

**The Prayers
Of Christianity**
*Our Father, Hail
Mary & Glory Be.*



by
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The prayers of Christianity

The Lord's prayer, Hail Mary and Glory Be

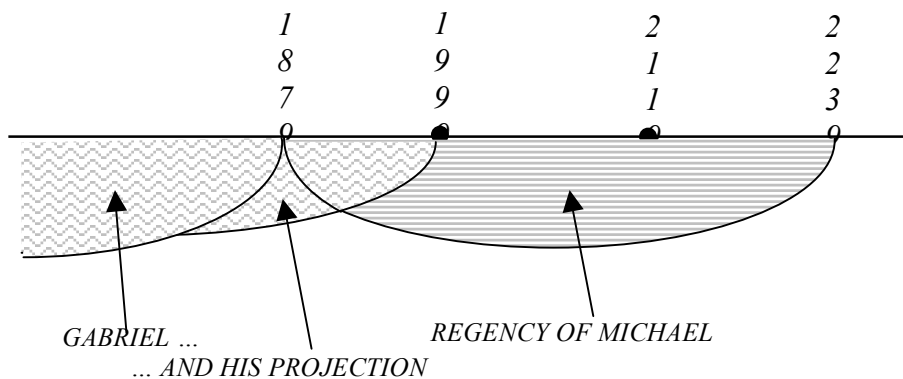
Foreword

The relationship with the divine in the twenty-first century is undoubtedly very different from the relationship that existed in past centuries. Even if we look back only one generation we notice that the habits, and even the spiritual needs, are profoundly changed. Things that were once accepted as dogma are now up for discussion, and the cool-headed rationality and lucidity of thought risks undermining what before was simply accepted, because they addressed the true needs in the depths of peoples hearts.

This new way of relating to the spiritual world can also be seen as a consequence of the intellectual development in the general culture, because at one time the few literate people belonged to the clergy and the nobility and had well-established traditions and values. But this explanation itself is not sufficient.

According to the indications given by the spiritual science of Dr Rudolf Steiner, to whose work we'll refer in our discussion, we learn that the evolution of our planet is governed by seven archangels, each of which wields their influence for a period of about 360 years. Dividing these 360 years into three thirds of 120 years each, we find that the first third still feels the influence of the Archangel who held the previous regency, and the last third, in the same way prepares the coming of the Archangel to follow. Only in the central 120 years does one witness the pure impulse brought by the regency of one Archangel. Between the years 1879 and 2239 the regency was entrusted to the Archangel Michael¹, but in the 120 years between 1879 to 1999 as we have explained, the Michaelic impetus was still in transition from the regency held by the previous Archangel, Gabriel.

Gabriel, the archangel of the Annunciation, is the one who is linked to the current of blood, the stream of inheritance.



The transition from the regency of Gabriel to the regency of Michael

On the other hand, Michael brings the spiritual force that enables Man to undertake *conscious and free activity* dictated by discernment, developed on the basis of spiritual laws that have been learned, free from any constraints, habits or relationships of blood. Under the influence of Michael, Man develops the strength to be free in his

¹ To be accurate Michael has developed into the rank of Archai (Spirits of time who govern entire epochs of time) but we will use the title under which he is normally known.

activity as the fruit of self-determination, of fully conscious self-awareness. The middle 120 years of the regency of Michael began in 1999, the period when his impulse is received by us strong and undiluted. In this period an abundance of the spiritual forces are flowing for us to achieve what we, as free individuals, recognize as true, good and just. At the same time we are disoriented by the loosening we feel toward the ties of the past, including the "traditional" links with the spiritual world. Today these must be consciously and freely reforged. One aspect of this "spiritual hunger" is the birth of countless spiritual movements that pursue the happiness and welfare of people through a variety of practices (unfortunately often questionable), of which the most widely found is undoubtedly meditation, which is almost supplanting prayer in its importance.

Before delving into the world of the most well known prayers, it seems appropriate to say a few words about the relationship and differences between prayer and meditation.

