

The Texts of the Convivium

OUR PRAYERS

S U M M A R Y

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TO THE OMNIPRESENT GOD

Humans have always yearned
to feel close to their gods
to God who is our Life and our All

and so, my Lord
bestow that I too
may walk in Your presence
and always be with You.

With You, my God, on the altars
surrounded by the faithful
where Mass is celebrated

and again in the absorbed silence
of dimly lit churches and chapels
inside the tabernacles
where, night and day,
Jesus silently watches
over us among us.

With You, my God
in the synagogues
and in the mosques
throughout a thousand
dispersed white cities
and green oases
gazing, from afar, at the Kaaba.

With You, my God
in the temples, monasteries
hermitages and holy places,
sanctuaries and venerated images
of all religions.

With You, my God
in the ancient hearth
which is the centre of every house
and of the whole world too

in the temple of Vesta
perpetual jealous guardian
of the sacred fire of Rome

in the Umbilicus Urbis
axis of both the city and the orb.

With You, my God
in the heart of being.

With You, my God
in every centre and altitude
and depth and origin.

With You, my God
in every figure of transcendence
where men and women
of any tradition
can however feel
Your proximity.

With You, my God
in every act of love
in every gift and work
for others and for the cause.

With You to rejoice
in the light of all truths

to find You again
in every expression
of beauty and of good.

With You, my God
in every creative action
whether carried out in Your name
or even without mentioning You
but nevertheless for Yourself.

With You where there is suffering
where one struggles and dies
in all travail, torment and pain
where You, my God, are crucified.

With You, to relive the existence
of Your most faithful friends
with them in You in prayer
and labour of every day.

To be always with You
to hold me close to You.

Oh God, my eternal Source and Root
that I may always live with You
that I may never be parted from You.
Amen.

EVERYWHERE AND ALWAYS WITH YOU, MY LORD

With You
at the centre of the world
I am
where the heart of things beats.

With You
up above in the clearness
beyond the clouds
the sun shines.

With You
at the dawn of the millennia
creation springs
clear and untouched.

With You
at last
all together enraptured
in the glory of the midday
which has no end.

With You
for absorbed vigils
I behold
the eternal eye of being
which the restless spiral of time
pursues around.

With You
through one hundred battles
behind the closed sallet
hard sleepless obedience is peace.

With You
lightly and swiftly
does the train of the days slip by.

With You
my little chamber
contains the heavens of heavens.

With You
beyond the door ajar
a great feast of lights awaits me.

With You
with You forever
sweet is this prison of love

PRAYER TO THE HEAVENLY FATHER

Our Father who are in heaven
hallowed be Your name
Your kingdom come
Your will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us
and lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil. Amen.

PRAYER TO THE TRIUMPHANT CHURCH IN HEAVEN

Jesus Christ, Lord, God incarnate
ascended into Heaven
on the right hand of the Father

come down to bless
the deeds and works
we offer you
and make them flesh and blood
of your being
multiplied in us

and you, Virgin Mary
mother of God
sweet image
and immaculate heart
of the Church

and all you angels of light
and saints of heaven

pray for us
now and forever
and at the hour of our death

so that we may be cleansed of all sin
and, freed from all evil
once achieved the peak
of truth, of beauty, of good
having co-operated with God
in the fulfilled creation of the universe

we unite all together with the Lord
in the boundless perfection and happiness
of his eternal kingdom. Amen.

WHAT THE OUR FATHER MEANS TO ME

by Filippo Liverziani

Here, I intend to bear witness to that which the Our Father means to me: of how I feel it and live it.

Our Father, who are in heaven: to say that You are high up above, to place Your seat in heaven is the figure that takes shape in our intimate spirit from feeling that You are entirely different from us, You transcend us, You are immensely beyond us.

And yet my God, You are our Father, and, at the same time, our Mother.

I commit all my trust in You, because, together with all humans, I feel I am Your infinitely loved creature.

I feel that You love me for how I am, to gradually give me everything, so that little by little I will be able to transform myself until I become like You.

I place myself before You, God Father, in the tormented situation I am in today, like a sinner, who gazes at his house from afar with longing nostalgia.

To see You so forgotten, not only by me, but more or less by everyone, especially nowadays, is a cause for great sufferance as far as I am concerned.

Therefore, my God, *hallowed be Your name!*

That it is no longer blasphemed in all possible ways.

May Your name be honoured once again above any other name.

May every man go back to perceiving You as the centre of his own life.

This commitment shall begin with me.

May religions flourish and open up more and more to Your truth.

May every inveterate prejudice be brought down.

May the inspiration which gushes purely from Your Spirit be adulterated no more.

May everybody act in an increasingly suitable and correct manner.

May God be glorified on this earth, as He is glorified by the angels and saints in heaven.

