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THE LORD'S PRAYER

[St. Cyprian](#)

Chapter 1



The precepts of the Gospel, most beloved brethren, are other than divine teachings, foundations for building hope, supports for strengthening faith, nourishments for encouraging the heart, rudders for directing our course, helps for gaining salvation, which, as they instruct the docile minds of believers on earth, conduct them to the heavenly kingdom. God wished many things also to be said and heard through the prophets, His servants; but how much greater are the things which the Son speaks, which the Word of God, who was in the prophets, testifies with His own voice, no longer commanding that the way be prepared for His coming, He Himself coming and opening and showing the way to us, that we who thus far have been wandering in the shadows of death, improvident and blind, illumined by the light of grace, may hold to the way of life with the Lord as our leader and guide.

Chapter 2

He who, among His other salutary admonitions and divine precepts by which He counsels His people unto salvation, Himself also gave the form of praying, Himself advised and instructed us what to pray for. He who made us to live taught us also to pray, with the same benignity, namely by which He has deigned to give and bestow the other things, so that, while we speak to the Father with that prayer and supplication which the Son taught, we may more easily be heard. Already He had foretold that the hour was coming when 'the true adorers would adore the Father in spirit and in truth'; and He fulfilled what He promised before, so that we, who by His sanctification have received the Spirit and truth, may also by His teaching adore truly and spiritually. For what prayer can be more spiritual than that which was given us by Christ, by whom the Holy Spirit was sent to us, what prayer to the Father can be more true than that which was sent forth from the Son, who is truth, out of His mouth? So to pray otherwise than He taught is

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not ignorance alone but even a sin, since He Himself has established and said: 'You reject the command of God, that you may establish your own tradition.'

Chapter 3

So let us pray, most beloved brethren, as God the Teacher has taught. It is a friendly and intimate prayer to beseech God with his own words, for the prayer of Christ to ascend to His ears. Let the Father acknowledge the words of His Son, when we make prayer. Let Him who dwells within our breast Himself be also in our voice, and since we have Him as the advocate for our sins before the Father, let us put forward the words of our Advocate. For since He says: 'Whatsoever we shall ask the Father in His name, He will give us,' how much more effectively do we obtain what we seek in the name of Christ, if we ask with His own prayer?

Chapter 4

But let those who pray have words and petitions governed by restraint and possessing a quiet modesty. Let us bear in mind that we stand in the sight of God. We must be pleasing in the sight of God both with the habit of body and the measure of voice. For as it is characteristic of the impudent to be noisy with clamors, so on the other hand does it benefit the modest to pray with moderate petitions. Finally, in His teaching the Lord bade us to pray in secret, in hidden and remote places, in our very bed-chambers, because it is more befitting our faith to realize that God is everywhere present, that He hears and sees all, and by the plenitude of His majesty penetrates also hidden and secret places, as it is written: 'I am a God at hand and not a God afar off. If a man hide himself in hidden places, shall I not see him? Do not I fill heaven and earth?' And again, 'In every place the eyes of the Lord behold the good and the evil.' And when we are gathered together with the brethren in one place and celebrate divine sacrifices with a priest of God, we ought to be mindful of modesty and discipline, and not toss our prayers about at random with uncouth voices and not cast forth with turbulent loquaciousness our petition, which should be commended to God in modesty, because the hearer is not of the voice but of the heart, and is not to be admonished by shouts, who sees our thoughts, as the Lord proves when He says: 'Why do you think vainly in your hearts?' And in another place: 'And all the churches shall know that I am a searcher of the desires and the heart.'

Chapter 5

This does Anna in the first Book of Kings, portraying a type of the Church, maintain and observe, who prays to God not with a noisy petition but silently and modestly within the very recesses of her heart. She spoke with a hidden prayer but with manifest faith; she spoke not with the voice but with the heart, because she knew that so the Lord hears, and she effectually obtained what she sought,

because she asked with faith. Divine Scripture declares this saying: 'She spoke in her heart and her lips moved, but her voice was not heard, and the Lord heard her.' Likewise we read in the psalms: 'Speak in your hearts and in your beds be ye sorrowful.' Through Jeremias also the Holy Spirit suggests and teaches these same things, saying: 'In the heart, moreover, O Lord, you ought to be adored.'