Prayer and meditation

Prayer and meditation are two distinct paths through which one reaches the same goal. One does not exclude the other, but the important thing is that both are undertaken in full awareness. Initially, those who choose to take either of these two paths gives great importance to preparation and to external conditions, such as some of the numerous tips to find a secluded spot, to assume a comfortable position, or perhaps to light candles or burn 's incense. All these indications, if followed with proper awareness, are not quite wrong, but bit by bit as the practice increases and it becomes easier to resonate with the spiritual worlds, the importance of such external aspects fades to become very marginal.

Fasting is a favourable condition for both prayer and meditation (as in general for a relationship with the divine). Such fasting is not just in relation to food (which should not exceed three days to avoid alienation), but also 'fasting' in relation to ones thoughts: for instance take a break from reading the newspaper as soon as one wakes up, or think about the daily chores. These occupy and distract our consciousness. What we tend to learn from the newspapers is rarely pleasant, so our minds are full of negative images and impressions. The thoughts of our daily tasks places material concerns in a place that is sometimes best left open for spiritual considerations. It is appropriate then that prayer takes place at a moment that precedes the daily chores, both so it is done in a more conscious way, and so that the day can start in serenity.

Prayer should not be understood as a means to seek personal intercessions or for fulfilment of our own desires through a superior will becoming an instrument of our own. It is a means to raise ourselves to the spiritual worlds by diminishing our personality, our lower ego, so we can become worthy instruments of the Spirit. The real key to prayer or meditation is: *"Not my will but Thy will be done."*

The cycle of the ego resonates with number 1: Every night our Higher Self² rises into the spiritual worlds, and in the morning our lower bodies are becoming aware of the return of the ego permeated by the divine. Every morning our I wakes up in us, or we can say that our spiritual element is aroused to consciousness, and if the first

² The Higher Self [It: *l'Io Superiore*], also known as the Spirit Self, is the Holy Spirit aspect of the trinity within us. The higher self – with a lower case *h* and *s* – is a general term for the three higher parts known in Anthroposophy as *Spirit Self*, *Life Spirit* and *Spirit Man*, and as *Manas*, *Buddhi* and *Atman* in Sanskrit.

action we make in the day is to liaise with the spiritual world and ask to be instruments of the divine will, we can only benefit.

Evening prayer instead has the role of making us aware of the day that has just passed and to request protection for us who are about to enter the world of darkness. This protection is given to us by our guardian angel, who accompanies our higher components every night in our spiritual worlds and protects the lower components that "remain here" (the physical and etheric bodies). Up to around the age of twenty our angel gives strong protection in this regard, by grace, while from around forty years onwards it is for us to seek this help consciously. Between these two periods there is the work of formation and transformation of the forces of the soul.

When we sleep what we did during the day rises up to the first hierarchy³ where they are evaluated. Every night, therefore, there is a judgement, as there will be at the end of our lives and again at the end of the developmental phase in which we live. As the morning was appropriate for fasting in terms of our ideas, the evening is also a good time to formulate appropriate thoughts. The higher up we climb into the spiritual worlds during sleep the fewer hours of sleep we need, because the sleep we do get is of better quality and it regenerates us quickly. If our life is full of materialistic thoughts our nightly ascent into the spiritual worlds is much more difficult and we need more hours of sleep.

As the night time brings the deepest darkness, noon is the time of the most intense brightness. This should not however be regarded as the moment of greatest consciousness; just because of the excessive brightness at noon we can not look directly at the sun. This dazzling splendour is merely an indicator of the maximum attack of the luciferic forces so that, even at this time, it would be good to give thought to ones protection.

The luciferic influence is also expressed in the clouds: they are a veil that is placed between us and the conquest of higher consciousness, especially the imaginative consciousness⁴ which Lucifer seized. Help in this case comes from Mary. This first veil is the most difficult to pierce: once this is done the conquest of the two additional modes of higher consciousness is relatively easier. It may seem contradictory that Lucifer acts both through sunlight and through the clouds, but in fact these are two different aspects of Lucifer's influence with the latter representing more the luciferic influence united with Ahriman.

