

## **SESSION 4: THY WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN**

The following excerpt from the Catechism of the Catholic Church will serve as the session material to be read by participants before the meeting.

### **III. “THY WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN”**

**2822** Our Father “desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” He “is forbearing toward you, not wishing that any should perish.”<sup>96</sup> His commandment is “that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.” This commandment summarizes all the others and expresses his entire will. (851; 2196)

**2823** “He has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ ... to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will.” We ask insistently for this loving plan to be fully realized on earth as it is already in heaven. (59)

**2824** In Christ, and through his human will, the will of the Father has been perfectly fulfilled once for all. Jesus said on entering into this world: “Lo, I have come to do your will, O God.” Only Jesus can say: “I always do what is pleasing to him.”<sup>100</sup> In the prayer of his agony, he consents totally to this will: “not my will, but yours be done.” For this reason Jesus “gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father.”<sup>102</sup> “And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” (475; 612)

**2825** “Although he was a Son, [Jesus] learned obedience through what he suffered.” How much more reason have we sinful creatures to learn obedience—we who in him have become children of adoption. We ask our Father to unite our will to his Son’s, in order to fulfill his will, his plan of salvation for the life of the world. We are radically incapable of this, but united with Jesus and with the power of his Holy Spirit, we can surrender our will to him and decide to choose what his Son has always chosen: to do what is pleasing to the Father.<sup>105</sup> (615)

In committing ourselves to [Christ], we can become one spirit with him, and thereby accomplish his will, in such wise that it will be perfect on earth as it is in heaven.

Consider how [Jesus Christ] teaches us to be humble, by making us see that our virtue does not depend on our work alone but on grace from on high. He commands each of the faithful who prays to do so universally, for the whole world. For he did not say “thy will be done in me or in us,” but “on earth,” the whole earth, so that error may be banished from it, truth take root in it, all vice be destroyed on it, virtue flourish on it, and earth no longer differ from heaven.

**2826** By prayer we can discern “what is the will of God” and obtain the endurance to do it. Jesus teaches us that one enters the kingdom of heaven not by speaking words, but by doing “the will of my Father in heaven.”<sup>109</sup>

**2827** “If any one is a worshiper of God and does his will, God listens to him.” Such is the power of the Church’s prayer in the name of her Lord, above all in the Eucharist. Her prayer is also a communion of intercession with the all-holy Mother of God<sup>111</sup> and all the saints who have been pleasing to the Lord because they willed his will alone: (2611; 796)

It would not be inconsistent with the truth to understand the words, “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven,” to mean: “in the Church as in our Lord Jesus Christ himself”; or “in the Bride who has been betrothed, just as in the Bridegroom who has accomplished the will of the Father.”