

Meditation on the Our Father by an Unknown Author

Translated by Patrick Colbourne O.F.M.Cap from the Italian text, introduction and notes by Costanzo Cargnoni O.F.M.Cap in *I Frati Cappuccini Documenti e Testimonianze del Primo Secolo*, III/ 1 pp. 1568-1588.

This is a very practical example of the responses and emotions that can develop through meditating on the Our Father. Above all we can see how an unknown sixteenth century Capuchin used and put the method of Francesco da Jesi into practice. This is particularly evident in the preparatory acts where the “circumstances” and mind-set of the prayer, which Ripanti stressed so strongly, are brought into play.

In addition to the reasons already noted concerning the Capuchin origin of the codex (cf. AO 94 [1978] 378), what supports the supposition that the text was written by a Capuchin is the terminology that is used repeatedly to identify the Capuchin Order and which was so characteristic of the Capuchins: “Congregazione”, “santa religione”, “povera religione”, “la nostra povera Congregazione” and “nostra Congregazione”.

The various theological and biblical arguments that foster affective prayer are quite typical as are also the continuous repetition of having to beware of not yielding to sentimentalism and of keeping the soul reaching beyond itself in pure love.

The matter for meditation follows the text of the Our Father word for word. When meditating on the fatherhood of God, the unknown author refers to the value of creation, its conservation and its protection, while at the same time speaking about our vocation and the sanctification of mankind as the gift of being made in the image and likeness of God, thus referring to the excellence of the rational creature even in its body and finally mentioning the “admirable and divine nature” mankind has received from God. Then there is the gift of redemption and at this point, since this is the key concept of Franciscan and Capuchin meditation, examples are given of hundreds of the mysteries from the life of Christ, from his birth to his death on the cross. All of this is centred on the legacy of the Eucharist.

Where the words “who is” appear in the Our Father the author meditates on the essence of God in Himself using words that have obviously been borrowed from Ripanti. Christ is seen as frequently being the one who invokes “the Father”. The heavens represent God’s omnipresence, and the hidden mystery of the divinity and of the divine action is “hidden” in the saints and the sacraments. This is a typical example of how prayer addressed to the Father spontaneously becomes prayer to the Son and in effect becomes Trinitarian.

Hallowed be thy name, that is – as the author explains – the name of the Trinity, by the whole world in union with the Church triumphant and militant. The Sacrament of the Eucharist comes up again and the prayer breaks into thanksgiving. With the mention of free us from our trespasses he launches into how the five wounds convert sinners through the intercession of Mary and the gift of the stigmata which was bestowed on St Francis.

The kingdom is within us, and with this in mind the author meditates on the gift of “sanctification”, the grace of heaven and the Church militant. The will of God consists in the gift of being most unworthy servants who observe God’s commandments and the commandments of the Church and the Order (the Rule). Our daily bread is for both body and soul, especially the spiritual bread of compunction, tears, Holy Scripture and our Heavenly Father, that is Christ Himself and the Eucharist.

The author is a priest since he speaks about preparing for the celebration of Mass. Much of his style and thought reminds us of the “Orationi devote” by Bernardino d’Asti, especially the emotion of deep compunction which penetrates all the prayer and breaks out into love which makes it probable that this work comes from the first half of the seventeenth century.

Preparation for the Our Father

5426 I want you to perform this preparation at least once a day. When you are pleading with God repeat it throughout the day in the same way as you did at the beginning of the day. I recommend that you do it at night before Matins and throughout all that day. If you cannot readily commit it to memory, read it frequently, and, in this frame of mind¹ you will be able to speak to Jesus Christ and say:

5427 O kind and sweet Father and my Lord Jesus Christ, I come, as an unworthy and miserable sinner, a most ungrateful child of yours to offer this prayer, which you taught us, to your Majesty. In the first place I come:

Deliberately, consciously, not by chance, but purposefully, since I know how much I am obliged to honour, to praise and to serve your Majesty, which is deserving of all honour and glory. I know how much I am obliged to honour it, serve it and praise it because I have been Baptised and the because of the vow I took because of the Rule when I entered this hallowed Order and was consecrated to your service.²

I know how much I am obliged to change from doing the evil things that I did in the past.³

I also recognise the great need I have to beg of you by means of this prayer, to intercede for my family, friends and benefactors for all that they need for their salvation, since without your help and support they cannot do anything that is good.⁴

I approach you, O blessed Jesus, *in union with*, and in collaboration with the entire holy Church, triumphant and militant, including in a special way the members of my Congregation and my brothers who are present and assisting at this prayer.⁵ I come in union with You who are our head, advocate and benefactor who is zealous concerning our salvation, so that when you have put a spirit of devotion and attention in me,⁶ I may offer this prayer in a manner that is acceptable to You and beneficial to us.

