

LIGHT & LIFE

FATHER REGINALD MARTIN, O.P., *DIRECTOR*

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LOURDES JUBILEE DRAWS TO A CLOSE

This year's feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, on February 11, will mark an end of the 150th anniversary of the Lourdes apparitions. Throughout this year the faithful have thronged to Lourdes, some in search of healing, others to offer thanks for favors granted. These individuals have visited the site where the Blessed Virgin appeared to St. Bernadette, and sites associated with St. Bernadette herself.

These are extremely humble places, and were they not associated with great events in our faith, none of them would command any attention. Such is the humility of Lourdes, a reflection of the humility of St. Bernadette, a reflection of the humility of the Mother of God, and a challenge to each of us.

Pilgrims to Lourdes during this Jubilee year will, no doubt, number in the millions, and each will be touched in some way by the journey. A far greater number of the faithful will have stayed home, but equally touched through making a pilgrimage of faith in their hearts. The sacramental dimension of our Catholic faith enables us to bridge the divisions of time and space, to kneel with Bernadette and share her awe – to stand beneath the cross with Mary, sharing her grief.

Mary is our model in all things, particularly in her trust and confidence in God's loving Providence. As her special year draws to its close, this issue of *Light and Life* includes a condensed version of a sermon preached by Fr. Bede Jarrett, a great Dominican priest, on the 75th anniversary of the Lourdes apparitions. Fr. Jarrett's words, preached in New York during the frightening days of our nation's Great Depression, are a thrilling call to imitate Mary's faith in our own uncertain time.

"OUR LIFE, OUR SWEETNESS, AND OUR HOPE!"

Because Our Blessed Lady is holy, she is merciful. Mercy is one of the inevitable effects of holiness... But what, exactly, do we mean when we say of her, or of anyone, that she is holy or good? ...You should remember that Our Blessed Lord in His teaching as it reaches us through the gospels, was determined that



OUR LADY OF LOURDES
Silhouette by Sister Mary Jean Dorcy, O.P.

we should truly understand what goodness, holiness, really was. He was at pains to point out to us what goodness was not. Goodness is not to be judged by what we do. It is quite possible for us individually to be thought good by other people and yet not to have goodness. It is possible for us to misjudge those around us; to be ourselves misjudged...

Our Lady had her love of God, her real deep love of God... All she had was faith. She had nothing more than faith. Faith, as you and I have! She had no teaching given her by which to live other than faith, but how it sweetened all her life for her, and how she loved God, and how out of her faith and love she had hope and trust undaunted! She was valiant! The others scattered under the threat of death, she remained. It was her courage that gave all the others courage.... Though the world shook and though the darkness covered Him, she stood unmoved. When the darkness lifted she was found still standing under the Cross – her faith, her love, her hope undaunted. She lived without fear. What she had in herself she can give us.

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TO BE OFFERED FOR YOUR INTENTIONS

THEOLOGY FOR THE LAITY

The Our Father, Part V

Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread

By Father Reginald Martin, O.P.

A GIFT FOR THE PRESENT

The Lord's Prayer teaches us to ask for God's blessings. When we pray that God's name be hallowed, we ask that our lives and example will be among the means by which His holiness is made manifest in the world. When we pray for the coming of God's kingdom, we ask that we may find a place in His eternal realm. When we pray that God's will be done, we pray that we may fulfill His will in our actions.

In each of these petitions we beg for a blessing in our lives on earth, but as we grow in holiness, we realize we will see fulfillment of these blessings only when we share God's eternal life in heaven. When we ask for our daily bread, however, we ask for a gift that will be perfectly realized here on earth, namely, the gift of Fortitude.

THE NATURE OF VIRTUE

At first glance, we may be unable to see a connection between the virtue of Fortitude and the "daily bread" we ask for when we say the Lord's Prayer. This difficulty is resolved when we consider that virtue is a good habit that enables us to perform good works. As we exercise them, the virtues enable us to do good, and to do good with greater and greater skill and ease.

