

**The Monastery of St Macarius**

**Soetis**

**"When you pray, say:  
Our Father In Heaven"**



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*The Spiritual Father of the Monastery of St Macarius*

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(Luke 11: 2-4)

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”إذا ما صليتم فقولوا“ (إنجليزي)

”When you pray say: Our Father in Heaven”

Father Matta El-Meskeen

*The Spiritual Father of the Monastery of St Macarius*

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***“When you pray, say:  
Our Father In Heaven”***

(Luke 11: 2-4)

**“When you pray (when you need to pray)”:**

Prayer, before anything else, is a need, as when you feel hungry and want to eat immediately. It is the same with prayer, a spiritual hunger; when man feels its intensity he wants to pray immediately.

This means that prayer is a pressing need with every human being, and we will not be at peace until the need is fulfilled. It also means that if we pray without true hunger our prayer becomes a sham, as food is to a person who is not hungry. It is said that food to the satiated is a loss, and so with prayer; it is a loss to him who is not hungry or thirsty in his spirit for God.

**Where does spiritual hunger and spiritual thirst come from?**

Job said: “In famine he will redeem you from death ...” (Job 5:20), as man with physical hunger is liable to die and actually does die if hunger becomes too intense, so Job found that through spiritual hunger God moves to redeem us. Here, spiritual hunger is a pressing need for God in moments of trouble. Being saved from spiritual hunger is redemption. The feeling of redemption is like the feeling of satiation, the soul in peace and the body joyful. Thus the joy that comes to the spirit through prayer is a feeling of satisfaction and of the greatest fullness: “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled” (Matt 5:6). To the one who thirsts for the spirit, the Lord says: “for I will pour water

on the thirsty..." (Is 44:3). Christ calls the thirsty to Himself: "My soul thirsts for you ..." (Ps 63:1): "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink" (John 7:37). This is the true hunger and thirst for God that is the meaning of prayer. It is a need that arises from true hunger and thirst.

### **"Say (thus)":**

The words of the "Lords prayer" are words that came to us directly from the mouth of the Lord, words full of strength and power, effective words. They are not mere vocabulary, but when you pray "Our Father" you utter what God spoke, and his words, in your mouth, become as sharp as a sword.

The words of our Lord "Say (thus)" are a Divine command that has its strength, efficiency and power, so that the one who prays "Our Father" is obeying a Divine commandment, one that has within itself God's power. The words come out of your mouth like arrows into the darkness to light your way with the light of God. You must utter the "Lord's prayer" with the tongue of a person who obeys God's commandment saying His words as a commandment with God's power.

Christ, having instructed His disciples to "say..." then gave them the words of the prayer. Do not, therefore, deviate from it even by a letter because the words are God's words, and God's words are effective when correctly uttered.

### **"Our Father":**

This is expressed in the vocative plural because the Heavenly Father is the father of us all. How can we exclaim "Our Father"? He is our father because He is the Father of our Lord and God, Jesus Christ. In the Virgin, Christ became incarnate through the Holy Spirit, just as had been announced to her: "that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35). God

is His Father because He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit. This is the magnificence of the incarnation: God took on the image of man, born of a saintly woman, the Virgin Mary, and became the Father of every one who believes that God became flesh.

How did we become God's children, to call Him: "Our Father"? The magnificence of the incarnation is that Christ, the Son of God, put on human flesh, and we who believe in Christ incarnate in our flesh became His partners. Our unity with Christ happened through Christ's death in the flesh. We also died through Christ's death on the cross, were buried with Him and resurrected after three days through the resurrection of Christ our incarnate God. Through our faith in Christ's death for us and in us, we died with Him and were buried with Him and were also resurrected through His resurrection. Our partnership in Christ became a partnership united by one death, one burial and one resurrection. Our death through Christ's death gave us the power to partake of His holy flesh at the holy altar, and our resurrection with the living risen Christ gave us the power to drink of Christ's blood because in the blood of Christ is eternal life!

"I am the bread of life... This is the bread which comes down from heaven that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is my flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world" (John 6:48-51).