I come before You, my dear Father, *to honour You*, in reverence, with all the homage and deference that would be expected of a good son towards his good father.⁷

Willingly, I come freely, voluntarily, with complete freedom of will, and without being constrained, but willingly and joyfully.⁸

¹ This preparation for meditation which lasted for the whole day shows us how a Capuchin who rose for prayer “before Matins” at night began to pray each day and how he continued to pray all day. The monastic custom is stressed here. The frame of mind referred to here can be traced back to the method outlined in the *Circolo del divin Amore* by Ripanti.

² Cf. especially, RB 10. There is also reference to this in the Ordinance of Albacina (n. 1)

³ This is a reference to penance and reparation that was so important to the early Capuchins.

⁴ Cf. Jn 13, 5.

⁵ This is the fourth condition attached to the act of love which Ripanti laid down (above, n. 3792), Note who the one who is at prayer feels united with all the brothers in the Order and those who are praying with him.

⁶ Being attentive and devout is a gift of the Spirit and fundamental to perfect prayer.

⁷ This is the filial attitude of love that was greatly stressed in the 1536 Constitutions.

5428 *Humbly*, I come with humility, sine I admit that I am not worthy to speak or to appear before Your Majesty; I who am earth, ashes, a worm and a wicked sinner.⁹

Contrite, I come before You contritely, feeling regret and displeasure over the sins that I have committed, being sorry for having offended your Majesty for such a length of time and in so many ways.¹⁰

With faith, I come to you O good Jesus with strong faith knowing that you are true God, the second Person of the most holy Trinity.

Confidently, I come to you with confidence and assured hope and great trust that You will listen to me because of your infinite clemency and that you will grant all that you consider necessary for my salvation, and for what I am obliged to do in your honour.

With love, I come to you with love, in charity, for love of you whom I hold so dear. I am fulfilled by you and wish you every good thing, honour and glory.¹¹

Generously, I come munificently¹² firstly with deep fondness of will; secondly, *for a space of time*, sharing this hour and the whole day with you.

Perseveringly, supporting your activity by means of this prayer until death and then in the next life if this pleases your Majesty. I promise your Majesty to do this forever, and I intend to say this prayer with the same dispositions and more, so that I can achieve such an outcome.

5429 Finally I come to you in the finish to adore, honour, magnify and to affirm as being holy the name of your most exalted Majesty, recognising it to be our God, our Lord, our Creator, our Redeemer, our Saviour, our Ruler and our only Good in this life and in the next.¹³

Finally I come to you to thank your Majesty for all the gifts that you have given and always give and I intend to thank you especially for your miraculous Incarnation, your Nativity, your Passion and death for our redemption. I come to thank you for the wonder of creation, conservation and governance and for my vocation to this Order though I am unworthy because of my sins. Finally I come because I am poor and in need of your help, begging you with all my heart to grant me all that I need to praise, honour, and bless your Majesty because you commanded that this come about by means of holy prayer.¹⁴

However, O kind and sweet Jesus, our Teacher, *doce nos orare (teach us how to pray)*¹⁵, teach us how to pray to our most divine Lord.

Dicite: Pater noster qui es in coelis, sanctificetur nomen tuum, adveniat regnum tuum, fiat voluntas tua, sicut in coelo et in terra. Panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis hodie, et dimitte nobis debita nostra, sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris, et ne nos inducas in tentationem sed libera nos a malo. Amen.

⁸ This corresponds to the second condition laid down by Ripanti (above, n. 3790). It is important to pray with joy.

⁹ This is Ripanti's third condition (above, n. 3891). There is also a reference to this in the Bible: Gen 18, 27.

¹⁰ The spirit of contrition runs throughout the meditation.

¹¹ These words also remind us of what Ripanti said. (cf. above, note 60 for the *Circle* n. 3798).

¹² This corresponds to the fifth characteristic of prayer according to Ripanti (cf. above, n. 3793) who makes the same three subdivisions.

¹³ This again comes from the *Ciclo* by Ripanti (above, note 51 of the *Ciclo*, n. 3795).

¹⁴ The aim of prayer is that it should become praise, thanksgiving and recall the wonder of God.

¹⁵ Cf. Lk 11, 1.

Putting the Our Father into practice.

5430 O kind and most clement Jesus, this is what you said in order to speak with love:¹⁶ That I should call you Father: I who am a man and you who are God: I who can suffer and am mortal, while you are immortal and beyond suffering. I am earth, dust, a worm and all evil, while you are the glory of the Angels, heavenly and divine happiness and everything good in paradise! You wish me to call you Father in order to assure myself that you have accepted me as your son. Oh infinite demeaning! Oh unspeakable humility to want me to be your son! Oh good Jesus, although I am frightened, I say it, because I know that it pleases you. O loving Father, I accept you once more as my dear and only Father and, with all my heart and soul, I lament and am sorry that up to now I have been the very worst son. I beg of you, dearest father, to give me the grace to be a good son in future. I beg this of you since at this point in time I resolve with all my heart to regard you as my greatest Father and to love you and pay you every honour and reverence, as is fitting to a Father such as you are.