THE NATURE OF FORTITUDE

The word "Fortitude" is derived from the Latin word *fors*, which means strength. Each of the virtues is directed toward a proper goal, and the virtue of Fortitude is God's gift to help us when a good action seems too difficult to do. Fortitude comes to our aid when we are tempted to turn away from some good action because we fear we will suffer some harm if we perform it.

FORTITUDE AND BREAD

In general terms, Fortitude is a gift that helps us face the things we fear. Chief among these is the fear of death, but if we consider the reasons we act (or fail to act) reflection will show we fear many other, lesser ills as well, including a lack of the things necessary to support our physical life. In the Lord's Prayer we ask for "bread," but this food should be understood to represent every temporal need, as well as our need for trust in God's Providence.

FORTITUDE AND "DAILY" BREAD

The bread we ask for is "daily" bread, common food and the other basic temporal goods that will meet

everyday needs. Elsewhere in the Lord's Prayer we ask for spiritual goods and the blessings of everlasting life; in this petition we ask God for no more than we need in the present. Fortitude is part of this petition, encouraging us to trust that God will provide what we need, and helping us to resist the fear that we will lack the necessities of life.

FORTITUDE AS A REMEDY FOR SIN

If we consider what we ask of God when we beg for our daily bread, we realize we are asking for very little. We are not asking God to supply all our wants, which can be infinite; we are asking Him to supply our needs, which are far more modest.

St. John Chrysostom continually preached against the excesses he witnessed at the Byzantine court. In these words of the Lord's Prayer he took the opportunity to warn his listeners, once again, about the hazards of wealth. In a sermon on the gospel of Matthew he preached, "*...it is neither for riches, nor for delicate living, nor for costly raiment, nor for any other such thing, but for bread only that He commanded us to make our prayer.*"

The Lord's Prayer, thus, encourages us to seek simplicity in our lives, and the virtue of Fortitude helps us trust that this simplicity will be sufficient for our needs. In this way, Fortitude enables us to avoid the sins that arise from too great a desire for temporal goods.

St. Thomas Aquinas identifies these as greed, fraud, excessive solicitude, ingratitude and excessive concern.

GREED

The first of the sins that arises from the desire for temporal goods is greed. We commonly think of greed as the desire for more and more of some thing. But greed also manifests itself as dissatisfaction with what we have. We encounter greed when we desire things in a quantity greater than we need, or when we demand only the best quality. Ultimate, greed blinds us to spiritual goods by leading us to concentrate only on the quality and quantity of our material goods.

Jesus promises a blessing to those who are "*poor in spirit*" to remind us that only God can satisfy our desire for excellence and abundance. Fortitude helps us look beyond what we want, and to concentrate on what we truly need. In the Lord's Prayer we ask for bread because bread represents the most common of our physical needs, a need everyone shares.

The Scripture is very clear that our true needs are very modest. In the Old Testament we read, *“Life’s prime needs are water, bread, and clothing, a house, too, for decent privacy”* (Ecclus 29:21). The New Testament is equally clear, as St. Paul reminds Timothy, *“If we have food and clothing, we shall be content”* (1 Tim 6:9). To ask for our daily bread is to ask for no more than we need.

FRAUD

The dictionary defines fraud as trickery or deceit, specifically a lie told *“to induce another to part with something of value.”* We might be surprised to encounter fraud in a discussion of the Lord’s Prayer, but we should remember that our prayer is not simply a request for what we need, but also a request for the proper means by which to acquire what we need. St. Thomas Aquinas reminds us that when we say the Lord’s Prayer we ask for our daily bread, not someone else’s. This, St. Thomas explains, represents our wish to maintain strict honesty in all our dealings with others.

EXCESSIVE SOLICITUDE

The author of the Book of Proverbs asks God, *“Give me neither beggary nor riches; give me but the necessities of life”* (Prov. 30:38), and we find a reflection of this prayer for moderation in the Lord’s Prayer when we ask for “daily” bread. “Daily” in this case means sufficient for a limited time, bread for a single day or a season. Because we naturally fear having to do without what we need, the Fortitude we beg for in the Lord’s Prayer strengthens us to be content with what we have, and to trust that God will provide what we need.

