

# OUR FATHER

**Our**": small word, almost meaningless. It seems that this word intends "to satisfy " all people, believers and not, distant and near.

Instead, it is one of the words of Jesus' prayer more revolutionary and more difficult to live, because "it uncovers" the man from his egoism; it frees one from the eternal temptation of "using, and exploiting" God. It is an uncomfortable word because it unmask the man in his attempts of "possessing" God as personal wealth, and of manipulating him.

The word "**our**" puts in discussion a Christianity, at times some "bourgeois", made to our use and consumption.

## **God - Father, who are you?**

To this question, how do you answer?

With the name that have you left to Moses: "**I am he who I am**"(Es. 3, 14)?

Or with the definition inspired to the evangelist St. John: "**God is love** "(1 Jn. 4, 8)?

Or do You prefer the word that has left us your child Jesus: **Abbà**?

**You are Mine**... I can affirm it, because for God every person is unique and irripetibile. God doesn't see the mass but the single ones...

**You are Ours**... because You call us to salvation as a People....

**You are for All**... This is the appointment to realize in our life. The Christians have received as gift the familiarity with God, therefore they have the assignment to recall to themselves and the others and to all that have not known this familiarity with the God of Jesus Christ the universal vocation to welcome this Good News.

Therefore, God-the Father, who are You?

You are Ours!

The adjective "our" reported to the Father doesn't point out a possession: on the contrary, it expresses a relationship, a sharing, a communion.

"God is my Father, only because He is our Father".

I need the others. If I exclude my brothers, I don't have the right to pray anymore.

The word "Father" would not have sense anymore.

"The Father makes to rise the sun above the good ones and the bad ones. He wants that also his children turn to Him as a brothers.

Our Father is the prayer of his children and his brothers."

The daily assignment that God – the Father leaves us is to make Him become more and more "our"; that is what we have to learn: to look for the face of God in the face of the next one, to learn more and more to be children and to help the others, to live a style of life that doesn't reject and exclude anybody.

The word "Our" is fundamental in our prayer to God – the Father.

The prayer owes us to go out of ourselves, to fight against the egoism and, gradually, to bring us inside the world of Christ and, through Him, in the world of his brothers and the whole humanity.

God is "our Father": it is his paternity that makes us a brothers and eliminates the distance between man and man."

This truth opens to us a new horizons of solidarity among the people

"Anybody is image of God. It does not exist any man who doesn't have a mysterious relationship with the Father who has created him."

Every man, in front of God is important as me.

"He is a child of God as me. In any case I can overpower him or possess him, neither I can isolate him, whoever he is. I must only welcome him in a attitude of fraternity."

The Father's love toward all men is clear, it doesn't admit any conditions: "I will be for you as a father, and you will be as a children". (2 Cor.6,18)

"Love your enemies... and you will be children of the Almighty, because He is benevolent toward the ungrateful persons and the wicked ones. Be merciful, as your Father is merciful" (Lc.6,35-36)

### **Therefore it cannot be children without being a brothers**

"In our time, the men want to reach fraternity without fatherhood. At the same time it is impossible to live the paternity without fraternity. It is a contradiction to desire to be father children without being brothers of the other children."

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PAGE OF GUANELLIAN SPIRITUALITY : I HAVE ANYBODY (JN. 5, 7)

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The man, orphan of father, of mother, of affections and of any type of supports, is at the origin of the guanellian Work.

Jesus, through the cry of the paralytic at the swimming pool of Betsaida - "I don't have anybody!" allows Fr. Guanella to understand from what side he could start: from the small ones, the weak and those that are alone in the walk of life.

From this call, Fr. Guanella plans all his life and starts a walk of discovery of universal fraternity: from the my God to a our God - "The whole world is your country."

"Gather the abandoned ones among all of you and put him at table with you and make him your, because he is Jesus Christ."

"In this is known the true follower of Christ, if he has the charity for the poor and the suffering one's, in which the image of the Savior is more alive."

The guanellian mission, in its substance, consists on making the poor feel that God is Father and that He tenderly loves them as his children (Mt. 11, 25).