O kind Jesus, you created the whole universe out of nothing by means of just a word from your infinite omnipotence, your infinite wisdom and infinite goodness. I am your miserable, vile, fragile and fallen creature, and you want me, and it is your pleasure to have me call you Father. What an immense and incalculable disgrace, deepest humiliation it is for you to accept me as your son. For my part, although I am unworthy, accept you as my dear Father and it saddens me not to have been a good son.

5431 O sweet Jesus, you are Lord, Owner and Ruler of everything and I am your ungrateful and unfaithful servant and slave! Yet through your infinite clemency you wish to accept me as your son, wanting me to call you Father. I accept you as my Father.¹⁷ I lament and am sorry at the thought that I have not loved you, revered, feared, obeyed, served and followed such a Father in the practice of virtue. In fact I have done quite the opposite as I have followed the devil in all kinds of vice for a long time and in various ways. Oh how I have cheapened your Majesty. I have dishonoured¹⁸ it, disobeyed it, offended and injured it to an immeasurable extent. I confess and admit that I am not worthy of such a Father. In spite of this I am sure that you have conferred your Fatherhood on me and that you are a most merciful Father of a completely miserable son. You continue to give me such assurance, good Jesus, since you instructed me to address you as Father. Yet this prayer is filled with faith, hope and charity with respect to your Majesty, accompanying servitude with these virtues which are required of your son if he is to magnify, praise and recognise¹⁹ so great a Father with acts of worship and holiness as he is supposed to do.

However I am sorry, my dear Father, that I do not possess the perfect disposition of true charity that I ought to have towards you because of the many great sins which I have not confessed properly, that I have forgotten, or not admitted or mentioned in the sacrament of Confession or performed adequate penance and I ask pardon for this from You..²⁰

¹⁶ *Dite* here is *dicete* in the text.

¹⁷ This is the refrain that continues to appear in meditation on the fatherhood of God. The soul dwells on completely accepting God as his father.

¹⁸ Here *disonorata* in the text *Dissonerata*.

¹⁹ These terms were also used by Silvestro da Rossano who referred to acts of knowing, magnifying and humility etc.

²⁰ Note how the expression “mi dolgo” is repeated in reference to various kinds of sorrow.

I am also sorry for not being disposed towards my brothers as I should be, and most of all, towards you, my good Jesus, as my very warm brother. I do not love and feel for you in the same way as you do for me.²¹ Likewise I am not loving, humble, patient towards my other brothers, nor do I set them good example as I should do, nor do I love them as I love myself.²²

I am also sorry for not having the right disposition for that act or exercise because my mind had not been purified and raised to heaven and to your Majesty. However, I beg of you, kind and sweet Jesus, that you make up for all my defects, and since you have taught me what words to say, grant that I may say them in the right spirit and with the right sentiments.

Our Father

5432 O good Jesus, with these words I believe, affirm and confess that you are the universal Father of all, firstly, through Creation which you made out of nothing. You did this when we did not exist. You gave us a share in your nature, making us noble with a most excellent body and soul. You gave us an immortal soul that would never die, in contrast to the dumb animals.

You endowed our soul with the faculty of reason and caused it to be dissimilar and very different from the brute animals in that it possessed memory, intellect and will by means of which faculties it could know its Creator, Redeemer, saviour, leader, its happiness and every good, and so love him with the will, enjoy him and benefit from him and be happy and blessed in this world through grace and through glory in the next.

However, my dear Father, being blind and ungrateful, when I received the use of reason I used it continually²³ to oppose you, despise you, dishonour you and to shame you. In your world I also used it to bring about great damage and the greatest scandal against the Order which was contrary to my own interest and contributed to my damnation and great ruin. However, O kind Father, I beg your pardon. I pray that you will give me grace so that in future I may use these faculties to do what you gave them to me to do for you, for the Order, for the world and for my salvation.

5433 O my dear Father how generous have you been to me in giving me this completely spiritual soul, which is just a little below the Angels, having the same substance, happiness, and place in heaven and, in addition, having them look after me.²⁴ Yet I who am miserable and unhappy, gave myself as prey to demons from hell, becoming like Lucifer and worse than a devil.

O my dear Father, you gave me a soul which was made in the image of the Blessed Trinity, which made me capable of sharing in²⁵ your divinity. However I, being a devilish son, turned it into the image and likeness of Lucifer, capable of every kind of filth and iniquity. However, Father of mercy, who wishes my salvation from the depths of your heart, forgive me for the great injury that I, your image and precious creature, inflicted on your Majesty.

²¹ Here *fate voi con me* in the text *facete voi comeco*.

