

*Series on the Mass, Part 57: The Pater Noster, Part 8*

April 11, 2021

“Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.”

God, says St. John Chrysostom, makes our eternal recompense depend upon ourselves. As you will have judged, God will judge you. As you will have forgiven, God will forgive you. What a powerful thought this is concerning the next petition of the Our Father where we ask that our debts be forgiven as we have forgiven.

The person who truly prays this petition acknowledges that he is a sinner and should try to feel sorrow and compunction for the sins committed. With such a disposition, the sinner is disposed to receive pardon and God is willing to grant it. We need to have this assurance of God’s mercy, lest perhaps we easily give into discouragement and despair.

What if we want to forgive someone but cannot seem to forget the injury? Are we in disobedience of this command? We must understand that there are contradictory desires of the flesh and of the spirit; the former is prone to revenge, the latter ready to pardon. There can be, therefore, a continual struggle and conflict that goes on inside us because of these two elements. The thing to remember here is that, although the appetites of corrupt nature are ever opposing and rebelling against reason, we are not on this account to be uneasy regarding salvation, provided that the spirit perseveres in the duty and disposition of forgiving injuries and of loving our neighbor.

Sincerely in Christ,

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