Christ thus gave us bread on the spiritual altar, which the church considers to be His flesh, after He Himself had sanctified it at the altar. For that reason Christ says: "unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you" (John 6:53).

Christ then returns to defining the meaning of food lest it should be thought to be merely physical food to benefit the body, and so he says: "For my flesh is food indeed (meaning divine and

spiritual), and my blood is drink indeed” (John 6:55). “He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him” (John 6:56).

Christ is food and drink. For as the bread came from heaven, so did the living water. We really do hunger and thirst for Him: “My soul thirsts for you” (Ps 63:1). Divine love is characterized by true hunger and true thirst. From his inmost spirit the lover of Christ declares: “quench my thirst with your love, and water me from the river of your grace, if not I will die.”

Eternal life is true drink from the Living Water. Life in Christ is thirst completely quenched with this water. Yes, the true spiritual life is hunger and satiation, and thirst being quenched; the compensation for the Flesh and Blood! It is the union and eternal partnership with Christ that qualifies us for death with him, resurrection with him, and to be seated with him in the heavens. It is that which gathers the children of God, those who participate in eating his flesh and drinking his blood, into one body, and which qualifies us to call God “our Father” just as Christ himself did.

The awesome meaning of the incarnation is that we were born the day Christ was born, we were baptized the day he was baptized by John the Baptist in the river, died through his death on the cross, and rose through his resurrection to become one in him. He is our God, and his Father is our Heavenly Father.

Our saying “Our Father in heaven” means that we have become, in the partnership of love, one with Christ. God has become for us one Heavenly Father, as Christ said: “Do not call anyone on earth your father; for you have one Father, He who is in heaven” (Matt 23:9). The unity of the children through the Spirit has as a result made us enter the heavenly Father’s paternity.

“Our Father” is mentioned in the vocative i.e. we call the One Heavenly Father to listen to our prayer that was first uttered by

Christ. We find herein a wonderful mystical connection that ties the Son and the Father together. It is Christ who teaches us what to say to his Father in vocative wording, as an expression of the strength of ties between the Son and the Father. To those He owns, those who believe in His name, the Son gives the power and ability to address God as “Heavenly Father”, and to consider Him as **“our”** Father too.

For a son to call out to his father implies a close, loving relationship between them. The fact that we can speak to God like this means that the same intimacy is also the nature of our relationship with God. We would not be able to speak to God as Jesus did, with such informality, assured that he would listen to us, unless we truly were His sons. To be truly ‘His sons’ means we have become regarded as true members of God’s household. So calling God with the words: “Our Father in heaven” sets a seal on the hearts of the children to be heavenly as their Father is heavenly. This is what God meant when he said: “You shall therefore be holy, for I am holy” (Lev 11:45).

### **“In heaven”:**

It was the first time in the history of humanity that man, while on earth, called God a Father in heaven. For that reason the cherubim in Isaiah’s prophecy shout: “the whole earth is full of his glory” (Is 6:3). While still earthbound humanity, we were able to enter the circle of Divine glory and were given the authority and power to call God a ‘Father’ in heaven. The differences between the flesh and the spirit were abolished when the spirit was given to us to call out on our behalf to God in heaven saying: “our Father”. It was only possible because God’s only Son became as one of us. Earth did not rise to heaven, but heaven bent itself down, and the Son of the Highest descended to take the image of man. As he was made in our image, the earth became

His footstool and we became the image of the Son looking towards heaven, calling out to the Father just as the Son calls to his Father, with the familiarity of love and the tie of Divinity. As the Son became linked to humanity through incarnation, we became connected to divinity by the same incarnation. If not, we would never be able to call God in Heaven: “Our Father!”

When we adopt Christ’s words by saying: “Our Father in heaven”, it is a sign of the tie that connects us to heaven. If our Father is in heaven, then inevitably we are too. But it is also indicating a place that is yet to come, for we are strangers on earth looking for a better, heavenly place. We do not hate our separation because even in it, if we look up to heaven we will inevitably go there. When we call out: “Our Father in heaven”, we narrow the vast gap that separates the earth from heaven. For that reason Christ descended from heaven, from the Father, to take us, through His resurrection, to the highest heaven.

