

THE LORD'S PRAYER
***'Thy kingdom come - Thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven'***
Texts from the
Catechism of the Catholic Church

“THY KINGDOM COME”

The kingdom has come in its fullness in Christ

In the New Testament, the word *basileia* can be translated by "kingship" (abstract noun), "kingdom" (concrete noun) or "reign" (action noun). The Kingdom of God lies ahead of us. It is brought near in the Word incarnate, it is proclaimed throughout the whole Gospel, and it has come in Christ's death and Resurrection. The Kingdom of God has been coming since the Last Supper and, in the Eucharist, it is in our midst. The kingdom will come in glory when Christ hands it over to his Father:

“It may even be... that the Kingdom of God means Christ himself, whom we daily desire to come, and whose coming we wish to be manifested quickly to us. For as he is our resurrection, since in him we rise, so he can also be understood as the Kingdom of God, for in him we shall reign.” (St Cyprian) (2816)

'Come, Lord Jesus'

This petition is '*Marana tha*', the cry of the Spirit and the Bride: 'Come, Lord Jesus'.

“Even if it had not been prescribed to pray for the coming of the kingdom, we would willingly have brought forth this speech, eager to embrace our hope. In indignation the souls of the martyrs under the altar cry out to the Lord: ‘O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell upon the earth?’ For their retribution is ordained for the end of the world. Indeed, as soon as possible, Lord, may your kingdom come!” (Tertullian) (2817)

We look to the time when Christ will come again

In the Lord's Prayer, "thy kingdom come" refers primarily to the final coming of the reign of God through Christ's return. But, far from distracting the Church from her mission in this present world, this desire commits her to it all the more strongly. Since Pentecost, the coming of that Reign is the work of the Spirit of the Lord who "complete[s] his work on earth and brings us the fullness of grace." (Euch. Pr. 4) (2818)

A reminder of the coming of the Holy Spirit

"The kingdom of God [is] righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." (Rom 14:9) The end-time in which we live is the age of the outpouring of the Spirit. Ever since Pentecost, a decisive battle has been joined between "the flesh" and the Spirit.

“Only a pure soul can boldly say: ‘Thy kingdom come’. One who has heard Paul say, ‘Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies’, and has purified himself in action, thought and word will say to God: ‘Thy kingdom come!’” (St Cyril of Jerusalem) (2819)

We seek a kingdom of justice and peace on earth

By a discernment according to the Spirit, Christians have to distinguish between the growth of the Reign of God and the progress of the culture and society in which they are involved. This distinction is not a separation. Man's vocation to eternal life does not suppress, but actually reinforces, his duty to put into action in this world the energies and means received from the Creator to serve justice and peace. (2820)

This petition is the prayer of Jesus in the Eucharist

This petition is taken up and granted in *the prayer of Jesus* which is present and effective in the Eucharist; it bears its fruit in new life in keeping with the Beatitudes. (2821)

“THY WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN”

A command of love and salvation

Our Father “desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim 2: 3-4). He "is forbearing toward you, not wishing that any should perish." (2 Pet 3:9) His commandment is "that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another." (Jn 13:34) This commandment summarises all the others, and expresses his entire will. (2822)

Our prayer is that God's plan in Christ be fulfilled

"He has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ... to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will." (Eph 1: 9-11)
We ask insistently for this loving plan to be fully realised on earth as it is already in heaven. (2823)

Jesus came to carry out the Father's will

In Christ, and through his human will, the will of the Father has been perfectly fulfilled once for all. Jesus said on entering into this world: "Lo, I have come to do your will, O God." (Heb 10:7) Only Jesus can say: "I always do what is pleasing to him." (Jn 8:29) In the prayer of his agony, he consents totally to this will: "not my will, but yours, be done." (Lk 22:42) For this reason Jesus "gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father." (Gal 1:4) "And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." (Heb 10:10) (2824)

With Jesus we ask to obey the Father with the power of the Holy Spirit

"Although he was a Son, [Jesus] learned obedience through what he suffered." How much more reason have we sinful creatures to learn obedience - we who in him have become children of adoption. We ask our Father to unite our will to his Son's, in order to fulfil his will, his plan of salvation for the life of the world. We are radically incapable of this, but united with Jesus and with the power of his Holy Spirit, we can surrender our will to him and decide to choose what his Son has always chosen: to do what is pleasing to the Father.

"In committing ourselves to [Christ], we can become one spirit with him, and thereby accomplish his will, in such wise that it will be perfect on earth as it is in heaven." (Origen)

"Consider how [Jesus Christ] teaches us to be humble, by making us see that our virtue does not depend on our work alone but on grace from on high. He commands each of the faithful who prays to do so universally, for the whole world. For he did not say 'thy will be done in me or in us,' but 'on earth', the whole earth, so that error may be banished from it, truth take root in it, all vice be destroyed on it, virtue flourish on it, and earth no longer differ from heaven". (St John Chrysostom) (2826)

Jesus teaches us to do 'the will of my Father in heaven'

By prayer we can discern "what is the will of God" and obtain the endurance to do it. (Rom 12:12) Jesus teaches us that one enters the kingdom of heaven not by speaking words, but by doing "the will of my Father in heaven." (Mt 7:21) (2826)

The power of the Church's prayer in the Eucharist

"If any one is a worshipper of God and does his will, God listens to him." (Jn 9:31) Such is the power of the Church's prayer in the name of her Lord, above all in the Eucharist. Her prayer is also a communion of intercession with the all-holy Mother of God and all the saints who have been pleasing to the Lord because they willed his will alone:

"It would not be inconsistent with the truth to understand the words, 'Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven,' to mean: 'in the Church as in our Lord Jesus Christ himself'; or 'in the Bride who has been betrothed, just as in the Bridegroom who has accomplished the will of the Father.'" (St Augustine) (2827)

IN BRIEF

- **By the second petition, the Church looks first to Christ's return and the final coming of the Reign of God. It also prays for the growth of the Kingdom of God in the "today" of our own lives. (2859)**
- **In the third petition, we ask our Father to unite our will to that of his Son, so as to fulfil his plan of salvation in the life of the world. (2860)**