First of all to bring love of our Father toward the more poor and to assist the humblest, for a guanellian is not an option, but it is the answer to the plan of God. To welcome "the abandoned one's and the needy" it is an expression that returns in all the rules and projects of Constitutions that the Founder has written

However it is not possible to make known the love of the Father, if not through the realism of the fraternity of Jesus.

And this is the most dear appellative that Fr. Guanella attributes to Jesus: "Jesus Christ, your greater brother, loves for essence his own Father... What has not made Jesus, your greater brother, to find again you and to conduct you to Him...! "

## WHO ARE IN HEAVEN

The reign of the Father is in heaven. Since you are a child of God, behold the Paradise which awaits you. Look at it with great joy. The kingdom of God the Father is vast, because it is meant for all the children of the Lord. His kingdom is abundant because it possesses glory and happiness for everyone. It is a very well ordered kingdom, because honor and reward are given according to merit. There is no sign of hunger, thirst, or of any suffering in His kingdom

because there is peaceful rest in it.

When the Apostles experienced only a part of the glory of God in the Transfiguration of Jesus, they were so filled with joy that they exclaimed:

"How good it is for us to be here!"

And they would have liked to remain there. Seeing the Lord, you will rejoice in a continuous ecstasy of heavenly happiness. You will turn your smiling gaze on Mary, and seeing your Mother crowned as a queen, your joy will be doubled. Looking around in amazement, you will encounter the blessed faces of the angels and of the rejoicing saints and you will continue to exclaim: "How lovely are your tents, O Lord! Here I am and here I will stay forever. I am blessed and I will be so for eternity!"

The reception which God will have for you in heaven will be proportional to the reception you have had for God here on earth. What God desires from you is your heart. He showed himself in human flesh in Bethlehem, Nazareth, and Jerusalem hastening through his tiring journey until, when unable to find you, he climbed Mount Calvary. There he cried out for you in agonizing pain, and to show the depth of his love, he opened his sacred side to show you his

divine Heart. When kneeling at his feet, you cried out, "Come in, O Lord, because the house of my heart is your house!" and the Lord came and joyfully sat at your table with you. You gave your heart to him, and Jesus enriched that heart and seemed to do to you as he did to Mary, Most Holy.

The Lord enriched the heart of the Blessed Mother with immeasurable virtues to render it a worthy dwelling for God. The Lord himself enriches your very heart with many gifts, so that you may become His chosen dwelling.

Another kingdom of the Father is the Church of Jesus Christ. In heaven, Father, Son and Holy Spirit said together: "Let us show great mercy to mankind until they learn to live with their hearts!" And consequently, the Lord established the kingdom of his Church on earth. The Church of Jesus Christ is like a great capitol city placed on the top of a mountain to be seen from all over the world.

Think of a pure golden mountain from which many crystal clear springs flow.

Think also of people who come to them to drink. Those springs are the grace of the Sacraments which come forth from the open side of our Divine Redeemer. The people, then, are all fortunate Christians who rejoice in the Kingdom of the Father. A divine light envelops them. Faith opens wide the gates of heaven to them. Hope is rekindled, by which they are fortified as by a comforting angel. The Charity of Jesus Christ unites them with God so that they exclaim: "I do not live any longer, but it is Christ who lives in me!"

Charity joins them together so that they may exclaim: "How beautiful it is that brothers live together, with one mind and one soul!"

*From Let us go to the Father," Works, Pg 36-38*

## YOUR KINGDOM COME

When we speak of **Kingdom of God** the most varied forms of government come to our mind: the places of power and predominance above the others....

The word "**Kingdom**" reminds us a type of a social cohabitation that arises in us a series of resistances and defenses because of the breaches of our governors: corruption, influences...

However we can think about the Kingdom of God as Someone who changes the existing situation, that removes the death, that defeats the injustices...

In the Gospel Jesus speaks of the Kingdom many times.

It is not correct to put to comparison the divine "royalty" with the human one, nevertheless we know that every concept we have derives from our limited experiences.

