

The Cathar ‘Pater’

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Pater noster qui es in celis, sanctificetur nomen tuum; adveniat regnum tuum. Fiat voluntas tua sicut in cello et in terra. Panem nostrum supersubstantialiam da nobis hodie. Et demitte nobis debita nostra sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris. Et ne nos inducas in temptationem sed libera nos a Malo. Quoniam tuum est regnum et virtus et Gloria in secula. Amen.

Commentary (or the hidden meaning according to the Cathars):

“Our Father”: These two words are in the ‘vocative’ mode. It is as if one were saying: ‘O Father of those who need to be saved.’

“Who dwells in the Heavens”: ‘You who lives in the holy heavens (or even ‘amongst the heavenly Virtues’). ‘Our Father who dwells in the Heavens’ is to distinguish Him from the Father of the Devil¹, who is a liar and the father of the evil ones; which is to say – those who cannot benefit from divine compassion, which could save them. This is the reason why we say “Our Father”.

“Hallowed be Thy Name”: for by the name of God we hear the law of the Christ. It is as if we are saying: ‘May Your law be affirmed in Your people.’

“Thy kingdom come”: by the ‘kingdom of God’ we must hear the ‘Christ’. In the gospels, Christ says: “...because the kingdom of God is within you.” (Luke XVII:21) But by ‘the kingdom of God’ we can also understand ‘the people of God who must be saved’. This is why the prophet Joel says: “The priests and ministers of the Lord, lying prostrate between the temple porch and the altar, wept and proclaimed: ‘Forgive us, Lord, have mercy on Your people; do not give Your heritage to reproach and expose them to the insults of foreign nations who would mock, saying: ‘where is your God?’” (Joel II:17) It is to prevent this very same that every day Christians piously pray the ‘Our Father’ – for the salvation of the people of God.

“Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven”: signifies: ‘May Your Will be accomplished in these people who are attached to a terrestrial nature, as it is accomplished in the kingdom on high, or in Christ – who said: “I came not to do my own Will, but the Will of Him who sent me, the Will of my Father”. (John VI:38)

“Give us this day”: means: ‘in this time of thanksgiving; or: ‘while we are in this temporal life, give us your strength (*virtutem tuam*), so that we may accomplish the law of your Son Jesus Christ.’

“Our supersubstantial bread”: We understand *supersubstantial bread* to mean the law of Christ which was given to all peoples. We must believe, then, that it is this bread of which Isaiah speaks when he says: “On that day seven women will take hold of one man and say, ‘We will nourish ourselves and provide our own clothes; only let us be called by your name.’” (Isaiah IV:1) David also says: “My heart is blighted like withered grass, for I forgot to eat my food.” (Psalm CII:4) It is written in the book of Wisdom: “Instead of these things, You gave Your people the food of angels, and

¹ John 8:44 – *oti pseustès esti Kai o pater autou: Quia mendax est, et pater ejus.* Mani translated this to mean “For (the Devil) is a liar, like his father”. Many Cathars interpreted this verse from John as Mani did.

without their toil You supplied them from heaven with bread ready to eat, providing every pleasure and suited to every taste. For Your sustenance manifested Your sweetness toward Your children; and the bread, ministering to the desire of the one who took it, was changed to suit every one's liking. (Wisdom of Solomon XVI:20-21) And the Lord said in Isaiah: "Share your food with the hungry and provide the poor wanderer with shelter; for when you see the naked, clothe the, and do not turn away from your own flesh and blood." (Isaiah LVIII:7). It is about this bread, we believe, that Jeremiah spoke in his *Lamentations*: "...the children beg for bread, but no one gives it to them." (Lamentations IV:4).

Christ, in the Gospel of John, says to the Jews: "I tell you the truth, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven; for the bread of god is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." (John VI:32-33). And again, "I am the bread of life." (i.e. 'it is I whose mission is Life') "He who comes to me will never go hungry..." (John VI:35) And once again: "I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life. I am the bread of life. Your forefathers ate the manna in the desert, yet they died. But here is the bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread (i.e. 'if he observes my precepts'), he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world (i.e. 'for the people')." "Then the Jews began to argue sharply among themselves; How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" This question was debated amongst the Jewish people, how Christ could give them his precepts to observe: they ignored, in effect, the Divinity of the Son of God. "Jesus said to them, 'I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man (i.e. 'if you do not observe the precepts of the Son of God'), and drink of his blood (i.e. 'if you do not receive the spiritual understanding of the New Testament'), you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him.'" (John VI:47-56) Elsewhere, Christ says: "My food is to do the will of Him who sent me and to finish His work." (John IV:34) Assuredly, those priests who mislead do not partake of the body of Our Lord Jesus Christ, nor truly drink of his blood, for they do not live in Our Lord. This is why the blessed John said in his first Epistle: "But if anyone puts His word into practice, the love of God is perfected in him. This is how we know we are in Christ. Those who claim to live in him must walk as Jesus Christ walked." (1 John II:5-6).

