Oh eternal Father, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, “Father of Lights,” holy Father, all gentle and all loving Father, Father creator of the universe, how can I ever deserve to call you “Father”, I who am earthly, “dust and ashes,” the least of all your servants? What possible good have you found in me or in any other child of Adam that you desired to be our Father? “Who are you Lord and who am I?” You are the God of infinite majesty, the “King of kings, Lord of Lords,” the Saint of saints, the glory of the angels and joy of all the blessed. In your sight, the heavens, the earth and all it contains are less than a small grain of sand in comparison to the whole world. But I, on the other hand, am a little earthworm, a sinner and a child of sinful Adam, who has so often offended your sovereign majesty. And yet, you want me to call you Father! Oh! what excellence, what dignity you give me! May it please you, Lord, that my soul come to recognize this and give you the thanks due to so great a blessing. But since my gratitude is insufficient, I pray that the angels assist me in praising and thanking your unceasingly.

Father, I must confess to two things: one that this gift and great blessing comes from your infinite goodness and the infinite love you have for me, the other that this word Father is so fitting on the lips of your only Son, my Lord Jesus Christ, who is your Son by an eternal and consubstantial generation, but on my lips, I who am such a great sinner, it is not fitting, it is not appropriate. I do not deserve such a great blessing. Nevertheless, since it so pleases your majesty, with all my heart I shall from now on call you Father, and I will rejoice in this sweet name of Father.
This word gives testimony to the immense love that you have for me, Lord. This is why your evangelist, filled with amazement, says: “See what love the Father has for us that we are called children of God and so we really are.” It also teaches and equally informs me that I must love you with my whole heart: “I love you, Lord, my strength, my rock, my refuge, my liberator” and my Father. What ungrateful son could there possibly be in the world, who having such a good, holy, gentle, glorious and loving Father as you, would not love him?

This word, Father, moves me to ask you for the things I need, for a father never refuses his child what he sees is necessary, provided he can give it to him. I know, my Father, that you can and will; you can because you are omnipotent; you will because you are all good. I do have needs; I am wounded by many sins, and I need remedies. You, Father, are the physician who heals all my ills and cures all my infirmities. Have mercy on me, Lord, for I am weak; heal me, Lord, for my bones are trembling,” and I shall be healed. Lord, heal this soul; see how it comes before you full of wounds. (It shows here all of its wounds of pride, avarice, lust, etc. and lovingly asks for health.)

Moreover, Oh Father, I am naked and deprived of all virtuous clothing. Clothe me, Oh Father, you who clothe the sky with so many stars and the earth with so many flowers. Give me the wedding garment of charity so that I may appear at your wedding banquet, the robe of obedience that I may obey your commandments and your laws, the robe of humility that I may be pleasing in your eyes. Clothe me with the rich vestments of the infused virtues; give me perfect faith, firm hope and ardent charity.

Furthermore, I ask you, Oh good Father, that you deign to be a father to me. A father disciplines his son to correct him because otherwise, if he does not discipline him, he will do worse things and at times would even be hanged. Discipline me mercifully, Lord. I ask you, Lord, for the rod with your mercy. Burn, cut here below so that you may pardon me in eternity. And if I do not mend my ways, strengthen your holy hand and strike me harder with tribulations, illnesses, afflictions and distress. “May decay invade my bones and consume me within so that I may be at peace on the day of tribulation and be joined to our people to walk with them.” I beg you, good Father, that in these bones decay may enter, that is to say, that like another Job may my body be covered with sores and bruises, provided that my soul be at rest on the “day of tribulation,” which is the day of death, and that I be among the number of your children, who are the heavenly people, girded with glory and blessedness.

A father, after he has chastised and disciplined his child, caresses him. Father, after you have mercifully disciplined me for my foolishness, deign to visit me with spiritual consolation, caress this soul by interior gentleness so that it burns with your love and does not cease to praise you.

Oh! what consolation to my soul the word, “Father,” brings and not only consolation, but gladness, joy and supreme contentment. “Let me hear words of joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice,” said the prophet. And nevertheless, the name Father had not yet been revealed to him. And what shall I say? Father, you have made me “hear words of joy and gladness.” Oh! how great my joy, my gladness when this sweet word, Father, sounds in my ears! My humbled soul, my bones crushed by the multitude of my sins are revived and acquire new
strength on hearing this word, “Father.” What greater joy can I possibly have than to remember that I have such a good Father that he is goodness itself; so holy that he is holiness itself; so wise that he is wisdom itself, and finally so powerful that he can do all things in heaven, on earth and in the depths. Let the rich rejoice in their riches, the powerful in their power, the wise in their wisdom. But as for me, I shall rejoice in my Lord,12 because he is Father and our Father. There are those who put their trust in chariots, others in horses; but we exult in the name of our God.13 Lord, may my spirit exult in you, O God, our Savior and our Father.14

