





# **MEDITATIONS ON GOD THE FATHER**



MIGUEL ÁNGEL FUENTES

**MEDITATIONS**  
**ON**  
**GOD THE FATHER**



Chillum—2017

*Cover Design*

© IVE Press

*Cover Art*

© IVE Press

*Text*

© Institute of the Incarnate Word, Inc.  
All rights reserved.

Manufactured in the United States of America.

**IVE Press**

Chillum, MD

[www.ivepress.org](http://www.ivepress.org)

ISBN: 1-939018-73-0

ISBN-13: 978-1-939018-73-1

Library of Congress Control Number: 2017931149

Printed in the United States of America ∞

## Table of Contents

1. Meditation: God exists.....	11
2. Meditation: Who is God?.....	15
3. Meditation: God is measureless .....	21
4. Meditation: God is one .....	25
5. Meditation: God is truth .....	29
6. Meditation: God is love .....	33
7. Meditation: God is Three Persons.....	37
8. Meditation: God is Father .....	41
9. Meditation: God “Abba-Father” .....	45
10. Meditation: The dispositions of a good child.....	49
11. Meditation: Unless you become like children.....	53
12. Meditation: God the Father, the forgiver.....	57
13. Meditation: God the Father is provident .....	59
14. Meditation: To abandon oneself into God’s hands .....	63
15. Meditation: What does abandonment to God consist of .....	67

TABLE OF CONTENTS

16. Meditation: In what way should we abandon ourselves to God ..... 71

17. Meditation: God the Father permits evil.....75

18. Meditation: A Father who gives us His Son .....79

19. Meditation: Examination of the Our Father (1).....83

20. Meditation: Examination of the Our Father (2) .....87

21. Meditation: Examination of the Our Father (3) ..... 91

22. Meditation: to seek the face of God the Father .....97

23. The Litany of Divine Providence.....99



The following meditations are aimed at building an adequate understanding of God the Father. They begin with some meditations on God in general, and then on the Most Holy Trinity, and finally some points are offered for meditating upon some truths about God the Father, Providence, Holy Abandonment, and God's allowing of evil and suffering.

These are some possible meditations; many more meditations could be prepared by taking the Biblical texts that speak of divine paternity. I suggest that each person adjust the meditations that follow in the measure that it is helpful for them and for their own spiritual benefit.

These meditations should be complemented with some meditations on *oneself* and on one's neighbor, since these three concepts (the idea of God, in particular the idea of God the Father, the idea of myself, and the idea of my neighbor) are intimately linked, and the ruin of one of them (as, for instance, happens in those who have a distorted understanding of themselves: exaggerated self-contempt, a lack of meaning in life, an inferiority complex, etc.) necessarily has repercussions on the understanding of divine paternity and of the true value of their neighbor.



# 1.

## Meditation: God exists

The foundation of all the truths of our Catholic faith is the belief *that He exists* (He 11:6).

1) **All creatures proclaim to us that God exists.** All creatures are preachers of this great truth. The skies with their planets, galaxies, unknown worlds, stars; the air with its birds, the water with its fish and mysteries, the earth with its animals and plants. *God made us* (Ps 100:3). Read and meditate upon Wisdom 13:1-10. Job 12: 7-10: *But now ask the beasts to teach you, the birds of the air to tell you; or speak to the earth to instruct you, and the fish of the sea to inform you. Which of all these does not know that the hand of God has done this? In his hand is the soul of every living thing, and the life breath of all mortal flesh.*

2) **That proof is within our very selves.** Ps 139:6-12: *Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, far too lofty for me to reach. Where can I go from your spirit? From your presence, where can I flee? If I ascend to the heavens, you are there; if I lie down in Sheol, there you are. If I take the wings*

*of dawn and dwell beyond the sea, even there your hand guides me, your right hand holds me fast. If I say, "Surely darkness shall hide me, and night shall be my light"—Darkness is not dark for you, and night shines as the day. Darkness and light are but one.*

a. **I have that natural light stamped within me.** *The light of thy countenance O Lord, is signed upon us* (Ps 4:7, Douay-Rheims.).

b. **Our very form proclaims that God is.** *My very bones shall say, "O Lord, who is like you?"* (Ps 35:10).

c. **Our spirit** with its nobility says that there is Someone who is spirit and who is above all things.

3) **Other proofs of God.** Not only does beauty proclaim God, but also the very disorder and confusion of the universe itself; since we're not able to free ourselves from them through our own efforts, they remind us that there is a God.

a. **The confusion that sometimes reigns in nature and in history:** earthquakes, storms, wars, injustices, etc. All of this asks for and demands an order that man cannot provide. Yet, order cannot be lacking in a universe that is, on the other hand, so perfect. At some point that order must come from someone who is able to rule history and the world. It suggests God so that the universe isn't simply something absurd.

b. **The war and contradiction within me:** the fight between my desire for something eternal and my passions that are so earthly; since we are so perfect in some things, we can't

reduce ourselves merely to an expiration date. My interior struggle proposes a God who will put an end to that war and will satisfy those eternal desires.

c. **By reduction to the absurd:** the man who forgets God is dehumanized; man needs the pure and magnificent idea of God in order for him to be a balanced and happy man. Without God man is no longer free; he is, rather, more absurd and unhappy.

4) *Be careful not to forget the Lord* (Dt 6:12). Have compassion on those who live without God; on those who live apart from God, who have forgotten God. Have mercy on yourself if you live as though God didn't exist, if God isn't the most present Presence in your thoughts; if He is not your goal in every act, of every day, and of your whole life.

\* \* \*

**Response:** What do I think of God? How much do I think of God? Do I live as I believe? Does the thought of God fill my days? Do I often forget God? Can I live without God? Do I feel remorse when I lose God through sin? Does the possibility of losing Him forever in the next life bother me? Am I disposed to sacrifice everything to avoid losing God?



## 2.

# Meditation: Who is God?

1) **God is “He who is.”** *I am who I am. Then he added: This is what you will tell the Israelites: I AM has sent me to you (Ex 3:14). God necessarily is, was, and will be. His essence is His very being; He is the absolute Being. For I, the Lord, do not change (Ma 3:6): I don’t change, I don’t grow old, I don’t get wrinkled. You are the same, your years have no end (Ps 102:28). Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God almighty, who was, and who is, and who is to come (Re 4:8).*

2) **Only God is He who is by essence.** Nothing nor no one, apart from God, has being because of themselves. 1 Tm 6:16: *[He] who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, and whom no human being has seen or can see.* The serious spiritual life is truly rooted in this truth, because the humility that every creature (both men and angels) must have before God is founded upon it: He is *the one who is*; I am *the one who is not*. Gn 3:19: *You are dust, and to dust you shall return.* He has no measure; I am a measure; Ps 39:6: *You establish the expanse of my days; indeed, my life is as nothing before you.*

*Every man is but a breath.* From here it follows that we must love God as the principle and foundation of our whole lives.

3) **All of the perfections of created things are in God.**

Saint John of the Cross says it (*Ascent of Mount Carmel*, L. I, cap. 4):

a. “All the being of creatures compared to the infinite being of God is nothing and that, therefore, anyone attached to creatures is nothing in the sight of God, and even less than nothing because love causes equality and likeness and even brings the lover lower than the loved object. In no way, then, is such a person capable of union with the infinite being of God. There is no likeness between what is not and what is. To be particular, here are some examples:

b. All the beauty of creatures compared to the infinite beauty of God is the height of ugliness. As Solomon says in Proverbs: *Fallax gratia, et vana est pulchritudo. Comeliness is deceiving and beauty vain* [Pr 31:30]. So a person attached to the beauty of any creature is extremely ugly in God’s sight. A soul so unsightly is incapable of transformation into the beauty that is God because ugliness does not attain to beauty.

c. All the grace and elegance of creatures compared to God’s grace is utter coarseness and crudity. That is why a person captivated by this grace and elegance of creatures becomes highly coarse and crude in God’s sight. Someone like this is incapable of the infinite grace and beauty of God because of the extreme difference between the coarse and the infinitely elegant.



d. Compared to the infinite goodness of God, all the goodness of the creatures of the world can be called wickedness. *Nothing is good save God only* [Lk 18:19]. Those who set their hearts on the good things of the world become extremely wicked in the sight of God. Since wickedness does not comprehend goodness, such persons will be incapable of union with God, who is supreme goodness.

e. All the world's wisdom and human ability compared to the infinite wisdom of God is pure and utter ignorance, as Saint Paul writes to the Corinthians: *Sapientia hujus mundi stultitia est apud Deum. The wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight* [1 Co 3:19].

