

## Ten After Ten Session 134: The Seven Petitions, concluded

And forgive us our trespasses...

2838 This petition is astonishing...according to the second phrase, our petition will not be heard unless we have first met a strict requirement. Our petition looks to the future, but our response must come first, for the two parts are joined by the single word “as.”

2839 In this new petition, we return to him like the prodigal son and, like the tax collector, recognize that we are sinners before him... We find the efficacious and undoubted sign of his forgiveness in the sacraments of his Church.

2840 This outpouring of mercy cannot penetrate our hearts as long as we have not forgiven those who have trespassed against us. Love, like the Body of Christ, is indivisible; we cannot love the God we cannot see if we do not love the brother or sister we do see.

2841 This petition is so important that it is the only one to which the Lord returns and which he develops explicitly in the Sermon on the Mount. This crucial requirement of the covenant mystery is impossible for man. But “with God all things are possible.”

2842 It is impossible to keep the Lord’s commandment by imitating the divine model from outside; there has to be a vital participation, coming from the depths of the heart, in the holiness and the mercy and the love of our God. Only the Spirit by whom we live can make “ours” the same mind that was in Christ Jesus.

2843 Thus the Lord’s words on forgiveness, the love that loves to the end, become a living reality...It is not in our power not to feel or to forget an offense; but the heart that offers itself to the Holy Spirit turns injury into compassion and purifies the memory in transforming the hurt into intercession.

2844 Christian prayer extends to the forgiveness of enemies, transfiguring the disciple by configuring him to his Master. Forgiveness is a high-point of Christian prayer; only hearts attuned to God’s compassion can receive the gift of prayer. Forgiveness also bears witness that, in our world, love is stronger than sin.

2845 There is no limit or measure to this essentially divine forgiveness...The communion of the Holy Trinity is the source and criterion of truth in every relationship. It is lived out in prayer, above all in the Eucharist.

2846 Our sins result from our consenting to temptation; we therefore ask our Father not to “lead” us into temptation... 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.

2847 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.

2848 “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.”

2849 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.

2850 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.”

2851 In this petition, evil is not an abstraction, but refers to a person, Satan, the Evil One, the angel who opposes God. The devil is the one who “throws himself across” God’s plan and his work of salvation accomplished in Christ.

2852 “A murderer from the beginning...a liar and the father of lies,” Satan is “the deceiver of the whole world.” 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.”

2853 Victory over the “prince of this world” was won once for all at the Hour when Jesus freely gave himself up to death to give us his life. This is the judgment of this world, and the prince of this world is “cast out.”

2854 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.

2855 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.

2856 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.