We can never have enough of looking upwards towards our Father in heaven, until we are taken there and are with the Father in partnership with Christ.

My beloved, do not cease calling on the Father in heaven, because he hears us and calls us: “My sons, who are alienated, I reach out my arms to embrace you, that you may suck from the breast of heaven and become satiated with full consolation.”

### **“Hallowed be Your name”:**

Yes, his name is Holy and is sanctified in every mouth. The heavenly hosts do not cease to sanctify God’s name, the Seraphim call out to one another: “Holy, Holy, Holy.” It is the Seraphic praise we repeat during mass that our praise may become sanctified too. It is for that reason that God ordered us, with a commandment, to become holy as he is holy, meaning that we

sanctify God in our hearts, minds and mouths. The sanctification of God's name is able to sanctify our lives.

I know a lady whom God blessed with paralysis. She could not speak nor utter a word except: "Holy, holy, holy." Day and night she continued to say "Holy, holy, holy", except during sleep and eating. For seven years until her death she never tired from calling out, morning, noon, evening, and night; "Holy, holy, holy".

This lady never became irritated or complained, and only the words "Holy, holy, holy", came out of her mouth. She thus took on the work of the Cherubim while she was in great suffering. It was her expression of love for the Heavenly Father, in thankfulness, contentment and praise.

Christ asks us to sanctify God's name, which means that we should emulate the Cherubim in heaven. In this way we make our earth become heaven and fulfill the prophet Isaiah's dream of the Cherubim crying out that the whole earth is full of the Lord's glory!

My brothers do not belittle the consecration of God's name because this is the work of saints in heaven, where we will not learn anything except to ceaselessly sanctify God's name. He who sanctifies God's name continuously fulfills the Cherubim's task and that of all the saints; he proceeds and prepares himself for the work of those in heaven.

Christ revealed to us the mystery of the heavenly hosts and kinship with the Heavenly Father in truth and merit. By sanctifying the name of God in heart, in spirit and mouth continuously, a person draws near to the Holy One and the imprint of holiness marks his face.

We are sons of God, bearing his holy name, and the knowledge of this sets even the angels in awe and makes the devil quake at our feet. So imagine what it is like when God's holy name is on our breath and his holiness beats in our chests as we breathe it by

our spirit and become a mass of God’s heavenly light. Holiness is a light and a heaven that the enemy cannot bear and which everyone evil and obstinate fears. Holiness is the sharpest weapon of heaven with which the Archangel Gabriel overcame the devil and thrust him from heaven to earth. All of the heavenly host bears holiness because they serve God’s holy name. God gave them this heavenly nature with which to serve before God and minister to those who will inherit salvation.

God did not deprive humanity of the gift of humility which comes through bearing various difficulties and tests that the enemy brings, even those which they bring upon themselves through complaining and refusing to bear the sufferings God has placed on them.

### **“Your kingdom come”:**

God’s kingdom is his realm of infinite holiness, in which all his heavenly creation obeys Him. It is hidden from humanity due to the weakness of their fleshly body and their limited holiness. His realm includes the heavenly and the earthly hosts. All of them submit to his yoke in love, joy, and praise. His heavenly kingdom is whole and absolute in glory, holiness, obedience and the ministering of praise and worship in Spirit. As for his kingdom on earth, it grows and becomes integrated until it reaches the fullness of God’s intention in his creation.

Christ commanded us to ask for the perfect kingdom: “Your kingdom come”, for man to get rid of his troubles, to bring to an end the enemy’s trials and let him receive his final punishment. The revelation of God’s kingdom to mankind is related to the revelation of the falling of the devil’s kingdom and his horrific punishment along with the false prophet in the unquenchable lake of fire. The revelation of God’s kingdom is accompanied by man’s access to complete salvation and eternal joy. Therein lies no trial or grief, trouble, fatigue or sighing, but eternal exultation

and spiritual jubilation in partnership with the saints in the heavenly kingdom of God, where God rules His happy kingdom in indescribable total perfection.