²² Here *come me stesso* in the text *con me stesso*.

²³ Here *sempre* in the text *sè per*.

²⁴ The Guardian Angels.

²⁵ This is a scholastic term which had already been used by Ripanti. (Cf. *Circolo* in conjunction with notes 87 and 37).

O my dear Father, when I think about²⁶ my body I am amazed when I consider and see how well it is made, well proportioned, so beautiful and so noble and having so many limbs that are well dispersed among themselves. What is more you joined and united it to a soul so that they make up an superb creature for whom you made all the other irrational creatures to serve him. They have never ceased to be of service to this creature and have served your divine Majesty. Yet such a creature has not served you and, indeed, done you disservice and, being ungrateful, has dishonoured, offended, betrayed and done you all possible kinds of injury. Yet your Majesty has always shown clemency and pity and has never shown a sign of ill will.

5434 O dear Father, I confess, very sorrowfully, that I have failed you particularly in giving service to this Order by being so tepid, negligent, imperfect and wicked. When I think about all of this I am dumfounded. Most of all I have failed to be grateful and because I lacked gratitude to this very moment I have not utilized my body and soul with the degree of energy that I should have, but by continuously offending and despising your Majesty, like a really bad and wicked sinner, I have been unfaithful and ungrateful to you my good and most excellent Lord.²⁷ O Father when I think about and consider the wonderful and divine existence that you have conferred upon me in making me your son and setting me an example, and realise that I have not given this much attention, nor appreciated it, nor esteemed it as I should have up to now, I am overcome with sorrow, and ask you for pardon for my great blindness and nastiness. The obligation that I still have towards your Majesty is grate and infinite because you are the Father who protects me, has preserved me and continues to do so at every moment of my human existence, to such an extent that if your very strong hand did not hold me I would have already been reduced to nothing. When you ought to have annihilated and put me down because of my sins, you saved me. The saving action that you have carried out²⁸ on my behalf is like a continuously new creation.

In addition to this, O my dear Father, you have always preserved my good reputation and my good name by your action. I beg of you and ask that you make everything lead to your glory, the welfare of the world and of this poor Order by organising things so that I become what you want and what is most pleasing to your Majesty. O dear Father, I believe and confess that you are our Father in controlling our body, so that it does not want for anything that is necessary for the body. O Father, when I consider the great effort that you have expended and the control that you have always exercised over me both in the Order and in the world, and how being ungrateful I have continually not used it well to work for you, the world or the Order by not recognising your continual governance, I know that I have not always worked as I should have in your service. I am sorry and I weep over such ingratitude with tears that come from the heart.

3435 O Father, how you have always aptly organised to fill my ungrateful soul with spiritual thoughts, worthy governance and holy inspirations! Yet my soul has shown little appreciation for this and followed its own wishes as it was rebellious and unfaithful in not recognising your delicate visitations,²⁹ so that I fell into iniquity.

²⁶ Here *discurgo* probably means *discurro*, from the verb *discutere*.

²⁷ Note how the attitude towards the human body is positive.

²⁸ Here *fate* in the text *facete*.

²⁹ Cf. Lk 19, 44.

O good Jesus, I confess that you are my Father through my redemption,³⁰ and have made me your child because you came down from heaven by means of a Virgin.³¹ From being God you became a most vile man and more so than any other man.³² You spent thirty three years on this earth in the greatest pain and poverty, being persecuted most shamefully, bound and scourged so painfully that all of your head and body was stunned³³ and concussed.

You were then taken to the house of Caiaphas where many wolves and dogs were assembled against you, Scribes and Pharisees and the leading priests, or rather devils. Throughout the night you were tormented by young people and all kinds of villains, to such a degree that although Pilate would have set you free you could not escape from death. Early in the morning, after you had been maltreated, you were led and presented in great anxiety to Pontius Pilate, who could find no reason to punish you, so he sent you to Herod who, when he did not experience you performing miracles as he desired of you, sent you back dressed in white holding a cane in your hand like a stupid madman of little account.

In order to satisfy the people, Pilate scourged you so harshly that blood and pieces of flesh sprung off your very delicate body onto the ground.³⁴ In the end, the executioners, who were exhausted because of the blows they had given you, which it is believed numbered [6666],³⁵ dressed you in a purple garment, with hands bound and blindfolded you and placed³⁶ a crown of the sharpest thorns on your head, which penetrated to the skull through the deep wounds in your head. They spat in your face, pulled your beard and struck your face saying in mockery: “Prophesy who it was who struck you!”³⁷

5436 O good Jesus, O sweet Father, how much pain and how much sorrow did you endure in this most bitter crowning, and all so that I might be born as your son at what great price. Finally, following such great insults, you were led, *id est* (that is) sentenced to death on a bitter cross,³⁸ as a most vile thief. O dear Father, you carried the cross on which you were to be crucified with great pain on your shoulder. . Having arrived³⁹ on Mount Calvary and having been stretched out on the cross you were nailed to the cross with three large sharp nails. What a miserable and ungrateful son am I because I have not been aware of your great distress and what good it brought to me! I beg of you, dear Father, by means of the pain and suffering which you endured when your hands and feet were nailed to the cross, that you forgive my sins, and give me grace to absorb my heart in most bitter suffering because I have offended your Majesty.⁴⁰

³⁰ By attaching divine benefits to the title of Father the author commences a meditation on the mysteries of the life and death of Christ.