f. Those, therefore, who value their knowledge and ability as a means of reaching union with the wisdom of God are highly ignorant in God's sight and will be left behind, far away from this wisdom. Ignorance does not grasp what wisdom is. Saint Paul says that such wisdom is foolishness to God, for in God's sight those who think they have some wisdom are very ignorant. The Apostle says of them in writing to the Romans: *Dicentes enim se esse sapientes, stulti facti sunt: Taking themselves for wise, they became fools* [Ro 1:22]. Only those who set aside their own knowledge and walk in God's service like unlearned children receive wisdom from God. This is the wisdom about which Saint Paul taught the Corinthians: *Si quis videtur inter vos sapiens esse in hoc saeculo, stultus fiat ut sit sapiens. Sapientia enim hujus mundi stultitia est apud Deum: If anyone among you thinks he is*

*wise, let him become ignorant so as to be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God* [1 Co 3:18-19]. Accordingly, to reach union with the wisdom of God a person must advance by unknowing rather than by knowing.

g. All the sovereignty and freedom of the world compared to the freedom and sovereignty of the Spirit of God is utter slavery, anguish, and captivity. Those, then, who are attached to prelacies or to other such dignities and to freedom of their appetites will be considered and treated by God as base slaves and captives, not as offspring. And this because of their not wanting to accept His holy teaching in which He instructs us that *Whoever wants to be the greater will be the least, and whoever wants to be the least will be the greater* [Lk 22:26]. Thus they will be unable to reach the royal freedom of spirit attained in divine union, for freedom has nothing to do with slavery. And freedom cannot abide in a heart dominated by desires, in a slave's heart. It abides in a liberated heart, in a child's heart. This is why Sarah told her husband Abraham to cast out the bondwoman and her son, declaring that the bondwoman's son should not be an heir together with the free son [cf. Gn 21:10].

h. All the delights and satisfactions of the will in the things of the world compared to all the delight that is God are intense suffering, torment, and bitterness. Those who link their hearts to these delights, then, deserve in God's eyes intense suffering, torment, and bitterness. They will not be

capable of attaining the delights of the embrace of union with God, since they merit suffering and bitterness.

i. All the wealth and glory of creation compared to the wealth that is God is utter poverty and misery in the Lord's sight. The person who loves and possesses these things is completely poor and miserable before God and will be unable to attain the richness and glory of transformation in God; the miserable and poor is very far from the supremely rich and glorious."

\* \* \*

**Response:** Who is God for me? When does His thought weigh on my heart? Am I aware of the divine Goodness and Beauty? Does the thought of God fill my heart with happiness? Does knowing that God is so great and at the same time such a Father fill me with assurance and security? Do creatures lose their importance in my heart when I meditate on God's greatness?



### 3.

## Meditation: God is measureless

1) **God surpasses everything that we can perceive through our senses.** God has no color, nor image, nor measure; He can't be touched or heard. Is 40:18: *To whom can you liken God? With what likeness can you confront him?* Ps 35:10: *O Lord, who is like you?* He isn't beautiful like the things of the earth, but rather with a different beauty, one that is so great that not even the angels can take it in.

2) **He can't be encompassed within the imagination or with the created intellect.** Ps 89:7: *Who in the skies ranks with the Lord? Who is like the Lord among the sons of the gods?* For this reason, in order to know God's greatness we must give up our senses, our imagination, and the limitations of our minds. Ps 97:2: *Cloud and darkness surround him; justice and right are the foundation of his throne.* 1 Tm 6:16: *[He] dwells in unapproachable light.*

3) **He is infinite in all His perfections.** Jb 36:26: *God is great beyond our knowledge, the number of his years past searching out.* Je 32:19: *Great in counsel, mighty in deed.* Ws 9:16: *Scarcely can we guess the things on earth, and only with difficulty grasp what is at hand; but things in heaven, who can search them out?*

4) **By revealing Himself, God has performed a great act of mercy towards us.** This is because, if He hadn't, we never would have been able to know His inner life and His real greatness. From here it follows that we should: (a) be very grateful to Him for having revealed to us the Sacred Scriptures, where the secrets of His knowledge are hidden; (b) have a passionate faith, allowing our minds to be captivated by the divine truths; (c) great trust in what He still wants to show us in the face-to-face vision of Him in eternity.

We can meditate on this beautiful hymn by Saint Gregory Nazianzus:

“O you who are beyond all,  
How can you be called by another name?  
What hymn can sing of you?  
No name describes you.  
What mind can grasp you?  
No intellect understands you.  
Only you are inexpressible;  
All that is spoken comes forth from you.

GOD IS ONE

Only you are unknowable;  
All that is thought comes forth from you.  
All creatures praise you,  
Those that speak and those that are dumb.  
All creatures bow down before you,  
Those that can think and those that have no power of thought,  
The universal longing, the groaning of creation tends towards you.  
Everything that exists prays to you  
And to you every creature that can read your universe  
Sends up a hymn of silence.  
In you alone all things dwell.  
With a single impulse all things find their goal in you.  
You are the purpose of every creature.  
You are unique.  
You are each one and are not any.  
You are not a single creature nor are you the sum of creatures;  
All names are yours; how shall I address you,  
Who alone cannot be named?  
What celestial spirit could penetrate the clouds covering the sky  
itself?  
Have mercy, O You, the Beyond All  
How can you be called by any other name?

\* \* \*

**Response:** Do we have an awareness of God's infinitude and transcendence? Do I feel small and insignificant in the face of such greatness? Upon contemplating the extensive space of a starry night, am I aware that all of that space, impossible to observe, imagine, or calculate, is smaller than a grain of sand and weighs less than a speck of dust compared to God? And doesn't it surprise me, then, that that measureless God had placed his Fatherly eyes upon me?



## 4.

# Meditation: God is one

1) **There is only one God.** *Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone! Therefore, you shall love the Lord, your God, with your whole heart, and with your whole being, and with your whole strength (Dt 6:4-5). Turn to me and be safe, all you ends of the earth, for I am God; there is no other! To me every knee shall bend; by me every tongue shall swear, saying, "Only in the Lord are just deeds and power" (Is 45:22-24).* "We firmly believe and simply confess that there is only one true God, eternal and immeasurable, almighty, unchangeable, incomprehensible and ineffable, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, three persons but one absolutely simple essence, substance or nature" (Fourth Lateran Council).

2) **Jesus speaks of the One and Only God:** Jesus Himself affirms that God is "the one Lord," and that it is necessary to love Him with "all your heart, all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength" (cf. Mk 12:29-30). At the same time, He

gives us to understand that He Himself is “the Lord” (cf. Mk 12:35-37).

3) **Consequences of faith in the one God:** To believe in God, the only One, and to love Him with one’s whole being has vast consequences for the whole of our lives. It means:

a. To recognize God’s greatness and majesty: *Behold, God is great, and we know him not* (Jb 36:26). Therefore, we must “serve God first” (Saint Joan of Arc).

b. To live in thanksgiving: if God is the only One, everything we are and have comes from him: *What have you that you did not receive?* (1 Co 4:7). *What shall I render to the Lord for all His bounty to me?* (Ps 116:12).

c. To make good use of created things: faith in God, the only One, leads us to use everything that is not God only insofar as it brings us closer to Him, and to detach ourselves from it insofar as it turns us away from Him: “My Lord and my God, take from me everything that distances me from you. My Lord and my God, give me everything that brings me closer to you. My Lord and my God, detach me from myself to give my all to you” (Saint Nicholas of Flüe).

d. To trust God in every circumstance, even in adversity. A prayer of Saint Teresa of Jesus wonderfully expresses this trust:

Let nothing trouble you, let nothing frighten you  
 Everything passes, God never changes

Patience, obtains all

Whoever has God, wants for nothing

God alone is enough.

\* \* \*

**Response:** Is God really “the only one” for me? In spite of my faith in the one and only God, are there any “other gods” for me? That is, do I chase after false gods? Do I use created things for what they are: merely creatures that should bring us to God; or rather do I ask from them a happiness that only God can give? Do I trust *fully and absolutely* in God?



## 5.

# Meditation: God is truth

1) God is the Truth, because *God is light, and in him there is no darkness at all* (1 Jn 1:5). *Since you, Lord God, are truly God and your words are truth* (2 Sa 7:28); this is why God's promises always come true (cf. Dt 7:9). God is Truth itself, whose words cannot deceive. This is why one can abandon oneself in full trust to the truth and faithfulness of His word in all things. The beginning of sin and of man's fall was due to a lie of the tempter who induced doubt of God's word, kindness, and faithfulness.