This word, Father, demonstrates your care and how great your providence is in my regard and in regard to all. Every day, Oh Father, you prepare a table and a feast for the whole world, and I always participate in this feast. Every day you make the sun shine on us, your children, and in the evening you hide this beautiful lamp, and it seems to me that you extinguish this beautiful light so that, your children, can rest and sleep. You inhabit, Lord, heaven and earth to be at my service, and you have even entrusted me to the care of the angels. You do all that so that I may obtain the inheritance reserved for your children, which is the kingdom of heaven. In this way, I recognize what a provident Father you are for us, who are your sons.

Finally, this word, Father, encourages me so that when I fall, I may run to throw myself contritely into your arms, for I will be received more lovingly than the Prodigal son. And now, remembering my past faults, I run toward you, Father, and I say: “Father, I have sinned against heaven and you; I am not worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.”15 Or else, Father, because I know the mercy and love you bear me, come to meet me, open the arms of your mercy, embrace this prodigal child, give me the robe of innocence, the ring of a vibrant faith, the sandals of the example of your saints, whom I must imitate. Give me, Oh Father, the fatted calf, that is to say, your Son in the Most Holy Sacrament so that it will be nourishment for my soul…16 by its most abundant grace.17

To conclude, Oh Father, this very sweet word is an abbreviated word18 which contains all of the sweetness of the manna that you gave your people to eat in the desert. As for me, I am happy that this word, Father, is very savory nourishment for my soul. It sufficed for the apostle Paul to know only [Jesus Christ] crucified, and for me it suffices to know and understand this word, Father, because by understanding it, I will know that you have taken me as your adopted son, which is the greatest dignity there is in heaven and on earth after that of your natural son, which properly belongs to your only Son and my Lord Jesus Christ.

---

**On the Word “Our”**

You are, Lord, our Father. What a great blessing! You are not simply content to communicate this name of Father to your angels and to your saints who dwell in your house, but you also desire to communicate to those who are in this world, and not only to the rich and powerful, but also to the poorest shepherds, who, on bridges and in forests, sleep on the bare earth. It seems to me, Lord, that you are like the sun that communicates its light and sends its rays to the smallest mountain flower as well as to the mountain itself. And so, my Lord, you communicate your very sweet name to the great and to the small, to the rich and to the poor, and for this you desire us to call you Father.
In these two words, our Father, you reveal to me, Lord, another great mystery, viz., that you desire that I greatly love your holy law of love and of charity, for you have reduced it all to love of you and love of our neighbor. By the first word, “Father,” you ask me to love your most supreme majesty, by the second, “our,” you ask me to love my neighbor since you give him to me as a brother and you desire that I pray for him.

You are our Father because you have created us: “Your hands,” Lord, “have formed me.” You are our Father because you have purchased us “with the precious blood” of your Son, “the spotless Lamb,” our Christ Jesus with whom we have been adopted as your children. You are our Father because you console us so gently in this “valley of tears.” Finally, you are our Father because after this life of work and penitence, you prepare for us a life of rest and eternal blessedness.

Finally, you are our Father because you give yourself entirely for us who are so poor and because you have communicated everything to us here below in the Most Holy Sacrament, and then in heaven, you will communicate yourself more clearly, revealing to us your blessed essence, the infinite treasures of your beatitude and the glory of your majesty. So, I beg you, Oh Father, that since you are completely ours, may I also be your child – you the Father and I your son. These words, our Father, will be fitting on my lips when my soul and my body will belong completely to you since you belong completely to us.

On the Words: “Who art in heaven”

I know, Lord, that you are everywhere and that the heavens and the earth are full of your glory, and I also know, Father, that you hold the universe in your hands and that you conserve it, if it it were not so, all things would return into the nothingness from which you drew them. You are also, Father, in heaven where you glorify the immense multitude of angels and saints who are ever present before the throne of your glory, adoring you with all reverence. When will my soul, Oh Father, be like heaven, lifted above the earth by the force of your love, adorned with as many virtues as the heavens contain astral bodies and stars, firm and strong in your service without every falling just as the heavens do not fall so that it may be all beautiful and pleasing before your face and that you, Father, may deign to dwell there as in a very beautiful heaven. I ask also, Father, so that my soul be a heaven and a dwelling for your most supreme majesty, it may move like the heavens in “sync” with the movement of the First Mover. You are the first and prime Mover. May my soul only be moved by your holy will so that in all things it is in conformity with your will.