Chapter 6

Moreover, most beloved brethren, let him who adores not ignore this, how the publican prayed with the Pharisee in the temple. Not by impudently lifting his eyes to heaven nor by insolently raising his hands, but striking his breast and testifying to the sins inclosed within did he implore the help of divine mercy, and, although the Pharisee was pleased with himself, this man rather deserved to be sanctified who thus asked, who placed the hope of salvation not in confidence in his innocence, for no one is innocent, but confessed his sins and prayed humbly, and He who forgives the humble heard him as he prayed. This the Lord lays down in his Gospel saying: 'Two men went up to the temple to pray, the one a Pharisee, the other a publican, the Pharisee stood and began to pray thus within himself: "O God, I thank thee that I am not like the rest of men, dishonest, robbers, adulterers, or even like this publican. I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I possess." But the publican standing afar off would not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven, but kept striking his breast, saying: "O God be merciful to me a sinner!" I tell you, this man went down to his home justified rather than the Pharisee; for everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled and he who humbles himself shall be exalted.' Learning these things most beloved brethren, from the sacred reading, after we have learned how we should approach prayer, let us learn also, with the Lord as our teacher, what to pray. 'In this manner', He says, 'Pray ye: Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors. And suffer us not to be led into temptation, but deliver us from evil.'

Chapter 8

Before all things, the Teacher of peace and Master of unity did not wish prayer to be offered individually and privately as one would pray only for himself when he prays. We do not say: 'My Father, who art in heaven,' nor 'Give me this day my bread,' nor does each one ask that only his debt be forgiven him and that he be led not into temptation and that he be delivered from evil for himself alone. Our prayer is public and common, and when we pray, we pray not for one but for the whole people, because we, the whole people, are one. God, the Teacher of prayer and concord, who taught unity, thus wished one to pray for all, just as He Himself bore all in one. This law of prayer the three children inclosed in the fiery furnace observed, united in prayer and harmonious in the agreement of the spirit. The faith of the divine Scripture so declares, and, when it tells how such did pray, gives an example which we should imitate in our prayers, that we may be able to

be such as they. It says: 'Then those three as from one mouth were singing a hymn and blessing God.' They were speaking as from one mouth, but not yet had Christ taught them to pray. And so their words were availing and efficacious as they prayed, because a peaceful and simple and spiritual prayer deserved well of the Lord. Thus also do we find that the Apostles with the disciples prayed after the ascension of the Lord. Scripture says: 'They were all with one mind continuing steadfastly in prayer with the women and Mary, who was the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren.' They were with one mind continuing steadfastly in prayer, declaring alike by their constancy and unity in prayer that God, who makes men of one mind to dwell in a home, does not admit into the divine and eternal home any except those who are of one mind in prayer.

Chapter 9

Moreover, of what nature, most beloved brethren, are the sacraments of the Lord's prayer, how many, how great, collected briefly in words but abounding spiritually in virtue, so that nothing at all is omitted which is not included in our petitions and in our prayers in a compendium of heavenly doctrine! Scripture says: 'Thus pray ye: Our Father who art in heaven.' A new man, reborn and restored to his God by his grace says in the first place 'Father,' because he has now begun to be a son. 'He came,' He says, 'unto his own and his own received him not. But as many as received Him, He gave to them the power to become the sons of God, to those who believe in His name.' He, therefore, who has believed in His name and has become the son of God, thereafter should begin to give thanks and to profess himself the son of God, when he declares that his father is God in heaven, also to testify in the very first words of his new birth that he reverences his earthly and carnal father and that he has begun to know and to have as father Him only who is in heaven, as it is written: 'Those who say to their father and mother: I do not know you, and who do not recognize their children, these have kept thy words, and observed thy covenant.' Likewise the Lord in His Gospel has bidden us to call not our father upon earth, because one is our Father, who is in heaven. And to the disciple who had made mention of his dead father, He replied: 'Let the dead bury their own dead.' For he had said that his father was dead, when the father of believers is living.

Chapter 10

And, most beloved brethren, we ought not to observe and understand this alone, that we call Him Father who is in heaven, but we join in saying 'Our Father,' that is, of those who believe, of those who sanctified through Him and restored by the birth of spiritual grace have begun to be sons of God. And this voice also reproaches and condemns the Jews, because they not only faithlessly spurned Christ who had been announced to them through the Prophets and had been first sent to them, but also cruelly slew Him; who now cannot call the Lord father, since the Lord confounds and refutes them, saying: 'You are born of the devil as

father, and you wish to do the desires of your Father. He was a murderer from the beginning and has not stood in the truth, because the truth is not in him.' And through Isaias the prophet God exclaims with indignation: 'I have begotten and brought up sons, but they have despised me. The ox knows his owner, and the ass the crib of his master, but Israel has not known me, and my people has not understood. Woe to the sinful nation, to a people laden with iniquity, a wicked seed, ungracious children. They have forsaken the Lord and have blasphemed the Holy One of Israel.' And in condemnation of these we Christians say, when we pray, 'Our Father,' because He now has begun to be ours and has ceased to be of the Jews, who have forsaken Him. Nor can a sinning people be a son, but to those to whom the remission of sins is granted is the name of sons ascribed, to these also is eternity promised when the Lord himself says: 'Everyone who commits sin is the servant of sin. But the slave does not abide in the house forever; the son abides there forever.'