2) God's truth is His wisdom, which commands the whole created order and governs the world (cf. Ws 13:1-9). God, who alone made heaven and earth, can alone impart true knowledge of every created thing in relation to Himself (cf. Ws 7:17-21). God is also truthful when He reveals Himself - the teaching that comes from God is *true instruction* (Ma 2:6). When He sends His Son into the world it will be *to bear witness to the truth* (Jn 18:37): *We know that*

*the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, to know him who is true (1 Jn 5:20).*

3) God is the Truth, and this means that He sees through us deeply and knows us better than even we know ourselves. Nothing is hidden to His eyes. *He dams up the sources of the streams, and brings hidden things to light (Jb 28:11). God will bring to judgment every work, with all its hidden qualities, whether good or bad (Ec 12:14).* He lays our souls bare: *So I myself will strip Esau; I will uncover his lairs so he cannot hide (Je 49:10).* What I really am is what I am in God's eyes. Nothing escapes Him; I can disguise myself in the eyes of others, and I can deny my truth before my own eyes, before not before God's eyes.

4) However, my *justice* is also clear to God's eyes. God also sees the good that He has put in me, even more than I see it. He made me, and His light sees through me completely. He knows the number of my bones: *God knows your hearts (Lk 16:15); You know everything (Es 14:17). Lord, you have probed me, you know me: you know when I sit and stand; you understand my thoughts from afar. You sift through my travels and my rest; with all my ways you are familiar. Even before a word is on my tongue, Lord, you know it all (Ps 139:1-4).*

5) God is the witness of all our thoughts, desires, sufferings, and happiness that no one else can grasp. *Ws 1:6: Because God is the witness of the inmost self and the sure observer of the heart and the listener to the tongue.*

\* \* \*

**Response:** Do you feel like God knows you? Does that knowledge fill you with fear or with assurance? Are you afraid because God is the witness of your secrets, or are you happy that He is constantly dwelling in the deepest depths of your conscience?





## 6.

# Meditation: God is love

God is love: the Apostle John teaches it (cf. 1 Jn 4:8). In the course of its history, Israel was able to discover that God had only one reason to reveal Himself to them, a single motive for choosing them from among all peoples as His special possession: His sheer gratuitous love (Dt 4:37; 7:8; 10:15). And thanks to the prophets Israel understood that it was again out of love that God never stopped saving them (Is 43:1-7) and pardoning their unfaithfulness and sins (Ho 2). God's love is:

- a. compared to a father's love for his son (Ho 11:1);
- b. stronger than a mother's for her children (Is 49:14-15);
- c. God loves His people more than a bridegroom his beloved (Is 62:4-5);
- d. His love will be victorious over even the worst infidelities (Ez 16; Ho 11);

e. His love will extend to His most precious gift: *God so loved the world that he gave his only Son* (Jn 3:16).

1) God's love is "everlasting" (Is 54:8). *Though the mountains fall away and the hills be shaken, My love shall never fall away from you* (Is 54:10). *With age-old love I have loved you; so I have kept my mercy toward you* (Je 31:3).

2) But Saint John goes even further when he affirms that *God is love* (1 Jn 4:8, 16): God's very being is love. By sending His only Son and the Spirit of Love in the fullness of time, God has revealed His innermost secret (1 Co 2:7-16; Ep 3:9-12): God Himself is an eternal exchange of love, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and He has destined us to share in that exchange.

3) God has loved me and *He loves me now*:

a. With a *personal* love: God the Father loves me, knowing who I am, how I am, where I'm coming from, what I can do, and what limitations I have. He knows me by name. He has loved me with those characteristics; He hasn't loved me "in bulk," "*en masse*," or generically. I'm me, with my own self, with my own non-transferable and incommunicable personality, whom God the Father has loved and loved. Why? [*Because*] *I have loved you* (Je 31:3), period.

b. With a *prior* love: *He loved us [first]* (1 Jn 4:10). I wasn't anything but rather nothing, and He loved me before I existed. He gave His Son to save me, even before I was called into existence. He gave me His life in baptism, before my mind had

been opened to knowledge. He has always taken the initiative in my life.

c. With an *eternal* love: *With age-old love I have loved you* (Je 31:3)

\* \* \*

**Response:** After these considerations, could I possibly affirm that “no one loves me,” or that “I’m not worth anything”? Could I assume that God is indifferent to my good or my ill? Do I consider myself as “embraced” by God, that is, covered by His Paternal hands? What feelings are awakened in my heart by the words of love for me that Sacred Scripture places on God’s lips?



# 7.

## **Meditation: God is Three Persons**

God has revealed to us His deepest mystery: He is Three in persons.

1) **We confess only one God in three Persons.** We do not confess three Gods, but one God in three persons, the “consubstantial Trinity” (Second Council of Constantinople in the year 553). The divine persons do not share the one divinity among themselves but each of them is God whole and entire: “The Father is that which the Son is, the Son that which the Father is, the Father and the Son that which the Holy Spirit is, i.e., by nature one God” (Eleventh Council of Toledo in the year 675). In the words of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215), “Each of the persons is that supreme reality, viz., the divine substance, essence or nature.”

2) **The divine persons are really distinct from one another.** “God is one but not solitary” (*Fides Damasi*). “Father,” “Son,” “Holy Spirit” are not simply names designating modalities of the divine being, for they are really distinct from one another: “He is not the Father who is the Son, nor is the Son He who is the Father, nor is the Holy Spirit He who is the Father or the Son” (Eleventh Council of Toledo in the year 675). They are distinct from one another in their relations of origin: “It is the Father who generates, the Son who is begotten, and the Holy Spirit who proceeds” (Fourth Lateran Council in the year 1215). *The divine Unity is Triune.*

3) Saint Gregory of Nazianzus, also called “the Theologian,” entrusts this summary of Trinitarian faith to the catechumens of Constantinople: “Above all guard for me this great deposit of faith for which I live and fight, which I want to take with me as a companion, and which makes me bear all evils and despise all pleasures: I mean the profession of faith in the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. I entrust it to you today. By it I am soon going to plunge you into water and raise you up from it. I give it to you as the companion and patron of your whole life. I give you but one divinity and power, existing one in three, and containing the three in a distinct way. Divinity without disparity of substance or nature, without superior degree that raises up or inferior degree that casts down. . . the infinite co-naturality of three infinities. Each person considered in Himself is entirely God. . . the three considered together. . . . I have not even begun to think of unity

when the Trinity bathes me in its splendor. I have not even begun to think of the Trinity when unity grasps me” (Saint Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oratio*, 40, 41).

4) **I confess:** Schmaus, in his *Dogmatic Theology*, cites Noulleau (+ 1672) who wrote: “I confess that I never adored You as I should have; I confess that I am even ignorant of the word adoration. While I thought of many acts of piety, I almost never had adoration in mind. When would I have thought of adoring You and of speaking of it?”

\* \* \*

**Response:** What is my awareness of the Most Holy Trinity? What is my attitude in the face of it? How has my desire been to know this infinitely adorable and loveable mystery more and more? What is my level of closeness with God who reveals Himself to me in His deepest mystery, that of His very being?





## 8.

# Meditation: God is Father

1) “The expression ‘God the Father’ had never been revealed to anyone. When Moses himself asked God who he was, he heard another name. The Father’s name has been revealed to us in the Son, for the name ‘Son’ implies the new name ‘Father.’” (Tertullian). We can invoke God as “Father” because He is revealed to us by His Son become man and because his Spirit makes him known to us.

2) “Revelation teaches us this marvel of God’s fecundity: there is in Him an altogether spiritual and ineffable paternity; He is Father, the principle of all the Divine Life in the Trinity” (Blessed Dom Columba Marmion, *Christ in His Mysteries*).

3) Knowledge of the Father is a gift that Jesus Christ has given us: *No one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son wishes to reveal Him*, that is, *the childlike* (Mt 11:25-27).

4) In order to adequately understand who the Father is, we must strip our image of earthly fathers from all their limitations, because these are always deficient and darken the true divine paternity, which is infinitely lovable.

5) By revealing that God is our Father, at the same time God teaches us who we are (children!): “O man, you did not dare to raise your face to heaven, you lowered your eyes to the earth, and suddenly you have received the grace of Christ all your sins have been forgiven. From being a wicked servant you have become a good son. . . . Then raise your eyes to the Father who has begotten you through Baptism, to the Father who has redeemed you through His Son, and say: ‘Our Father. . . .’ But do not claim any privilege. He is the Father in a special way only of Christ, but He is the common Father of us all, because while He has begotten only Christ, He has created us. Then also say by His grace, ‘Our Father,’ so that you may merit being His son” (Saint Ambrose).