You are in heaven, Oh Father, that is to say, in the angels and the saints. You enlighten them so that they may know you, for you are the eternal light that illuminates everything. You are, Father, in the angels and the saints, and you enflame them with a fire of an ardent love so that they may love you perfectly, for you are the fire that consumes every imperfection. “You make [your] angels as winds and [your] ministers a fiery flame” You are in your angels and saints, filling them with blessing so that they will be eternally happy, for you are the beatitude, the glory, the repose of this glorious assembly. Make me, Oh Father, an angel and a saint by
grace so that I may share in such great blessings and that my understanding may be enlightened to know you. You have given, Oh Father, to your servant Francis these two great luminaries – the first to know your sublime Majesty, the second to know oneself.  

Give me, Oh Father, this great light so that I may know you as the angels and your servant Francis know you, my God of infinite virtue, of infinite power, of infinite wisdom and of infinite beauty. Give me also the other great light by which I may know my lowliness and my misery.

I ask you also, Oh Father, that you deign to enflame my heart with the fire of the Holy Spirit as you have inflamed the angels in heaven and in the same way as you enflamed on earth the hearts of the Apostles on the holy day of Pentecost. Oh most happy Father, send some of this great river and of this great flame which proceeds from your throne and from the Lamb, that is, from the Holy Spirit; send them to my soul so that it may burn with your love. Cast from on high fire into my bones; may this fire penetrate to the very core of my soul so that the great waters of tribulation may not extinguish charity. With this great fire enflame my affections so that I may no longer beg for the vile, earthly things but rather drawn by its power I may look for the eternal things of heaven.

Holy Father, it is quite fitting that since you, my God, my Father and my inheritance, are in heaven, I no longer seek nor embrace the earth. What do I have to do with the earth, Oh Father, since all my good, all my treasure is in heaven? If you, Father, are in heaven, then it follows that I, your child, am a stranger in this world and that I always walk toward my homeland, which is heaven. If the pilgrim as he walks has his body on the road and his soul in the sweet homeland, every hour seems like a thousand years because of the desire he has to reach it and to see his dear father and brothers. Why wouldn’t this be the same for me? Why, our Father, doesn’t my soul converse in heaven like the soul of your holy Apostle who said: “Our conversation is heaven.” And why does each hour of this exile not seem to me to be like a thousand years? Why don’t I desire to see my dear brethren, who are the angels and the saints? Why, Father, do I not consider all the base, vile things of this life to be unworthy of my heart’s attachment since I have been created to possess the blessings of heaven? There is no doubt, Father, that it would be a great dishonor (indignity) for the son of a great prince or king to groom horses with his own hands or, with the same hands to pick up the filth and the manure in the streets. But it is an even greater dishonor for me knowing, Oh Father, that you have adopted me as your son and that you prepare for me infinite blessings, inestimable riches and even the kingdom of heaven, where I to debase and make myself contemptible by seeking after the vile and base things of this world. So then, our Father who are in heaven, give me the love of heavenly things so that by loving them, I may despise the things of the earth and that all my love may be for you, our heavenly Father.

Finally, I ask, Oh Father, that just as you fill the heavens, who are the angels and the saints, with glory, deign to likewise fill my soul, when, as it leaves this world, it presents itself before you so that it may be “a heaven full of your glory.”
On the Words: “Hallowed be thy name”

Oh Father, grant that this name so sweet and gentle be known throughout the whole world. Do not keep hidden, Oh Father, such a rich treasure from the souls in whom you have imprinted your “image and likeness.” May the East and the West and other parts of the world know that you are Father, that Jesus Christ is your only, coeternal and consubstantial son, and that all can become your adopted children. Reveal and communicate to all the nations this lovable name so that all of them may embrace each other and be enflamed with your holy love. Oh! how joyful my soul would be to one day see the whole world bend its knee to adore your supreme Majesty! Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, if my blood and my life were needed to bring this about, I would gladly offer my blood and my life and a thousand lives, if I had them.

Hallowed be thy name. Grant, Oh Father, that my soul and those of the whole world have a greater understanding of your Majesty. We know, Father, “with all the saints, what is its breadth, its length, its height and its depth.” We know the breadth of your blessings toward us, which is more vast than the sea and the earth; the length of your promises, which are infinite; the height of your majesty, which is immense; the depth of your judgments, which are unfathomable.