The etherization of the blood and the Pisces-Virgo axis

Since Golgotha, ie since Christ united himself with the Earth, every day the Earth inhales and exhales. In the morning, between 5 am to 6 am (solar time) the Earth expires - in the form of ether - the blood of Jesus, which for more than two thousand years fell into the Earth. This is a process called the "etherization of the Blood"⁵. This forms a sort of "etheric cloud" and it is precisely in this "cloud" that the Christ appears to us (the "return above the clouds" of the Gospels, eg Mark 13.26). At sunset, from around 17 to 18 o'clock the reverse process occurs and the Earth inhales the etherised Christic blood. This happens every day in humans too: every morning our blood is etherised and every evening the process is reversed. If we carry out

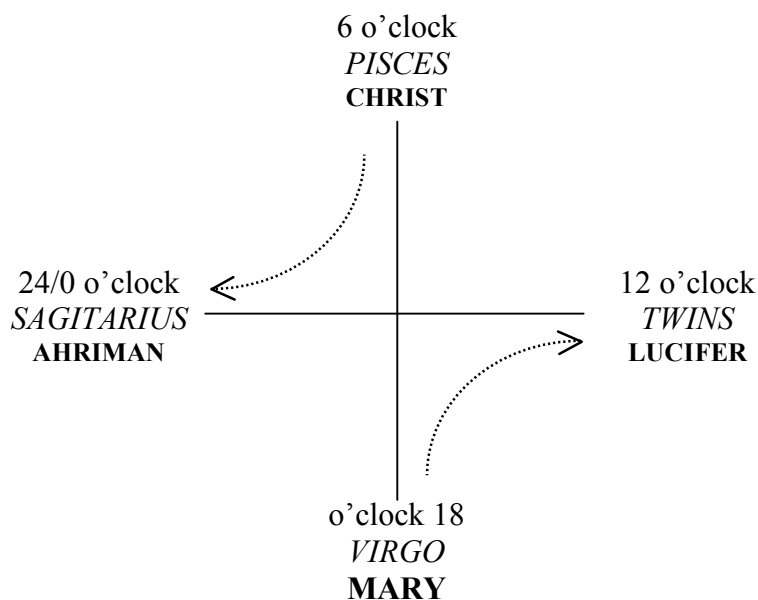
³ These are the Thrones, Cherubim and Seraphim, which together are the Father aspect of the Holy Trinity.

⁴ We can gain Imagainative Consciousness through the transformation of our astral body which enables us to understand life as images in movement or in a form in continuous metamorphosis.

⁵ For more on this see the lecture given by R Steiner in Basle on October 1, 1911 called 'The Etherisation of the Blood and the Etheric Christ'.

proper spiritual work, these two macrocosmic and microcosmic currents merge and we have the Christic experience. Otherwise they run in parallel without meeting.

The macrocosmic forces that promote this process in the morning are those from Pisces - the constellation of reference of the Christic forces - and those of Virgo in the evening - the constellation which brings the forces of Mary. For this reason, our morning prayers should appeal to the Christic forces and our evening prayer would better appeal to Mary.



Relationship between the forces of good and evil

The axis formed by the forces of Pisces and Virgo, from 6 o'clock to 18 o'clock, "cuts" ideally the axis of evil forces which act at times of maximum light (noon) and maximum darkness (midnight).

The strength of Mary helps us to overcome the forces of Lucifer, and the Christic forces come to our aid against the forces of Ahriman. So in the morning, when the Christic forces are strongest, we can be aware of the darkness that we crossed in the night and elaborate this experience for the future. In the evening we can thank Mary for the protection given to us in the day of which noon is the centre.

These two daily meetings take place by grace, and each of us has the opportunity to test this out. Of course, to live through these moments consciously amplifies their strength.