How far we are from the kingdom of God: “My kingdom is not of this world”, said Jesus; and it is true in every sense of the word.

Let us take a look around us and search deep down inside ourselves: where is the kingdom of God?

Some little good thing, some germ of good, which tries to open itself up a way with great difficulty, is hardly able to prevent itself from being suffocated by so much evil.

The kingdom of God is supreme happiness, and how unhappy we are.

It is goodness, and how evil we are, and if we are not exactly evil, then we are certainly malevolent and wretched amid so much meanness, stinginess, ambition and vanity, hypocrisy, egoism, insensitiveness to other people's evil: the list of our faults and imperfections could go on forever.

How much injustice, how much abuse of power, how much violence, how much suffering which could all be well avoided with wiser, more humane and charitable behaviour.

How much good is left undone due to indolence, or because one wishes to pursue the most false images of good: how many sins of omission, which are very often more rankling than others.

Indeed, Father, *Your kingdom come*, may the spirit triumph, and with it, good and beauty, in all their expressions, on all levels.

May the world be renewed, and creation be carried out until it reaches its goal of ultimate perfection.

“May God's will be done” is a phrase which every now and then we repeat when overcome by evil or pain which seems unavoidable, to which we are persuaded to believe that there is nothing else to do but make the best of it.

But what really is the will of God? What do You really want for us, our Lord God?

When struck with evil, the first thing to do is not to let ourselves be disheartened, but to bear with it with all necessary courage.

God's will is that we accept evil in the sense that we do not allow ourselves to be crushed by it; however, our Lord God, You want us to fight evil.

All the injustice, all the most different forms of oppression are to be confronted and opposed, in the same way as diseases and illnesses, in the same way as delinquency, in the same way as ignorance and whatever limits and clips our spiritual life.

Your will is that men may be in peace, that they will love one another in You, and that they are united in everything, that they will make progress together until they reach the ultimate goal of the fulfilment of a perfect, divine life: indeed, Father, really *Your will be done*..

On earth as it is in heaven: what we call heaven is God's own dimension, His absolute dimension.

Here God is sanctified by the court of His angels and saints, here His will is done in the full sense of the word, here He really reigns.

In creation, on this earth, things are very much different, things are done in a decidedly different manner to that of the divine will of good.

And yet a divine impulse to improve, to make progress, if possible, continually and without limits, is expressed in creation.

It is the evolution of the cosmos, of which God Himself is the Prime Mover; it is the history of salvation.

Evolution and history are aimed at pursuing increasingly higher goals, until the deification, which is the final, irreversible arrival point of all human progress, is reached.

This will be the final meeting between heaven and earth, heaven which comes down to earth and transfigures it in the spirit.

Give us this day our daily bread: give us everything we need, for our physical and spiritual life, to nourish our intelligence, our creativity, every form of spirituality.

Let us think of all those who live in straightened circumstances, if not in poverty; or also those who live in prosperity, but have many problems, who lack all kinds of things and are very needy.

Give us the initiative to provide for ourselves, while still being aware that the Prime Giver of all good is You, our Lord Creator.

Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us: our epoch has lost the sense of this debt of ours that we have with You, the religious sense of sin, the sense that compared to You, we are all sinners.

How far we are from You, and how much we need to be led back to living with You in friendship and communion.

He who feels no need to enter this life of grace again, does not even feel his present exclusion from it.

The saints are those who mostly feel or consider themselves as sinners, and definitely not because they are any more... sinners than others, but because more than anyone else they have matured the sense of God, therefore the sense of how much man has grown far away from God.

We cannot ask You, our God, any forgiveness, if we, in turn, do not forgive our human brothers.

How painful is all this rivalry, jealousy, envy, resentment, revenge, incompatibility and antipathy, aversion which turn into hate, people who live next door to one another and never greet each another, families who split up over matters of inheritance and interests, feuds and vengeance.

The moment in which we will all finally understand one another, and are reconciled, and forgive one another to establish a perfect never-ending friendship in You, will be a wonderful one.

You forgive me and thus re-establish me in full relation of grace with You. However, what will happen if I fall back into my negative behaviour of before? I therefore need to *be protected against all possible temptation*.

In the most immoderate and guilty existence, there is nevertheless a nostalgia for good within me, a desire for pureness, an aspiration to go back to the house of the Father to never move away from it again.

So here then, I ask You, divine Father, to *deliver me from evil* - and precisely *from the malignant*, from every invisible baleful power - to give me every good.

I ask for it for me and for everyone: Our Father is the prayer which rises from "us".

Whoever repeats it, associates himself with the multitude of brothers who pray together in every country and epoch, in every phase of the tormented journey of humanity.

I ask all of this from You, because *Yours is the kingdom*: if not yet established on the entire reality, it is certainly alive and active like a seed that has great promise, the mustard seed destined to grow until it becomes the greatest and most majestic of plants.