Chapter 11

Moreover, how great is the indulgence of the Lord, how great the abundance of His regard for us and His goodness, that He has thus wished us to celebrate prayer in the sight of God, so as to call the Lord 'Father' and, as Christ is the son of God, ourselves also so to be pronounced the sons of God, which name no one of us would dare to take in prayer, had not He Himself permitted us so to pray. So, most beloved brethren, we ought to remember and to know that, when we speak of God, we ought to act as sons of God, so that, just as we are pleased with God as Father, so too He may be pleased with us. Let us live as if temples of God, that it may be clear that the Lord dwells in us. Let not our acts depart from the Spirit, that we who have begun to be spiritual and heavenly may ponder and do nothing except the spiritual and the heavenly, since the Lord God Himself has said: 'Those who glorify me, I shall glorify; but they that despise me, shall be despised.' The blessed Apostle also in his Epistle has laid down: 'You are not your own, for you have been bought at a great price. Glorify God and bear him in your body.'

Chapter 12

After this we say: 'Hallowed be thy name,' not because we wish for God that He be hallowed by our prayers, but because we seek from the Lord that His name be hallowed in us. Moreover, by whom is God hallowed who himself hallows? But because He Himself said: 'Be ye holy, for I am holy,' we petition and ask for this, that we who have been sanctified in baptism may persevere in what we have begun. And for this daily do we pray. For we have need of daily sanctification, that we who sin daily may cleanse our sins by continual sanctification. Moreover, what that sanctification is which is conferred upon us out of God's esteem the Apostle proclaims when he says: 'Neither fornicators nor idolaters nor adulterers

nor the effeminate nor sodomites nor thieves nor the covetous nor drunkards nor the evil-tongued nor the greedy will possess the kingdom of God. And such were some of you, but you have been washed, you have sanctified, you have been justified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.' He says that we have been sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God. We pray that this sanctification abide in us, and because our Lord and Judge warned the man who had been healed and quickened by Him to sin no more, lest something worse befall him, we make this petition with constant prayers, we ask this night and day, that the sanctification and quickening which is assumed from the grace of God be preserved by His protection.

Chapter 13

There follows in the prayer: 'Thy kingdom come.' We seek also that God's kingdom be manifested to us, just as we ask that His name be sanctified in us. For when does God not reign, or when does that begin in Him which both always was and does not cease to be? We petition that our kingdom come which was promised us by God, which was acquired by Christ's blood and passion, so that we who formerly served in the world may afterwards reign with Christ as Lord, as He Himself promises and says: 'Come, blessed of my Father, take possession of the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.' Indeed, most beloved brethren, even Christ Himself can be the kingdom of God whom we daily desire to come, whose coming we wish to be quickly presented to us. For since He Himself is the resurrection, because in Him we rise again, so too the kingdom of God can be understood as Himself, because in Him we are to reign. Moreover, well do we seek the kingdom of God, that is the heavenly kingdom, because there is also an earthly kingdom. But he who has already renounced the world is greater than both its honors and kingdom. And so he who dedicates himself to God and to Christ desires not earthly but heavenly kingdom. Moreover, there is need of continual prayer and supplication, lest we fall away from the heavenly kingdom, just as the Jews to whom this had first been promised fell away, as the Lord makes clear and proves. He says: 'Many shall come from the East and from the West and shall feast with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom will be put forth into the darkness outside; and there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' He shows that formerly the Jews were sons of the kingdom, when they persevered in being also the sons of God; after the name of the Father had ceased among them, the kingdom also ceased. And so we Christians who in our prayers have begun to call God 'Father,' pray also that the kingdom of God come to us.

Chapter 14

We also say in addition: 'Thy will be done in heaven as it is on earth,' not that God may do what He wishes, but that we may be able to do what God wishes. For who stands in the way of God's doing what He wishes? But since the devil

stands in the way of our mind and action obeying God in all things, we pray and petition that God's will be done in us. That it may be done in us, there is need of God's will, that is, of His help and protection, because no one is strong in his own strength, but is safe by the indulgence and mercy of God. Finally also the Lord, showing the infirmity of man which He was bearing, says: 'Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me,' and giving forth to His disciples an example not to do their own will but God's, He added: 'Yet not as I will, but as thou wilt.' And in another place He says: 'For I have come down from heaven not to do my own will, but the will of Him who sent me.' But if the Son obeyed to do His Father's will, how much more should the servant obey to do his Lord's will, just as John also in his epistle urges and instructs us to do the will of God, saying: 'Do not love the world, nor the things that are in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in Him, because all that is in the world is the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life which is not from the Father, but from the lust of the world. And the world with its lust will pass away, but he who does the will of God abides forever, as God also abides forever.' We who wish to abide forever should do the will of God who is eternal.

