

Faith of Our Fathers

[A WEEKLY INSTRUCTION FOR YOUNG AND OLD.]
PRAYER—(Continued.)

15. The Lord's Prayer, or "Our Father," is the most excellent of prayers, (1) because Jesus Christ Himself is the Author of it; (2) because it is a summary of all that we can wish or ask for. We must know it from necessity of precept, because Our Lord has expressly commanded us to recite it.

This divine prayer is composed of a preface and of seven petitions.

The preface is contained in these words: "Our Father who art in heaven." We call God "our Father," (1) because we owe to Him our life, all that we are, and all that we have; (2) because, having adopted us through Jesus Christ, He recognises us as the brethren of His only Son, He loves us as His children, and makes us heirs of His kingdom. We add, "who art in heaven," in order to raise our hearts to heaven, where we are called to abide with God our Father, and also to make us desire and ask for whatever may render us worthy of this happiness. The seven petitions then follow:

(1) "Hallowed by Thy name." By this, the first of the seven petitions, we pray, (1) that the name of God may never be blasphemed or profaned; (2) that God may be known, loved, served, and glorified by all men, and particularly by ourselves.

(2) "Thy kingdom come." Here we pray, (1) that God may reign in all hearts, but especially in our own, by His grace and His love; (2) that He may make us reign with Him one day in heaven; (3) that the kingdom of God, which is the Church, may be extended more and more over the whole earth.

(3) "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." By this petition we pray for grace to accomplish the will of God on earth, to obey His commandments with as much love and fidelity—if that be possible—as the blessed do in heaven.

(4) "Give us this day our daily bread." These words signify, "Give us each day that which is necessary both for the life of soul and body." For the life of the soul,—the word of God, grace, and the Holy Eucharist; for that of the body,—food, clothing, and lodging. We say give us, and not give me, because we must not pray for ourselves only, but for all others; because we are all members of one family. The words "this day" teach us that we must not be anxious about the morrow, but banish excessive solicitude, and trust in God to give us what is necessary for each day.

(5) "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us." By these words we beg pardon for our sins and the grace of a sincere repentance; but as God only forgives us in proportion as we forgive others, we add that we do forgive them with all our heart.

(6) "And lead us not into temptation"; that is to say, preserve us from temptations, or grant us the grace to overcome them. We call temptation everything that leads us to offend God by sin.

(7) "But deliver us from evil." By this must be understood all the evils which can come to us either in this world or in the next, but especially from the spiritual evils of sin and eternal damnation.

Amen or "So be it." This conclusion confirms and ratifies all the prayers which have gone before it, and expresses an earnest desire to be heard.

16. After the Lord's Prayer, the Church generally recites the Angelical Salutation, to offer her prayers to God through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The Angelical Salutation, or "Hail Mary," the most excellent of all prayers after the "Lord's Prayer," is composed of three parts: (1) the words spoken by the angel Gabriel to Mary on the day of the Annunciation; (2) those of St. Elizabeth, the cousin of the Mother of God, on the day of the Visitation; (3) a concluding supplication, "Holy Mary, Mother of God, etc., which is added by the Church.

The words of this beautiful prayer include things the most sublime; they may be briefly explained by the help of the following paraphrase:

"Hail, Mary, full of grace." I salute and congratulate thee, O Blessed Virgin. Thou hast received from God more abundant graces than have been bestowed on any other creature, and thou hast constantly added to them by thy perfect fidelity and the sanctity of thy life.

"The Lord is with thee" in an especial and most wonderful way. He was with thee from the time of thine Immaculate Conception, and still more so at His Incarnation, and during the remainder of thy mortal life. He is with thee now in eternal glory for all eternity.

"Blessed art thou amongst women," because thou hast been chosen from amongst all women to be the mother of God; because, in becoming a mother, thou didst not cease to be a virgin; and because thou art raised in sanctity and in glory above all women and above all creatures.

"And blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus," Jesus Christ, thy Divine Son, who has saved us and loaded us with blessings, is Himself, together with the Father and the Holy Ghost, the object of all the blessings of angels and of men for all eternity.

"Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us"; obtain for us from God by thy powerful intercession the forgiveness of our sins, and the grace to live and die holily.

17. Every Christian must honor the Blessed Virgin above the saints and angels with a special devotion—(1) because she surpasses them all in sanctity, being full of grace; (2) because she surpasses them all in dignity, being the Mother of God and the Queen of Heaven; (3) because we must honor and love in a special manner her whom Jesus Christ Himself so much honored and loved on earth, and whom He still loves and honors more than all the saints in heaven; (4) because Jesus Christ gave us Mary to be our mother and protectress; (5) because we must testify great gratitude towards her for her benefits, and constantly have recourse with great confidence to her powerful help.

Our confidence in her is founded on her power with God, and on the maternal affection she bears towards each one of us. Her power she derives from Jesus Christ, her Divine Son, who, by honoring her as His Mother, has constituted her Queen of Heaven, of angels, and of men. Her affection towards us springs from her double quality of Mother of God and mother of men. Jesus Christ gave us to her, and she adopted us as her children at the foot of the Cross.

18. Our devotion towards the Blessed Virgin must consist—(1) in honoring, loving, and invoking her; (2) in meditating on her virtues in order that we may imitate them, and become like unto our Saviour Jesus Christ, after her example. The fruits of devotion to our good Mother are consolations and continual helps from her during life, and her assistance at the hour of death. The practices of devotion to the Blessed Virgin especially recommended by the Church are, to celebrate her feasts by approaching the Sacraments; to recite the Litany in her honor; to say the Angelus and the Rosary; to honor and invoke her Immaculate Heart; to join one of the confraternities or congregations established in her honor; to wear her scapular; and above all, to love and glorify her Divine Son in the holy Sacrament of the Altar.

Police Required to Cope with Crowds Going to Mass

Despite the cold drizzle of rain which was sweeping Chicago, police lines had to be formed to direct the congregations that attended the noon Masses on the Feast of All Saints, at Old St. Patrick's Church, just across the river from the downtown district. As soon as the skyscrapers in the loop district began to disgorge their thousands for the lunch period, the bridges leading to the west side became thronged with the crowd of men and women, boys and girls on their way to Mass. They had been compelled to leave their homes on the outskirts and suburbs too early to attend their own churches. First the main church of St. Patrick's was filled, then the basement chapel, and finally the boys' chapel in the gymnasium of St. Patrick's School. When the three Masses were finished, a later Mass was said in the school gymnasium for those who had been too late, or unable to get in to the other Masses. This Mass was also thronged. A similar situation obtained at Old St. Mary's (Paulist) Church, a few blocks to the south of the business district.