6) “In a very real, very true sense, we are divinely begotten by grace. With the Word, we can say: ‘O Father, I am Thy Son, I came out from Thee.’ The Word says it necessarily, by right, being essentially God’s own Son; we only say it by grace, as adopted sons; —the Word says it from all eternity; we say it in time, although the decree of this predestination is eternal; —for the Word, this language denotes a relation of origin with the Father; for us, there is added a relation of dependence. But for us, as for Him, these is a true sonship: we are, by grace, God’s children” (Blessed Dom Columba Marmion, *Christ in His Mysteries*).

7) Recognizing that God is our Father demands from us the desire and the will to become like Him: “We must remember . . . and know that when we call God ‘our Father’ we ought to behave as sons of God” (Saint Cyprian). “You cannot call the God of all kindness your Father if you preserve a cruel and inhuman heart; for in this case you no longer have in you the marks of the heavenly Father’s kindness” (Saint John Chrysostom); “We must contemplate the beauty of the Father without ceasing and adorn our own souls accordingly” (Saint Gregory of Nyssa).

8) “Full knowledge of God does not consist in only knowing His existence, but rather in knowing that He is Father and of whom He is Father. . . . Our Lord Jesus Christ has added perfection to the Mosaic law and has given the precept of the law greater clarity: He has given us an understanding of God that surpasses all the previous ones, since He has revealed to us that God, in addition to being the Creator and Lord of the Universe, is also Father” (Cyril of Alexandria, *In Io.*).

\* \* \*

**Response:** Is God really a “father” for me? Do I have difficulties in talking to God as *my* Father? Do my words reflect the tenderness of a child? Where do I think that my difficulties in speaking to God the Father as a child would speak to their mom or dad come from?



## 9.

# Meditation: God “Abba-Father”

1) When speaking of the Father, Jesus calls Him *Abba*. “Abba” is an Aramaic expression, which has been kept in the Greek text of Mark’s Gospel (14:36). On the lips of Jesus of Nazareth, it has a unique, unrepeatable meaning.

2) *The word “Abba”* formed part of the language of the family; it was used to express that unique relationship *between the father and the son begotten by him*, between the son who loves the father and who is, at the same time, loved by him. When Jesus used this word to speak of God, it must have caused admiration and even scandalized His listeners. An Israelite wouldn’t have used it, not even in prayer. Only the one who was considered the Son of God in the proper sense of the word could speak to God that way and address Him as Father. “*Abba*,” that is to say, “*my father*,” “*daddy*,” “*dad*.”

3) God was waiting to be invoked this way. Jeremiah says that God waits to be invoked as Father: *You would call me, "My Father"* (Je 3:19). Jesus speaks constantly of the Father, and He invokes the Father as one who has the right to address Him simply with the term of endearment: "Abba-My Father."

4) Saint Mark says that during the prayer in Gethsemane, Jesus exclaimed: *Abba, Father, all things are possible to you. Take this cup away from me, but not what I will but what you will* (Mk 14:36). In the other Gospels, when the words "My Father" come from Jesus' mouth, they should be understood in this sense.

5) Jesus gradually accustomed His hearers so that they would understand that upon His lips, the Word "God" and, in particular, the word "Father," meant "*Abba-My Father.*" Hence, from His infancy, when He was only 12 years old, Jesus told His parents who had been looking for Him for three days: *Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?* (Lk 2:49). At the end of His life, in the priestly prayer with which He concludes His Mission, He insists on asking God: *Father, the hour has come. Give glory to Your son, so that Your son may glorify You* (Jn 17:1). *Holy Father, keep them in Your name that You have given Me* (Jn 17:11). *Righteous Father, the world also does not know You, but I know You* (Jn 17:25). In the proclamation of what is to come, made through the parable about the final judgment, Christ presents Himself as the One who proclaims: *Come, you who are blessed by my Father* (Mt 25:34). Later, from the cross He will say His last words: *Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit* (Lk 23:46). Lastly, once raised from the dead, He

announces to the disciples: *I am sending the promise of My Father upon you* (Lk 24:49). When He teaches us to pray, He makes us say to God: *Our Father* (Mt 6:9-13), or also *Father* (Lk 11:2-4).

6) In this way, Jesus teaches us that that, by grace, we really are sons and daughters of God: *But to those who did accept Him* [that is, those who did accept the Word made Flesh] *He gave power to become children of God* (Jn 1:12). He says as much to Mary Magdalene: *Go to My brothers and tell them, "I am going to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God"* (Jn 20:17). We are children *by participation*, or, better said, *by adoption*, as theologians have taught followed Saint Paul, who, in the letter to the Galatians writes: *God sent his Son . . . so that we might receive adoption* (Ga 4:4-5; cf. Saint Thomas Aquinas, ST III, q. 23, a. 1 and a. 2).

7) Therefore, we should constantly call out to God as His children: *As proof that you are children, God sent the spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!"* (Ga 4:6); *For you did not receive a spirit of slavery . . . but you received a spirit of adoption, through which we cry, "Abba, Father!"* (Ro 8:15).

\* \* \*

**Response:** What is my awareness of being a child of God? What is my closeness and my confidence with God the Father? Are my dealings very personal, trusting, friendly, open, like a child with their Father?





# 10.

## **Meditation: The dispositions of a good child**

Good children have the right disposition towards their father. With respect to God, our relationship to Him demands that we develop five fundamental dispositions.

1) Above all else, honor. Through the prophet Malachi God complains: *A son honors his father, and a servant fears his master; if, then, I am a father, where is the honor due to Me?* (Ma 1:6). It is an honor that shouldn't be only on the lips, but rather in the heart, so that we aren't like that people about whom Isaiah complained: *Since this people . . . honors Me with their lips alone, though their hearts are far from Me* (Is 29:13).

2) We owe Him imitation. *Be imitators of God, as beloved children* (Ep 5:1). This imitation should seek perfection: *Be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect* (Mt 5:48). Saint Cyprian said: "We must

remember . . . and know that when we call God *our Father* we ought to behave as sons of God.” Likewise Saint John Chrysostom: “You cannot call the God of all kindness your Father if you preserve a cruel and inhuman heart; for in this case you no longer have in you the marks of the heavenly Father’s kindness.” And Saint Gregory of Nyssa: “We must contemplate the beauty of the Father without ceasing and adorn our own souls accordingly.”

3) We owe Him obedience. *Should we not [then] submit all the more to the Father of spirits and live?* (He 12:9). Moreover, we should do this in order to imitate that most perfect Son, who became obedient unto death (cf. Ph 2).

4) We also owe Him patience in our punishments. *The discipline of the Lord, my son, do not spurn; do not disdain His reproof; for whom the Lord loves He reproveth, as a father, the son He favors* (Pr 3:11-12).

5) Lastly, we owe Him childlike trust (cf. Mt 18:3); because the Father reveals Himself to “the childlike” (Mt 11:25). Saint Augustine beautifully said: “Our Father: at this name love is aroused in us . . . and the confidence of obtaining what we are about to ask. . . . What would He not give to His children who ask, since He has already granted them the gift of being His children?”

\* \* \*

**Response:** Do I understand “obedience to God” (to His will) as an act of filial love? Am I patient when God

corrects me? Do I seek to imitate God, that is, to act with Him as my example?



# 11.

## **Meditation: Unless you become like children...**

1) *He called a child over, placed it in their midst, and said, “Amen, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (Mt 18:2-4).*

2) Johann Pestalozzi (+ 1827): “The greatest tragedy of modern man is the loss of feeling like a child, because it renders God’s paternal and educational work impossible.” This is because God guides, educates, and works in the soul that surrenders itself to Him with docility, littleness, and humility. By becoming like a child before God, a person obtains whatever they want from Him *for their sanctification and for eternal life.*

3) Spiritual childhood is comprised of three great pillars:

a. Childlike piety: piety is respect, devotion, and tenderness. It also means have an almost *natural or spontaneous* faith in God the Father. It implies a blind trust, like a child has in their earthly father (“if my dad says so, it must be true”). Piety means “to fear to disappoint the one whom we love,” that is, our Father.

