessary for the life of this land, the Lord speaks to us saying: (Mt 6, 33): seek the kingdom of God and his justice and the rest will be given to you in addition!

This corresponds exactly to the three objects of our desires, listed above and requested in the second, third and fourth orders of Sunday Prayer.

We also said that the Our Father contains everything that we must flee and avoid. We must flee and avoid everything that is contrary to good. The good is what we want first of all. There are four goods we desire: The first is the glory of God. Good that no evil is against. The book of Job tells us: (35, 6) If you sin in what way will you harm God? And if your offenses multiply, what will you do against Him?

Furthermore, if you act justly, what will you give him? Indeed, the glory of God results from the punishment of evil and the reward of good.

The second good, the object of our desires, is eternal life. It opposes sin, because through sin we lose eternal life. Also to remove sin we say: Forgive our debts, just as we forgive our debtors.

The third good is justice and good works. Temptation is opposed to one and the other, because it prevents us from doing good. To remove it, we say: and do not let us fall into temptation.

The fourth well are the things necessary for our earthly life. And these are adversities and temptations contrary, so we ask to remove them: Deliver us from evil. AMEN.

## **THE ANGELIC GREETING**

### **PROLOGUE**

1. - The angelic greeting is divided into three parts: The first, composed by the Angel: Ave, full of grace, the Lord is with you, blessed are you among women. (Lk 1, 28).

The second is the work of Isabel, mother of John the Baptist, who said: Blessed is the fruit of your womb.

The third part, the Church added: Maria The Angel did not say: Ave Maria but yes, Ave, Full of grace. But this name of Mary, in fact, harmonizes with the words of the Angel, as we will see later.

### **BIRD**

2. - In ancient times, the appearance of Angels to men was an event of great importance and men felt extremely honored to be able to witness their veneration to Angels.

Sacred Scripture praises Abraham for giving hospitality to the Angels and for having revered them.

But an Angel bowed before a human creature, he had never been heard before the Angel had greeted the Blessed Virgin, reverencing her and saying: Hail.

3. - In ancient times, man revered the Angel and the Angel did not revere man, it is because the Angel is greater than man and he is for three different reasons: First, the Angel is superior to man because of his spiritual nature.

It is written: Of the spiritual beings God made his Angels. (Ps 103).

4. - Man has a corruptible nature and that is why Abraham said to God: (Gen 18, 27) I will speak to my Lord, I who am ash and dust.

The spiritual and incorruptible creature should not pay homage to the corruptible creature.

Second, the Angel surpasses man because of his familiarity with God.

Indeed, the Angel belongs to the family of God, standing at his feet. Thousands of thousands of Angels served him, and ten thousands of hundreds of thousands stood in his presence, it is written in Daniel (7, 10).

But man is almost foreign to God, like an exile away from his face for sin, as the Psalmist says: (54, 8) Fleeing, I turned away from God.

It is therefore fitting for man to honor the Angel because of his proximity to divine majesty and his intimacy with her.

Third, the Angel was elevated above man, by the fullness of the splendor of the divine grace that he possesses. The Angels participate in the divine light itself in the most perfect plenitude. Can the soldiers of God be enumerated, says Job (25, 3) and will there be any on whom no light is raised? That is why Angels always appear luminous. But men also participate in this light, albeit sparingly and as in a chiaroscuro.

Consequently, it was not appropriate for the Angel to bow down before man until the day when a human creature appeared that surpassed the Angels by their fullness of grace (cf n ° 5 to 10), by their familiarity with God (cf. No. 10) and for their dignity.

This human creature was the blessed Virgin Mary. To recognize this superiority, the Angel witnessed his veneration for this word: Ave.

### **FULL OF GRACE**

5. - First, the Blessed Virgin surpassed all Angels for her fullness of grace, and to manifest this preeminence Archangel Gabriel bowed before her, saying: full of grace; which means: I worship you, because you surpass me by your full grace.

6. - It is also said of the Blessed Virgin that she is full of grace, in three perspectives: First, her soul has all the fullness of grace. God gives grace to do good and to avoid evil. And in this double aspect, the Blessed Virgin had grace perfectly, because she was the one who best avoided sin, after Christ.

Sin is either original or actual; deadly or venial.

The Virgin was preserved from original sin, from the first moment of her conception and always remained exempt from mortal or venial sin.

It is also written in the Song of Songs: (4, 7) You are beautiful, my friend, and there is no spot on you.