Our asking for: “Your kingdom come”, is not in vain, nor is it merely words to say, but it is one of the divine tasks placed on us to fulfill the works of God’s mercy. When it reaches God’s ears, it increases his fatherly compassion, shortening evil days and offering rest to his suffering children on earth. It is based on God’s law: “Ask, and it will be given to you” (Matt 7:7). He listens to our prayers. To him come all human beings; admitted before him are the supplications of his saints and the intercessions of those appointed to represent us.

The words “Your kingdom come” is completely synonymous with the revelation of the ending of the age of salvation, to enter into the heavenly age filled with glory and joy. When we ask and strive to save our souls we come near to the revelation of his kingdom. Man’s work of prayer and worship in spirit is a direct outworking of the request: “Your kingdom come”. Man was created to be in harmony with the works of God’s kingdom, because man’s prayer is heard by God, and his demands are answered through the Spirit for his good. It is clear from our history that a number of Saints’ prayers and intercessions prevented catastrophes from coming on those who were evil and they quickened mercy at that time. The human saints have an effective role in bringing about God’s mercy on their fellow men who are struggling. It is apparent that man is also responsible for producing the coming of God’s Kingdom. This is the reason God included it in the Lord’s Prayer.

Out of God’s love for mankind, Christ himself, with his wounds and cross, stands before God interceding for us, and his prayers are answered.

“Your kingdom come”, definitely includes the revelation of the glory of Christ, King of the saints. With him will be revealed the works of saved humanity that will be made beautiful in God’s kingdom. They who have responded to all the demands of God’s law will appear like radiant pillars and will be a visual answer to the requirements of the Gospel. The praises of the saints will be heard continually in God’s kingdom along with the Cherubim and Seraphim ministering. The person sanctified by God will have a position in the front of the Kingdom before God, ahead of all the heavenly hosts.

The Apostle Paul saw this and wrote of it in his Epistle to the Ephesians: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love; having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved” (Eph 1:3-6).

Our position in God’s Kingdom, as it is revealed, is immediately in front of God’s face, ahead of any other creation because we will be united with the Son. Our work will be to praise God’s works that he accomplished in Christ for our sake. Man will appear there, crowned with the crown of Christ’s own glory, as Christ is worshipped eternally.

**“Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven”:**

**“On earth as it is in heaven”:**

God’s heavenly Kingdom is spiritual, and His kingdom on earth is physical, helped and supported by the Holy Spirit and all the spirits of the holy angels created to minister to those who are

inheriting salvation: “Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?” (Heb 1:14)

The relation between the heavenly and the earthly is one-sided. We are visible to the heavenly and spiritual ministering angels, but we do not see these heavenly creations, and we know very little about them. We do know about the Cherubim and the Seraphim, the heads of angels, the angels, and the vast innumerable array of heavenly soldiers who some of the saints caught a glimpse of and were bewildered by their great number. These heavenly soldiers appeared to the servant of the prophet Elisha when he was afraid of the Syrian (i.e., Aramean) army (2 Kings 6:17).

We have also heard that the angel Gabriel is standing before God. He is the one who foretold the Lord’s birth to the Virgin Mary: “Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin’s name was Mary” (Luke 1:26, 27). The archangel Michael, head of the angels, in charge of the Israelites (Dan 12:1) fought the enemy that stood against his people. It is also mentioned that he was the leader of Israel (Dan 10:21; 11:1). The Bible mentions the help Daniel received from one of the angels (Dan 10:13), in which it is also mentioned that the archangel Michael is one of the first archangels. Also that he witnessed, with Daniel’s angel, the fight against the prince of the kingdom of Persia (the devil): “But I will tell you what is inscribed in the book of truth: there is none who contends by my side against these except Michael, your prince” (Dan 10:21).

The archangel Michael also had to contend with the devil over Moses’ body, because the devil intended to reveal to Israel the place of Moses’ body in order for them to renounce God and worship Moses. When he found no accusation against him he said to him: “The Lord rebuke you” (Jude 9).