³¹ This is from the Creed: *descendit de coelo et incarnates est.*

³² Cf, Ps 21, 2 (*Vulg.*).

³³ *Intronata* in the text means *stordita*.

³⁴ This is a devout, amplified piece of imagination.

³⁵ There is a blank space in the text. That the number of blows delivered to Christ in the scourging was 6666 is mentioned by Girolomo da Molfetta (see above note 58 of *Alcune regula, n.4009*).

³⁶ Here *miserio* in the text *miserio*.

³⁷ Cf. Mt 26, 68.

³⁸ In the manuscript the word “croce” is written using the symbol +.

³⁹ Here *Ito* is a Latin version of *andato* (having arrived.)

⁴⁰ These expressions and emotions are reminiscent of the meditation on Christ’s passion presented in the Circolo by Bernardino da Montolmo. Cf. above, n. 4112 ss.

In the end, when you had been raised up high on the cross and were still alive and suffering for a period of time you surrendered your most holy soul and all the blood that you possessed by means of which and for which you established the Sacrament of Baptism to give me birth as a Christian and your child by means of the very precious sacrament. However, alas, I have to confess that I have been a very bad and false Christian and not Jesus Christ's son, but Lucifer's son and a satanic child, falling short from the day that I received the water of holy Baptism up to the present, from the time that I was indebted to you because of your most bitter Passion and this most worthy sacrament, through which I became your son, the heir of Paradise, contented and blessed in both worlds.

5437 I confess, O Father that I have sinned and am not worthy to remain on this earth, that I deserve Hell a thousand times, not just once, because of my sins which are very serious and infinite. Nevertheless, completely confident in your paternal generosity and in the merits of your most sacred humanity, I ask pardon for my many iniquities, begging that you would not allow your child to be lost and that your blood should have been shed for him in vain, and that your sweat and the suffering of your most sweet Mother should have been lost to my greater damnation and suffering.

I know, my dear Father, the infinite love that you have always shown towards me, *masime* (especially) in creation, preservation, governance and redemption, and much more in feeding me and nourishing me with your most sacred body, soul and blood together with your most incomprehensible divinity in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, in which, to achieve my salvation you now deign to come to me, when you are in glory, beyond suffering and immortal,⁴¹ I confess how miserable, blind and ungrateful I am towards your Majesty. I beg of you, dear Father, that you will give me your love, so that I may become ardent, fervent about you and for you and love no one but you, hating everything that would rob me of your love, *maxime* (especially) myself.⁴²

Who is

5438 However, O Father, I confess with these words that you alone exist, and that we cannot⁴³ exist in the true sense of the word, because if your powerful hand did not sustain us we would have returned to nothing since you created us out of nothing. Thus, the expression *qui es* (who is) can only be applied to you. This is why you instructed Moses to say to Pharaoh: "He who is, has sent you to me."⁴⁴

Qui es because it is of your nature to exist, *hoc est* (that is) not taken from anything, not derived.⁴⁵

Qui es. You are my brother, the Second Person of the Most Holy Trinity. You are human and God by means of the unique, personal and most noble union of your divine person with human nature. You are the one who redeemed our souls with your most precious blood. You are the King of heaven and earth. You are the one who is

⁴¹ To connect Christ's death on the Cross with the mystery of the Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist (which Tommaso da Olera also emphasises so well) is profoundly biblical, theological and in line with the teaching of the Fathers.

⁴² This is the objection of meditating on the *Our Father* in terms that are reminiscent of the *Orationi devote* by Bernardino d'Asti.

⁴³ Here *poteemo* in the text *passiamo*.

⁴⁴ Ex 3, 14.

⁴⁵ These are expressions used by Ripanti.

seated on the right hand of your Eternal Father. You are the one who is to come to judge the living and the dead.⁴⁶ You are our Judge, our procurator and advocate, who loves, cares and is keen about our salvation.