“Though storms may rage  
and winds may howl,  
and lightning strike again,  
and the thunder roar,  
I calmly think as does the mariner’s child,  
‘My Father is at the helm:  
I fear nothing!’”

b. Simplicity of a child: simplicity means simplicity of heart, that is, avoiding duplicity and useless and distrustful complications, and, above all, the principal characteristic of simplicity: humility.

c. Purity of a child: there is a profound relationship between childhood and purity. Childlike purity is *instinctive*, just as it was in the earthly paradise. We’re not in paradise, and so we must *aspire to recover* that purity. This is accomplished by not settling simply to “not commit sins against purity.” “Whoever only wants to avoid sin will fall into it” (Fr. Kentenich). We must go beyond that, desiring to live a pure life with *magnanimity*. This means to cross that simple line of obligatory

purity, meaning, to flee from the spirit of the world, but a *magnificent flight*, i.e., a flight towards the supernatural; avoiding unsuitable or less good reading material (even though they aren't bad in themselves, but rather *emotional compensations*); cultivating modesty, industriousness, and mortification of the body.

4) Here is a letter that gives an exact vision of this childlike simplicity (written by Antonietta Meo, who died at the age of 6 on July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1937). Letter “to God the Father”:

“Dear God the Father,

God! Father! Father! . . . What a beautiful name! . . .

Dear God the Father! . . . Let me get well soon so that on Sunday I can receive the sacrament of the Confession.

Dear God the Father I like this name so much, because it means Father of all the world.

You who are the Maker . . . send all of us the Holy Spirit.

Dear God the Father I love You so much.

Dear God the Father, bless all the world, first of all my parents and my little sister and then all the others and send them all to Paradise. Save a lot of souls so that they can go to Paradise and glorify You.

Dear God the Father! . . . First of all bless the Church and the Clergy and all the community of the Church.

Dear God the Father tell Jesus that I'm very glad to receive Him and I wish He will be happy, too.

Dear God the Father, many greetings and kisses from Your daughter. Antonietta” (Letter 72, November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1936).

\* \* \*

**Response:** Do I want to become a child before God? How is my piety, my prayer, my devotions, my loyalty, my confidence in God? Are they like that of a child? How is my simplicity, my humility with God? Are they like that of a child? How is my purity, my modesty, my chastity, without which I can't truly be a child before God? Are they like those of a child of God?



# 12.

## Meditation: God the Father, the forgiver

Meditation on the figure of the Father in the parable of the prodigal son (Lk 15:11-31)

1) God the Father doesn't force our will, not even to keep us by His side: *A man had two sons, and the younger son said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of your estate that should come to me.'* So the father divided the property between them.

2) However, He anxiously awaits our return: *While he was still a long way off, his father caught sight of him, and was filled with compassion. He ran to his son, embraced him and kissed him.*

3) His joy at receiving us into His heart is greater than our need to ask pardon for our going astray: *His son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you; I no longer deserve to be called your son.'* But his father ordered his servants, *'Quickly bring the finest robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Take the*

*fattened calf and slaughter it. Then let us celebrate with a feast, because this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and has been found.’ Then the celebration began.*

4) He is ready to give us back everything that we lost when we lost Him: He places a ring on our finger (which signified freedom in ancient times; only free men could wear them), He clothes us with a new vestment (grace), and He heals our feet, which are tired from running after sin.

5) His happiness is because of our life: *we must celebrate and rejoice, because your brother was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.* Ez 18:23: *Do I find pleasure in the death of the wicked—oracle of the Lord God? Do I not rejoice when they turn from their evil way and live?* Ez 33:11: *Answer them: As I live—oracle of the Lord God—I swear I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! Why should you die, house of Israel?*

\* \* \*

**Response:** What image do I have of my Father? Is it like the father whom Jesus describes in His parable of the prodigal son? Do I understand that God really is happy when I return to His heart, when I ask for forgiveness for my sins? Do I really feel forgiven by God when the priest assures me that that’s what God has done? Is my awareness of forgiveness something *spiritual* or do I always seek to “feel sensibly” that forgiveness?

# 13.

## Meditation: God the Father is provident

1) The end that God has given to man is a *magnificent plan*: God wants to freely communicate the glory of His blessed life. Such is the *mystery of His will* (Ep 1:9, Douay-Rheims) that He conceived before the world's creation in His beloved Son, *He destined us for adoption to Himself through Jesus Christ* (Ep 1:5), that is, *to be conformed to the image of His Son* (Rm 8:29), thanks to the *spirit of [filial] adoption* (Rm 8:15). This design is a *grace bestowed on us in Christ Jesus before time began* (2 Tm 1:9), immediately born from the Trinitarian love.

2) God's fatherhood gently disposes everything that His children need. Providence means to direct His children towards Himself as to their end.

3) The solicitude of Divine Providence is concrete and immediate. God cares for everything, from the least things to the

great events of the world and its history. The sacred books powerfully affirm God's absolute sovereignty over the course of events: *Our God is in heaven and does whatever He wills* (Ps 115:3); and of Christ it is said: *who opens and no one shall close, who closes and no one shall open* (Re 3:7); *Many are the plans of the human heart, but it is the decision of the Lord that endures* (Pr 19:21).

4) Thus, Divine Providence is my mother who gives me birth, my teacher because it counsels me, my queen because it reigns over me, my protector because it defends me, my consoler because it eases my pain. In His Providence, God the Father shows Himself to be a friend, shepherd, father, and doctor.

5) All good things come to me through God's Providence: from the goods of body and soul, existence and conservation in life, my intellectual and practical gifts, my family and friends, grace and forgiveness, the path of righteousness.

6) Prayer to Divine Providence of Blessed Isabel of France (+ 1270): "What will happen to me today, my God? I don't know. The only thing I know is that nothing will happen to me that You haven't foreseen, governed, and ordered from eternity. This is enough for me, my God, this is enough! I adore Your eternal and everlasting designs; I submit myself to them with all my soul for love of You. I want everything, I accept everything, I want to make a sacrifice of everything for You. I unite this sacrifice to that of Jesus, and I ask You in His name and through His infinite merits for patience in my sufferings and perfect resignation in everything that pleases You to have happen to me. Amen."

GOD THE FATHER IS PROVIDENT

\* \* \*

**Response:** Do I recognize the action of Divine Providence in my daily life? Do I have “eyes” for Providence? Am I thankful to God?



# 14.

## **Meditation: To abandon oneself into God's hands**

1) Jesus asks for childlike abandonment to the providence of our heavenly Father who takes care of His children's smallest needs: *So do not worry and say, 'What are we to eat?' or 'What are we to drink?' or 'What are we to wear?'. . . . Your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom [of God] and His righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides* (Mt 6:31-33).

2) Mt 10:29-31: *Are not two sparrows sold for a small coin? Yet not one of them falls to the ground without your Father's knowledge. Even all the hairs of your head are counted. So do not be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.*

3) Christ invites us to filial trust in the providence of our heavenly Father: *Look at the birds in the sky; they do not sow or reap, they gather nothing into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are not*

*you more important than they? Can any of you by worrying add a single moment to your life-span? Why are you anxious about clothes? Learn from the way the wild flowers grow. They do not work or spin. But I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was clothed like one of them. If God so clothes the grass of the field, which grows today and is thrown into the oven tomorrow, will he not much more provide for you, O you of little faith? So do not worry and say, 'What are we to eat?' or 'What are we to drink?' or 'What are we to wear?' All these things the pagans seek. Your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom [of God] and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides. Do not worry about tomorrow; tomorrow will take care of itself. Sufficient for a day is its own evil (Mt 6:26-34).*

4) For this reason the Apostle Saint Peter insists: *Cast all your worries upon Him because He cares for you (1 Pe 5:7)*. And the Psalms: *Cast your care upon the Lord, who will give you support. He will never allow the righteous to stumble (Ps 55:23)*.

5) Reasons why we should abandon ourselves into God's hands.

a. Because nothing happens that God hasn't foreseen and desired, or at least permitted, from all eternity. Even when it is merely permitted by God, since it is something bad, it is always in light of greater goods.

b. Because God can neither want nor permit anything that is not in conformity with the end that He set at creation, that is, with the manifestation of His goodness and of His infinite perfections and the glory of the Word Incarnate, Jesus Christ,



His only-begotten Son: *Everything belongs to you, Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world or life or death, or the present or the future: all belong to you, and you to Christ, and Christ to God* (1 Co 3:21-23).

c. Because all things work for the good of those who love God (cf. Rm 8:28).

6) Prayer of Blessed Charles de Foucauld: "Father, I abandon myself into Your hands; do with me what You will. Whatever You may do, I thank You: I am ready for all, I accept all. Let only Your will be done in me, and in all Your creatures - I wish no more than this, O Lord. Into Your hands I commend my soul: I offer it to You with all the love of my heart, for I love You, Lord, and so need to give myself, to surrender myself into Your hands without reserve, and with boundless confidence, for You are my Father."

\* \* \*

**Response:** Where do my concerns lie? What is it that I seek the most? In what measure do I entrust myself to Divine Providence?