Hallowed be thy name. Holy Father, all your creatures move me to praise your holy name, to bless you unceasingly. The angels with their sweet music, continually and pleasingly chant matins, praise you, bless you and never cease crying out: “Holy, Holy, Holy, the Lord God of hosts,” and they invite me to join them. The heavens, with their continual movements, the stars with their brilliant light, and especially the two great lights, the sun and the moon, by their splendor and brightness, move me to adore and bless you holy name. All of the elements, fire, air, water, earth, the birds who fly in the air, the fish who swim in the sea, the rivers, the fountains, the mountains and valleys, the plants of the earth and finally all the animals who roam on it preach to me adoration and tell me to bless you. Hence, Oh Father, hallowed be thy name; deign to make me a saint so that I may never cease to bless your supreme majesty and that the world, seeing that I am busy praising blessing, and glorifying you, Oh our Father, and hallowing your name which is blessed forever and ever.

On The Words: “thy kingdom come,” Second Petition

In addition, I ask for, Oh Father, the kingdom of the blessed, this everlasting kingdom, so ardently desired by a son, the realm where our souls will find rest and where they will rejoice. In this holy kingdom, we will always praise you; we will love and rejoice over you, Oh Father, with your blessed Son and Holy Spirit. Oh holy Father, “thy kingdom come” because it is for this purpose that you have created our souls; may “thy kingdom” because it was for this purpose that you desired your Son to die on the tree of the cross. May “thy kingdom come” so in blessing your name, “the just wait for me until you reward me.” Your angels and all the saints desire this day because it reveals in you, Father, an abyss of infinite beauty, of infinite power. This is why they so ardently desire to have numerous companions to assist them in praising and loving your supreme majesty.
“Deal favorably, O Lord, in thy good will with Sion that the walls of Jerusalem may be built up.”

“Thy kingdom come.” Holy Father, banished from your kingdom, we are “in this valley of tears.” Grant, Oh Father, that we may return. Just as pilgrims look forward to the last day of their journey when they return to their cities and homes, so we look forward to the coming of your kingdom so that our pilgrimage will be completed and we may enter the home you have prepared for us in your kingdom.

“Thy kingdom come.” We are at war. Grant, Lord, that we may be victorious so that we may obtain the prize which is your holy kingdom. “You are just, Lord, and will be found just in your words.”

“Thy kingdom come.” Oh! happy day! Oh! blessed hour! When, Oh Father, will this day approach and this hour come? “When will I come and appear before your face?” When will I see, Father, the walls of your kingdom adorned with precious stones? When will I knock at your doors, Oh! heavenly Jerusalem? When will I behold your rich palaces? When will I enjoy your beautiful gardens clothed with eternal flowers? When will I drink at your fountains of life? Oh holy Father, when will I see in your kingdom the numberless legions of angels and saints, full of glory, these choirs of virgins, who, with palms in their hands, singing and following the Lamb? When will my ears hear the dulcet music, the harmony of the angels and the concert of the saints singing before you: “Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of hosts”? “How lovely your dwelling, Oh Lord of hosts!” “My soul yearns and pines the courts of the Lord.”

“Thy kingdom come.” Here, Father, in my body and soul is your kingdom. You desire to reign in this kingdom. I surrender it to you, Oh Father; I give it to you. May it be truly yours since it really is yours. May I not usurp it, may I not deliver it up to Satan, to the world nor to the flesh, which are cruel tyrants, but to you who is its true Lord. So, Father, your kingdom come. Reign from now on in my soul, in my memory so that it remembers you always, in my understanding so that it always considers your infinite goodness and grandeur, in my will so that it may unceasingly love, praise and bless you.

On the Words: “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” Third Petition

Father, I also pray that your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Grant, Oh Father, that as in the land of the living, which is heaven, all the angels and saints do your divine will, so in this land of the dying, which is the world, that my soul does your will. Your will, Oh Father, is holy and good; mine is evil and sensual. May your will be done, then, on this earth of my soul as
it is in heaven. My soul will be blessed when it conforms to your will in everything. Holy Father, remove from my soul, I pray, my own will and graft on it yours so that your will and not mine is always done. Just as when one cuts a branch from a tree and grafts on a better one, its fruit is also much better, remove from this tree, Oh Father, the little branch of my will and graft on it your holy will then I will be certain that it will bear beautiful fruit. All my faults and sins proceed from this evil will. So, Lord, what are you waiting for? Cut only what is mine and graft on what is yours. I will say, Oh Father, with your well-beloved Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ: “Father, not my will but thine be done;” Father, not what I will, but what you will; Father, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

I pray also, Father, that just as the angelic, spirits signified by heaven, always do your most holy will, so also may the soul of sinners, represented by the earth, do what you will for in this way they will not offend you.