With the exception of the Holy Virgin, says Saint Augustine, in his book on nature and grace; all the saints in their earthly life, faced with the question: are you without sin? they would have shouted with one voice: If we said: we are without sin (cf. 1, Jn 1, 6), we would be deceiving ourselves and the truth would not be with us ».

The holy Virgin is the only exception. To honor the Lord, when it comes to sin, never mention the Holy Virgin. We know that she was given an abundance of greater graces to completely triumph over sin. She deserved to conceive the One who was not tainted by any fault.

But Christ surpassed the Blessed Virgin. Undoubtedly, both were conceived and were born without original sin. But Maria, unlike her Son, is legally submissive. And if it was, in fact, totally preserved, it was by a grace and a unique privilege of Almighty God that is due to the merits of his Son, Jesus Christ, Savior of mankind. (NT).

7. - The Virgin also performed the works of all virtues. The other saints stand out for some virtues, among many. This one was humble, the one was chaste, the other, merciful, that is why they are presented as a model for this or that particular virtue; as, for example, Saint Nicholas appears as a model of mercy.

But the Blessed Virgin is the model and the example of all virtues. In it you will find the model of humility. Listen to his words: (Lk 1, 38) This is the Lord's slave. And more (Lk 1, 48): The Lord looked at his servant's humility. She is also the model of chastity: she herself confesses that she has never met a man (cf. Lk 1:43). As is easy to see, Mary is the model of all virtues.

The Blessed Virgin is therefore full of grace, both because she does good and because she avoids evil.

8. - Secondly, the fullness of grace of the Holy Virgin is manifested in the reflection of the grace of her soul, on her flesh and her whole body.

It is already a great happiness that the saints enjoy sufficient grace for the sanctification of their souls. But the soul of the Blessed Virgin Mary has such a fullness of grace, that this grace of her soul reflects on her flesh, which, in turn, conceives the Son of God.

Because the love of the Holy Spirit, Hugo de São Vitor tells us, burns in the Virgin's heart with a singular ardor, He works wonders in his flesh so great that a Man God was born from her, as the Angel warns the Holy Virgin: (Lc 1, 35) A holy Son will be born of you and will be called Son of God.

9. - Thirdly, the Blessed Virgin is full of grace, to the point of spreading her fullness of grace over all men.

That every saint has enough grace for the salvation of many men is a considerable thing. But if a saint were endowed with a grace capable of saving all mankind, he would enjoy an abundance of unsurpassed grace. Now, this fullness of grace exists in Christ and the Blessed Virgin.

In all dangers, we can get help from this glorious Virgin.

The husband sings in the Song of Songs: (4, 4) Your neck is like the tower of David, built with its ramparts. A thousand escudos are pending, that is, a thousand remedies against the dangers.

We can also benefit from your help in all virtuous actions. In me there is all the hope of life and virtue (Ecl 24, 25).

### **MARIA**

10. - The Virgin, full of grace, surpassed the Angels, for her fullness of grace. And for this reason it is called Mary, that is to say, enlightened from within, from where Isaiah said: (58, 11) The Lord will fill your soul with splendors. It also means: illuminating others, across the universe; therefore, Mary is rightly compared to the sun and the moon.

### **THE LORD IS WITH YOU**

11. - Second, the Virgin overcomes the Angels in her intimacy with the Lord. Archangel Gabriel recognizes this superiority when he speaks these words to him: The Lord is with you, that is, I venerate you and I confess that you are closer to God than I am myself. The Lord is indeed with you.

The Lord Father is with Mary, for He is in no way separated from her Son and Mary has this Son, like no other creature, even angelic. God sent to Mary, through Archangel Gabriel (Lk 1, 35) A holy child will be born of you and will be called Son of God.

The Lord is with Mary, for she rests in her bosom. Better than any other creature, these words of Isaiah apply to Mary: (12, 6) Rejoice and praise, house of Zion, because the Great, the Holy One of Israel is among you.

The Lord does not dwell in the same way with the Blessed Virgin and with the Angels. God is with Mary, as her Son; with the Angels, God dwells as Lord.

The Holy Spirit is in Mary, as in her temple, where she operates. The archangel announced to him: (Lk 1, 35) The Holy Spirit will come upon you. So, Mary conceived by the effect of the Holy Spirit and we call her "Temple of the Lord", "Sanctuary of the Holy Spirit". (cf. liturgy of the feasts of Our Lady).

Therefore, the Blessed Virgin enjoys a greater intimacy with God than the angelic creature.