INGRATITUDE

St. Augustine taught that pride differs from every other sin. In every other case, he said, the sinner delights in doing something evil. Pride, however, is taking inordinate delight in doing some good. In his sermons on the Lord’s Prayer, St. Thomas Aquinas preached that ingratitude is closely allied to pride because the ungrateful take personal credit for whatever they possess, and deny or forget that whatever they own is God’s gift. The Lord’s Prayer calls us to acknowledge God as the source of everything we possess.

We have seen that the words “daily bread” stand for all the material goods that support our life. Because we seek “daily” bread, we are not asking God for an excessive number of material things, nor to provide goods of exceptional quality. “Daily bread,” by contrast, is the bare minimum we need to survive. We do not pray for this lowest common sum because we doubt God’s generosity, but rather because we acknowledge God to be the source of the tiniest morsel we eat. To pray, “give us our daily bread” reminds us we depend upon God for even the barest necessities.

EXCESSIVE CONCERN

Citizens today are faced with budgets that project a nation’s spending for many years. Financial institutions warn workers to invest for their retirement or face the

possibility of a frightening old age. Wherever we turn, we are challenged to prepare for a threatening future. The Scripture, no less than common sense, tells us to “look out for tomorrow,” so we reasonably deny ourselves a present luxury to provide for a future necessity.

But as we look forward to the future, we must not allow its uncertainties to blind us to the opportunities of the present. In the Lord’s Prayer we ask for “daily” bread, the food and other goods we need for today. Nothing in our faith encourages us to waste the gifts God gives us, but neither are we rewarded for fear or mean-spiritedness. Fortitude strengthens us to trust that God’s love will be present at all times, to provide what we need today and every day.

TWO ADDITIONAL MEANINGS OF BREAD

The bread we ask for in the Lord’s Prayer is a symbol for whatever we need for our survival. Thus far we have allowed it to stand for the material goods that support and sustain our lives. But as we say this prayer – and especially as we offer it during the Mass – we should be reminded of the bread Christ offers us in the Eucharist, the bread that is transformed into His Body. When Our Savior was present among us, He taught, *“I am the living bread which came down from heaven”* (John 6:51) and each day the Church makes this bread available to Christ’s followers.

When He was tempted in the desert, Jesus said, *“Not by bread alone does man live, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God”* (Matt. 4:4). To ask for our daily bread is to beg spiritual as well as physical sustenance. The twofold worship we offer in the Mass – the liturgy of the Word, and the liturgy of the Eucharist – is the perfect realization of God’s providential care. In the Mass, God’s Word nourishes our intellect, as the Sacred Body of His Son nourishes not only our bodies, but our will.

This petition of the Lord’s Prayer, which evokes our liturgical worship, is a beautiful reminder that our life is a pilgrimage, one that will end with the everlasting life God promises us in His kingdom. St. Augustine taught that the “daily” bread we beg is not only the day-to-day necessities of our earthly life, but something that benefits us only for the days of our life, something we will no longer need once we have reached the end of our pilgrimage.

... what I am handling before you now is “daily bread:” and the daily lessons you hear in church... the hymns you hear and repeat are daily bread. For all these things are necessary in our state of pilgrimage. But when we shall have reached heaven, shall we hear the word, we who see the Word Himself, and eat and drink Him as the angels do now... surely not... therefore has it been said... that this petition is necessary for us in this life.

FINAL THOUGHTS

As we study the Lord’s Prayer we discover that each of its petitions is a request that God will enable us more

and more to identify our will with His will. Our spiritual life is a continual growth in God's image, and as grace allows us to become more like God we discover that we want to become more and more like Him.

The image of bread is a particularly rich image for our spiritual life because it calls to mind both food and hunger. Food nourishes us, but eventually we discover we need more food if we are to live. As we grow closer to God, through conforming our will to His, we realize that we want to grow still closer to Him. The Lord's Prayer expresses our need for God in the present, our desire for Him in the future, and our dependence upon Him at all times. ■

LOURDES JUBILEE *(Continued from page 1)*

If we keep ourselves in her company she can radiate her love and faith and hope to us. Out of love she can give life, supernatural life, to all our living. Through her faith our own faith finds life sweetened at every turn...