Chapter 15

Moreover, the will of God is what Christ both did and taught. Humility in conversation, steadfastness in faith, modesty in words, justice in deeds, mercy in works, discipline in morals, not to know how to do an injury and to be able to bear one done, to keep peace with the brethren, to love the Lord with a whole heart, to love Him in that He is Father, to fear Him in that He is God, to place nothing at all before Christ, because He placed nothing before us, to cling inseparably to His love, to stand bravely and faithfully at His cross; when there is a struggle over His name and honor to exhibit the constancy in speech with which we confess, under investigation the confidence with which we enter combat, in death the patience for which we are crowned; this is to wish to be co-heir with Christ; this is to do the commandment of God; this is to fulfill the will of the Father.

Chapter 16

Moreover, we ask that the will of God be done on heaven and on earth, each of which pertains to the consummation of our safety and salvation. For since we possess a body from earth and a spirit from heaven, we ourselves are earth and heaven, and in both, that is in both body and spirit we pray that God's will be done. For there is a struggle between flesh and spirit, and as they contend there is daily conflict with each other, so that we do not do the very things which we wish, as the spirit seeks the heavenly and the divine, the flesh desires the earthly and worldly. Accordingly we ask that harmony be effected between these two by the help and assistance of God, so that, while the will of God is being done both in the spirit and in the flesh, the soul which is reborn through Him may be

preserved. The Apostle Paul openly and manifestly declares this in these words, saying: 'For the flesh lusts against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, so that you do not do what you would. Now the works of the flesh are manifest which are adultery, fornication, uncleanness, licentiousness, idolatry, witchcrafts, murders, enmities, contentions, jealousies, anger, quarrels, dissensions, sects, heresies, envies, drunkenness, carousings, and such alike. They who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is charity, joy, peace, magnanimity, goodness, faith, clemency, continence, chastity.' And so by daily, yes, by unceasing petitions we pray for this, that both in heaven and on earth the will of God concerning us be done, because this is the will of God, that the earthly give way to the heavenly, that the spiritual and divine prevail.

Chapter 17

And it may thus be understood, most beloved brethren, that, since the Lord orders and admonishes to love even our enemies and also to pray for those who persecute us, let us ask for those who are still on earth and have not yet begun to be heavenly, so that the will of God, which Christ accomplished by preserving and renewing humanity, may be done also with respect to those. For since the disciples are no longer called by Him 'earth' but the 'salt of the earth,' and the Apostle declares that the first man is from the slime of the earth but the second from heaven, we too, who should be like God the Father, who makes His sun to rise on the good and the evil and sends rain upon the just and unjust, worthy pray and seek, as Christ so admonishes, so that we offer prayer for the salvation of all, so that just as the will of God has been done, that is, in us through our faith, that we might be of heaven, so too on earth, that is among those unwilling to believe, the will of God may be done, that those who are still earthly by their first birth may begin to be heavenly, born of water and of the Spirit.

Chapter 18

As the prayer proceeds, we ask and say: 'Give us this day our daily bread.' This can be understood both spiritually and simply, because either understanding is of profit in divine usefulness for salvation. For Christ is the bread of life and the bread here is of all, but is ours. And as we say 'Our Father,' because He is the Father of those who understand and believe, so too we say 'our Bread,' because Christ is the bread of those of us who attain to His body. Moreover, we ask that this bread be given daily, lest we, who are in Christ and receive the Eucharist daily as food of salvation, with the intervention of some more grievous sin, while we are shut off and as non-communicants are kept from the heavenly bread, be separated from the body of Christ as He Himself declares, saying: 'I am the bread of life which came down from heaven. If any man eat of my bread he shall live forever. Moreover, the bread that I shall give is my flesh for the life of the world.' Since then He says that, if anyone eats of His bread, he lives forever, as it is manifest that they live who attain to His body and receive the Eucharist by right

of communion, so on the other hand we must fear and pray lest anyone, while he is cut off and separated from the body of Christ, remain apart from salvation, as He Himself threatens, saying: 'Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you.' And so we petition that our bread, that is Christ, be given us daily, so that we, who abide and live in Christ, may not withdraw from His sanctification and body.

