

THE LORD'S PRAYER
***'Lead us not into temptation but deliver
us from evil. Amen.'***
Texts from the
Catechism of the Catholic Church

“AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION”

Do not let us yield to temptation

This petition goes to the root of the preceding one, for our sins result from our consenting to temptation; we therefore ask our Father not to "lead" us into temptation. It is difficult to translate the Greek verb used by a single English word: the Greek means both "do not allow us to enter into temptation", and "do not let us yield to temptation". "God cannot be tempted by evil and he himself tempts no one" (Jas 1:13); on the contrary, he wants to set us free from evil. We ask him not to allow us to take the way that leads to sin. We are engaged in the battle "between flesh and spirit"; this petition implores the Spirit of discernment and strength. (2846)

The need for discernment which unmasks the lie of temptation

The Holy Spirit makes us *discern* between trials, which are necessary for the growth of the inner man, and temptation, which leads to sin and death. We must also discern between being tempted, and consenting to temptation. Finally, discernment unmasks the lie of temptation, whose object appears to be good, a "delight to the eyes" and desirable, when in reality its fruit is death.

"God does not want to impose the good, but wants free beings... There is a certain usefulness to temptation. No one but God knows what our soul has received from him, not even we ourselves. But temptation reveals it in order to teach us to know ourselves, and in this way we discover our evil inclinations and are obliged to give thanks for the goods that temptation has revealed to us." (Origen) (2847)

Where your treasure is there will be your heart

"Lead us not into temptation" implies *a decision of the heart*: "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also... No one can serve two masters." (Mt 6: 21, 24) "If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit." (Gal 5: 25) In this assent to the Holy Spirit the Father gives us strength. "No testing has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your strength, but with the temptation will also provide the way of escape, so that you may be able to endure it." (1 Cor 10:13) (2848)

Victory in the battle is only possible through prayer in union with Christ

Such a battle and such a victory become possible only through prayer. It is by his prayer that Jesus vanquishes the tempter, both at the outset of his public mission and in the ultimate struggle of his agony. In this petition to our heavenly Father, Christ unites us to his battle and his agony. He urges us to vigilance of the heart in communion with his own. Vigilance is "custody of the heart," and Jesus prayed for us to the Father: "Keep them in your name." (Jn 17:11) The Holy Spirit constantly seeks to awaken us to keep watch. Finally, this petition takes on all its dramatic meaning in relation to the last temptation of our earthly battle; it asks for final perseverance. "Lo, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is he who is awake." (Rev 16:15) (2849)

“BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL”

Jesus prays to protect us from the Evil One

The last petition to our Father is also included in Jesus' prayer: "I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one." (Jn 17:15) It touches each of us personally, but it is always "we" who pray, in communion with the whole Church, for the deliverance of the whole human family. The Lord's Prayer continually opens us to the range of God's economy of salvation. Our interdependence in the drama of sin and death is turned into solidarity in the Body of Christ, the "communion of saints." (2850)

The Evil One is Satan

In this petition, evil is not an abstraction, but refers to a person, Satan, the Evil One, the angel who opposes God. The devil (*dia-bolos*) is the one who "throws himself across" God's plan and his work of salvation accomplished in Christ. (2851)

One who entrusts himself to God does not fear the devil

"A murderer from the beginning,...a liar and the father of lies," Satan is "the deceiver of the whole world." (Jn 8:44) Through him sin and death entered the world and by his definitive defeat all creation will be "freed from the corruption of sin and death." (Euch. Prayer 4) Now "we know that anyone born of God does not sin, but He who was born of God keeps him, and the evil one does not touch him. We know that we are of God, and the whole world is in the power of the evil one." (1 Jn 5:18-19)

"The Lord who has taken away your sin and pardoned your faults also protects you and keeps you from the wiles of your adversary the devil, so that the enemy, who is accustomed to leading into sin, may not surprise you. One who entrusts himself to God does not dread the devil. 'If God is for us, who is against us?'" (St Ambrose) (2852)

The new Adam and the new Eve have triumphed over the Evil One

Victory over the "prince of this world" (Jn 14:30) was won once for all at the Hour when Jesus freely gave himself up to death to give us his life. This is the judgement of this world, and the prince of this world is "cast out." "He pursued the woman" but had no hold on her: the new Eve, "full of grace" of the Holy Spirit, is preserved from sin and the corruption of death (the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption of the Most Holy Mother of God, Mary, ever virgin). "Then the dragon was angry with the woman, and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring." (Rev 12:13-17) Therefore the Spirit and the Church pray: "Come, Lord Jesus," since his coming will deliver us from the Evil One. (Rev 22:17, 20) (2853)

Praying to be free of all evils, present, past, and future

When we ask to be delivered from the Evil One, we pray as well to be freed from all evils, present, past and future, of which he is the author or instigator. In this final petition, the Church brings before the Father all the distress of the world. Along with deliverance from the evils that overwhelm humanity, she implores the precious gift of peace and the grace of perseverance in expectation of Christ's return. By praying in this way, she anticipates in humility of faith the gathering together of everyone and everything in him who has "the keys of Death and Hades," who "is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty." (Rev 1:8, 18)

"Deliver us, Lord, we beseech you, from every evil and grant us peace in our day, so that aided by your mercy we might be ever free from sin and protected from all anxiety, as we await the blessed hope and the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ." (*Roman Missal*, after the Lord's Prayer) (2854)

THE FINAL DOXOLOGY

Christ restores the kingdom, the power and the glory to the Father

The final doxology, "*For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever*", takes up again, by inclusion, the first three petitions to our Father: the glorification of his name, the coming of his reign and the power of his saving will. But these prayers are now proclaimed as adoration and thanksgiving, as in the liturgy of heaven. The ruler of this world has mendaciously attributed to himself the three titles of kingship, power and glory. Christ, the Lord, restores them to his Father and our Father, until he hands over the kingdom to him when the mystery of salvation will be brought to its completion and "God will be all in all." (1 Cor 15:24-28) (2855)

Amen

"Then, after the prayer is over you say 'Amen', which means 'So be it', thus ratifying with our 'Amen' what is contained in the prayer that God has taught us." (St Cyril of Jerusalem) (2856)

IN BRIEF

- When we say "lead us not into temptation" we are asking God not to allow us to take the path that leads to sin. This petition implores the Spirit of discernment and strength; it requests the grace of vigilance and final perseverance. (2863)
- In the last petition, "but deliver us from evil", Christians pray to God with the Church to show forth the victory, already won by Christ, over the "ruler of this world", Satan, the angel personally opposed to God and to his plan of salvation. (2864)
- By the final "Amen", we express our "fiat" concerning the seven petitions: "So be it". (2865)