



SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE BOLLETTINO

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General Audience

This morning's General Audience took place at in Saint Peter's Square. The Pope dedicated today's catechesis to the Easter Triduum, focusing on the theme "Easter: the Lord's Prayer in times of trial" (Bible passage: from the Gospel according to Mark, 14: 32-36a).

After summarising his catechesis in several languages, the Holy Father addressed special greetings to the groups of faithful present, from all over the world. The General Audience concluded with the recitation of the *Pater Noster* and the Apostolic Blessing.

Catechesis of the Holy Father

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning!

In these weeks we are reflecting on the Lord's Prayer. Now, on the eve of the Easter Triduum, let us look at some words with which Jesus, during the Passion, prayed to the Father.

The first invocation occurs after the Last Supper, when the Lord, "looked toward heaven and prayed: 'Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son", and then, "glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began" (*Jn 17: 1-5*). Jesus asks for *glory*, a request that seems paradoxical when the Passion is just around the corner. What glory does He mean? Glory in the Bible indicates the revelation of God, it is the distinctive sign of His saving presence among mankind. Now, Jesus is He Who manifests in a definitive way God's presence and salvation. And He does so in the Pasch: raised up on the cross, He is *glorified* (cf. *Jn 12: 23-33*). There, God finally reveals His glory: He removes the final veil and astonishes us like never before. Indeed, we discover that the glory of God is *all love*: pure love, mad and unthinkable, beyond any limit and measure.

Brothers and sisters, let us make Jesus' prayer our own: let us ask the Father to remove the veils from our eyes so that in these days, looking to the Crucified, we may accept that God is love. How often do we imagine Him as

master and not as Father, how often do we think of Him as a severe judge rather than a merciful Saviour! But God at Easter removes the distances, showing Himself in the humility of a love that demands our love. So we render glory to Him when we live all that we do with love, when we do every thing with the heart, as if it were for Him (cf. *Cor* 3: 17). The true glory is the glory of love, because it is the only one that gives life to the world. Certainly, this glory is the opposite of worldly glory, which arrives when one is admired, one is praised, one is acclaimed: when *I* am at the centre of attention. The glory of God, instead, is paradoxical: no applause, no audiences. At the centre there is not *I*, but the other: indeed at Easter we see that the Father glorifies the Son while the Son glorifies the Father. No-one glorifies Himself. We can ask ourselves, today: "Which is the glory for which we live? Mine or that of God? I wish only to receive from others or also to give to others?"

After the Last Supper Jesus enters the garden of Gethsemane; and also here He prays to the Father. While the disciples are unable to stay awake and Judas is arriving with the soldiers, Jesus begins to feel "fear and anguish". He feels all the anguish for what awaits Him: betrayal, disdain, suffering, failure. He is "sad", and there, in the abyss, in that desolation, He addresses the tenderest and sweetest word to the Father. "Abba", that is, "papa" (cf. *Mk* 14: 33-36). In trial, Jesus teaches us to embrace the Father, because in prayer to Him there is the strength to go ahead in pain. In hardship prayer is relief, trust, comfort. Abandoned by all and in inner desolation, Jesus is not alone, He is with the Father. We, instead, in our Gethsemanes often choose to remain alone instead of saying "Father" and trusting ourselves to Him, like Jesus, entrusting ourselves to His will, which is our true good. But when in time of trial we remain closed up in ourselves, we dig a tunnel within, a painful inward journey that goes in one direction: ever deeper within ourselves. The greatest problem is not the pain, but how it is faced. Solitude does not offer a way out; prayer yes, because it is a relationship, it is entrustment. Jesus entrusts everything and entrusts all of Himself to the Father, taking to Him what He feels, leaning on Him in His struggle. When we enter our Gethsemanes – each one of us has his own Gethsemane or has had them, or will have them – let us remember this: when we enter, when we will enter into our Gethsemanes, let us remember to pray like this: "Father".

Finally, Jesus addresses to the Father a third prayer *for us*: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (*Lk* 23: 34). Jesus prays for those who were evil towards Him, for his killers. The Gospel specifies that this prayer happens at the moment of crucifixion. It was probably at the moment of the most acute pain, when the nails were hammered into Jesus' wrists and feet. Here, at the peak of pain, we reach the climax of love: there comes *forgiveness*, that is, the gift of the highest power, that breaks the circle of evil.

Praying the Lord's Prayer in these days, we can ask for one of these graces: to live our days for the glory of God, that is, to live with love; to know how to entrust ourselves to the Father in moments of trial and to say "papa" to the Father, and to find, in the encounter with the Father, forgiveness and the courage to forgive. These both go together. The Father forgives us, but He gives us the courage to be able to forgive.

At the end of his catechesis, addressing English-speaking pilgrims, "especially those from the Netherlands, Australia, the Philippines, Canada and the United States of America", and with a special greeting to "the delegation from the NATO Defense College", the Pope said, "May this Holy Week lead us to celebrate the resurrection of the Lord Jesus with hearts purified and renewed by the grace of the Holy Spirit. God bless you all!"

He also mentioned, in Italian, the participants in the UNIV 2019 Meeting: "Dear young people who experience these days of formation, following the example of Saint Josemaría, base your lives increasingly on the values of faith, so that, by changing yourselves following the model of Christ, you may transform the world that surrounds you".