# 15.

## **Meditation: What does abandonment to God consist of**

1) To abandon oneself into God's hands consists in completely surrendering one's rights over their own life, their own plans, thoughts, projects, and desires to God. It means being guided, not by our own *aims*, but rather by God's: to seek His will, and only His will.

2) Moreover, it means to live in the present moment: to see God here and now: what does He want here and now? It means not concerning ourselves with the past and even less with the future; everything that's not in the present is to be left in the hands of Divine Providence. It implies concerning oneself only with love for and obedience to the present will of God (what He wants here and now).

3) It means simply having the good will to let oneself be guided by God: to become God's instrument, like the instrument that a worker uses for his work. It means embracing the divine inspirations and motions.

4) This divine motion is manifested, not at whim, but rather in two ways:

a. The first is through *God's previously expressed will*: this divine will we know through the Ten Commandments, the natural law, the Church's precepts, our vows and promises when they have been accepted by the Church, the rules of the community or house where we live, if we are consecrated persons. God wants that here and now: the fulfillment of all these things. It's not possible to doubt this will. God wants us to live in complete fidelity to this divine will.

b. There is, however, another realm in which the divine will is manifested: this is *God's will of good pleasure*. This will contains in itself something that's not contained in the previous one; this is what is manifested in what, in an extraordinary way, God asks us by means of our superiors and in the divine inspirations of the moment. This will is never opposed to the previous; rather, it presupposes it and adds new requests from God.

5) "Nothing is more secure than the way of self-abandonment, just as nothing is clearer, easier, or more pleasant and less exposed to possible error and illusion. Travelling on this road, we love God, we fulfill our Christian duties, we frequent the

Sacraments, we produce the external acts obligatory for everyone, we obey our superiors, we continually resist the movements of the flesh and the devil, for no one is more attentive or vigilant in fulfilling all their obligations than those who walk in this way” (J. P. de Caussade).

6) “How clear and gleaming this path is! I defend it and teach it without any fear, and I am certain that everyone understands me when I say that the whole of our sanctification consists in receiving at each moment the pains and duties of our states as cloaks that hide us and give us God Himself” (J. P. de Caussade).

\* \* \*

**Response:** How is my abandonment into God’s hands? By what plans and projects do I guide myself: by my own or by God’s? How far do I push myself to seek God’s will? Do I fight with God’s will? Does God’s will make me happy? Do I accept God’s will sorrowfully?



# 16.

## **Meditation: In what way should we abandon ourselves to God**

In what way should we abandon ourselves into God's hands?

1) In the things that don't depend on human will (unforeseen accidents, incurable illnesses, etc.) we can never go too far in our abandonment to God. Moreover, any resistance would be useless. As Garrigou-Lagrange recalls, after receiving the diaconate, Fr. Girard was attacked by tuberculosis of the bone, which immobilized him and kept him in bed for twenty-two years; each day he offered his pains for priests. Not having had the privilege of celebrating Mass, he united himself every day to Jesus Christ's unbloody sacrifice. He never thought that his illness destroyed his vocation. On the contrary, his illness gave fullness to his priesthood. Abandonment converts current or future trials into means of sanctification, inspired by love.

2) When trials come because of the spite of men (calumnies, persecutions, insults, and mockeries): when these only affect our person, we should accept them with serenity, without defending ourselves. This is what Jesus Christ taught: *When someone strikes you on [your] right cheek, turn the other one to him as well* (Mt 5:39). We should only respond when the evil done to us affects others (if, by insulting us, they insult Christ's Church) or if we can hope for some good for the detractor themselves; however, in the case that we need to respond, we should make our reply without passion, and placing the success of our reply in God's hands.

3) When the annoyances or punishments come to us because of our own failings, imprudence, or laziness, we should accept the punishment in silence and humility, and happily abandon ourselves into God's hands. We should say with the Psalmist: *It was good for me to be afflicted, in order to learn your statutes. I know, Lord, that your judgments are righteous; though you afflict me, you are faithful* (Ps 119:71-75). With the saints, we should love *to be unknown, ignored, and consisted as nothing*.

4) Saint Francis de Sales writes (*Entretien*, 2): "Our Lord Jesus Christ loves with extreme tenderness those who place their happiness in abandoning themselves completely to His paternal care, letting themselves be ruled by Divine Providence, without stopping to consider if the effects of that Providence will be useful and beneficial, or harmful; they are guided by the certainty that they have that the divine, most-loving heart would never send them anything or permit anything to happen to them that would



not be for the use and benefit of their souls, provided only that they place all their confidence in Him. As we abandon ourselves entirely to His Divine Providence, assuming, of course, the fulfillment of our daily duties, Our Lord cares for everything and directs everything. . . . Thus, for Him the soul is like a little child with its mother; when she set him down on the ground so that he can walk, he walks until she picks him up again into her arms; and if the mother wants to carry him, he doesn't resist. He doesn't know nor even think of where he is going, but rather allows himself to be carried and led to wherever his mother wants."

\* \* \*

**Response:** Am I afraid of the divine hands? Do I feel secure when I know that I am in His hands? Do I see God's hands as fatherly ones? Do I really understand that no one *can do me more good* than God, my Father, and that no one *wants to do me more good* than Him? In what way do I show my complete and absolute surrender? With my words, my deeds, my attitude?



# 17.

## **Meditation: God the Father permits evil**

1) Why didn't God create a world so perfect that no evil could exist in it? With infinite power God could always create something better (Saint Thomas Aquinas). But with infinite wisdom and goodness God freely willed to create a world "in a state of journeying" towards its ultimate perfection. In God's plan this process of becoming involves the appearance of certain beings and the disappearance of others, the existence of the more perfect alongside the less perfect, both constructive and destructive forces of nature. With physical good there exists also *physical evil* as long as creation has not reached perfection.

2) God permits evil, however, because He respects the freedom of His creatures and, mysteriously, knows how to derive good from it: "For almighty God, . . . because He is supremely good, would never allow any evil whatsoever to exist in His works

if He were not so all-powerful and good as to cause good to emerge from evil itself? (Saint Augustine).

3) Only in time we can discover that God in His almighty providence can bring a good from the consequences of an evil, even a moral evil, caused by His creatures: *It was not you*, said Joseph to his brothers, *who sent me here, but God. . . You meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive* (Gn 45:8; 50:20). From the greatest moral evil ever committed—the rejection and murder of God’s only Son, caused by the sins of all men—God, by *His grace that abounded all the more* (Rm 5:20), brought the greatest of goods: the glorification of Christ and our redemption

4) Saint Paul reminds us of this difficult truth: *We know that in everything God works for good for those who love Him* (Rm 8:28). The constant witness of the saints confirms this truth:

a. Saint Catherine of Siena said to “those who are scandalized and rebel against what happens to them”: “Everything comes from love, all is ordained for the salvation of man; God does nothing without this goal in mind.”

b. Saint Thomas More, shortly before his martyrdom, consoled his daughter: “Nothing can come but that that God wills. And I make me very sure that whatsoever that be, no matter how bad it might seem, shall indeed be the best.”

c. Dame Julian of Norwich: “Here I was taught by the grace of God that I should steadfastly keep me in the faith . . . and that at the same time I should take my stand on and

earnestly believe in what our Lord showed in this time - that 'all manner [of] thing shall be well.'"

5) We must firmly believe that God is master of the world and of its history. But the ways of His providence are often unknown to us. Only at the end, when our partial knowledge ceases, when we see God *face to face* (1 Co 13:12) will we fully know the ways by which - even through the dramas of evil and sin - God has guided His creation to that definitive Sabbath rest for which He created heaven and earth.

\* \* \*

**Response:** How great is my confidence in God's providential guidance of history? Am I scandalized by evil, by sin, the fall of the good, the injustice of sinners? Do I leave all the unfathomable judgments, the ones that go far beyond me, to God? Do I fall into despair or sadness when I see evil and the innocent suffering? Am I capable of bowing my head and adoring in silence the divine plans that I can't understand?



# 18.

## **Meditation: A Father who gives us His Son**

1) Nothing manifests God's love for us as much as the fact that He has given us His own Son: *For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son* (Jn 3:16).

2) The Incarnation is the gift of God's love. The Incarnation of the Word, taking on a passible and mortal nature, wasn't necessary. God wasn't obligated to do it. The Father and the Son desired it because of an entirely merciful plan, a free plan of love. God the Father wanted to give us His love, His adoption, and His salvation by means of His Son.

3) The Father gave us His Son knowing what was to happen: that we would make Him suffer and die, that we would reject Him, that we would ask for His death, considering Him as less than a thief like Barabbas, that we would humiliate Him even to the point of making Him die between thieves.