It is again of this Bread that is written, according to our faith, in the Gospel of Saint Matthew: "While they ate, Jesus took the bread" – which is to say: 'the precepts of the Law and the Prophets'; - "he blessed it" – meaning: 'exalted and confirmed the precepts'; "broke it" – meaning: 'explained the precepts spiritually'; "gave it to his disciples" – meaning: 'instructed them so that they could observe the precepts spiritually'. "And said to them: Take", - meaning: 'teach these precepts'; "eat," – meaning: 'preach them everywhere'. This is why blessed John the Evangelist was told: "Take this book and eat it..." etc., "then (the angel) told me:; 'you must prophesy again before my men, nations and kings'" (Revelation X:9,11) "This is my body": the Lord says that the bread is His body. Earlier He said: "The bread I give you is my flesh (that I must give) for the life of the world". (John VI:51 & Matthew XXVI:26) It is, in truth, the commandment of the Law and of the Prophets, heard in a spiritual sense, that we believe, according to our faith, He designated by these words: "This is my body" – meaning: '*It is in them that I am, it is in them that I live*'. This is why the Apostle says, in the first Epistle to the Corinthians: "Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? There is but one loaf, and we, who are many, are but one body, for we all partake of the same". (I Corinthians X:16-17) This signifies that we participate in the same spiritual sense of the Law, of the Prophets and of the New Testament. Another witness: "Take and eat, for this is my body, that is given for

you” – meaning: *‘these spiritual precepts from the ancient Scriptures are my body; it is for you that they shall be transmitted to the people’* – “Do this in remembrance of me. In the same way, after they had supped, he took the cup and said: “this cup is the new covenant (sealed) by my blood; do this in remembrance of me, every time you drink”. (1 Corinthians XI:23-25). ***It is of this supersubstantial “bread” that we speak.***

“And forgive us our debts”: meaning: ‘do not ascribe the sins we have committed in the past to those of us who desire to observe the commandments of your Son’.

“As we forgive our debtors”: meaning: ‘as we forgive those who persecute us and who do us harm’.

“And lead us not into temptation”: meaning: ‘do not allow us to be tempted any longer now that we desire to follow Your Law’. There is, in reality, *carnal temptation*, and *diabolical temptation*. Diabolical temptation is that which comes from the heart, through suggestions from the devil, like wrongdoing, iniquitous thoughts, hate and the like. Carnal temptation results from human nature, like hunger, thirst, cold and everything similar²; we cannot avoid them. This is why the Apostle says, in the first Epistle to the Corinthians: “May no temptation seize you except those that are human³. God is faithful and will not suffer you to be tempted beyond what you can bear; but in permitting temptation, He will provide for a way out so that you can stand up under it”. (1 Corinthians X:13).

“But deliver us from Evil”: means: ‘from the Devil who is the tempter of the faithful, and from his works’.

“For Thine is the kingdom”: The words (and those that follow) are found in the Greek and Hebrew texts⁴ – and signify: ‘we are Your people, which is why You will do for us what is asked’.

“...and the power”: by which we understand: ‘You have the power to save us’.

“...and the glory”: meaning: ‘to You be all praise and honor when You do this for Your people’.

“Unto the aeons”: meaning: ‘in the heavenly realms⁵’.

“Amen”: signifying: ‘without failure (*sine defectu*).

² Diabolical temptation is that which corrupts, or tries to corrupt, the operations of the soul. Carnal temptation corresponds to the ‘needs’ of the body. The pleasures it proposes are *natural* and *necessary*, but are *evil*, because the *physical body* is *satanic*.

³ Roman Catholics interpret this passage a little differently: “You have not *yet* been seized by temptations except those common to man.

⁴ These last words: *Quoniam tuum est regnum et virtus et Gloria in secula...* belong to the Greek text. However, the Latin versions did not ignore this text. The version of the Gospel of Saint Matthew that was used for this commentary did not contain them, but the author remarked on them.

⁵ **Secula** is translated from the Greek: *Aiōnas*. These are not ‘centuries’ or ‘ages’ – in a temporal sense – but spiritual realms in the heavenly hierarchies.