I ask with insistence, Oh Father, that thy will be done in and in all because I am certain that it is your will that we all become saints. “Be holy for I am holy.” “This is my will, your sanctification.” Oh fountain of all holiness, make us holy for such is your will. What person can be so blind in understanding that he does not desire to be a saint? Holy Father, I don’t look for nor desire anything else; my wealth, my possessions, my treasure will consist in being a saint. May thy will be done in me so that I may be a saint.

Holy Father, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. “Your will is that I be steadfast in faith, humble in conversation, modest in my words, just in my actions, merciful toward the needy, disciplined in my behavior; that I harm no one, that I assist everyone, that I be peaceful with all, that I love you as Father, that I fear you as Father.”

Thy will be done. This is what I want, Father, this is what I ask, this is what I desire with all my heart, that your holy will be accomplished in me. That the accomplishment of your will be the pleasure, the contentment, the joy of my soul in every place and at every time for I know, Father, that it is most helpful to my soul to suffer all the torments of the world, if this be you will, than to enjoy all the diversions and pleasures of the children of Adam. The joy of the angels, the desire of the saints consist in this, viz., that thy will be done, that your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. I pray, then, Father, that your will be done in me.

Finally, Father, you and your well-beloved Son have made known to me your will when he said: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and all your strength and your neighbor as yourself." Oh Father, since it is your will that I love you with all my heart, with all my soul, and with all my strength, make me, Oh Father, do "what you ordain and what you will." Fountain of charity, give me charity; abyss of infinite love, give me love. Light, Father, this lamp of my soul with the light of your love. You have ordained, Father, that there will always be a fire on your altar. I offer you, Oh Father, my soul as an altar; grant that the fire of your love may burn endlessly in it. Oh eternal Light, “which enlightens every light and consumes in eternal splendor thousands upon thousands of flaming torches before the throne of your divinity from the dawning of day!” O eternal Light which enlightens every light and preserves it in your eternal splendor. Thousands upon thousands of angels stand before your Majesty like so many torches enflamed by your charity and that burn continuously without being burned or consumed. Permit, my God and Father, this torch of my
soul to approach you, Fire of love, so that being aflame, it may burn ceaselessly, loving you, your yourself and my neighbor in you. In this way, your holy will shall be done in me.

---

**On the Words: “Give us this day our daily bread” – Fourth Petition**

Yes, Father, children need bread. Do not refuse it to us lest we die. Give us, Oh Father, your supersubstantial bread, your only Son Jesus Christ our Lord in the Most Holy Sacrament so that we may nourished in our spiritual life, grow in virtue and be so strengthened that we may be able to make the journey “in this valley of tears”\(^{59}\) “to the mountain of God, to Horeb.”\(^{60}\) Holy Father, this is the bread which your son has brought us. It is the marvelous things he has done, preached, endured. Grant, Oh holy Father, that during the time of this pilgrimage, that we may never lack this heavenly manna and may taste its immense sweetness.\(^{61}\)

“The eyes of all look hopefully to you, Lord; you give them their food in due season.”\(^{62}\) The eyes of your children are upon you, Oh Father, and ask for this Bread of Life because by means of it one lives a heavenly life. As one of your children, Father, though completely unworthy, up in years, but very little in merit, famished and needy, I ask you for bread. And since I am made of two substances, one corporal, the other spiritual, I ask bread for both. For the body which is earthly, I ask the earthly bread; for the soul which is spirit, I ask for the heavenly Bread, the Bread of angels.\(^{63}\) Father full of compassion, remember that when little children ask their father for bread, especially if they are really hungry, they cry out with all their strength: “Bread, Bread!” and with this word, like so many arrows, they wound the heart of their fathers who, here below, search for bread to give to their children. Here I am famished, Oh our Father. Listen to this word that I address to you: Some bread, Father, some bread! Deign, then, holy Father, open the bowels of your mercy,\(^{64}\) and because you are able to, come to my aid and give your child the bread of your grace and the supersubstantial Bread of your Most Holy Sacrament.

Moreover, Oh Father, give me the mild and gentle bread of your word. Break it for us, cut it up into small pieces through your ministers who are your preachers. Grant that it may germinate in our souls like the good seed that falls on the good ground and yields a hundredfold.\(^{65}\)

Finally, Father, I now find myself under the table of your great Majesty where a multitude of angels and saints are eating, on my knees, humbled in your presence like the little dogs who are under the table of their masters on the look out for the crumbs that fall from it.\(^{66}\) Deign to honor me with that mildness, that gentleness which the blessed taste at your table so that in my prayer I may taste something of which your children taste in heaven. Grant, Oh Father, that my prayer not be arid and dry but gentle and mild, with the bread of your consolations and your visits.