4) He did this while we were yet sinners: *But God, who is rich in mercy, because of the great love He had for us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, brought us to life with Christ (by grace you have been saved)* (Ep 2:4-5).

5) All of the Son's works are also the work of His Father and of our Father: this is because God the Father is the one who inspired in His Son the will to suffer for us. Jesus Christ hasn't reconciled man with an "infuriated Father, one inclined to reject man," but rather with a Father who is infinitely merciful, One who sent His Son in order that we might be saved from our sins.

6) *See what love the Father has bestowed on us that we may be called the children of God. Yet so we are* (1 Jn 3:1). Our adoption is entirely the Trinity's work, but Sacred Scripture invited us to consider the Father as the author of this adoption.

7) This doesn't mean simply being a new man, but rather a new reality. God could've contented Himself to declare that sin was forgiven; if He had done this, He would've already been a father in the broad sense. Nonetheless, He went beyond this and has truly made us His children.

8) That filiation consists in that, in His Son, we have been admitted to participate in the life of His family. Adoption makes us children and transforms even what is deepest within us.

\* \* \*



**Response:** Could I ever think that God doesn't care about me? Do I think that maybe my sins prevent God from loving me, and from offering me His redeeming love? Do I see God the Father only as a judge who is ready to punish? Do I see my relationship with God the Father with excessively strict characteristics?



# 19.

## **Meditation: Examination of the Our Father (1)**

In a certain sense, the Our Father is Jesus' plan or program. How beneficial it will be to undertake an examination of that divine plan in our lives from time to time! In this meditation upon the Our Father and the ones that follow, we will follow the meditations of Saint Manuel González.

1) **“Our.”** If Jesus is the natural Son of God, and we Christians are the adopted children of God, we are all Jesus' brothers and sisters and also brothers and sisters amongst ourselves. This is why our God commands us to love each other, and our older brother teaches the way to love like this by telling us: “Love one another as I have loved you.” The model for my love for my brothers and sisters is, therefore, the love with which Jesus Christ my brother loves me. He asks for things and

sacrifices Himself for me so that I might ask for things and sacrifice myself for Him and for my brothers and sisters. What value this company gives to my sacrifices! How much is my “Our Father” worth because my brother Jesus and all my brother and sister saints pray it with me!

Do I practice, with my heart and with works, this mandate of my Father and that imitation of my Divine Brother and Model? Do I love my brothers and sisters, both good and bad, kind and unkind, sensitive and crude, grateful and ungrateful?

2) **“Father.”** The Son of God, Jesus Christ, Savior and Teacher, has come to earth, becoming our brother as the Son of Man, in order to make men and women into sons and daughters, sons and daughters of God. He has taught me and authorized me to call His Father “Father,” and to treat Him in the way that I, as a good child, should treat God my Father. Through the sacrament of Baptism I have been made into God’s adopted child.

Do I love God and ask things from Him like a Father, with all my heart and all my strength as He asks me to, and does my soul have the feelings of a child who trusts in their Father’s affection and power, seeking to please Him in everything? Do I imitate my divine brother Jesus in His interactions with our heavenly Father as the Gospels teach me? Are my dealings with the Father perhaps hard, dry, distrusting, as though He were a stranger? Am I zealous to give Him children?

3) **“Who art in heaven.”** Where is Our Father, full of goodness and mercy for His children? To where must I draw my

attention in order to find Him? He is everywhere, giving being to everything, but in a particular way He is in the three heavens. The first heaven is in the Empyrean heaven, since He is the glory of the blessed who see Him face to face. In a special way, by His grace, He is in the clean soul, which is the second heaven, that small heaven of our soul where, as the Holy Gospel says, I should enter when I pray, into the most hidden depths of it and, having closed the door, that is, the senses and exterior distractions, pray to my Father in secret. The third heaven is the Blessed Sacrament, since there the Sacramented Son is really and truly present, and, since He is one with His Father and His Holy Spirit, they cannot be separated.

Do I realize that my Father lives and is in heaven, caring for His children on earth with love, awaiting my communications? Do I see myself as a pilgrim and an exile in the world, and do I consider heaven to be my real homeland, where my Father and my vast and holy family await me, and to where Jesus ascended in order to prepare a dwelling place for me? Can I always say with Jesus Christ: I am not of the world. I am going to my Father? . . . Do I accompany or abandon in some way God our Lord hidden in the heaven of my soul and in the Sacrament of Love?



## 20.

# **Meditation: Examination of the Our Father (2)**

1) **“Hallowed be Thy name.”** In order to sanctify God’s name, that is, in order to give it the greatest glory possible, I have been created, just like all the other creatures, spiritual, rational, animal, and inanimate. I give thanks to God if with my understand I know Him and recognize Him as my only God and Lord to whom I owe everything and to who my being and its acts belong; if with my will I love Him above everything else and if with my works I serve Him, preferring His will to mine. This is the only thing I am here in the world for; this is the only business I need to attend to and against which everything else should be measured.

The glorification of God my Father by means of my union with Him in my brother Jesus is the end of my life, to which God

has mercifully united my eternal happiness. Since the glory of God is the only thing necessary, everything that He tells us to ask for and to do is directed to it.

The Church gives God this glory principally by means of the sacrifice of the Mass. Do I offer myself with Jesus in every Mass, and do I thus unite myself to Jesus Christ in order to glorify God? Do I pronounce the holy name of God and the words of my prayers with devotion? Do I make the sign of the cross slowly? Do I show respect in Church and do I treat holy things with veneration?

Do I always give God all glory and honor by avoiding mortal and venial sins and imperfections that can break or lessen my union with Jesus, by means of which I glorify God the Father? What must I avoid or do in order to increase His glory in me and in my neighbor, that is, in order that His glory be more and better known, loved, and served? Do I interest myself in teaching catechism and encouraging the reading of good books while impeding bad ones? Do I promote or give missions?

2) **“Thy kingdom come.”** With this I ask God the Father the best and most pleasing way to give Him glory, that is, that He always keep me in the supernatural life of grace which His divine Son won for me on the cross, by which all of my good acts merit eternal glory and that, living in His grace, I might come to such a deep union with Him that, by means of it, my soul might be transformed in God and moved by the Most Holy Trinity, who will reign in me without finding any resistance. The soul that has



become God's holy temple and transformed into Him no longer lives but rather Jesus lives in it; it is this soul that possesses His kingdom and that can give Him perfect glory and praise; to it God gives all His graces that make it happy in this world and in the next.

Am I aware and do I give thanks for the gift that my brother Jesus offers me with His grace and that He tells me to ask for in order to obtain God's glorification and my happiness? Do I scorn everything that is opposed to and hinders God's reign in my soul? Who is presently reigning in my soul, my thoughts, my love? Do I work for Jesus' kingdom?

3) **“Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”** This is the means to glorify God and to have His kingdom come to us: to do His will on earth as it is done in heaven. If in the second petition we ask for the best way to glorify the Heavenly Father, that is, to live in grace and to be transformed in Him, in this third petition we ask for the surest means or path in order to reach that end, which is the fulfillment of His will, as completely and as quickly as the angels do. God shows me this will that I must fulfill, this path that I must walk, in the Ten Commandments of His law, in the precepts of the Church, and in the duties of my state in life. However, God not only shows His absolute, obligatory wishes under pain of sin, but rather He deigns to have me know His desires. These are His pieces of advice revealed in the Gospel.

Can I say, with Jesus my model: I always do what is pleasing to my Father? Do I always seek, first and foremost, to fulfill His will? Am I faithful to all my duties, both general and particular? To the orders and desires of my superiors? Am I faithful to what God specifically asks of me? . . . Do I accept the divine Will in whatever form it presents itself to me, sad or happy, saying as Jesus and Mary did: Be it done unto me? And, always?

## 21.

### **Meditation: Examination of the Our Father (3)**

1) **“Give us this day our daily bread.”** This petition expresses everything that is useful for supporting me as I walk without faltering on the path of God’s will. What is asked for is bread for body and for soul, but only for today. This is because God our Father wants to compel us to be like children who live from their trust in their Father and it pleases Him that each day we have, even for our benefit, a need, a reason, and an occasion to remind us to draw near to our Father, laying before Him our needs of soul or body and asking Him for the solution, so that, in this way, every day He might have the joy of showing us His love and exercising mercy in us, as well as seeing us rest in the solicitude of His providence.

