

THE LORD'S PRAYER
'Hallowed be thy name'
Texts from the
Catechism of the Catholic Church

THE SEVEN PETITIONS

The Holy Spirit inspires seven petitions, seven blessings

After we have placed ourselves in the presence of God our Father to adore and to love and to bless him, the Spirit of adoption stirs up in our hearts seven petitions, seven blessings. The first three, more theological, draw us toward the glory of the Father; the last four, as ways toward him, commend our wretchedness to his grace. "Deep calls to deep." (Ps 42:7) (2803)

The first series of three petitions - concerning God himself

The first series of petitions carries us toward him, for his own sake: *thy name, thy kingdom, thy will!* It is characteristic of love to think first of the one whom we love. In none of the three petitions do we mention ourselves; the burning desire, even anguish, of the beloved Son for his Father's glory seizes us: "hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done..." These three supplications were already answered in the saving sacrifice of Christ, but they are henceforth directed in hope toward their final fulfilment, for God is not yet all in all. (2804)

The second series of petitions - concerning each of us

The second series of petitions unfolds with the same movement as certain Eucharistic *epicleses*: as an offering up of our expectations, that draws down upon itself the eyes of the Father of mercies. They go up from us and concern us from this very moment, in our present world: "give us ... forgive us ... lead us not... deliver us..." The fourth and fifth petitions concern our life as such - to be fed and to be healed of sin; the last two concern our battle for the victory of life - that battle of prayer. (2805)

Faith, hope, and charity

By the three first petitions, we are strengthened in faith, filled with hope and set aflame by charity. Being creatures and still sinners, we have to petition for us, for that "us" bound by the world and history, which we offer to the boundless love of God. For through the name of his Christ and the reign of his Holy Spirit our Father accomplishes his plan of salvation, for us and for the whole world. (2806)

"HALLOWED BE THY NAME"

Praise and thanksgiving - 'to hallow'

The term "to hallow" is to be understood here not primarily in its causative sense (only God hallows, makes holy), but above all in an evaluative sense: to recognise as holy, to treat in a holy way. And so, in adoration, this invocation is sometimes understood as praise and thanksgiving. But this petition is here taught to us by Jesus as an optative: a petition, a desire and an expectation in which God and man are involved.

Beginning with this first petition to our Father, we are immersed in the innermost mystery of his Godhead and the drama of the salvation of our humanity. Asking the Father that his name be made holy draws us into his plan of loving kindness for the fullness of time, "according to his purpose which he set forth in Christ", that we might "be holy and blameless before him in love" (Eph 1: 9,4). (2807)

The revelation of God's name is related to his work

In the decisive moments of his economy God reveals his name, but he does so by accomplishing his work. This work, then, is realised for us and in us only if his name is hallowed by us and in us. (2808)

God gave his name to restore man in his own image

The holiness of God is the inaccessible centre of his eternal mystery. What is revealed of it in creation and history, Scripture calls "glory", the radiance of his majesty. In making man in his image and likeness, God "crowned him with glory and honour", but by sinning, man fell "short of the glory of God". (Ps 8:5; Rom 3:23) From that time on, God was to manifest his holiness by revealing and giving his name, in order to restore man to the image of his Creator. (2809)

God's name given to Moses

In the promise to Abraham, and the oath that accompanied it, God commits himself but without disclosing his name. He begins to reveal it to Moses and makes it known clearly before the eyes of the whole people when he saves them from

the Egyptians: “he has triumphed gloriously” (Ex 15:1). From the covenant of Sinai onwards, this people is "his own" and it is to be a "holy (or “consecrated”: the same word is used for both in Hebrew) nation”, because the name of God dwells in it. (Ex 19:5-6) (2810)

The profanation of God’s name

In spite of the holy Law that again and again their Holy God gives them -“You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy” - and although the Lord shows patience for the sake of his name, the people turn away from the Holy One of Israel and profane his name among the nations.(Ex 20:9) For this reason the just ones of the old covenant, the poor survivors returned from exile, and the prophets burned with passion for the name. (2811)

The holy name of Jesus our Saviour

Finally, in Jesus the name of the Holy God is revealed and given to us, in the flesh, as Saviour, revealed by what he is, by his word, and by his sacrifice. This is the heart of his priestly prayer: “Holy Father... for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be consecrated in truth.” (Jn 17:11, 19) Because he “sanctifies” his own name, Jesus reveals to us the name of the Father. At the end of Christ's Passover, the Father gives him the name that is above all names: “Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil 2:9-11). (2812)

In Baptism we are sanctified in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit

In the waters of Baptism, we have been "washed... sanctified... justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God." Our Father calls us to holiness in the whole of our life, and since "he is the source of [our] life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and...sanctification," (1 Cor 1:30) both his glory and our life depend on the hallowing of his name in us and by us. Such is the urgency of our first petition.

“By whom is God hallowed, since he is the one who hallows? But since he said, ‘You shall be holy to me; for I the LORD am holy,’ we seek and ask that we who were sanctified in Baptism may persevere in what we have begun to be. And we ask this daily, for we need sanctification daily, so that we who fail daily may cleanse away our sins by being sanctified continually... We pray that this sanctification may remain in us.” (St Cyprian) (2813)

Hallowing his name depends on our life and our prayer

The sanctification of his name among the nations depends inseparably on our *life* and our *prayer*:

“We ask God to hallow his name, which by its own holiness saves and makes holy all creation... It is this name that gives salvation to a lost world. But we ask that this name of God should be hallowed in us through our actions. For God's name is blessed when we live well, but is blasphemed when we live wickedly. As the Apostle says: ‘The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.’ We ask then that, just as the name of God is holy, so we may obtain his holiness in our souls.” (St Peter Chrysologus)

“When we say ‘hallowed be thy name,’ we ask that it should be hallowed in us, who are in him; but also in others whom God's grace still awaits, that we may obey the precept that obliges us to pray for everyone, even our enemies. That is why we do not say expressly ‘hallowed be thy name *in us*,’ for we ask that it be so in all men.” (Tertullian) (2814)

Our prayer fulfilled in the priestly prayer of Jesus in his Father’s name

This petition embodies all the others. Like the six petitions that follow, it is fulfilled by the prayer of Christ. Prayer to our Father is our prayer, if it is prayed in the name of Jesus. In his priestly prayer, Jesus asks: “Holy Father, protect in your name those whom you have given me” (Jn 17:11). (2815)

IN BRIEF

- **In the Our Father, the object of the first three petitions is the glory of the Father: the sanctification of his name, the coming of the kingdom and the fulfilment of his will. The four others present our wants to him: they ask that our lives be nourished, healed of sin and made victorious in the struggle of good over evil. (2857)**
- **By asking “hallowed be thy name” we enter into God's plan, the sanctification of his name - revealed first to Moses and then in Jesus - by us and in us, in every nation and in each man. (2858)**