---

**On the Words: “Forgive our debts ...” – Fifth Petition**

Father, we are poor and full of debt. You are rich and our creditor. The rich ought to forgive the poor their debt. Forgive, then, our sins. Father, be merciful to your child who has
contracted so many debts by committing sins. Who is the Father that would not forgive his son who has fallen into great poverty of no matter what debt if he humbly asks him to? And who, then, Oh holy Father, is the son poorer or more burden with debt than me? Here I am like another Publican humbly praying: Forgive me the debt of so many sins by which I have offended you: “Oh God, whose nature it is be always merciful and to pardon,” have mercy on this poor child and forgive me all my debts. I realize, Oh Father, that my debts are numerous (ten thousand talents) because I have sinned against your whole law, but the riches of you mercy infinitely surpasses them. Remember, Oh Father, that your mercy is everlasting, and just as you have been merciful to so many of your servants, deign to forgive me all my sins.

I am mindful, Oh Father, of the compassion you showed to your ancient people whose sins you forgave so many times. I recall, Oh Father, that you remembered your servant David and that you forgave his grave sin. I remember, Oh Father, that your well-beloved Son, while on this earth, looked with mercy on his Apostle when he denied him and Mary Magdalene when she repented, and finally that he received all repentant sinners and ate with them. You have not changed; you were once a very merciful God; you are not less so now; you are the same God as before. Your mercy is not exhausted since it is infinite. It has not stopped because there are not stopping points and that, furthermore, it would close heaven. It has not ceased because, just as a fire continues to burn as long as it has consumable material, so is your mercy, as long as there are sins to burn and debts to forgive. “His mercy extends from age to age on those who fear him,” the canticle of the Most Holy Mother of your blessed Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who knows full well that it is immense. You have set limits to the extent of the sea, but you have not set any limits to your mercy so that it always goes in search of sinners overburden with debts to pardon them. Your mercy, Oh Father, goes out to encounter the greatest sinner of them all, the one who has more debts than any other child of Adam. Wipe out my sins; forgive me the great sum of my debts and always press on to find other debtors. “Deep calls unto deep.”

The miserable son calls out to the Father of mercies. May deep absorb another deep; may the depth of my infinite miseries be absorbed by the depth of your mercy.

I know, Oh Father, that all my sins, as numerous as they are, and those of the whole world are in your presence like piece of straw in the presence of a great fire. Finally, I beg you, holy Father, through your infinite mercy, through the power of that Passion which your Son so lovingly endured on the tree of the Cross and through the merits and intercession of the Blessed Virgin and of all the elect since the beginning of the world, to deign to forgive our sins.

“As we forgive those who are in debt to us.” I beg you also, Oh Father, to give me the sufficient strength and your grace so that I may completely forgive those who have offended me, and if you find in my heart some imperfection inimical to those who have offended me, grant, Father, that you may make it disappear by the fire of you charity. Burn it, grant that not a trace or a hint of bitterness remain in my heart so that I may say in all truth: “Forgive our offenses as we forgive those who have offended us.”
“And lead us not into temptation”

We are, Oh Father, in a place of temptation. Our adversary, the devil prowls among us looking for someone to devour. Give me the wherewithal, help me, Oh Father. My enemies are as numerous as the sands of the sea and experienced in combat. My soul is weak, languishing, powerless if you do not come to my aid. “Take hold of arms and shield: and rise up to help me. Bring out the sword, and bar the way against those that persecute me: say to my soul: ‘I am your salvation.’” Oh Lord, how much this poor soul needs our grace, your help, your assistance so as not to succumb to temptations. A small sheep is doomed in the midst of wolves if the shepherd does not save it. And so, Father, this soul in the midst of so many wolves that assail it in the world where it is solicited by thousands occasions of sin, with the flesh that continually wars against it, what will it be able to do without your help?

Holy Father, I will lift up “my eyes to heaven whence comes my help. My help comes from the Lord who made heaven and earth.” Oh Father of mercies and God of all consolation, come to my aid. Lord, make haste to help me. Holy Father, when will you give me justice against those who persecute me? Give me justice against those who seek the death of my soul; give me, however, your help so that I will not falter and offend you. I do not ask that you deliver me from temptations, Oh Father, but I ask you for the grace and the strength to resist and fight against them energetically. Out of love for you, I would gladly experience tribulations and distress in this world, provided that amidst tribulations my soul does not falter. Grant, Lord, that just as gold in the furnace becomes more beautiful so may my soul thrown into the furnace of tribulations become purer, more luminous and resplendent. May it not be like straw which, for lack of strength, allows itself to be burned and consumed by the fire. May I rather be like your saints who, in this world, thrown into the flames and the fire, remain strong and firm, and afterwards, like precious stones, come out of it with more splendor and light. Do not, then, lead us into temptation, Oh Father, so that we may not offend such majesty.