Indications on prayer from Jesus

In the Gospel of Matthew (Mt 6.1-6) Jesus shows us what are the best conditions to recite 'Our Father':

Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.

Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:

That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.

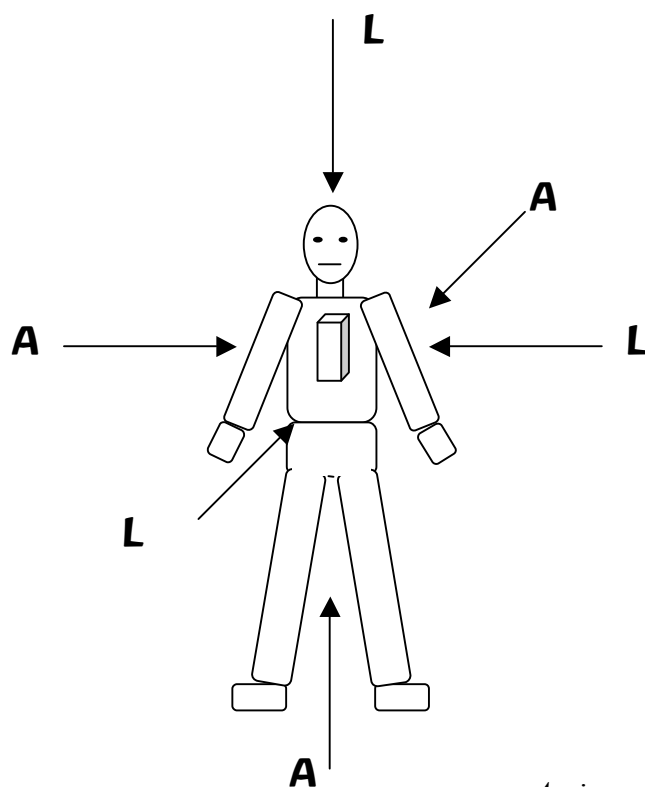
And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. "

What is indicated by the words "thy closet" corresponds to what Gnosticism⁶ defines as the "bridal chamber". It means the place where our masculine or spiritual side and our feminine or soul aspects can merge to give birth to an inner **Child**: this place is the heart and the Child represents the higher spiritual parts – Spirit Self etc.

The forces of evil and human freedom

We, as human beings, are constantly prey to the forces of Lucifer and Ahriman.



An image of our 'small room'

More precisely, the forces of Lucifer work from our left (our feminine side - creative, abandoned, lost in luciferic fantasies) from the front (Lucifer draws us into the seduction of perceptions) and from above (in the same way he draws us towards the spiritual world without giving us the opportunity to gain terrestrial experience); the ahrimanic forces assail us from the right (the male side – the rational in us which,

⁶ Gnosticism was a widespread path of knowledge at the time of Jesus, which was latter repressed by Christians.

if not fertilized by the left side, dries up) from behind (by inducing hardness of the heart) and from below (Ahriman draws us towards the Earth and materialism).

"Compressed" from these six directions all that remains is a minimal and very small area of freedom - shown as a tall thin box - and this space of freedom corresponds precisely to the heart, the "little room". Our heart can reach out to two dangers: that of being stirred up by Lucifer or hardened by Ahriman.

Now the phrase *"let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth"* seems clearer, because it shows the way to ensure that the collaboration between the forces of Lucifer and Ahriman within us is dissolved. We know that only through their union can the third force of evil, the force of the Asura, be present.

In the Gospel of Matthew (24.15) we find the phrase: *"When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation,.."*. The word *abomination* (*ab* - distancing and *homo* - Man) means 'he who is far away from Man', inhuman, while the word *desolation* means a sun-less condition, or one without heart. That which is inhumane in the Sun - and that is where we must ensure that the asuric forces do not take possession of our hearts.

The consonant that in Eurythmy⁷ opens the "room", the heart, is the "G", which is approximately expressed in the action when, with both hands, we part two heavy curtains. Many names from the Old and New Testament, begin with the letter "G", including Jesus, Jonah, John ... that are symbolic of many different degrees of the initiation that develops the relationship between man and the divine.