Chapter 19

But it can also be understood that we who have renounced the world and have cast aside its riches and pomps in the faith of spiritual grace seek only food and sustenance for ourselves, as the Lord instructs us saying: 'He who does not renounce all things which are his cannot be my disciple.' Moreover, he who has begun to be a disciple of Christ according to the word of his Master renouncing all things should ask for daily bread, and not put off for long the desires of their petition, as the Lord Himself again prescribes in these words: 'Be not anxious for tomorrow, for tomorrow will have anxieties of its own. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.' Worthily then does the disciple of Christ ask for his sustenance unto the day, who is forbidden to think of the tomorrow, because it becomes contrary and repugnant to Him that we seek to live long in the world who seek that the kingdom of God come quickly. Thus also the blessed Apostle advises, establishing and sustaining the firmness of our hope and faith. He says: 'For we brought nothing into this world, and certainly we can take nothing out. But having sustenance and clothing we are content with these. But those who seek to become rich fall into temptation and snares and into many harmful desires which plunge a man into destruction and damnation. For covetousness is the root of all evils and some in their eagerness to get rich have strayed from the faith and have involved themselves in many troubles.'

Chapter 20

He teaches that not only are riches to be contemned but are also dangerous, that in them is the root of enticing evils, that device the blindness of the human mind with hidden deception. So God rebukes the foolish rich man who ponders on his worldly wealth and boasts of the abundance of his overflowing harvests, saying: 'Thou fool, this night do they demand thy soul of thee; and the things thou hast provided, whose will they be?' The fool was rejoicing in his stores in the night when he was about to die and he whose life was now ebbing pondered on the abundance of his sustenance. However, on the other hand, the Lord teaches that he becomes perfect and complete who by selling all his possessions and distributing them for the use of the poor lays up for himself a treasure in heaven. He says that that man can follow Him and imitate the glory of the Lord's passion, who unencumbered and with his loins girded is not involved in the entanglements of personal property, but unentangled and free he himself also accompanies his possessions sent on before to the Lord. That each one of us may be able to

prepare himself for this, thus he learns to pray and from the principle of prayer to know what sort of man he ought to be.

Chapter 21

For daily bread cannot be lacking the just man, since it is written: 'The Lord will not afflict the just soul with famine'; and again, 'I have been young, and am old and I have not seen the just man forsaken, nor his seed begging bread' ; likewise, since the Lord promises, saying: 'What shall we eat or what shall we drink or what are we to put on? For after these things the gentiles seek; for your Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be given you besides.' To those who seek the kingdom and the justice of God, He promises that all things are added. For since all things are of God, nothing will be lacking to him who has God, if he himself be not lacking to God. Thus a meal is divinely prepared for Daniel who was inclosed in a lions' den by order of the king and the man of God is fed in the midst of the wild beasts who are angry and spare him. Thus Elias is sustained in his flight and solitude by ministering ravens, and is nourished in persecution by birds bringing food to him. And oh detestable cruelty of human malice, the wild beasts spare, the birds feed, and men lay lots and go mad!

Chapter 22

After this also we pray for our sins, saying: 'And forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors.' After the subsistence of food the pardon of sin is also asked so that he who is fed by God may live in God, and so that not only the present and temporal life may be provided for but also the eternal, to which we may come if our sins are forgiven, which the Lord calls debts, as He says in His Gospel: 'I forgave thee all the debt because thou didst entreat me.' Moreover, how necessarily, how providently and salutarily, are we admonished that we are sinners, who are compelled to plead for our sins, so that, while indulgence is sought from God, the soul is recalled to a consciousness of its guilt! Lest anyone be pleased with himself, as if innocent, and by exalting himself perish the more, he is instructed and taught that he sins daily, since he is ordered to pray daily for his sins. Thus finally John also in his epistle admonishes in these words: 'If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we acknowledge our sins, the Lord is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.' In his epistle he has combined both, that we should both entreat for our sins and that we should obtain indulgence when we entreat. Therefore, he said that the Lord was faithful to forgive sins, preserving the faith of His promise, because He who taught us to pray for our debts and our sins promised that mercy and forgiveness would follow.

Chapter 23

He clearly appended and added the law, binding us by a condition and engagement, that accordingly we ask that our debts be forgiven us according as we ourselves also forgive our debtors, knowing that what we seek for our sins cannot be obtained, unless we ourselves shall have acted likewise toward those sinning against us. Therefore, in another place he says: 'With what measure you measure, it shall be measured to you.' The servant who after all his debt was forgiven him by the Lord was himself unwilling to forgive his fellow servant is confined to prison. Because he was unwilling to forgive his fellow servant, he lost the forgiveness which had been granted him by the Lord. And these things Christ sets forth still more strongly in His precepts by the greater force of His censure. He says: 'When you stand to pray, forgive whatever you have against anyone, that your Father who is in heaven, may forgive you your sins. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive you your sins.' There remains no excuse for you on the day of judgment, when you are judged according to your sentence, and what you have done, this also you yourself suffer. For God has ordered us to be peace-makers and of one heart and of one mind in His house, and as He has made us, so reborn by a second birth He wishes to preserve us, that we who are the sons of God may remain in the peace of God, and 'that we who have one spirit may have one heart and mind. Thus neither does God receive the sacrifice of the dissident, and He orders him to turn back from the altar and first be reconciled with his brother, so that by pacifying prayers God also can be pacified. The greater sacrifice to God is our peace and fraternal concord and a people united in the unity of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Chapter 24