The relationship between the angels and us is strong, but they are classified in accordance to the gifts God gives them. A lot of angels have appeared without us knowing their names. In the book of Revelation it is said that the archangel Michael fought Satan in heaven and caused him to fall from his place in heaven down to earth (Rev 12:7-9). It is also known that when God created the nations and divided them, he made Michael the head over Israel. So it seems that every nation following God is protected and helped by a special angel. Church tradition says that every city is protected by two angels. In Egypt we have heard that there exists the Church of the Northern Angel (i.e., the angel guarding the region north of Cairo), and the Church of the Southern Angel (i.e., the angel guarding the region south of Cairo). But generally, news of the angels is scarce, and there are very few who have seen them. The Kingdom of heaven is filled with angels of various kinds and with their praises.

**"Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven":**

This phrase expresses the desire for God's will to be fulfilled because it is the realization of His Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven, in spirituality, holiness and continuous praise, with the angels ministering to those designated to inherit the prepared salvation. So God takes on the headship of His Kingdom in the same way in heaven and on earth. The obstacles in the Church and the laxness of its people are the reasons for the delay of Christ's appearance on earth at his second coming: "Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he really find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8)

Christ prophesied the loss of faith at the end of the days in which we live, which is just what our eyes see and our ears hear. The whole world follows the devil, and there are few who ask for God's kingdom to come and for his will to be done on earth as in

heaven. The angels stand by grieving over the state of mankind, who was created in the image of God.

**“Give us day by day our daily bread”:**

Christ put his finger on the malady that will prevail in the world, hindering the coming of God’s kingdom. It is running after money and hoarding treasures when there is really only one need; the Lord who sustains us and gives us life. Christ warns us that our daily bread is sufficient, meaning that we should not run after more, to have excess or to waste. The meaning of “sufficiency” is the medicine that the whole world needs. Hoarding money, food, gold, diamonds or riches of any kind is an infringement on God’s planning.

Although “Give us day by day” applies to bread, food and human needs, it aims to also draw our attention to the need for prayer and worship in spirit. The world has become very rich with money and consequently greatly deficient in the Spirit. “Our daily bread” stands for: Take heed of your spirit’s pressing needs and its richness. Serious striving in the Spirit urges God to fulfill all our needs and requirements for money and bread.

“Give us day by day” aims further because it involves fasting, being hungry and not filled with delicacies whilst the poor hunger for a morsel of bread before our very eyes.

Its target is also sensible behavior with our surplus, for the hungry thousands await the twelve baskets of leftovers. If the world would take note of the precious commandment: “Give us day by day”, millions of baskets of bread and dollars would be available for the poor who wander around in hunger. As well as those people who literally die of hunger and thirst in Africa there are also those who are dead whilst still alive due to the dire poverty and need for a morsel of bread and a glass of water. America and Europe consume the majority of the world’s

resources wastefully and destructively. In “Give us day by day” lies the need of the whole world today, the needs of every home and every person. If not, one day the world will perish from wastefulness and wealth.

**“And forgive us our sins”:**

Christ then moves to address the outcome of deviating from and violating the commandment of sufficiency, running after more, striving for money and riches. The love of money is the root of all evil, said the Apostle Paul: “For which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows” (1 Tim 6:10). It implies that the transgressions, offences and sins resulting from the love of money are numerous. They include stealing, falsifying, embezzlement, cheating, excessive pricing, monetary speculation, stockpiling items to increase their price as well as thousands of sins resulting from greed, covetousness, meanness and producing products from defective materials and all that results from this. All of these are the results of the love of money and the desire to become rich quickly. These are sins that are difficult to forgive. There are sins which we ask to be forgiven, they are: forgetting to fulfill ones duties towards God in prayer and fasting, laxness and laziness in prayer, negligence with the rules of prayer and church attendance, using deceit in dealing with others, the distinction between those who are equal in rights, lacking of performing duties towards others, especially the poor, weak, and sick, breaking the laws of the Holy Church regarding prayer and duties towards others. These are the sins for which the priest asks for forgiveness when he prays for the dead during the prayers for the deceased. He asks for them to be forgiven in accordance with the prayer “forgive us our sins”. God’s mercy is forbidden to those who intentionally hurt people and who treat others unjustly. God hates injustice and

will not forgive it unless those who commit it go back on their injustice like Zacchaeus the tax collector did (Luke 19:1-10). On the other hand God is forbearing and his mercy immense for the weak, meek, merciful, benevolent to the poor and needy, and every one who gives a morsel to the hungry and a glass of water to the thirsty according to Christ's commandment.