“But deliver us from evil”

Holy Father, I am aware of the mercy you have shown me for you have preserved me from many evils which I deserved because of my sins. As many times as I sinned, so was I deserving of the evil of eternal damnation as many times. How numerous, Father, are they who have incurred this evil! They have sinned less frequently than I, and how many of them, since they were not given like me the opportunity to repent, died unrepentant and perished. I beg you, Oh Father, from now on to deliver me from every sin so that I may escape the punishment of hell. Grant, Lord, that I no longer offend you, to have offended you in the past is more than enough. May my sins, Lord, not multiply like the sands of the sea and the stars of the sky; may hell not swallow me up nor the pit shut her mouth upon me.

You have delivered me, Oh Father, from the many evils of this world. How many blind, deaf, dumb and paralyzed people there are among the children of Adam! And you, Lord, have preserved me from all of these evils, although I am like them a child of Adam and more of a sinner than all of them. Nonetheless, that would be of little or no use, if you were not to deliver
me from the evil of sin. Hence, I ask to be delivered from sin, from the lapses and punishment due to sin. “But deliver us from evil.”

You have delivered me, Oh Father, from the darkness and the blindness that affect the Turks, the Moors, the Jews, the Gentiles and the pagans by causing me to be born in the bosom of holy Church. Deliver me, Oh Father, from the darkness and the blindness of sin so that I may rejoice in the blood and the merits of your blessed Son, Jesus Christ my Lord and that I be counted among your children, who are the “sons of light” in your kingdom.

Father, I remember that the good woman of Tekoa, who, going to see King David, asked him to pardon Absalom his son. The good King, knowing that the request had been engineered by his captain Joab, his well-beloved and favorite, immediately granted the favor she requested. Father, your holy and well-beloved Son Jesus Christ ordained me to make this request and sent me to you so that you may grant me the graces that are a very part of it. Do not, Oh Father, look upon me, the greatest of all sinners, but look upon your very holy and blessed Son, the greatest of all the saints, indeed the Sanctifier of them all. By the love you bear him, grant me what he ordained me to request.

I also recall, Father, that the sons of Jacob were not allowed to appear a second time in the presence of Joseph if they did not bring with them their youngest brother Benjamin. Likewise, we are not permitted to appear in your presence without our oldest brother, who is your only Son Jesus Christ. I come now, Oh Father, before you with your holy Son, my Lord Jesus Christ. I present him to you and humbly pray that by his merits and this most holy death and Passion, that you deign to grant me what he himself in this prayer and this request which are his ordained me to ask you so that my soul may be completely yours and praise and bless you for ever and ever. Amen.

---

1 In 1880 a Canon from Cremona went to Annecy. He brought a manuscript with him and wanted to know whether it was written by St. Francis de Sales. The answer was easy: the old nuns from the first monastery of the Visitation responded that the handwriting was not the saint's. Further study was needed to determine if the content was his.

The Italian manuscript had this title: "Pater Noster composto et scritto di propria mano da S. Francesco di Sales, rimessa già à una dama, sua figlia spirituale, e passato al P. Generale de' Domenicanin, e da esso donato a Donna Anna Galliana de Cara, sua Nipote" (The Our Father Composed and Written by St. Francis de Sales, Given First to a Woman, His Spiritual Daughter, Then Passed On to the Father General of the Dominicans and Given by Him to Anna Galliana de Cara, His Niece).

A good deal of research was done recently either to find the original manuscript or to discover the one for whom it was originally intended, as well as the General of the Dominicans and his niece. All of these attempts were fruitless. Inquiries were made of the Bishop of Cremona. He responded that nothing was found in the city but that "in the Chancery Office there is an empty envelope on which is written 'Pater Noster commenté par Saint Francis de Sales'" So the manuscript has disappeared.

In the absence of any documents, we are reduced to conjectures. Saint Francis de Sales must have written this paraphrase in French. The Italian and the writing are not his, but the translation certainly dates from the 17th century....