O my dear Father, I confess that all that I have said about you is nothing in comparison to who you are since you are infinite, ineffable, inestimable and incomprehensible. O my dear Father, if you were not so good, and I could make you that way, I would do so willingly with all my heart. If I could take this away, I would not do so, if I could add to it I would not, if I could diminish it, I would not. Thus I am satisfied and glad that I cannot lessen anything so that I may not diminish your infinite perfection.⁴⁷

In coelis

5439 O my dearest Father, you are in heaven, without, however, being absent from every place even though strictly speaking you are in heaven, a place that is most becoming to your Majesty, a place that is very excellent, and very pleasant, where your infinite power, inestimable wisdom, your grandeur and inestimable goodness shines and is made manifest outside of us.

You are in heaven, that is, your divinity, your essence and your persons are hidden from us. You are in heaven, that is, the infinite and divine operations in us are concealed in yourself as your memory holds us all joyfully in the sight of your infinite intellect, which grasps everything infinitely. You love, enjoy and rejoice over us with your will and you are infinitely happy, blessed and glorious.

O my dear Father, you are also in heaven in our saints⁴⁸ by your marvellous workings in them, and their works in you which is hidden from us.

Finally you are in heaven that is, hidden from us in all the Sacraments of the Altar, because in reality you are glorious in them. You are, O good Jesus, my Father,⁴⁹ the Second Person of your Godhead, hidden from us in the Sacraments, who by nature and in substance is the same as the Father and the Holy Spirit. Thus I believe, confess and adore the entire Most Holy Trinity and the one God, who is my dear Father hidden from us in all the Sacraments. You are the God of the virtues, the King of glory and our Father. I confess this and, at the same time, as I confess this, I say that you are worthy of all praise and glory and as such you are my dear Father.

Sanctificetur nomen tuum

5440 My you name be held holy, your Majesty, your divinity in three distinct persons yet only one God.

May it be held holy by the entire world with soul, body and action! However, my dear Father, what would make me most happy is to wish and offer you all the blessing and perfect adoration that the Triumphant Church offers you and to desire that it increase in number and uprightness, that is in soul and body, in praise and

⁴⁶ This expression comes from the Creed.

⁴⁷ These are paradoxical expressions which are used by mystics and are reminiscent of Cardoni and Giovanni da Fano and also a little of Paolo Manassei. “*Nisciuna*” appears in the text instead of *nessuna*. This is from the dialect spoken in the Marches and Umbria.

⁴⁸ This is reminiscent of the Commentary on the Our Father by St Francis.

⁴⁹ Jesus is called “my Father” in the same way that Christ is also invoked in the Constitutions of 1536. The anonymous author immediately explains why he is called Father. The whole of the prayer here is a canticle of praise for “God who is one and three”.

glory, so that your Majesty may be better glorified by all as you wish and merit.⁵⁰ However, I earnestly beg of you, O kind Father blessed Jesus Christ, that by virtue of the five wounds that you suffered for us on the cross, and through the sacrifice which I shall offer this morning, which is a repetition of your Passion, that today it would please you to free five souls who are the most pleasing to your Majesty from Purgatory, and to whom I am most indebted, taking them to Paradise, so that your Majesty may receive more honour and so that those souls may rejoice in the glory which you have prepared and merited by means of your most precious blood.⁵¹

I would also be happy and rejoice if your name was held holy by the entire Church Militant, firstly by those who are really charitable and I desire that they may increase in number and perfection. As a member of the Church I wish to contribute⁵² in public and in private to the praise that they offer you. I join in all the praise offered by your priests in the sacrifice of the altar which they offer in your name and in that of the Holy Church to honour, adore, bless, proclaim and recognise your Majesty, our God, our Creator, our Redeemer, the one who protects us, governs us and gives us all that is good, because this is due to you alone and to none other through your sacrifice of your body, soul and blood.

Together with these offerings I offer all the honour that you bestowed on your human nature during life and in death, offering up again your most holy Passion, which we believe, accept and offer⁵³ for the universal and local Church, for this poor Congregation,⁵⁴ for all our family, friends and benefactors both the living and the dead. I beg of you, kind and sweet Jesus, that by means of this sacrifice that you appease you Majesty towards us, as you placated it before the whole world when you were lifted up on the cross.

5441 O kind Jesus, our head, our advocate and our procurator, by means of this sacrament we wish to thank your Majesty for all your gifts, *maxime* (especially) that you deigned to die for us and leave us this sacrament, which is filled with mercy, as a memorial of your Passion. Therefore I beg that you would make up for all our defects, so that this sacrifice may be satisfactory and acceptable on our behalf to your Majesty, as in itself it is always most adequate.⁵⁵

O eternal Father, may you most divine name be held holy by those who are still actually imperfect, that is by unfortunate sinners, who find themselves in mortal sin. I beg, O merciful Father, on their behalf that you have mercy on them by means of the five wounds which pierced the middle of the heart of your most sweet Mother when she saw you nailed to the cross in between two thieves, and then taken down after having had your hands, feet and side so maltreated. I beg that you convert five sinners today, so that they may bless your name using a perfect gesture.

