



The Holy See

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

Wednesday, 1st May 2019 [\[Multimedia\]](#)

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning!

Let us continue the catechesis on the “Lord’s Prayer”, now arriving at the penultimate invocation: “lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil” (Mt 6:13). Another version says: “let us not fall into temptation”. The “Our Father” begins in a calm manner: it makes us desire that God’s great plan be fulfilled in our midst. It then casts a gaze on life, and makes us ask ourselves what we need each day: “daily bread”. Then the prayer turns to our interpersonal relationships, often tarnished by selfishness: we request forgiveness and we commit to bestow it. But it is with this penultimate invocation that our dialogue with the heavenly Father gets, so to speak, to the heart of the drama: that is, to the matter of the contrast between our freedom and the pitfalls of evil.

As we know, the original Greek expression contained in the Gospels is difficult to render in an exact manner, and all the modern translations are somewhat weak. But we can agree unanimously on one element: however one understands the text, we have to exclude the possibility that God is the protagonist of the temptations that loom over mankind’s journey. As if God himself were lurking with hidden pitfalls and snares for his children. One such interpretation contrasts first and foremost with the text itself, and is far from the image of God that Jesus revealed to us. Let us not forget: the “Our Father” begins with “Father”. And a father does not lay snares for his children. Christians are not dealing with an envious God, in competition with mankind, or who enjoys putting them to the test. These are the images of many pagan divinities. We read in the Letter of the Apostle James: “let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am tempted by God’; for God cannot be tempted with evil and he himself tempts no one” (1:13). If anything, it is the contrary: the Father is not the creator of evil. He does not give a serpent to any child who asks for a fish (cf. Lk 11:11) — as Jesus teaches — and when evil appears in people’s lives, he fights beside them, so they may be freed from it. A God who always fights for us, not against us. He is the Father! It is in this sense that we pray the “Our Father”.

These two moments — trial and temptation — were mysteriously present in the life of Jesus

himself. In this experience the Son of God became wholly our brother, in a way that is almost scandalous. And it is precisely these Gospel passages that show us that the most difficult invocations of the “Our Father”, those that conclude the text, have already been granted: God does not leave us on our own, but in Jesus he manifests himself as the “God-with-us” up to utmost consequences. He is with us when he gives life; he is with us throughout life; he is with us in joy; he is with us in trials; he is with us in sorrow; he is with us in defeat when we sin. But he is always with us, because he is Father and cannot abandon us.

If we are tempted to commit evil, by denying our fraternity with others and desiring absolute power over everything and everyone, Jesus has already fought this temptation for us: the first pages of the Gospels attest to it. Right after receiving Baptism from John, amid the multitude of sinners, Jesus withdraws into the desert and is tempted by Satan. Thus begins Jesus’ public life, with the temptation that comes from Satan. Satan was present. Many people say: “But why speak of the devil, which is antiquated? The devil does not exist”. But look at what the Gospel teaches you: Jesus is confronted by the devil; he was tempted by Satan. But Jesus rejects every temptation and emerges victorious. The Gospel of Matthew has an interesting note that concludes the duel between Jesus and the Enemy: “Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and ministered to him” (4:11).

But even at the time of supreme trial God does not leave us on our own. When Jesus withdraws to pray in Gethsemane, his heart is overwhelmed by unspeakable anguish — as he says to the disciples — and he experiences loneliness and abandonment. Alone, with the responsibility of the sins of the world upon his shoulders; alone, with unspeakable anguish. The trial is so excruciating that something unexpected happens. Jesus never begs for love for himself, but that night he feels his soul sorrowful, even to death, and so he asks his friends for closeness: “remain here, and watch with me” (Mt 26:38). As we know, the disciples, weighed down by a lethargy wrought by fear, fall asleep. In a time of agony, God asks man not to abandon him, but instead, man falls asleep. But when man faces times of trial, God is watching. In the most awful moments of our life, in the most painful moments, in the most anguishing moments, God watches with us; God fights alongside us; he is always close to us. Why? Because he is Father. Thus, we began the prayer: “Our Father”. And a father does not abandon his children. That night of Jesus’ suffering and struggle is the ultimate seal of the Incarnation: God descends to find us in our abyss and in the anguish that pervades our history.

He is our comfort at the time of trial: knowing that since Jesus crossed it, that valley is no longer desolate but is blessed by the presence of the Son of God. He will never abandon us!

Deliver us, thus, Oh God, from the time of trial and temptation. But when this time arrives for us, Our Father, show us that we are not alone. You are the Father. Show us that Christ has already taken upon himself the weight of that cross too. Show us that Jesus calls us to carry it with him, abandoning ourselves trustfully to your Fatherly love. Thank you.

Special Greetings

I greet the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors taking part in today's Audience, especially those from England, Scotland, Denmark, Finland, Cameroon, Japan, India, Indonesia, Canada and the United States of America. In the joy of the Risen Christ, I invoke upon you and your families the loving mercy of God our Father. May the Lord bless you all!

I address a particular thought to *young people*, to *the elderly*, to *the sick* and to *newlyweds*. Today we celebrate the Memorial of Saint Joseph the Worker, Patron of the universal Church. May the figure of Saint Joseph, the humble worker of Nazareth, direct us toward Christ, support the sacrifice of those who do good works in this world, and intercede for those who have lost their own work or cannot find it. Let us pray especially for those who are without work, which is a global tragedy in our times.