When Our Lady appeared to Bernadette she held her rosary in her fingers. She did not say the rosary. She did not pray to herself. But through her fingers passed all the rosaries said by all the souls the world over, passed through her fingers to her Son. And as you say your rosary... while you look at her you see life as it is, its joys and its sorrows and the glories that come at last; you see life real, stark – not just as a Mother playing with her Child and the whole world full of happiness and joy, you see the Mother losing the Child in life, you see her losing Him in death. You see Him emptied of God, apparently. You see real life, but you see it with a hope beyond itself. You see that behind sorrow comes happiness again. Life begins in happiness and it ends in glory. The sorrows fall between. The rosary is the prayer of Lourdes, the prayer of healing, because it shows you someone who was not healed; because it shows you sorrow that was not stanchied by a miracle, sorrow that was carried to the grave... If we pray to her and try to think what her life was like, it helps us also to see life as it really is; not as it appears, but as it really is; that is God's power over it; God's power in everything that comes. *"May it be done unto me according to Thy word."* That is her prayer. Keep it. Say it to yourselves. That will guide you through every crisis.

"Thy will be done. Do with me according to Thy word." Are you content? Can you dare say that to God, surely meaning it? If you can, nothing can ever disturb you in life again. If you can really kneel down, and by keeping her in your memory, say to God, *"May it be done to me according to Thy word"*; if you can reach these heights that she reached, you can also share her valiancy. You can go through life and nothing can make you afraid. If you can say to others, as she said, *"Whatever He shall say to you, do"*; trusting Him absolutely, sure that He will uphold you, then you also have found the secret of life. You live. You are afraid of nothing. The earth cannot hurt you, nor the sky above.

"...But," you say, "these times are hard." Yes, they are hard and our ways seemed cast in evil places ...What does it all mean? If we are afraid of what St. Paul calls *"the fellowship of His suffering,"* if we are afraid to be a fellow with Christ in what He went through, it is foolish for us to talk of love of God... *"May it be done unto me according to Thy word."* If we keep with her, and, as we say our rosary, think of her, we shall share something of her greatness. She will be for us life, sweetness and hope! Poverty will be sweetened, will make life keener to us. In spite of it and life's uncertainty, we shall hope.

She was great, and she was great because of her absolute reliance upon an unchanging love about her; an island stationed in a vast sea. All about her the vast ocean of God's love, and there was she in its midst, like some island in the tropic seas, rich, smiling, radiant. If we keep by her she will share her life with us, that life begotten of the love of God. She will share her sweetness with us; for if our faith be real, it can sweeten all life for us. With her we shall learn to hope. She saw the Crucifixion. She hoped in the Resurrection. She saw it – her hope fulfilled. She can do the same for us, make us hope on beyond our crisis... Would you like to have that greatness, or are you afraid of it? We are human, we cry out for sympathy. We are afraid. Yet if we are devout to her, she will beat that fear from us, lift us above it to life, and sweetness, and unbroken hope.

VOLUME II AVAILABLE NOW

The second volume of Fr. Paul Duffner's, *To Know Him, the Way, the Truth and the Life*, have arrived from the printer, and friends who have read the volume are loud with their praises. The book, which contains revised and updated reflections from Fr. Duffner's many years as director of the Rosary Center's, *Light and Life*, is testimony and tribute to a life dedicated to prayer and study.

Our publisher says the volume is *"everything you want to know about theology in five minutes a day,"* a humorous – but accurate – description of the book's to-the-point contents that make a faithful presentation of the Church's *magisterium* accessible to all.

To Know Him, Vol. II can be ordered from the enclosed form, and the Rosary Center offers a discount to those who wish to purchase both volumes of Fr. Duffner's fine work.

MORE ABOUT MOTHER TERESA

The Rosary Center is pleased to offer a new book on Mother Teresa of Calcutta, *I Loved Jesus in the Night*. The author, Dominican Fr. Paul Murray, was a friend of Mother Teresa for thirty years. He has written a thoughtful book that sheds much light on the recently-published letters of this modern saint. Many have found the letters, which evidence Mother Teresa's spiritual struggles, confusing – or at least surprising. Fr. Murray's friendship enables him to provide thoughtful insight into the saint's rich spiritual life.