With her is the Lord Father, the Lord Son, the Lord Holy Spirit, the entire Holy Trinity. That is why the Church sings: "You are worthy throne of the whole Trinity".

This, then, is the noblest word, the most expressive, as praise, that we can address to the Virgin.

### **MARIA**



12. - Therefore, the Angel revered the Blessed Virgin, as mother of the Sovereign Lord and, thus, herself as Sovereign. Maria's name, in Syriac, means sovereign, which suits her perfectly.

13. - Third, the Virgin surpassed the Angels in purity.

Not only did she possess purity in herself, she sought purity for others.

She was pure from all guilt, since she was preserved from original sin and did not commit any mortal or venial sin, as she was also free from all penalty.

#### **BENDITA YOU ARE AMONG WOMEN**

14. - Three curses were pronounced by God against men, because of original sin.

The first was against the woman, who would bring her son in suffering and give birth in pain. But the Blessed Virgin is not subject to these penalties. She conceived the Savior without corruption, brought him joyfully into her bosom and had him in joy. Isaiah's word applies to her: (35, 2) The earth will germinate, rejoice, sing praises.

15. - The second curse was pronounced against man (Gen 3: 9): You will eat your bread with the sweat of your face.

The Blessed Virgin was exempt from this penalty. As the Apostle says (1 Cor 7, 32-34): Let virgins be free of care and take care only of the Lord.

The third curse was common to both men and women. Because of it they must both return to dust.

The Blessed Virgin of this was also preserved, since she was taken with the body to the heavens. We believe that, after being dead, she was resurrected and raised to heaven. The words of Psalm 131, 8 also apply very appropriately to her: Arise, Lord, enter your rest; you and the ark of your sanctification.

MARY The Virgin was thus exempt from all curse and blessed among women. She is the one who suppresses the curse, brings blessing and opens the doors of paradise.

Thus, the name of Mary, which means "Star of the sea", also suits her. Just as navigators are led by the starfish to the port, so, by Mary, are Christians led to Glory.

#### **BENDITO IS THE FRUIT OF YOUR WOMAN**

18. - The sinner seeks in creatures what he cannot find, but the righteous obtains it. The wealth of sinners is reserved for the righteous, say the Proverbs (13, 22). So Eva looked for the fruit, without finding in it the satisfaction of her desires. The Blessed Virgin, on the contrary, found in her fruit everything that Eve desired.

19. - Eve, in fact, desired three things from her fruit: First, the deification of Adam and herself and the knowledge of good and evil, as the devil had falsely promised: You will be like gods (Genesis 3: 5), said the liar to them. The devil lied, because he is a liar and the father of lies (cf. Jn 8:44). And because Eve ate the fruit, instead of becoming like God, she became dissimilar. For her sin, she turned away from God, her salvation, and was cast out of paradise.

The Blessed Virgin, on the contrary, found her deification in the fruit of her entrails. Through Christ we unite with God and become like Him. Saint John tells us: (1 John 3, 2) When God is revealed, we will be like Him, because we will see Him as He is.

20. - Secondly, Eva desired delight (cf. Gen 3: 6), but she did not find it in the fruit and immediately knew that she was naked and pain entered her life.

On the contrary, in the fruit of the Virgin, we find softness and salvation. Whoever eats my flesh has eternal life (Jn 6, 55).

21. - Finally, the fruit of Eve was seductive in appearance, but how much more beautiful is the fruit of the Virgin that the Angels themselves wish to contemplate (cf. 1 Pet 1: 12). He is the most beautiful of the sons of men (Ps 44, 3), because he is the splendor of his Father's glory (Heb 1, 3) as S.

Paulo.

Therefore, Eve could not find in her fruit what no sinner will find in her sin.

We will find, however, everything we desire in the fruit of the Virgin.

Let us seek him out.

22. - The fruit of the Virgin Mary is blessed by God, who so filled him with graces that his simple coming already makes us pay homage to God. Blessed be God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who blessed us with all the spiritual blessing in Christ, says St. Paul (Eph 1, 3).

The fruit of the Virgin is blessed by the Angels. Revelation (7, 11) shows us the Angels falling face down and worshiping Christ with his songs: Praise, glory, wisdom, thanksgiving, honor, power and strength to our God through the centuries.

Amen.

The fruit of Mary is also blessed by men: Every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father, says the Apostle (Phil 2: 11). And the Psalmist (Ps 117, 26) greets him like this: Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Thus, the Virgin is blessed, but even more, it is her fruit.