

*Monday Adoration: June 30, 2008*  
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## The Lord's Prayer (5)

Preamble: Our reflection on the *Lord's Prayer* shows it is a simple but rich prayer and a compendium of all prayers. Hence, when we pray the *Lord's Prayer*, we should do so with a renewed insight and devotion. Having asked for forgiveness, the last petition of the *Lord's Prayer* is on temptation and deliverance from the Evil One. Inasmuch as the grace of God is freely and abundantly given to us, the Evil One constantly lurks about to trip us from the path of grace and holiness. Hence, we should be aware of this when we pray and ask God to deliver us from the Evil One. We might be incapable of fighting the onslaught of Satan, hence we totally have to rely and cooperate with the grace of God.

Matthew 6:13: "And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the Evil One."

Oftentimes, we associate the word 'temptation' with sin and something bad. We see temptation as a seduction to sin. However, in the New Testament, temptation is used not so much to seduce someone into sin but to test a person's strength, loyalty, and ability for service. In the Old Testament, we read of how God tested Abraham when God demanded from Abraham to sacrifice his only son Isaac. Obviously, God did not want Abraham to kill Isaac but to test Abraham's fidelity, obedience and loyalty (Gen 22:1-18). God blessed and rewarded Abraham for his fidelity. God said to Abraham: "... because you have done this, because you have not refused me your beloved son, I will shower blessings on you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars of heaven and the grains of sand on the seashore" (Gen: 22:16-17).

### The Temptation of Jesus

All the synoptic Gospels narrated the temptation of Jesus (Mt 4:1-11; Mk 1:12-13; Lk 4:1-13). Immediately after His baptism, Jesus was led into the desert by the Spirit where He spent forty days and nights and after which was tempted by Satan. Mark's account of the temptation of Jesus was the shortest but the most poignant: "And at once **the Spirit drove** him into the desert and he remained there for forty days, and was put to the test by Satan" (Mk 1:12). In his temptation, Jesus triumphed over Satan. Jesus emerged victorious over Satan's tricks. If Jesus, our Lord and God, was tempted, then each of us will be tempted. In fact, we have been tempted already in our lives and will remain tempted in as much as we are still on this side of the divide. However, we must find solace from Jesus. We must cling to Jesus in our own times of trials and temptations so that we can also emerge victorious. That is what this petition of the *Lord's Prayer* is all about. Temptation is not primarily to seduce us to sin and to make us fall. Temptation can be a source of strength for our faith. Temptation is to make us stronger in our faith and increase our resolve to a better Christian life. According the William Barclay, "Temptation is not designed to make us sinners.... It is designed to make us good" (**The daily Bible Series. The Gospel of Matthew, Vol. 1, p. 225**).

The Sources of Temptation

We know that Satan is the main source of temptation. Satan leads us to sin. But we have the free will and freedom to say no to Satan as Jesus did. However, temptation comes to us from various sources. Temptation comes from outside: family members, friends, colleagues, situations, circumstances, etc. But temptation also comes from those we love and those close to us. On the other hand, temptation comes from within too, from inside a person without pressure from external forces. There is always a weak spot in each of us where one is prone to fall and sin. It could be pride, arrogance, wealth, love of money, weakness of the flesh, alcoholism, intelligence, anger, selfishness, self-centredness, etc.

If temptation is not necessarily meant to seduce us and make us sin, why then did our Lord teach us, “And lead us not into temptation?” Why should we pray not to be led into temptation? This prayer “lead us not into temptation,” means that God should not allow us to take the way that leads to sin. The best way to avoid sin is first to avoid the occasion of sin. Hence, our Lord asks us to pray for God to let us avoid those occasions that could lead us to sin. There is always a difference between being tempted and falling into temptation. To be tempted is not intrinsically a sin. However, falling into temptation leads to sin. It is our fervent hope and prayer that the Lord will not allow us to be tempted beyond our strength. Whatever temptation comes our way, God gives us a commensurate grace to overcome such temptation. Hence, we have to pray and rely on the grace of God to fight temptation. We cannot do it alone without the grace of God. Jesus Christ tells us, “Apart from me, you can do nothing” (Jn 15:5). As Paul poignantly puts it, “Everyone, no matter how firmly he thinks he is standing, must be careful he does not fall. None of the trials which have come upon you is more than a human being can stand. You can trust that God will not let you be put to the test beyond your strength, but with any trial will also provide a way out by enabling you to put up with it” (1 Cor 10:12-13).

Matthew 6:13: “Deliver us from the Evil One.”

The last petition of the *Lord's Prayer* refers to Satan. There is a reality of evil in the world. Satan is always around. He tempted Jesus and will not relent in tempting anyone, especially those who strive to be faithful to God. Hence, our Lord taught us to pray to be delivered from the hands of Satan. This does not mean we should be preoccupied with Satan and be afraid of Satan every minute as some Christians tend to. We should be aware of the presence of Satan but above all trust absolutely in the grace and power of Jesus Christ which clearly and definitely supersedes the power and influence of Satan. According to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: “When we ask to be delivered from the Evil One, we pray as well to be freed from all evils, present, past, and future, of which he is the author or instigator. In this final petition, the Church brings before the Father all the distress of the world. Along with the deliverance from all evils that overwhelm humanity, she implores the precious gift of peace and the grace of perseverance in expectation of Christ's return” (CCC #2854).

Conclusion: Brothers and sisters, as we come to the end of this series on the *Lord's Prayer*, I urge us to pray it as reverently and fervently as we can. Knowing full well its riches, power, and inspiration, we must have this prayer always in our hearts and on our lips. We should constantly meditate on it and practice it in our lives. May God give us the grace to be faithful to the *Lord's Prayer! Amen*. And so, let us pray, *Our Father!*