

Ten After Ten Session 132: The Seven Petitions

2803 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.

2804 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.

2805 The second series of petitions unfolds...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.

2806 By the three first petitions, we are strengthened in faith, filled with hope, and set aflame by charity...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.

2807 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 recognize 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.

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

2809 In making man in his image and likeness, God "crowned him with glory and honor," but by sinning, man fell "short of the glory of God." 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.

2810 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.

2811 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.

2812 Finally, in Jesus the name of the Holy God is revealed and given to us, in the flesh, as Savior, revealed by what he is, by his word, and by his sacrifice...Because he "sanctifies" his own name, Jesus reveals to us the name of the Father.

2813 In the waters of Baptism...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,” 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.

2814 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.

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.

2815 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.”