**“For we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us”:**

The words: “Forgive, and you will be forgiven” express clemency from God for the forgiveness of sins through the forgiveness of others. The forgiveness of others' sins and infringements towards us is counted for us, because God offers instead mercy and forgiveness for the extra measure.

Forgiving others' sins towards us is the easiest way to have our sins forgiven. In commanding this God was extremely clement and kind. A person who exacts retribution and judges those who commit a violation against him, will himself be required to pay for his own violations against God. In this commandment God teaches man the lesson that to be merciful to others will lead to finding mercy with God. In being clement with the violations of others towards him, he will find clemency with God in his own violations of God's rights and of those of others. Those who follow this commandment live in peace and the enemy finds no place among them, their lives are calm and peaceful. This is a commandment for the individual, the group, and for leaders. Blessed are those who follow God's commandments. They will walk in the way of eternal life surrounded by peace on every side. As for the quarrelsome, those who ask for retribution from the guilty while they themselves commit violations and are unjust and unwilling to cede to others any of their own rights, their end is severe judgment and they will be made to pay for every transgression.

**“And do not lead us into temptation”:**

The enemy has the power to harm us, our children and all our belongings. There is no way to escape the circle of the enemy’s power except by continual request and fervent entreaty in every prayer for God to allow us not to enter the enemy’s power to harm us.

The Lord taught us to pray this so that we might be protected from all the devil’s infringements that have no justification. The one who neglects prayer, requests for mercy, and to not be led into the enemy’s power, facilitates the devil’s work against himself and actually gives him power over himself. God alone is able to curb the evil power that confronts us. There is no way out except through continuing to pray morning and evening for God’s mercy and deliverance from the enemy’s power. The enemy has no power over the person he finds standing in prayer to God constantly morning and evening. He trembles at the sight of one who holds on to God’s holy name, and who admonishes the devil in the name of the Lord.

God does not listen to the prayer of the haughty, the unjust and those who are proud of themselves and of their own power. He leaves them as prey for the enemy and when they cry out to God they will not be heard. Pride is an open door for the devil, through which he may enter your house without deterrent to destroy it.

The same goes for the one who is unjust and who practices the enemy’s work. If a person allows himself to be unjust and merciless to his brothers or to the weak, then he befriends the devil by copying him and gives the enemy the opportunity to mistreat him. He will cry out to God and not be heard!

It is the same for the one who sneers at chastity and holiness, the required attributes of God’s children. God insisted that we should be holy and pure so that God’s holiness, mercy and love can descend upon us. The one who shamelessly follows his

passions and commits fornication without fear of God, will cry out when the power of the devil oppresses him, but to no avail. No succor comes because he has forfeited his share of God's mercy along with his chastity. Everything outside the bounds of chastity and modesty is fornication. Either a person is chaste or a fornicator, there is no in-between because the demon of fornication lies in wait for a man with arrows aimed at him, and has done ever since his childhood. Chastity and modesty are attributes that begin in childhood, that strengthen and prevail in youth and gain a crown in adulthood. It is the same for men and women, for fornication can ravish them both. If this sin is deliberate and continuous it will not be forgiven, but God is merciful with the weak, the oppressed and those who have been victims of the enemy in their childhood and youth. They may return to chastity through God's power and mercy. Nothing is impossible for God, even until the grave. Blessed is the person who does not hold against others their sins, lapses and infringements, because he is close to God's mercy.