Would the person for whom it was written be Dona Ginevra Scaglia, daughter of the ambassador of the Duke of Savoy in France and sister of the Duke's ambassador to Rome, to whom the saint had written several letters and who was honored to be as his spiritual daughter? The saint saw her only at the time of his last trip to Piedmont in 1622, and, at that time she had already taken the veil in Chieri, as a Dominican nun with the name of Sr. Marie-Chretienne.... The fact that the original manuscript was later transmitted to the General of the Order of Preachers...
would favor this view. Nevertheless, the doubt still remains and this is all that can be said. (Oeuvres completes, 26, 377).

2 Jas. 1:17.
3 Gen. 18: 27.
4 St. Francis of Assisi, Speculum vitae.
5 Rev. 17:14, 19:16.
6 Jn. 3:1.
7 Ps. 18: 2,3.
8 See Ps. 103: 3; Mt. 4:23.
9 Ps. 6:3.
10 See Hab 3:16.
11 Ps. 51:10.
12 See Hb 3:18.
13 See Ps. 20:8.
14 See Lk. 1:47.
15 Lk. 15: 18, 19, 21.
16 Some words are missing here in the manuscript.
17 See Lk. 15: 20, 22, 23.
18 See Rom. 9:28 of the Latin Vulgate to better understand what the saint is referencing here. It reads: “verbum enim consummans et brevians in aequitate quia verbum breviatum faciet Dominus super terram. (For he shall finish his word and cut it short in justice: because a short word shall the Lord make upon the earth).
19 See Job 10:8.
20 Ps. 138:8.
21 See 1Pet. 1:19.
22 See Vulgate Ps. 83:7.
23 See Is. 6:3.
24 See Jn. 1:9.
26 See St. Francis of Assisi, Speculum vitae.
29 See Lam. 1:13
30 See Cant. 8:7.
31 See Col. 3:1, 2.
32 See Mt. 6:20, 21.
33 Philip. 3:20.
34 Te Deum.
35 Gen. 1:26,27.
36 Ep. 3:18.
37 Is. 6:3, Apoc. 4:8.
38 See Rom. 1:25.
39 Ps. 141:8 of the Psaltery of St. Jerome, a popular medieval penitential work that often appeared in Books of the Hours. It is composed of verses from the psalms that seek to stir one to repentance and seek God's forgiveness. (http://preces-latinae.org/thesaurus/Confessio/PsalterJerome.html).
40 Ps. 50 (51):20.
41 Salve Regina.
42 Ps. 50(51):6.
43 Ps. 84:10.
44 Ps. 42:3.
45 Apoc. 21:18-20.
46 Apoc. 7:9; 14:4.
47 Is. 6:3; Apoc.4:8.
48 Ps. 84:2.
49 Mt. 26:42; Lk. 22:42.
50 Mk. 14:36.
51 Mt. 6:9,10.
52 Lev. 11:14; 1Pet. 1:16.
53 1Thess. 4:3.
54 St. Cyprian, “On the Our Father,” 15. What appears in this manuscript shows some discrepancies with the following English translation of the same passage: “15. Now that is the will of God which Christ both did and taught. Humility in conversation; steadfastness in faith; modesty in words; justice in deeds; mercifulness in works; discipline in morals; to be unable to do a wrong, and to be able to bear a wrong when done; to keep peace with the brethren; to love God with all one's heart; to love Him in that He is a Father; to fear Him in that He is God.” http://www.mb-soft.com/believe/txu/cyprian5.htm#4.
55 See Lk. 10:27; Mk 12:30.
56 See Augustine's Confessions, Bk. 10, ch. 29.
57 See Lev. 6:6.
58 The reference in the original is imprecise citing merely a sermon of St. Bernard of Clairvaux
59 Vulgate Ps. 83:7.
60 Vulgate 3 Kings 19:8.
61 Wis. 16:20.
62 Ps. 145:15.
63 See Ps. 78:25.
64 See Lk. 1:78.
65 Mt. 13:8; Lk. 8:8.
66 See Mt. 15:27.
67 See Litany of the Saints.
68 2 Sam. 12:13.
69 See Lk. 22:55-61.
70 See Lk. 7:37-50.
71 See Lk. 15: 1-2.
72 Lk. 1:50.
73 Ps. 42:8.
74 The play on words of the original is missed in translation. The original reads: “filius miseriae invocat [Patrem misercordiarum].”
75 See 1 Pet. 5:8.
76 See Vulgate: Ps. 34:2-3.
77 Vulgate, Ps. 70:1-2.
78 See 2 Cor. 1:3; Ps. 70:2.
79 Ps. 118:84.
80 See Vulgate Ps. 68:16.
81 Lk. 16:8.
82 See 2 Sam. 14:1-22.