Therefore, in the same way as Yours is the kingdom, *Yours is the power*: the gates of Hades will not prevail; and, one day, Your infinity will get the better of every finite force which dares to oppose it.

Yours is the glory: at the moment of truth, all false ephemeral glories will fade away in Your total and definitive glory, which is forever.

Eternal are Your kingdom, Your power and Your glory, Lord God our Creator, just as eternal is the perfection, eternal is the happiness You destine us.

Praise and thanks be to You now *and forever*. Amen!

SHORT NOTE ON THE BEGINNING OF THE PRAYER TO THE TRIUMPHANT CHURCH IN HEAVEN

Jesus Christ, Lord, God incarnate
ascended into Heaven
on the right hand of the Father

come down to bless
the deeds and works
we offer you
and make them flesh and blood
of your being
multiplied in us

The beginning two strophes of this prayer certainly need to be explained and clarified.

It is an invocation to Jesus Christ. In defining him Lord and God incarnate and in remembering his ascension to the right hand of the Father, one adapts it to an uninterrupted ancient tradition: up to here, there are no interpretative problems.

From the fourth verse to the sixth one, the prayer invokes Jesus to come down among us to bless the gifts we offer him. What are they?

During the Holy Mass, or Divine Liturgy as it is called in the Eastern Orthodox Church, we offer bread and wine.

As wheat and grapes, they are products of the earth, therefore gifts we receive from our Creator Himself.

These original gifts are then elaborated: they are, in this sense, also products of human work.

Bread and wine are accepted and blessed, to the point of being transformed into the body and blood of Christ. They are now the presence itself of Jesus among us and in our hearts.

It is a presence which sustains and nourishes us, so that we can grow in Jesus until we become part of his own divinity.

In this way, the real disciple of Jesus becomes another Christ: *Christianus alter Christus*. It is in this sense that the body of Christ multiplies itself in us.

Having clarified, if only briefly, the essence of the Eucharistic sacrifice, it would be useful now to extend the matter a little.

Together with the bread and wine, we offer ourselves, everything we are, we have and work: also all our good "deeds and works", as the prayer calls them.

During the holy mass, we offer the Lord our lives, our days, all our deeds. And the Lord welcomes our gift and not only transforms it into his own thing, but into himself. He transforms every thing into his humanity, not only, but into his divinity. He assumes and raises everything, he deifies everything.

Everything we work is transformed into divine deeds: into works that the Lord himself accomplishes through us.

In this way, the kingdom of God advances towards the total dominion, the total transformation and deification of us and, through us, of every reality of this world.

PRAYER FOR GOOD THINKING

by Enrico Raffi

Make me conscious, Lord,
that my thinking
is a pathway open to everyone
at the crossroads
of that of the others

of which others
avail themselves of
or go astray

according to how I treat it
I who, in turn, avail myself
or become confused
with that of others.

Unspoken insensitive
reciprocal effusion
and yet acknowledged in some way
intimately intuited

makes sure
that I may never
feel alone
in good and in evil.

However, the good path
guides the good one
and induces those less good
to cleanse themselves
of stones and brambles
with the help of the angel.

It is our thinking
house of glass
to the eyes of those born in heaven:

may it therefore be light
that illuminates them
of that light they send us
and which helps them rise up.

Oh Jesus, make sure
that it is not my thinking
darkness which loses me
and daunts them.

PRAYER TO INVOKE A GOOD EXPERIENCE OF COMMUNICATION

We draw near to the mystery of the invisible
with religious reverence.

Our tormented epoch
with its materialistic civilisation
had marginalized that other dimension
which is the Afterlife of God and eternal life
letting it fall into oblivion,
and us men and women of this century
were losing its sense, day after day.

But, today, the Other side
shows itself once again
and in trepidation we perceive
that many invisible presences
watch over our lives
and they inspire us
in the labour of our days
comforting us
giving us courage and help.

We are well aware, Lord
our creator and giver of all good
that it is Your will
that these communications happen
so that we are consoled
and have better knowledge
of the ultimate destiny
that awaits us
and the spiritual road
we have to cover.

Oh Lord, bless the contact
we invoke, for love.

Oh Lord, bless the dear souls
together with us of this world
so tormented and weary of false values
who yearns for the truth and real progress
of more humane conditions of life for everyone
for freedom, justice and peace,
for brotherly unity of the world's peoples,
for the fullness of good,
for serenity and joy of spirit.

Oh Lord, bless the journey
of each one of us towards You. Amen

PRAYER FOR THE SEMINARIES OF HOPE

We offer and entrust
the study meeting
which is due to begin now
to You, Lord
just as we consecrate
every act of our existence to You.

May the result of this collective reflection
also be a small stone,
tiny, yet useful,
for building Your kingdom.

