



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS **GENERAL AUDIENCE** St Peter's Square

Wednesday, 17 April 2019 [\[Multimedia\]](#)

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning!

In these past weeks we have been reflecting on the “Lord’s Prayer”. Now on the eve of the Paschal Triduum, let us pause on some of the words with which Jesus prayed to the Father during his Passion.

The first invocation occurs after the Last Supper when the Lord “lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, ‘Father, the hour has come; glorify thy Son’” — and then — “glorify thou me in thy own presence with the glory which I had with thee before the world was made” (Jn 17:1-5). Jesus asks for *glory*, a request which seems a paradox as his Passion is imminent. What glory is he referring to? In the Bible, glory refers to God’s self-revelation. It is the distinctive sign of his saving presence among mankind. Now, Jesus is the One who definitively manifests God’s presence and salvation. And he does this at Easter: lifted up on the Cross, he is *glorified* (cf. Jn 12:23-33). There, God finally reveals his glory: he removes the last veil and astonishes us as never before. Indeed, we discover that the Glory of God is *entirely love*: pure, unbridled and inconceivable love, beyond every limit and measure.

Brothers and sisters, let us make Jesus’ prayer our own: let us ask the Father to remove the veil from our eyes, so that in looking at the Crucifix over these days, we may understand that God is love. How often do we imagine him as master and not as Father; how often do we think of him as an austere judge rather than a merciful Saviour! But at Easter, God voids the distances, revealing himself in the humility of a love that seeks our love. Thus, we give him glory when we live whatever we do with love, when we do everything from our heart, as if for him (Col 3:17).

True glory is the glory of love because it is the only kind that gives life to the world. This glory is certainly the opposite of worldly glory, which comes from being admired, praised, acclaimed: when the ‘I’ is at the centre of attention. The Glory of God, on the other hand, is paradoxical: no applause, no *audience*. At the centre is not the ‘I’, but rather the other. Indeed, at Easter we see

that the Father glorifies the Son as the Son glorifies the Father. No one glorifies him- or herself. We can ask ourselves today: “which glory do I live for? Mine or God’s? Do I wish only to receive from others or also to give to others?”.

After the Last Supper, Jesus enters the Garden of *Gethsemane* and here too, he *prays to the Father*. While the disciples are unable to stay awake and Judas is approaching with the soldiers, Jesus begins to feel “distressed and troubled”. He feels all the anguish at what awaits him: betrayal, contempt, suffering, failure. He is “sorrowful” and there in the abyss, in that desolation, he addresses the Father with the most tender and gentle word: “*Abba*”, that is, Father (cf. Mk 14:33-36). Jesus teaches us to embrace the Father in our trials, because in praying to him, there is the strength to go forward in suffering. In times of struggle, prayer is relief, entrustment, comfort. Abandoned by all, in inner desolation, Jesus is not alone. He is with the Father. On the other hand, we in our own Gethsemanes, often choose to remain alone rather than say “*Father*” and entrust ourselves to him, as Jesus did, entrusting ourselves to his will which is our true good. But when we remain closed within ourselves during trials, we dig a tunnel inside ourselves, a painful, introverted path that has only one direction: ever deeper into ourselves. Solitude does not offer a way out, prayer does, because it is relationship, it is entrustment. Jesus entrusts everything and all of himself to the Father, bringing to him all that he feels, leaning on him in the struggle. When we enter our own Gethsemanes — we each have our own Gethsemanes or have had them or will have them — let us remember this: when we enter, when we will enter our Gethsemane, let us remember to pray in this way: “*Father*”.

Lastly, 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 cruel to him, for his killers. The Gospel points out that this prayer occurs at the moment of the Crucifixion. It was probably the moment of sharpest pain, when nails were being driven into his wrists and feet. Here, at the peak of suffering, comes the pinnacle of love: *forgiveness*, which is the gift to the Nth power that breaks the cycle of evil.

As we pray 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 times of trial and to utter “dad” to the Father and, in the encounter with the Father, to find forgiveness and the courage to forgive. Both things go together, The Father forgives us, but he gives us the courage to be able to forgive.

Special Greetings

I greet the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors taking part in today’s Audience, especially those from the Netherlands, Australia, the Philippines, Canada and the United States of America. My particular greeting goes to the Delegation from the nato Defense College. 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!

I offer a special thought to *young people, the elderly, the sick and newlyweds*. Tomorrow is the start of the Paschal Triduum, the fulcrum of the entire liturgical year. May the Easter of Jesus help you reflect on the love which God has shown he has for all of you. May the Lord give you the opportunity to fully participate in the mystery of his Death and Resurrection, may he help you to make his sentiments your own and to share them with your neighbour.