**“But deliver us from the evil one (the enemy)”:**

We identify with the Apostle Paul when he writes: “He who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that he will still deliver us” (2 Cor 1:10). Temptation and sin surround us everywhere, while asleep and awake, at home and in the street, whilst traveling and at work. There is no avoiding temptation except God saves us from it. We cannot be saved by our intelligence, by medicines, by doctors, brothers, fathers or friends; it is God alone who can save us. There is no salvation except through God, because our enemy is a stubborn autocrat. He is an intelligent force that traps even the most intelligent people, making the strongest and most recalcitrant men fall into his net. The temptation that surrounds us is mightier than us and more

violent than any other force. The devil caused our father and mother, Adam and Eve, to fall while they were in paradise in God’s very presence. God knows it and forewarns us by giving the commandment so that we may avoid the devil’s net. Christ puts in our mouths the prayer of deliverance from the enemy, the only weapon stronger than the devil’s power and schemes. He who arms himself by crying out sincerely in prayer to God to save him from evil, will definitely be saved.

It is strange that the devil, whose power and intelligence are so terrible that by comparison man is a mere straw blown by the wind, should be overcome by so simple a thing as a cry to God for deliverance.

Sure, we are surrounded by temptation at all times wherever we are, no matter how intelligent we are or how good our understanding. But God has also surrounded us with ministering angels in the same way that he surrounded Elisha the prophet in front of the Syrian (i.e., Aramean) armies (2 Kings 6:16, 17). Those who are with us are more numerous than those who are against us. Those who are with us are organized by the Lord of hosts. He who arms himself with the prayer of “Our Father In Heaven” every moment, and with the call for deliverance from the enemy in his mouth, is as safe as a suckling babe in its mother’s arms. God’s path is difficult and there are many stumbling blocks, struggles, persecutions and injustices from heads and subordinates, from fathers and brothers; but God is above us, holding our hands, showing us the way, safely leading us to our haven.

If the Holy One has opened up for us a new way to heaven through the blood of his Son, then is he not also able to take our hands and lead us along the path of worship and prayer to the final haven, which is heaven?

**“Through Jesus Christ our Lord”:**

It is Christ who gave us the “Lord’s prayer”, leaving us in the embrace of the Church that is his body, filled with every grace and blessing. So we add to the prayer he gave us the words: “through Jesus Christ our Lord”. He who pierced the entrails of death and trampled it with His feet will ceaselessly save us even on the very brink of death. It is Christ, the vanquisher of death and Lord of life, who conquered the hordes of darkness dispossessing them on the cross and putting them under His feet, who has dictated to us this prayer and it is he who taught us to cry out to Him: “deliver us from the evil one”. There is no power in heaven or on earth that has power over Christ. Christ rose to the highest heaven and his enemies bow beneath His feet, and he fills with grace, power and salvation all who call out to Him and pray in the way that he commanded us to pray.

Temptation and sin surround us, and the evil enemy is lying in wait for us with every step. But Christ saved us and also will continue to save us, because he endured every aspect of man’s weakness and experienced first-hand the violence of the enemy. For that reason he gave up his body to the cross and exposed himself to death to be a ransom before God, redeeming us from every temptation, and so that every sin may be forgiven. Man, who is weak, became stronger than the devil, by holding onto Christ and calling out to him for salvation.

How beautiful is frail humanity, and how strong in Christ’s embrace.

**“For yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory for ever. Amen”:**

This is the last doxology of the “Lord’s prayer” and it is the weapon of every believer in Christ. It expresses praise to God the possessor of all power and authority. It is praise to God that he has the power and glory forever. He is the powerful and glorious

focus, the one to whom we pray. From God’s power we acquire power, and from his glory we receive authority over the enemy. In the protective shelter of the Most High we sleep, and wake praising his glory that has carried us through the darkness of the night. Over and above the conquered enemy’s power stands the power of the Most High, eternally triumphant and exalted. He overshadows the meanness of the conceited and obstinate enemy whom God has deposed from his rank as an angel to become a despised creature dwelling in darkness and never seeing light. God took away from him all he previously had given him, so he fell from all creation. Compared to this infamy God rises in his glory forever and his authority will last forever and ever. Amen.

**30 November, 2003 A.D. = 20 Hathor, 1720 Anno Martyri.**

A gift to the monks, my brothers, during the Nativity Fast 2004 A.D.



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Prayer before anything else is a need, as when you feel hungry and want to eat something, it is the same with prayer; a certain hunger comes and feels its intention to be satisfied immediately.

Prayer is a need, a pressing need, and it is a need that is felt by all people, regardless of their status or condition.