Illuminate us, oh Lord,
help us discern
so that we may truly understand.

Infuse love in us
for You and every creature
so that we may always

be willing and ready
to listen,
to help,
to act for common good.

Infuse us with trust
that the initiative is in Your hands
and courage and constancy
in the long toil of our days.

And give us the heart
to continually surpass ourselves
to free ourselves of all waste
imperfection
lack of openness
egoism
and indolence

to dispel
many mental habits

to make us transparent
to Your truth.

Angels of light and beloved souls
may you stay close to us
as invisible companions
during our journey on earth
until the day in which we will
meet again all together
in the eternal life of God.

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL IN THE HOLY MASS

Let us pray together and say: *Hear us, Lord.*

God our creator, we are grateful to You for having blessed the Convivium's activities over so many years. We trust in You for what is yet to come. May our work also be a stone, although tiny, for the building of Your kingdom. Let us pray: *Hear us, oh Lord.*

God our creator, receive the souls of our loved ones in heaven and make them walk in the light, waiting until the moment in which we will meet again to stay forever in Your eternity. Let us pray: *Hear us, oh Lord.*

God our creator, may we meet again in the final resurrection on Your ultimate day, each one of us having covered his own way well, on earth and in heaven. Let us pray: *Hear us, oh Lord.*

God our creator, help us to be better, more holy and also more alert and creative, and more helpful with our human brothers of every nation. Stretch the horizons of our minds and give us a great heart. Let us pray: *Hear us, oh Lord.*

God our creator, we pray to You for all those who suffer, in whom You are crucified. We pray to You in particular for... Oh Lord, comfort all the sick and grant them salvation and health. Let us pray: *Hear us, oh Lord.*

THE "CREED" WHICH UNITES US

Faith is trust: it is delivering oneself to God, who reveals Himself to us from the depth of our heart of hearts.

In order for God to reveal himself, it is nonetheless necessary for us to open up a way for Him inside ourselves, purifying ourselves and refining our spiritual sensitiveness.

In this way we discover that our life, in Him, is anything but ephemeral and lacking in purpose and meaning, as often seems to us in moments of dejection.

By devoting Himself to us, God confers an absolute meaning to our existence.

The creation of the universe is a long tormented process, which God Himself, by branching Himself out across space and time through the countless variety of His angelic energies, carries out with the cooperation of all His faithful creatures.

The negative forces, which often appear to prevail, will be defeated in the end.

A destiny of infinite perfection and total endless happiness awaits us.

Thought is creative: throughout our life on earth, we shape our soul with the quality of our thoughts.

In this way, after our physical death, a soul degraded by the usage of negative thoughts - wicked, evil, but also only egoistic, of pride, envy, resentment, excessive attachment to worldly goods - will stay for a while, even for a very long period, in a condition of barren, painful solitude

On the contrary, a usage of good thoughts makes the soul luminous, suitable to enter a condition of light.

We will enter one condition or the other through a kind of automatic effect. The judgement is the gaining of consciousness of how we will have spent our life on earth, and the relative fruits of good or evil.

Our usual manner of acting, and more than anything else, of thinking, marks a direction on the future road our soul has to cover, a trajectory, which it will only succeed in modifying with a great deal of sufferance.

Therefore, it would be better for us to aim well and choose the right direction already from now in this life.

The divine mercy is, nevertheless, without limits, and, sooner or later, there is salvation for those souls who wish to redeem themselves. However, it would be expedient to insist on how much better it is to get one's bearings, to take aim rightly and put oneself on the right track from the very beginning.

A spiritual journey awaits us in the afterlife. We will have to free ourselves of all attachment and affection and rid ourselves of all egotism, to be totally of God.

It is the road of sanctification, which leads to the ultimate goal of deification.

Each one of us is a god in germ: he is such due to the will of the eternal God, who wants to devote His entire self to everyone.

God gives His entire self to man, until He Himself becomes man, so that man can become God.

Whereas this world is the place of humanism, of science, arts, technology, economy, social organisation, world unification, the afterlife is the place of sanctification par excellence.

It is fitting, therefore, for earth and heaven to converge into one, so that man's creativity would integrate with and enrich the kingdom of God: that kingdom of God that is open to all authentic values.

This final meeting between earth and heaven is the resurrection, where the disincarnate souls recover their full humanity.

The resurrected will infuse saintliness into the living; the living will make a donation of humanism, which will by then have reached its complete maturation.

Our communications of love with the other dimension represent the first of this final meeting between heaven and earth.

Working for the kingdom of God, preparing the ways of the Lord is a commitment for sanctification, not only, but for every form of human promotion.

It is in this sense that we are all called to collaborate in the full creation of the universe: each one according to his own very singular aptitudes and vocations.

This is the creed that unites us; such is our commitment in the long hard toil of our days, and may God help us.