For even in the sacrifices which Abel and Cain first offered God did not look upon their gifts but upon their hearts, so that he who pleased Him in his heart pleased Him in his gift. Abel, peaceable and just, while he was sacrificing to God innocently, taught others also, when they offer a gift at the altar, to come with fear of God, with simple heart, with the law of justice, with the peace of concord. Worthily did he, since he was such in God's sacrifice, himself later become a sacrifice to God, so that being the first to manifest martyrdom he initiated the Lord's passion by his blood, who had both the justice and peace of the Lord. Finally, such are crowned by the Lord; such on the day of judgment will be vindicated with the Lord. But the discordant and the dissident and he who has not peace with his brethren, according as the blessed Apostle and the Holy Scripture testify, not even if he be slain for His name, shall be able to escape the crime of fraternal dissension, because, as it is written: 'Whoever hates his brother is a murderer,' and a murderer does not arrive at the kingdom of heaven nor does he live with God. He cannot be with Christ, who preferred to be an imitator of Judas

rather than of Christ. What a sin that is which cannot be washed away by the baptism of blood; what a crime that is which cannot be expiated by martyrdom!

Chapter 25

Necessarily too the Lord give us this admonition, to say in our prayer: 'And lead us not into temptation.' In this part it is shown that the adversary has no power against us, unless God has previously permitted it, in order that all our fear and devotion and obedience may be turned to God, since in temptations nothing is permitted evil, unless the power is granted by Him. Scripture proves this when it says: 'Nebuchodonosor, king of Babylon, came against Jerusalem and assaulted it, and the Lord gave it into his hand.' Moreover, power is given to evil against us according to our sins; as it is written: 'Who hath given Jacob for a spoil and Israel to those who despoiled him? Hath not God, against whom they have sinned and were unwilling to walk in His ways and to hear His law, even poured out upon them the indignation of His fury? And again when Solomon sinned and departed from the precepts and the ways of the Lord, it is set down: 'And the Lord stirred up Satan against Solomon himself.'

Chapter 26

Power indeed is granted against us in two ways: either for punishment when we sin or for glory when we are approved, as we see was done with respect to Job when God made this clear with the following words: 'Behold all that he hath is in thy hand; only put not forth thy hand upon his person.' And the Lord in His Gospel says at the time of His passion: 'Thou wouldst have no power at all over me, were it not given thee from above.' When, moreover, we ask that we come not into temptation, we are reminded of our infirmity and weakness, lest someone extol himself insolently, lest someone proudly and arrogantly assume something to himself, lest someone think the glory of confession or passion to be his own, although the Lord himself, teaching humility, has said: 'Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak,' so that when humble and submissive confession precedes and all is ascribed to God, whatever is sought suppliantly with fear and honor of God, by reason of His loving kindness it may be granted.

Chapter 27

After all those things, in summation of the prayer there comes a little clause concluding all our petitions and prayer in compact brevity. For at the very last we state: 'But deliver us from evil,' comprehending all adversities which the enemy undertakes against us in this world, from which there can be strong and faithful protection, if God delivers us, if, as we pray and implore, He furnish us His aid.

Moreover, when we say: 'Deliver us from evil,' nothing remains for which we should ask still further; when once we seek God's protection against evil, having obtained this, we stand secure and safe against all the works of the devil and of the world. For what fear indeed is there with regard to the world for him who has God as his protector in the world?

Chapter 28

What wonder, most beloved brethren, if such is the prayer that God has taught, who by His instruction has abbreviated our every prayer in a saving word? This had already been foretold by Isaias the prophet, when, filled with the Holy Spirit, he spoke of the majesty and loving kindness of God. He said: 'Completing and abbreviating His word in justice, since God will make a short word in the whole earth.' For when the Word of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, came to all, and gathering together the learned and unlearned alike He gave forth the precepts of salvation to every sex and age, He made a great compendium of His precepts, so that the memory of the learners might not be burdened in heavenly discipline, but might learn quickly what was necessary to a simple faith. Thus when He taught what eternal life is, He embraced the sacrament of life with great and divine brevity, saying: 'Now this is life eternal, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Him whom Thou sent, Jesus Christ.' Likewise, when He gathered from the law and prophets the first and greatest commandments, He said: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God is one Lord.' And, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole strength. This is the first commandment. And the second is like it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments depend the whole law and the prophets.' And again, 'Whatever good things you wish men to do to you, even so do you also to them; for this is the law and the prophets.'