To understand the Kingdom of God it is necessary imagination... ability of...dreaming... and so much patience

"Your Kingdom come" does mean that the Kingdom has to take possession of the heart of the world and the heart of every man.

This is the dream of God's love.

All of us should say today:

I am a dream of the Lord

I am a person dreamt by the heart of the Lord.

To understand and to enter the Kingdom it is necessary Imagination and Fantasy

Imagination, because every day God enters the life of man "in the silence of his own heart" always in a new form.

Imagination because God doesn't want to preserve for himself what he possesses, otherwise he would not have gone down among us.

Imagination because God is able to fall in love even of me.

Imagination because God is not monotonous, but he has chosen the way of sharing.

Imagination because, also when it seems that everything goes badly, God knows how to draw the good from the evil.

WHAT IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD?

We say: "**Your Kingdom**": The Kingdom is not the Kingdom of men but of God.

The Kingdom is "the new look" with which Jesus has looked every man. The new look that goes down in the depths of the human being.

The Kingdom is built in the mystery of every man

The Kingdom is a seed, a germ, a hidden strength, a fire that burns inside us.

The Kingdom is the internal change: the things remain but it changes the way of looking them.

The kingdom is a " new face" that dwells inside you.

All of you remember the episode of Jhon and Andrew when, for the first time, they meet Jesus (Gv.1,35-42). After that meeting the two disciples "return home with engraved the face of the one with which they had spoken.

When the two disciples entered their own house they saw the members of their own family in different way beforehand: they saw God in the face of their relatives.

### **Christ is the Kingdom**

He made the Kingdom present by his person, his gestures, his word, his looks.

Whenever Jesus met a person or faced an political or religious system full of sin, he did it change, not with the imposition but with the strength of whom possesses inside all the strength and the authority of God.

### **The enemies of the Kingdom: the anxiety, the restlessness and the worry**

The coming of Kingdom of God is not an external phenomenon.

"What the kingdom of God is it similar to, and what do I resemble with? It is similar to a grain of mustard, that a man has taken and thrown in the garden; then it grows and becomes a bush, and the birds of the sky are placed among its branches". And still: "To what will I resemble the kingdom of God? It is similar to the yeast that a woman has taken and hidden in three measures of flour, as long as this is all leavened"(Lc.13,18-20)

It is necessary to give time to the time; in fact the times and the ways with which the seed will grow and will give fruit don't depend on us, but they are developed along the mysterious ways of the project of God.

We have to be careful not to suffocate the seed neither to make to die it, because the Kingdom don't admit violence, worry and impatience. We have to learn the patience of God.

The anxiety, the restlessness and the worry, besides showing little faith and trust in our Father, they steal our energies which we have to dedicate to the Kingdom. It is the treasure hidden in the field that to possess it we have to sell everything (Mt. 13, 44-46)

"The Kingdom becomes the aspiration of the true Christians, who are called to give all the own energies to build a more human world."

The only way to enter the vision of God and to make that our actions prepare the coming of the kingdom of God" is overcoming the restlessness, the anxiety and the worry and possession: in other words we need a great trust in the Providence.

#### PAGE OF GUANELLIAN SPIRITUALITY

A leit motive that constantly returns in the writings of the Founder and that gives light to every other aspect of his thoughts is the concept of Providence.

Don Guanella entitles its autobiography "the ways of the Providence"; he calls one of his Congregations "Daughters of Saint Mary of Providence"; to his first institution he gives the name of Small House of Divine Providence.

For Fr. Guanella, the Providence doesn't have anything philosophical, but it is something alive and sperimentable, something that he breathes of the daily life, that permeates the actions and the human relationships."

"The Providence has chosen us and guides us".

"I have not done anything: all has been made by the Providence."

""The Providence is at the origin of our Works that "from the Providence they not only take the name but the life."

"Our principle has to be: to live always trusting in the Providence."

"Let's surrender entirely to the Divine Providence; and then go on without fear."

"After having looked toward the Heaven for perceiving what God wants and for what streets He wants to conduct you, it needs to act without delaying."