And you, Mary the Virgin, may it please you to obtain this grace from your Son by means of his five wounds and your five wounds that you suffered with such pain at that time for us poor sinners so that the name of Jesus may be glorified and so that your children may not perish.⁵⁶

⁵⁰ These sentiments come from the *Circolo* by Ripanti.

⁵¹ This is the unusual and moving prayer that the author always said prior to offering Mass.

⁵² Here *concurgo* perhaps *concorro*. We also note here the influence of Cordoni.

⁵³ These verbs are taken from the dialect of the Marches and Umbria.

⁵⁴ That is the Capuchin Order.

⁵⁵ The insistence on the sacrifice of the Eucharist is significant.

⁵⁶ This reference to the five wounds, considered at this time as being in the heart of Mary is very beautiful. In fact *ms. 64*, from which this is taken, contains a meditation that speaks about Mary

Also, O holy Father, may your name be blessed by those who are to come whether sooner or later, namely, infidels, Turks, Jews and those who have been born and those still to be born. I pray for them so that by the five wounds that you gave our blessed father Francis, and through his merits, *maxime* (especially) his desire to convert them to the faith, that you will convert five of them, so that they may not perish in damnation, since you have shed your precious blood for them.⁵⁷

Finally, may your name be blessed, dear Father, by me a miserable sinner while I am in this mortal life, so that by means of your grace I may bless you together with the holy Angels in Paradise.

[*Adveniat regnum tuum*]

5442 Thus we beg of you, dear Father, that we may achieve such holiness, that your kingdom may come about within us. May you rule and govern our souls rather than we should hold dominion over them. Thus you will rule and we shall be happy and blessed through your governance, in this world by means of grace and in the next through glory.

May your kingdom come within us, dear Father! Rule over us as is just, and we shall accept you as our King and Lord. May you rule over what belongs to you and control your children! Let neither the devil nor sin rule any longer! Rather let your grace reign, and let faith, hope and charity and all your holy virtues reign and by means of them let us become holy and your name be called holy in this world and in the next.

Adveniat regnum tuum. Dear Father, let your holy grace come into us since without this we cannot be holy nor can your name be held holy.

Adveniat regnum tuum. May your kingdom come and your holy militant Church throughout the world, so that there may be one flock and one pastor,⁵⁸ in order that your name may be held holy!

Fiat voluntas tua

5443 May your will be done so that your kingdom will come in us according to the commands that you gave for the freedom of our will,⁵⁹ because you did not want to reign in those who were subject to your authority unless they did so voluntarily.

Fiat voluntas tua, because we wish, desire, confess to be your servants, even though we are unworthy, who are ready and prepared to carry out your will, being obedient and observing all of your precepts, and those of your Church and of our Rule through which your will is known and your wishes manifested together with your being blessed and holy. However while using these words I confess that I do not want to gain beatitude by any other means than by carrying out what your will has ordained, being obedient to your commands.⁶⁰ I am sorry that up to now I have not carried out your will, indeed, I have done just the opposite, and have been the cause of

suffering five wounds at the foot of the cross. Now it appears that a sinner was converted by each wound.

⁵⁷ This is a most beautiful detail which recalls the zeal that St Francis had for the conversion of infidels. The author is asking that five infidels be converted through the stigmata of the Saint.

⁵⁸ He is praying for the unity of the Church.

⁵⁹ In the manuscript the following words have been cancelled: *aciò che venga questo vostro regno in noi (so that your kingdom would come in us).*

⁶⁰ God's will is expressed through the commandments as St Francis said and as Ripanti stressed in the *Circolo*.

others doing the same, I confess that I deserve every evil, and I am prepared to do penance and am determined in future to do your most holy will honestly, willingly, and, finally, to give you praise. However because I recognise my imperfection, my instability and weakness, I beg of you, my dear Father, to help me and give me your bread.

Panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis hodie

5444 O dear father, O Father most generous, Father most zealous concerning all that is good for us, I beg of you to give me the bread that I need each and every day, both for my body and soul: for the body the food, clothing and strength required to carry out your will, to obey you and observe our Rule, and then, once you have given this, give us the grace to be brave.

Dear Father, give us spiritual bread for our soul; the bread of compunction,⁶¹ displeasure and sorrow for our sins, and, since we took pleasure in committing them, so, on the contrary, let us be sorry and repent from the heart for having committed them.

In addition to this I ask for the bread of tears⁶², to the degree that is pleasing to your Majesty, so that we may cry and weep over the great evil that we have committed over time with the heart, the tongue and deeds that were contrary to your goodness, so that we will not be made to cry in the next world with greater suffering and pain.

I also beg of you to give me the bread of Sacred Scripture so that all that we read, learn, preach and teach⁶³ will make us courageous, and we shall know your Majesty not only to admire and praise it, but so that we may love it and so that it will sanctify our brothers and our dearest sons.