Chapter 29

Not by words alone, but also by deeds has God taught us to pray, Himself praying frequently and entreating and demonstrating what we ought to do by the testimony of His own example, as it is written: 'But He Himself was in retirement in the desert, and in prayer,' and again, 'He went out into the mountain to pray and continued all night in prayer to God.' But if He who was without sin prayed, how much more ought sinners to pray, and if He prayed continually, watching through the whole night with uninterrupted petitions, how much more ought we to lie awake at night in continuing prayer!

Chapter 30

Moreover, the Lord prayed and asked not for Himself, (for what would an innocent person petition for himself?), but for our sins, just as He Himself declares when He says to Peter: 'Behold, Satan was asking to have you, that he might sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith may not fail.' And later He entreats the Father for all, saying: 'Yet not for these only do I pray, but for those also who through their word are to believe in me, that all may be one, even as thou, Father, in me and I in thee; that they also may be in us.' Great alike is God's kindness and compassion for our salvation, so that, not content with having redeemed us with His blood, He in addition also prayed for us. Moreover, behold what the desire was of Him who prayed, that, just as the Father and Son are one, so too we remain in that very unity; that from this it can be understood how much he sins who shatters unity and peace, since the Lord also prayed for this, namely, that His people live, for He knew that discord does not come to the kingdom of God.

Chapter 31

Moreover, when we stand for prayer, most beloved brethren, we should be alert and intent on our petitions with a whole heart. Let every carnal and worldly thought depart, and let the mind dwell on nothing other than that alone for which it prays. Therefore, the priest also before his prayer prepares the minds of the brethren by first uttering a preface, saying: 'Lift up your hearts,' so that when the people respond: 'We lift them up to the Lord,' they may be admonished that they should ponder on nothing other than the Lord. Let the breast be closed against the adversary and be open to God alone, and let it not suffer the enemy of God to approach it at the time of prayer. For he frequently creeps up and penetrates and with subtle deceit calls our prayers away from God, so that we have one thing in the heart, another in the voice, when not the sound of the voice but the mind and the thought should be praying to the Lord with sincere intention. But what slothfulness it is to be drawn away and to be captured by foolish and profane thoughts, when you are praying to the Lord, as if there were anything that you should ponder more than what you speak with God. How do you ask that you be heard by God, when you do not hear your very self? Do you wish the Lord to be mindful of you when you pray, when you yourself are not mindful of yourself? This is to be entirely off-guard against the enemy; this is, when you pray to God, to offend the majesty of God by the negligence of prayer; this is to be alert with the eyes and to be asleep with the heart, although a Christian, even when he is sleeping, should be alert with the heart, as it is written in the person of the Church speaking in the Canticle of Canticles? 'I sleep and my heart watcheth.' Therefore, the Apostle solicitously and cautiously admonishes, saying: 'Be assiduous in prayer, being wakeful therein,' that is, teaching and showing that they can obtain what they ask of God, who God sees are alert in prayer.

Chapter 32

Moreover, let those who pray not come to God with fruitless and destitute prayers. The petition is ineffective when a sterile prayer is offered to God. For, since every tree that does not bear fruit is cut down and cast into the fire, likewise words without fruits cannot merit God's favor, since they are fruitful in no deed. And so divine Scripture instructs us with these words: 'Prayer is good with fasting and alms.' For He who on the day of judgment is to render a reward for deeds and alms, today also is a kindly listener to prayer which comes with works. Thus finally did Cornelius, the centurion, merit to be heard, when he prayed. He was one who performed many alms-deeds among the people and who always prayed to God. Before him as he prayed at the ninth hour an angel stood giving testimony to his work in these words: 'Cornelius, thy prayers and thy alms have gone up for a memorial before God.'

Chapter 33

Quickly do those prayers ascend to God, which the merits of our works impose upon God. Thus did the angel Raphael stand before Tobias, as he always prayed and always worked, saying: 'It is honorable to reveal and confess the works of God. For when thou didst pray with Sara, I offered the memory of your prayer in the sight of the glory of God, and when thou didst bury the dead directly, and because thou didst not delay to rise and to leave thy dinner, but didst go out and hide the dead, I was sent to tempt thee; and again God sent me to heal thee and Sara thy son's wife. For I am Raphael, one of the seven just angels who go in and out before the glory of God.' Through Isaias also the Lord admonishes and teaches like things, testifying with these words: 'Loose every bond of wickedness, undo the bundles of the unbridled traders, release the broken for rest, and break asunder every unjust burden. Break thy bread to the hungry and bring the needy and the harborless into thy house. If thou shalt see one naked, cover him, and despise not the children of thy own seed. Then shall thy light break forth as the morning and thy garments shall speedily arise and thy justice shall go before thee and the glory of God shall surround thee. Then shalt thou call and the Lord shall hear thee, when thou shalt cry and He will say: 'Here I am.' He promises that He is present and hears, and He says that He protects those who loosening the knots of injustice from the heart, and performing alms-deeds around the members of God's household according to His precepts, as they hear what God orders to be done, themselves also deserve to be heard by God. The blessed Apostle Paul, when aided in the necessity of affliction, by the brethren said that the words which were done were sacrifices to God. He said: 'I am fully supplied now that I have received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a sweet odor, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God.' For when one has pity on the poor, he lends to God; and he who gives to the least, gives to God; in a spiritual sense he sacrifices to God the odors of sweetness.

