

The Way of Perfection

Part 5: Our Father

Christ, Master & Guide in Prayer

Chapter 27 (summary)

Saint Teresa of Avila

Chapter 27 Deals with the great love our Lord showed us in the first words of the Our Father and how important it is for those who truly want to be children of God to pay no attention whatsoever to lineage.

Our Father who art in Heaven ... this **favor** would not be so great, Lord, if it came at the end of the prayer. But at the **beginning**, you fill our hands and give a **reward** so large that it would easily fill the **intellect** and thus occupy the **will** that one would be unable to speak a word.

Oh, daughters, how readily should **perfect contemplation** come at this point! It would be right for the soul to **enter within** itself to better **rise above** itself for the Son might make it understand the **nature** of the place where the **Father dwells**, which is in the heavens. Let us **go forth** from the earth ... Once the greatness of a favor like this is understood, there is no reason for us to want to remain on **earth**.

2. How is it that You **give** so much in the first words? Since You **humble** Yourself in the extreme by **joining** with us in **prayer** and making Yourself the **Brother** of **creatures** ... How is it that you give us **all** that can be given in the name of Your Father? You desire that He consider us His **children** ...

You oblige Him to be **true** to Your word, so He must **bear** with us no matter the offenses. If we **return** to Him like the Prodigal Son, He has to **pardon** us, **console** us in our trials and **sustain** us. He must be better than all fathers in the world as all in Him must be faultless. And He must make us heirs with You.

3. With the **love** you have for us Lord and Your **humility**, nothing will stop You ... You are on earth and clothed with it. Since You have our nature, it seems You have some reason to look to our gain. But, Your Father is in heaven ... and it is right that You look to His honor since You have vowed to undergo **disgrace** for us. Leave Your Father **free**.

Don't oblige Him to do so much for the wretched creature who will not thank Him properly.

4. You have clearly shown that You are one with Him and Your will is His! ...

You made use of roundabout ways, hiding from the devil that You are the **Son of God**. The great desire You have for our **good**, You granted us so very great a **favor** ...

You have spoken as a favored Son ... You are powerful enough that what You say on **earth** will be done in **heaven**. May You be blessed forever ...

5. Don't you think, daughters, that this is a good Master? He begins by granting us this great **favor** to cause us to love what He is teaching us.

Is it then right for us to pray this prayer without thinking of what we are saying out of fear that so much love would break our hearts?

What son would not try to learn who his father was if he had one as good as ours? If God weren't all this, would we want to be known as His children? For in the world if the father is of a lower rank than his son, the son has no desire to recognize him.

God forbid that such a thing ever happen in this **house**! It would turn the place into **hell**. Let the sister of the highest birth speak the least of her father. We must all be **equals**.

6. O college of Christ, in which the Lord was pleased that Saint Peter, a **fisherman**, had more **authority** than Saint Bartholomew, **son** of a **king**!

His Majesty knew what a **fuss** would be made by men about who was fashioned from the **finer clay**.

Deliver us, Sisters, from such troubles. If this is going on among you, apply the **remedy** immediately! Let the Sister concerned fear herself to be a **Judas**! Do what you can to get rid of such a **bad companion**. If you cannot, give her **penances** heavier than for anything else until she realizes that she doesn't even deserve to be the **basest clay**.

You have a good Father, given you by the good Jesus! **Let no other be known or referred to here**! Strive, daughters, to deserve to find comfort in Him and to throw yourselves into His arms. If you are good children, He will never send you away. Who

would not do anything to avoid losing such a Father?

What cause there is for **comfort** here. I will now allow you to think about this. However much your thoughts may wander between the Father and the Son, there needs to be the **Holy Spirit**. May He enkindle your will and bind you to Himself with fervent love, as the great advantage you gain will not suffice to do so.

Amen