Do I go to my Father every day and show Him my needs, with humility and trust, awaiting with faith in His love and power for Him to remedy them for me? Do I receive the bread that is offered me each day, spiritual and material, but above all, Holy Communion and spiritual reading, with right desire and gratitude? Do I seek to take advantage of everything that He gives as sustenance to my soul and body in order to better fulfill the divine will?

2) **“Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.”** I know the end, the path, and the means: what is left for me to ask? That obstacles might be taken away. There are three obstacles that are opposed to the end, the path, and the means, respectively. The first, essential and radical, is sin. There is no greater impediment to God’s glory and my happiness through union with Him from whom only sin can separate me. For this reason, first and foremost, I must ask for forgiveness and to be clean from sin and its fruits and roots. And, as a sort of test to see if we are asking forgiveness sincerely and if we really hate sin, He subjects our petition to the condition that we have really forgiven those who have offended us. This Jesus who commands us to pray and to act in this way is God Himself the Rewarder, the one who raises up from sin and who rewards or punishes. Thus, if He tells us to ask for forgiveness, forgiving us, it’s because we can hope with certainty that there is a correspondence between our forgiveness of and love for our enemies, and His forgiveness and love for us. If God has loved us and forgiven us while we were

still His enemies, how can He not want us to love and forgive each other as He has taught us? We will be forgiven by God in the same measure that we have forgiven. If we don't forgive from the heart, we will not be forgiven. How easy God has made us for us to obtain forgiveness!

Do I really hate sin? Do I ask God and those I have offended for forgiveness with true repentance and a desire for change? Have I pardoned from my heart those who have offended me, without keeping any grudges? Do I love those who offend me and do I generously forgive how and in the same way that I want God to forgive me? Do I just fall into a routine with my confessions and not seek true repentance and amendment for the sins and defects that I confess?

3) **“Lead us not into temptation.”** After sin, the most serious obstacle is the danger of falling into sin. Temptation is the obstacle that attempts to have me stray from the path of the Divine will, and this is why I ask God that He free me from falling into it, since my three enemies, the world, the devil, and the flesh, are constantly seeking to have me fall into sin with their attractions, suggestions, and tricks. Jesus teaches me to combat them with vigilance and prayer.

When temptations come, do I quickly have recourse to God? Do I ask, with humility and confidence, that He free me from falling into them? Do I take advantage of temptations in order to unite myself more closely to Jesus and Mary, my defenders, instead of letting them lead me into discouragement and uproar?

Do I try to flee from occasions of temptation? Do I let myself be overcome by sadness, through which the devil usually enters? Do I avoid temptations in myself and in others, fleeing from tempting clothes, pastimes, and companions?

4) **“But deliver us from evil.”** In addition to sin and the danger of falling into it, the other evils of soul and body that deprive me of the necessary means for advancing are also obstacles. I ask, then, that they be kept away from me, but only in the measure than they can diminish God’s glory and my true happiness, since when the Lord permits evils, it’s to obtain from them greater and more lasting goods. How great is the care of our Heavenly Father and of the heart of our brother Jesus! He only allows us to suffer what it indispensable for our true health.

Do I realize the innumerable evils, both known and unknown to me, that the Lord has freed me from; do I thank Him for this? Do I have a living faith and certainty that He wants and can free me from them and that, when He leaves me in some suffering, it’s for my greater good and because He loves me?

5) **“Amen.”** The Amen with which our Lord Jesus Christ closes His prayer has a double meaning: of ratification and of anticipatory acceptance. In other words: Lord, I realize what I have asked of You, and I pray to You and I hope that it will be as I have asked you. Moreover, it is the last presentation of our petitions and an act of confidence that it will be that way.

EXAMINATION OF THE OUR FATHER (3)

Do I say amen with generosity to today's daily cross, to the demands of my ministry, to what Jesus asks today, what superiors and what souls ask?





## 22.

# **Meditation: to seek the face of God the Father**

1) “You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you” (Saint Augustine, *Conf.* 1, 1). We have an irrepressible need that prompts us to seek the face of God. The various religious traditions testify to this experience.

2) The search for God continues “gropingly,” as Paul says in his discourse to the Athenians (cf. Ac 17:27). How do we do this? All men feel the need to have a divine Father, even those who make idols for themselves, as Jeremiah says: *They say to a piece of wood, “You are my father,” and to a stone, “You gave me birth”* (Je 2:27).

3) Among the ancient Greeks, for example, the Good as a supreme and divine being was also called father, but the god Zeus displayed his fatherhood in anger and malice as much as in

kindness. In the Odyssey we read: “Father Zeus, you are the most deadly of gods: you take no pity on men after begetting them and abandoning them to misfortune and oppressive sorrows.” Isn’t this our idea of God sometimes?

4) God often laments that this fatherly love has not received a suitable response: *The Lord has spoken: “Sons have I reared and brought up, but they have rebelled against Me”* (Is 1:2). God invites us to seek Him: *Of you my heart speaks, you my glance seeks; your presence, O Lord, I seek* (Ps 27:8). Only the hearts of the righteous can rejoice in seeking the face of the Lord (cf. Ps 105:3f.) and so it is on them that the fatherly face of God can shine (cf. Ps 119:135; cf. also 31:17; 67:2; 80:4, 8, 20).

5) In His own Heart, Jesus shows the Father’s heaven face. To Philip, who asked: *Show us the Father, and we shall be satisfied* (Jn 14:8), He replies that knowing Him means knowing the Father, because the Father works through Him (cf. Jn 14:8-11). Therefore those who want to meet the Father must believe in the Son: through Him God does not merely assure us of His providential fatherly care, but communicates His own life, making us “sons in the Son.” This is what the Apostle John emphasizes with a deep sense of gratitude: *See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are* (1 Jn 3, 1).

\* \* \*

**Response:** Do I seek the face of God my Father? Do I desire it? Do I ask for it? Do I see the Father’s face reflected in Jesus Christ’s mercy, in His compassionate heart, in His vocation as consoler?

## 23.

# The Litany of Divine Providence

- Lord, have mercy on us.
- Christ, have mercy on us.
- Lord, have mercy on us.
- Christ, hear us.
- Christ, graciously hear us.
  
- God the Father of Heaven, *Have mercy on us.*
- God the Son, Redeemer of the world,
- God the Holy Spirit,
- Holy Trinity, one God,
- God, in Whom we live, move, and have our being,
- You, who created the heavens, the earth, and the seas,

- You, who created all things according to their measure, number, and weight,

- You, who with Your hand established the heavens and marked the limits of the seas,

- You, who direct all things according to the designs of Your Will,

- You, all-Powerful and Most Wise God,

- You, who open Your hand and pour out Your blessings upon all living creatures,

- You, Who make the sun to shine upon the good and the bad,

- You, Who clothe the lilies of the field and feed the birds of the air,

- You, God full of goodness and mercy,

- You, who order all things for the good of those who love You,

- You, Who send temporal sufferings for our correction and good,

- You, who heal the injured and raise up the downcast,

- You, Who reward Christian patience with an eternal reward,

- Father of Goodness and God of All Consolation

- Be merciful, *Spare us, O Lord.*

- Be merciful, *Graciously bear us, O Lord.*

- From all evil, *Deliver us, O Lord.*
- From all sin,
- From Your wrath,
- From plagues, hunger, and war,
- From lightning and storms,
- From destructive hail, rain, and droughts,
- From the loss of crops and shortages of goods,
- From mistrust in Your Divine Providence,
- From all murmurings and complaints against Your holy decrees,
- From cowardice and impatience,
- From immoderate concern for temporal things,
- From misuse or neglect of Your gifts and benefits,
- From uncharitableness toward our neighbor,
- On the day of judgment,
  
- We sinners, *Beseech You, bear us.*
- That we may always trust in Your Divine Providence,
- That in good fortune we may not become proud and godless, nor in misfortune become discouraged and impatient,
- That we may submit simply to all Your decrees,

- That we may praise Your name whether You give or take away,

- That You might give us what is necessary for the support of our life,

- That You might accompany all our labors with Your blessing,

- That in all adversities we may grow in patience and humility,

- That we may seek consolation from You in time of trial,

- That You might reward our temporal sufferings with eternal joys,

- Lamb of God, Who takes away the sins of the world, *Spare us, O Lord.*

- Lamb of God, Who takes away the sins of the world, *Graciously bear us, O Lord.*

- Lamb of God, Who takes away the sins of the world, *Have mercy on us.*

\* \* \*

**Prayer.** Almighty and Eternal God, who have granted to us Your servants the gift of knowing the glory of the Eternal Trinity in the confession of the true faith and of adoring the unity of power of Your Majesty, we pray to You for firmness of that same faith

THE LITANY OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE

and that You might always free us from all adversity,  
through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.