5445 O dear Father, give us the bread from heaven as it will make us brave since you are that bread, Jesus Christ, the Second Person, come down from heaven and become mortal and suffered for thirty three years, *id est* (that is) endured hardship in this world, being crucified and dying in order to nourish us with the precious bread of your Passion. Then make it move us to be devout and compassionate each time that we receive it by continuously recalling this. Let our intellect consider this well, drink it in with hope and digest it with warm and fervent charity in the stomach of our will to the praise of your most excellent name.⁶⁴

Finally, O my dear Father, I beg of you to give me the spiritual bread of the Sacrament of the Eucharist that this will make us brave and be of benefit towards our salvation and not towards our greater damnation,⁶⁵ when we receive it in a spiritual manner as a sacrament, confessing and believing that, under the appearances of bread and wine, there exist in reality all of your glorified humanity united to the Second Person of the Most Holy Trinity who is God. Therefore we believe and confess that this Sacrament contains our life, our salvation and our every good. Although we are not worthy of such a most sacred bread, nevertheless we come to receive it, so that it

⁶¹ The author shows that he possesses the gift of compunction.

⁶² This is the gift of tears.

⁶³ I would say that this portrays the Franciscan and Capuchin evangelical and apostolic spirit.

⁶⁴ These words are worthy of the ardour of Capuchin meditation on the Passion. It is to be received with devotion and compassion: chewed, swallowed and digested.

⁶⁵ This is reminiscent of the prayer after Communion at Mass.

might make us worthy and give us the strength to make us obey you and be given life eternal as we eat your body and drink your blood in this sacrament.⁶⁶

5446 I come to receive your Majesty as my God, as my Judge, as my Advocate, as my Sponsor. I come so that I may be united with you as our head in union with the entire holy Church, which is your body, for we are your members and her members.

I come to this most holy sacrament to drink your blood, the same blood which you shed for the remission of my sins, so that, with it and by means of it you might wash and cleanse my soul and body from all their vices and sins and all the vicious habits that I have acquired because of my lengthy behaviour as a sinner.

Finally, I come to feed on this bread because of the certainty it affords me of being drawn closer to you, and of you bestowing some of your merits on me by means of which your Majesty, which has been offended by me and through me, may be placated, making peace with me and with all those whom I caused to offend you, so that you may remit and pardon all of our sins and accept our willing penance, since we have placed all our hope in this most holy sacrament.

Thus, in order that this bread might make us brave and work towards our salvation rather than towards our greater damnation, and that this may be advantageous to me and to all the living and the dead, I beg of you, O Father full of pity and mercy, to pardon all the sins that we have committed against your Majesty, in the same way as I, out of love for you and obedience to you, forgive all the injuries my enemies have ever inflicted on me, and I ask you also for those who do not wish to forgive that you make them humble of heart and introduce peace into your holy Church, into worldly princes and lords, and into all people, especially the members of our Order, where anyone had held one of the brothers in contempt, so that the bread that you have given will make them fearless in praising you and gaining salvation.⁶⁷

Ne nos inducas in tentationem

5447 Let me not be led into, suffocated by or overcome by temptations that continuously assail us and which are strong while we are weak and powerless in resisting them without your assistance. I beg of you, dear Father, that you give me the strength and might to be able to resist them and not be overcome, to the praise of your name and for my salvation.

Sed libera nos a malo

5448 O most clement Father, finally I beg of you to free me from every evil that could make me fall into sin, since as you can see and recognise we have many evil inclinations and are in a sinful condition because of Original Sin, because of bad habits, because of temptations from the devil, the world and the flesh and because of a thousand others occasions of sin which the devil, who is envious of our salvation and the praise of your name, instigates at all times. Thus I beg of you with all of my heart that you would free me from all kinds of interior and exterior evil which could make me offend your Majesty.

All the thing which I have asked of you, my dear Father, I ask for the whole Church, for my Order and for all my relatives, friends and benefactors who are alive

⁶⁶ Cf. Jn 6, 53-55.

⁶⁷ This is a kind of preparation for receiving Communion.

and for all those for whom I am obliged to pray or for whom I have promised to pray. Thus with faith and secure hope I shall say, *Amen*.

Amen

5449 *Amen*, O my dear Father, may what I have asked of you be granted through the Passion that you have endured for us, while I beseech you through your infinitely paternal goodness, begging through the merits of the most sweet Mother, the Virgin Mary, who is your Mother and our Mother, the Mother of our Seraphic Father St Francis and of all the saints in Paradise, that you would grant all that is most pleasing to your Majesty for the praise of your blessed and holy name and for our salvation.⁶⁸

Laus Deo.

⁶⁸ Note the theological and spiritual precision of these sentiments which are appropriate for infusing a more deep faith, a secure hope and perfect charity in the heart. This gives us an understanding of Franciscan and Capuchin “devotion”.