The trust in the Providence is founded upon the idea of the paternity of God, who cares with patient and generous love for his children.

The Providence is tied tightly also to the charity, that activates the intervention of the Providence from God".

"If you say to your father: "Father I am hungry!" Does he, perhaps, deny a bread? And if you tell your mother: "Mother, my head is aching!" does she perhaps neglect to bring you a medicine? Neither the birds forgot their little one's..."

Perhaps, do you doubt that God will let you without a bread for the body and a spiritual bread for the soul? "

"Your celestial Father desires to give you his gifts more than you have hurry to ask them."

"The Lord looks at yourself with sighs of love, better than a father which recounts the beats of heart of his child even when he is sleeping."

The celestial Father knows your present, your past and your future and He cares of you as if could have to think only on you."

The Founder fully believed on the love of the Father even in the most painful and dark moments of his life; he felt to be driven by God and he acted totally abandoned among the hands of the Providence.

The Providence is essentially the love of God the Father who cares of everybody.

"In this - affirms Fr. Guanella - God resembles to the sun which sends its light and its heat to the mountain as to the plan, to the rock-cliff as to the sea, looks, at the same time, at all and at you personally, turns its rays to you, as if e didn't have to provide only to you. As the sun enlightens every corner of the earth, so you have to remember that in every part of the world the Lord looks at you and and provides for you."

\* The love of the Father is present in the humblest realities of the daily life

"Your daily assignment is to discern the signs that Providence sends in the events in which you are involved, even in a difficulties of life. And it is important to remember that these signs of the Providence can be discerned only with the eyes of faith.

## GIVE US OUR DAILY BREAD

As a pledge that God will not fail you, Jesus Christ himself taught you to pray: "Give us, Father, our daily bread!" You need food for your soul and food for your body. So, listen to me now, and you will find out what an excellent table He sets for your soul as well as for your body.

No food is so chosen as the meal prepared at the Eucharistic table. Here a Christian sits at a table which is the banquet of the angels, in which the bread of the strong is savored and the wine which produces virgins is drunk.\*

The faithful who attend this banquet adorn themselves with the garment of grace, and put on their fingers the ring of divine friendship.

Strengthened by the heavenly food, the soul longs only for joining God in heaven, and sighs: "When, O Father, will I see You? When will I rejoice in your divine embrace?"

Why do you doubt? Are you afraid that the Lord who feeds the soul so abundantly may not have material food for your body when you need it?

The fruit of the earth, the birds of the air and the fish of the sea offer plenty of the food necessary for living, which is so pleasant to our taste.

If you desire that your table remain well furnished for your entire life, thus bringing to you the treasure of paradise, remember that the table is an altar and from the altar gifts are brought to everyone and especially

to those who are most in need.

The table is an altar.

The victim who is sacrificed on this altar comes from the field, tired and sweating.

You must labor like a servant of the Lord, and as a victim for the sacrifice you must be ready to live for God and to suffer for Him.

The table is an altar. At the altar of the Lord we come to pray and to adore.

Before eating, adore the Lord, and after the meal pray to Him so that He may continue to bless you.

The table is an altar. On the altar of the Lord the sacrifice of a holy victim is offered. Seated at the table, offer to the Lord the sacrifice of special mortification.

Remember also that when you eat you can supply your body with energy which could damage your soul. Therefore, be careful when you take your nourishment. If you have a choice of foods, prefer those which may stimulate your body less against the spirit. If you keep this in mind, God will make your house prosper.

If you, by the divine mercy, have nourished your soul all along with the abundance of spiritual foods and, at the same time, you have set aside enough riches for your body for many years to come, still you must not cease to pray, "Give us our daily bread."

As long as you live, you need God to preserve and increase the abundance of his grace in you.

*From "Let us go to the Father" Works page 47-50*

## Forgive Us Our Trespases

Debts cause continuous preoccupations within a family. To owe something to someone who is your equal causes great displeasure. To find oneself a debtor to a highly respected person causes even more grief. It is painful to carry little debts, but it is more painful to carry big onerous debts.