The abomination of desolation was won for humanity by the spear of Longinus, which pierced the side of Jesus on the Cross. This sword pierced diagonally from lower right to upper left, thus breaking all six directions of attack of the forces of evil. If, for example, he had pierced the breast of Jesus, from right to left, it would cross the vertical axis and the one from front to behind, but not the parallel axis from right to left. In this way all six measures of Evil were defeated. The spear symbolizes the human ego, and this spear in particular was an ancient talisman (a potent spiritual tool lacking moral strength) also owned by Hitler in World War II. To return control of our own heart it is therefore necessary to overcome the forces of Lucifer and Ahriman who act from within us. Then we are masters of this place where *"thy Father which seeth in secret"*. We connect with Him.

Although there are precise formulas for prayer, in reality it is not the words that make the connection possible, but the state of mind, namely "how" one prays. It might be enough just to meditate on the word "Father", to really penetrate its meaning, in order to establish a bridge with the spiritual world.

Meditation

Meditation, like everything that responds to the divine and all that has to do with life and spiritual evolution, is a threefold world: it is a gateway to the divine and can be considered in its three aspects:

Concentration of thought

Now consider what Rudolf Steiner communicated in his book, "Knowledge of the Higher Worlds." Concentration of thought is a preparation for meditation because it is a way the spirit builds the faculty of thinking within itself, as opposed to prayer which acts by feeling. Exercises in the concentration of thought consist in considering an object and developing all the possible thoughts that are relevant to it logically and

⁷ Eurythmy is an art of movement established by Rudolf Steiner to make the etheric forces visible.

refusing to hold any thought that is not somehow connected to it. Through this exercise, one can become a master of ones own thoughts. In the East the development of mastery of thought is symbolized by the image of the sickle: with it the disciple "cuts out" thoughts that they do not want to have when they approach. The activity of thinking is based on the forces of the soul, especially the rational soul⁸, concentrated in the spine, the part of the soul that puts thinking at the service of our personal desires. In this age the majority of people living acts in accordance with the logic of the rational soul.

Meditation

In meditation one places an object for attention that has a spiritual content.

To get started and learn to concentrate ones thought, it is always good to use simple everyday objects, but the next step is to put our attention around something that also has a moral aspect, such as a passage from the Gospels or a *mantra*, and unite ourselves with it. The process first involving our thinking abilities now goes to our feelings, and this is thanks to the forces of the consciousness soul. The rational soul can only attain concentration, but the real work of meditation belongs properly to the consciousness soul.

The consciousness soul is of our Spiritual Self, or the Holy Spirit in us. In the diagram we have now abandoned the lower triangle, still tied to matter, to climb into the upper triangle of the spirit.

The Spirit Self, also called *Manas*, or Son of Man is our first spiritual component: the Jesus aspect within us begins to emerge.

The union with our Spirit Self

Through this union the spiritual world begins to be manifest and to flow in us. We have started to open our "small room - the heart," and so, by opening our consciousness we allow it to flow through our thoughts, feelings and progressive impulses, interpenetrated by all that is true, good and just. Now the process is ready to move from the heart-feeling into the blood-will.

The other two parts represented in the image are the Loving Life Spirit and the Spirit Man which correspond that aspect of ourselves which is called the Son of God, therefore not tied to the forces of Jesus but to those of Christ. To develop these parts is equivalent to becoming the *Christophorus*, that is bearers of Christ, and is the prerequisite to start to become actively involved in cosmic evolution, becoming collaborators and instruments together with the first hierarchy. All of this corresponds



The union of the higher and lower Man

⁸ According to the science of the spirit, our soul is divided into three parts: the sentient soul, which seeks to satisfy its desires by any means, the rational soul which seeks a lawful way to meet them by putting thought at its service, and the consciousness soul, which decides whether the need is in fact true, good and right and whether it is to be satisfied or not.

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