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Why do we



... anything?

“Scimus autem quoniam diligentibus Deum omnia cooperantur in bonum.”

“And we know that to them that love God, all things work together unto good” (Romans, 8.28)

Absolutely nothing happens to us that God does not either expressly *will* — or *permit* — for our sanctification.

Nothing.

Why, then, do we fear?

In the *Pater Noster*, the *Our Father*, given us by Christ Himself, we find seven petitions, but let us focus carefully on one in particular — “**Thy will be done on earth** [in everything pertaining to our lives] **as it is in Heaven.**” — in an effort to answer this very real question:

Our prayer, our deepest desire — which is (or should be) the fulfillment of our lives in Christ — is contained in this one single petition — in which every other petition is implicitly uttered. Let us look at what we are asking of God in this petition:

- That **God** fulfill within us perfectly **His** most holy will, *not ours*.
- That **He** make of us what pleases **Him**, *not us*.
- That **He** do with us what pleases **Him**, *not us*. †

- That **He** give to us, as it pleases **Him**, *not us*. †
- That **He** take from us what pleases **Him**, *not us*.
- With Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane, we ask (too) that He fulfill within us *perfectly* His most holy will --- not as **we** will, but as **He** wills. ‡

Divine Complicity

Once we have prayed this — *ex toto corde*, completely from the heart — our life is no longer our own. It never was, but we have made it explicit. And upon praying this, our lives, together with the world around us, change forever. We have entered into a compact with God, into the very will of God which is the act of God; in a word, into Divine complicity.

Everything, then, that *subsequently* touches upon us: *all* that we experience, all that we suffer, all that we endure — everything: our state in life, our poverty no less than our wealth, our illness no less than our health, our adversities no less than our good fortune, our ill-repute for His Name no less than our honor among men, the cardboard over our head no less than the stately roof, the shabby clothes no less than the elegant, the suffering no less than the joy, the ridicule no less than the accolades — all, all, we offer to Him, **accept from Him** with equal gratitude ... knowing that they come to us *from Him*, that whatever our condition in life, it is *His will* being mysteriously fulfilled within us. This ... this is the greatest *actus Fidei*, or Act of Faith. We do not understand what has become of us and we can adduce no reason or purpose — yet in holy simplicity and docility we accept in faith that it is the very best thing possible for us — even as it apparently contradicts what appears to be good for us. It is, in a word, *total submission* to the will of God in all things; the taking of all things from the hand of God: the bitter as eagerly as the sweet, realizing that we know nothing of what is good for us apart from the express will of God revealed to us in Holy Scripture, and the Teachings of Holy Mother the Church.

It may never be revealed to us in this life — but revealed it will be, for die we must and after death, arrive at understanding. This hopelessly entangled skein of misery, suffering, and misfortune — only punctuated by fleeting moments of respite, too brief to attain to any sustainable happiness — this dense reticulation of calcified knots, grown tighter by the years, unyielding to the probe of reason — all these utterly involuted complexities will unfold as so many segments in the history of our lives being drawn by the finger of God upon the fabric of eternity. We do not understand any of them until we see the whole which has been configured through them in the soul's cooperating with God in the dispensation of all things.

If, as Saint Paul tells us, we cooperate with God in all things, it is quite beside the point that we understand them, and very much to the point that we accept them, play our part in them, all unknowing but still all cooperating. Our lives are as so many golden threads amid a myriad of others, and docilely we allow the hand of God to move this thread where He wills and how He wills. The moment we resist the hand of God, tension ensues, and the whole fabric trembles under it. Countless millions, billions, of other golden threads are affected in places, times, regions, utterly remote to us and unknown by us.

To be continued ...

† "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: as it hath pleased the Lord so is it done: blessed be the name of the Lord." (Job 1.21)

‡ "And going a little further, he fell upon his face, praying, and saying: My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me. Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." (Saint Matthew 26.39)



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