

The Way of Perfection

Part 5: Our Father

“Thy Will be done” (Rapture)

Chapter 32 (summary)

Saint Teresa of Avila

Chapter 32 Discusses the words of the Our Father, *Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven*; the great deal a person does when he says them with full determination; and how well the Lord repays this. [So I counsel you to be attentive because the matter is very important.]

Our Good Master has asked, and taught us to ask for something so valuable that it includes all we can **desire** here below. In addition, He made us His **brothers**.

Let us now see what He desires we **give** His Father, how He **offers** this gift for us and what He **asks** of us. It is right that we **serve** Him in return for such a great favor.

O good Jesus! What You give on our behalf in return for what You requested for us is no small thing ...

2. “**Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.**” You did well, Lord, to make this petition ... When Your Father does what You ask Him by giving us His kingdom here on earth ... Once the **earth has become heaven**, the possibility is there for Your **will** to be **done in me** ... It is indeed a great thing, You offer us!

3. I am amused by persons who don’t **dare** ask for **trials** from the Lord ... I am not speaking of those who out of **humility** don’t ask for fear of not being **capable to suffer** them; although surely He who gives the **love** to ask for trials ... will give the **capacity** to suffer them.

I would like to question those who fear to ask for **trials**, lest these be given them **at once**. Do they say the words to be like everyone else with **no desire** that **His will be done**?

Consider, Sisters, that Jesus acts as our **ambassador** here. He **intervened between** us and His Father. It would not be right for us to fail to do what He has offered for us. If we don’t want to do it we shouldn’t say these words.

4. Let me put it another way, daughters, His will **must be done** whether we like it or not,

and it **will be done** in heaven and on earth.

So, make a virtue of necessity!

O Lord, what a great **comfort** that you didn’t want the **fulfillment** of Your will to **depend** on me! ... If it were up to me as to whether or not Your will were done, I’d be in a fine state! I freely give my will to You though I am not completely free of **self-interest** because I have experienced the **gain** that comes from freely **abandoning my will** to Yours ... What a **great loss** when we do not carry out what we offer to the Lord in the Our Father!

5. Before I tell you what is **gained**, I want to explain the great **deal** you **offer** so that later you won’t **take back** what you gave ...

Abandoning your will to another’s will seems **easy**, until we realize it is the **hardest** thing one can do if it is done as it should be done ... The Lord knows what each one can suffer. He does not delay in doing His will in anyone He sees has the strength.

6. I want to remind you what **His will** is. Don’t fear that it means He will give you riches, delights, honors or other **earthly things**. His **love** for you is not that small. He **esteems** highly what you give Him. He wants to repay you well for He gives you **His kingdom** while you are **alive**.

Do you want to know how He **answers** those who sincerely say these words? Well, ask His glorious Son who said them while praying in the Garden. They were said with such determination and willingness, that the **Father’s will** was **fully done** in Him through the trials, sorrows, injuries, and persecutions He suffered until His life ended by **death on a cross**.

7. See what He gave to the one He **loved** most. By that, we **understand** His will. For these are His gifts to the world.

He gives according to the **love** He has for each one. The more He loves, the more He gives these **gifts**. He also gives according to the **courage** and **love** He sees in each. He sees that whoever loves Him much will be able to **suffer** much for Him. It seems the measure for being able to bear a large or small **cross** is **love**.

So, Sisters, if you love Him, strive that what you say to the Lord are not just polite words. Strive to **suffer** what the Lord would have you suffer. For otherwise, when you give your

will, it would be like showing a jewel to another, making a gesture to give it away, asking that he take it and then taking it back when he extends his hand to do so.

8. This is no way to mock Him ... so let's give Him the **jewel** once and for all ... The truth is that He **rewards** us beforehand so that we might give it to Him ...

My good Jesus know us! He doesn't initially say that we should give our will to Him but first reveals that we will be **well paid** for this little service. He wants us to **benefit** a great deal from giving our will and so begins to reward us, even in this life.

Those in the world will be doing enough if they only have the **determination** to do His **will** ... At times though we not only commit to giving Him the jewel but place it in His hand, only to take it back again.

9. All I have advised in this book is about the **complete gift** of ourselves to our Creator, the **surrender** of our wills to His, and the **detachment** from creatures. This is very important.

I will now explain why our Master teaches us to say "*Thy will be done.*" We **gain** much by rendering this **service** to His eternal Father.

We are **preparing** to quickly reach the end of our journey when we will drink the **living water** from the fount.

Unless we give our **wills** completely to the Lord, so that in all pertaining to us, He might do what conforms with His will, we will never be allowed to drink from this fount. Drinking from the fount is **perfect contemplation**.

10. In **contemplation**, we do nothing ourselves ... except to say *Thy will be done*: Your **will**, Lord, be done in me in every way that You want.

If you want it to be done with **trials**, strengthen me and let them come; if with **persecution, illnesses, dishonors**, and a **lack of life's necessities**, here I am; I will not turn away ...

Grant me the **favor of Your kingdom** that I may do Your **will**, since Jesus asked for this for me, and use me as Your own **possession**, in conformity with Your **will**.

11. O Sisters, what strength lies in this **gift**! When accompanied by **determination**, the Almighty is drawn to become **one** with our **lowliness**. He **transforms** us into Himself,

effecting a **union** of the Creator with the creature. Are you not **well paid** and have a good **Master**? ...

12. The more our **deeds** show that these are not merely **polite words**, the more the Lord **brings us** to Himself and **raises the soul** from itself and earthly things to enable it to receive great favors. He never finishes repaying this service in the present life. He esteems it so highly.

Not content with having made this **soul one with Himself**, He begins to find His delight in it. He reveals His **secrets**. He also rejoices that it knows what it has **gained** and something of what He will give it. He makes it lose these exterior senses so that nothing will occupy it. This is **rapture**.

He begins to **commune** with the soul in so **intimate a friendship** that He not only gives it back its own will, but gives it His. For in so great a friendship the Lord takes joy in putting the **soul in command**. He does what it asks since it does His will.

13. The poor soul cannot **do** what it desires ... nor can it **give** anything save what is given. This is its **greatest wealth**: the more it serves, the more indebted it remains.

It often grows **weary** seeing itself subject to so many difficulties, impediments, and fetters, which result from dwelling in the **prison** of this body.

It would want to **repay** something of what it owes. To grow weary is **foolish**... and what can be repaid if all we have has been **received**?

All we can do ... is to give our will, and give it completely. Everything else **encumbers** and does **harm** to the soul.

Only **humility** can do something ... acquired by a **clear perception** that understands in a **moment** – what couldn't have been grasped in a long time by the imagination -- the **truth** about what a **trifle** we are and how very **great** God is.

14. I give you one **counsel**: reaching this stage by your own efforts is beyond your power. If you strive to reach it, your devotion will grow **cold**. But with **simplicity** and **humility**, which will achieve everything, say: *Fiat Voluntas Tua* (Let your will be done). Amen