

“Deliver us from Evil”

The Lord’s Prayer



By Lorraine Vincent
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The Lord’s Prayer concludes with the powerful words, “*deliver us from evil*”. Jesus gave us His prayer to His Father in Heaven because He loves us. He wants to save us from evil and help us in our journey here on earth towards everlasting life in Heaven. He died on the Most Holy Cross for us. He took all our sins upon Himself and sacrificed Himself for us, making reparation and reconciling us with God the Father, thus enabling us to enter His Kingdom in Heaven. “Herein is love: not that we loved God, but that He [the Father] loved us and sent His Son as expiation for our sins” (1 John 4:10).

Another example of God’s love for us is that all of mankind is endowed with a divine and natural moral law written in our hearts by the Creator. We are given an inborn sense of right and wrong. “It hinges upon the desire for God and submission to Him, Who is the source and judge of all ...” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 27, 37, 1955).

So why don’t all souls go to Heaven and why do some souls go to Hell? We pray, “*Our Father ... deliver us from evil*”. So what’s happening? First of all, we are all endowed with free will. God created all the angels and all of mankind with the freedom to think and act. Secondly, we are surrounded by temptations to stray from what is good. This life on earth is not easy. It is indeed a struggle.

The devil and his demons are eager to lead us into the fires of Hell for eternal torture. They hate God; and because God loves us, they hate us. They try to influence us to be full of egoism and selfishness, rebellious and proud, with no love for God. But since we have free will to think and do what we want, we have a choice: to follow God or the devil while our earthly life lasts.

Jesus says He is the Way, the Truth and the Life (see John 14:6); and to follow Jesus requires every effort on our part, plus patience, despite difficulties. The greater our struggles and the more we *win* our battles against temptations, the stronger and more developed our will power to seek God becomes. This whole thing is a process. This is the path towards respect and love for God. God wants “*to deliver us from evil.*” God gave us the Ten Commandments in the Old Testament and the Beatitudes in the New Testament. Also, Jesus, the Son of God, gave us His Church which includes the *Holy Bible*, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, the Pope and the teaching Magisterium of the Church. And Jesus sent us the Holy Spirit to guide us. We need to take the time to learn and to pray, so that we can serve God and obey Him.

Serve? Obey? That sounds harsh. But it is true. How can God “*deliver us from evil*” if we are rebellious and refuse to follow the right path? God will not force us into Heaven. We have free will. Therefore, pride and arrogance to do what *we* want and not what *God* wants, can lead us down a slippery slope into Hell—sad, but true.

However, all is not lost if we begin to develop *humility* before God—to realize that God is supreme. He rules. He is greater than we are. He is all-knowing. We don’t know all that much at all. He is the teacher, our guide. God is the Creator of all things, the cosmos, everything, including us of course. If we accept the truth of this, how can we not have humility when thinking of God? Can we still be arrogant and think we know more than God?

We need the great *virtue of humility* to admit that we can be in error, that we do sin. Also, when we are wrong, we have to admit that God and His Church are right. God said, “I reprove and discipline those whom I love. Be earnest, therefore, and repent” (Revelation 3:19). “[L]et the wicked forsake their way, and the unrighteous their thoughts; let them return to the LORD, that He may have mercy on them, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. ‘For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways’, says the LORD. ‘For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts’” (Isaiah 55:7-9).

Jesus said to His disciples, “If any want to become My followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow Me. For those who want to save their life [on earth] will lose it [in Heaven], and those who lose their [earthly] life for My sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it [in Heaven]. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life [for eternity in Heaven]?” (Mark 8:34-36). “What is your [earthly] life? For you are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, ‘If the Lord wishes, we will live and do this or that’” (James 4:14, 15). God can “*deliver us from evil*”, if we cooperate with Him, *ask* for His help and *try* to do His will, that is, to obey Him and to serve Him.

While we try to do God’s will, we must brace ourselves to endure suffering. The Apostle St. Peter, our first pope, said, “Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice in so far as you are sharing Christ’s sufferings ... Keep your conscience clear ... For it is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God’s will, than to suffer for doing evil. For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the Righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God ...” (1 Peter 4:12,13; 3:16-18).

Catholics have been given a great gift from God to “*deliver us from evil*”—the *Sacrament of Reconciliation*. If we can muster up the courage and the humility to confess our sins to a Catholic priest, it would certainly be a step in the right direction. Through this wonderful Sacrament, God’s love and mercy shine forth. God acts through the Catholic priest. God forgives our sins and we are strengthened by His graces. We should go to confession at least once a month, with the commitment to *continuous conversion*. In this way God will continue to guide us, and we will have peace of mind. Therefore, we can trust in God, Who knows what is best for us, and keep our eyes fixed on the person of Jesus Christ and our heavenly goal.

We can deepen our faith when we study the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, pray an hour daily, go to Church and attend Holy Mass. The Holy Mass is the greatest prayer to God. The Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist is the source and summit of our lives, food for the journey. We must be humble at Mass and prepare ourselves beforehand. Also, our witness can be powerful when we spread the Catholic faith and encourage others to join our Church and grow in their relationship with Christ. In this way God can “*deliver us from evil*” !