Chapter 34

Now in celebrating prayer we find that the three boys with Daniel strong in the faith and victorious in captivity observed the third, the sixth, and the ninth hours, namely for a sacrament of the Trinity, which in the latest times had to be manifested. For the first hour going into the third shows the number of the Trinity consummated, and likewise the fourth proceeding to the sixth proclaims a second Trinity, and when the ninth is completed from the seventh, the perfect Trinity is numbered every three hours. Having determined upon these spaces of hours in a spiritual sense a long time ago, the worshippers of God were subject to them as the established and lawful times for prayer. Later the fact was made manifest that formerly the sacraments existed, because the just of old so prayed. For upon the disciples at the third hour did the Holy Spirit descend, which fulfilled the grace of the Lord's promise. Likewise Peter at the sixth hour going upward upon the house-top was instructed alike by a sign and the voice of God admonishing him, to admit all to the grace of salvation, although before He was hesitant about baptizing the Gentiles. The Lord also, having been crucified from the sixth to the ninth, washed away our sins by His blood, and, that he might be able to redeem and quicken us, He then completed the victory by His passion.

Chapter 35

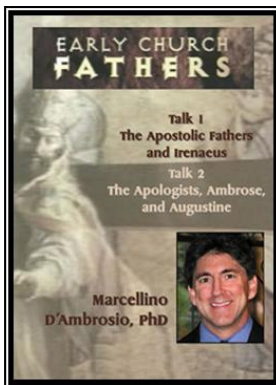
But for us, most beloved brethren, besides the hours of praying observed of old, both the times and the sacraments have increased. For we must also pray in the morning, that the resurrection of the Lord may be celebrated by morning prayer. The Holy Spirit set this forth of old, when He said in the psalms: 'O my king and my God. For to thee will I pray: O Lord, in the morning thou shalt hear my voice. In the morning I will stand before thee, and will see thee.' And again through the prophet the Lord says: 'At dawn they will be on watch for me, saying: let us go and return to the Lord our God.' Likewise at the setting of the sun and at the end of the day necessarily there must again be prayer. For since Christ is the true Sun and the true Day, as the sun and the day of the world recede, when we pray and petition that the light come upon us again, we pray for the coming of Christ to provide us with the grace of eternal light. Moreover, the Holy Spirit in the psalms declares that Christ is called the Day. He says: 'The stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. This is the Lord's doing; it is wonderful in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord has made; let us exalt and rejoice therein.' Likewise Malachias the prophet testifies that He is called the Sun when he says: 'But unto you that fear my name, the Sun of justice shall arise, and healing is in His wings.' But if in holy Scripture Christ is the true Sun and the true Day, no hour is excepted for Christians, in which God should be adored frequently and always, so that we who are in Christ, that is, in the true Sun and in the true Day, should be insistent throughout the whole day in our petitions and should pray; and when, by the law of the world, the revolving night, recurring in its alternate changes, succeeds, there can be no harm from the nocturnal shades

for those who pray, because to the sons of light even in the night there is day. For when is he without light who has light in his heart? Or when does he not have sun and day, to whom Christ is Sun and Day?

Chapter 36

Moreover, let us who are always in Christ, that is, in the light not cease praying even in the night. Thus the widow Anna without intermission always petitioning and watching, persevered in deserving well of God, as it is written in the Gospel: 'She did not leave the temple, serving with fastings and prayers night and day.' Either the Gentiles who have not yet been enlightened or the Jews who deserted the light and remained in darkness should have seen; let us, most beloved brethren, who are always in the light of the Lord, who remember and retain what we have begun to be after receiving grace compute the night as day. Let us believe that we walk always in the light; let us not be hindered by the darkness which we have escaped; let there be no loss of prayers in the hours of the night, no slothful or neglectful waste of opportunities for prayer. Let us who by the indulgence of God have been recreated spiritually and reborn imitate what we are destined to be; let us who in the kingdom will have day alone without the intervention of night be just as alert at night as in the day; let us who are destined to pray always and to give thanks to God, not cease here also to pray and to give thanks.

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