The serious or venial sins you are committing are your debts. It is hard for you to owe so much to the Lord, since you are unable to satisfy him with a cent!

While you still live on earth, work at balancing your accounts, behaving as one who intends to clear all his liabilities at any cost. He, who wants to pay his debts, reduces the needs of his house, contents himself with the bare necessities of food and clothing, and absolutely banishes expensive forms of recreation like dances, night entertainments, going to theatres and luxurious banquets.

He cannot even hear conversations about these extravagances, which caused his fall to the bottom of this abyss. He finds a job and works. He wastes no time during his working hours, and to comfort himself, do you know what he does? He cries.

Oh! When tears spring out from the heart and run warmly down from the eyes, then the heart

lightens and the eyes brighten up, and it seems that fruitful dew comes down upon the field of his heart, yielding a thousand fold the seeds of virtue.

My dear brothers and sisters, if you want to pay the great debts you have with God, do likewise. Pull yourself together. Rid your heart of those abominable monsters of pride, avarice and lust, which are the infernal thieves who have despoiled you so badly. Set about an untiring work.

Then soften that hard bread of which you want to feed yourself, with tears from your eyes. These tears will touch the Angels in Paradise.

If your tears are the same as the tears shed by the servant because of his own debaucheries, then you are close to having your grave debts written off. Much more, if to these tears you add a drop of the tears and blood which Jesus shed on the cross, then you are completely forgiven.

If your tears are like the tears of the desolate child who grieves for the lofty displeasure he has caused to his father, then the Heavenly Father is already willing to forgive all your abuses, and to readmit you into his home because the Lord immediately loves those who love Him.

Admire this miracle of love. In reparation for so many debts of yours and for so much suffering caused to Him, Jesus is satisfied to receive from you only one tear of repentance. If this tear flows

out of our eyes, Jesus takes it and mixes it with his own blood and offers it to the Most High, saying:

“Father, forgive him! Father, forgive him!”

From *Let us go to the Father*, Works page 51–54

## Deliver Us from Evil

Do not ask God to spare you from all those difficulties which are common to us all in the journey of this life.

The inconveniences of hunger and thirst, the rigor of cold, the annoyance of the heat, certain indispositions of spirit as melancholies and worries, and certain indispositions of body like the various illnesses which can affect us, are things which we may dislike, yet all pilgrims must undergo them in their journey.

Do you not remember how Jesus Christ himself, in order to give you an example of patience, bore so many torments that, foreseeing them a thousand years earlier,

the prophet wrote about seeing a man of suffering, all covered with infirmities?

In your regard, you can very well pray that the Heavenly Father may spare you from them.

However, when you pray, you should also say to God: “Grant my request if you foresee that my soul will benefit from it.

Otherwise, increase the afflictions as you like, and give me strength and patience to bear them, since your assistance can replace anything else!”

As you can see, the evil from which you absolutely need to be freed, is only one: sin. The greatest calamity is sin, and in order to be safe from it, it will never be enough that you cry out all the time: “Deliver us from evil!”

Keep yourself calm, because God will save you. You have been coming to the Heavenly Father saying: “I am happy that you are in heaven. I rejoice that all praise you. Yes, that all may obey you on earth as the angels adore you in heaven! Give us,

poor fellows, our daily bread to live and guard us from dangers.”

While you speak in this fashion, the lion of pride may attack you from the front, and the wild beast of avarice can attack you from the side, while the snake of concupiscence is already winding around you.

You cry out immediately: “Father, deliver us, deliver us immediately!” Will it be possible that the Lord does not welcome you into his arms?

You know that, reciting the Lord's Prayer, you offer to the Eternal Father the prayer suggested by his very own Son, Jesus Christ.

You also know that, by submitting that prayer to the Most High, you are joined in spirit by all the faithful of the world, which is the Church of our Divine Savior.

Why do you worry then? Pray, pray with holy affection: Our Father..." and the Heavenly Father will bless you.

*From Let Us Go to the Father, Works Page 64-67*