

Good Friday

THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT

Learn, therefore, what is the honor towards parents that this commandment requires. (a) They must be held in distinction and esteem above all things, as the most precious treasure on earth. (b) In our words we must speak modestly toward them [Proverbs 15:1]. Do not address them roughly, haughtily, and defiantly. But yield to them and be silent, even though they go too far. (c) We must show them such honor also by works, that is, with our body and possessions. We must serve them, help them, and provide for them when they are old, sick, infirm, or poor. We must do all this not only gladly, but with humility and reverence, as doing it before God [Ephesians 6:6–7]. For the child who knows how to regard parents in his heart will not allow them to do without or hunger, but will place them above him and at his side and will share with them whatever he has and possesses.

THE LORD’S PRAYER – THE SEVENTH PETITION

But deliver us from evil. Amen.

In the Greek text this petition reads, “Deliver or preserve us from the evil one,” or “the hateful one.” It looks like Jesus was speaking about the devil, like He would summarize every petition in one. So the entire substance of all our prayer is directed against our chief enemy. For it is he who hinders among us everything that we pray for: God’s name or honor, God’s kingdom and will, our daily bread, a cheerful good conscience, and so forth.

Therefore, we finally sum it all up and say, “Dear Father, grant that we be rid of all these disasters.” But there is also included in this petition whatever evil may happen to us under the devil’s kingdom: poverty, shame, death, and, in short, all the agonizing misery and heartache of which there is such an unnumbered multitude on the earth. Since the devil is not only a liar, but also a murderer [John 8:44], he constantly seeks our life. He wreaks his vengeance whenever he can afflict our bodies with misfortune and harm. Therefore, it happens that he often breaks men’s necks or drives them to insanity, drowns some, and moves many to commit suicide and to many other terrible disasters [e.g., Mark 9:17–22]. So there is nothing for us to

do upon earth but to pray against this archenemy without stopping. For unless God preserved us, we would not be safe from this enemy even for an hour.

THE SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR

To be sure, it is true that those who despise the Sacrament and live in an unchristian way receive it to their hurt and damnation [1 Corinthians 11:29–30]. Nothing shall be good or wholesome for them. It is just like a sick person who on a whim eats and drinks what is forbidden to him by the doctor. But those who are mindful of their weakness desire to be rid of it and long for help. They should regard and use the Sacrament just like a precious antidote against the poison that they have in them. Here in the Sacrament you are to receive from the lips of Christ forgiveness of sin. It contains and brings with it God’s grace and the Spirit with all His gifts, protection, shelter, and power against death and the devil and all misfortune.

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