



## A message to the faithful of the archdiocese from Archbishop Michael Jackels

---

**29 July 2019, 1:04 PM**

### **Archbishop addresses confusion around Italian translation of Our Father**

There has been discussion and some confusion about the Pope's intention to change the translation of "lead us not into temptation" from the Our Father.

Below please find an article from the June 2019 newsletter of the USCCB Committee on Divine Worship, commenting on this topic:

The Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments recently confirmed the Italian translation of the *Missale Romanum, editio typica tertia* for use in Italy and other Italian-speaking dioceses and communities that use the *Messale Romano*. This translation included a revision of the sixth petition of the Lord's Prayer, which in Italian now reads *e non abbandonarci alla tentazione* ("and do not abandon us to temptation"). Unfortunately, the way that this change was reported in the media – indicating that the pope himself had changed the text of the Our Father – has caused considerable confusion.

Canon law grants to Conferences of Bishops the authority to prepare vernacular translations of liturgical books for their territory. This authority was strengthened by Pope Francis' 2017 *motu proprio Magnum principium*, which modified canon 838 §2 to stipulate that translations approved by episcopal conferences require only the *confirmatio* (rather than the *recognitio*) of the Holy See. The Lord's Prayer, since it is part of the Mass, is a liturgical text, and so its translation falls within the authority given to the Conference of Bishops. When the new English translation of the *Missale Romanum, editio typica tertia* was prepared, the U.S. Bishops chose to retain the traditional translation of the Lord's Prayer. Moreover, at the June 2019 USCCB plenary meeting, a bishop stated that his understanding was that the recent news concerning the Lord's Prayer only concerned the Italian version of the text, and asked Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory, Committee Chairman, whether this understanding was correct. Archbishop Gregory replied that this was his understanding as well. None of the other bishops who were present added to the discussion, either to ask questions or to suggest that the matter be considered.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC) offers a helpful interpretation of this much-discussed petition. It acknowledges the challenge posed by this phrase: "It is difficult to translate the Greek verb used by a single English word: the Greek means both 'do not allow us to enter into temptation' and 'do not let us yield to temptation'" (no. 2846). The *Catechism* also explains the different dimensions of this petition. "When we say 'lead us not into temptation' we are asking God not to allow us to take the path that

leads to sin. This petition implores the Spirit of discernment and strength; it requests the grace of vigilance and final perseverance" (CCC, no. 2863).

Pope Francis offered a catechesis on this petition during one of his General Audiences, emphasizing that, no matter how one translates the prayer, "we have to exclude the possibility that God is the protagonist of the temptations that loom over mankind's journey. As if God himself were lurking with hidden pitfalls and snares for his children. One such interpretation contrasts first and foremost with the text itself, and is far from the image of God that Jesus revealed to us." The Holy Father concluded, "Let us not forget: the 'Our Father' begins with 'Father.' And a father does not lay snares for his children" (May 1, 2019).

So, no worries, the Pope has not and does not intend to change the translation of the Our Father.

Michael Jackels

Archbishop of Dubuque