

Fr. Romeo Evangelista Homily
Sunday, July 27, 2025
17th Sunday in Ordinary Time
Cycle C

Padre Pio once said, “The greatest act of faith is to say ‘Your will be done’ – and mean it.” And honestly, that is one of the hardest lines in the *Our Father* to pray with integrity. Most of us would rather say, “Lord, here’s my will... bless it.” We are wired to want control, clarity, and comfort. But Jesus teaches us to pray something much more courageous: “*Your will be done.*” And this, according to Henri Nouwen, is the heart of spiritual maturity: having a surrendered heart.

Today’s gospel passage begins with the disciples asking: “Lord, teach us to pray.” Notice: they did not ask, “*Teach us a prayer.*” They asked for a way of life. Jesus responds with the *Our Father*... And tucked right in the middle is this challenging phrase: “Your will be done.” It is not flowery. It is not poetic. But it is powerful.

It is said that prayer is not about manipulating God into doing what we want. It is about being reshaped by God’s will. In other words, prayer is not about bending God to our plans; it is about letting God shape our hearts to trust his will, his time, and his love. The purpose of prayer is not to get what we want from God, but to become who God wants us to be. Henri Nouwen, in one of his reflections on prayer, says, “Prayer is not about finding the right words, but

about allowing the Word to transform us.” Prayer is not just us reaching up to heaven. It is also God shaping our hearts down here on earth.

To say “*Your will be done*” is not passivity. *It is not resignation. It is trust.* Think of Jesus in Gethsemane – overwhelmed and sorrowful – but still able to pray: “Not my will, but yours be done.” That was not weak surrender; that was divine courage. The kind of courage we are invited to imitate. Prayer is not a “holy wish-list” we send up hoping for express delivery. It is more like heart formation school: where we slowly stop saying, “Lord, here’s what I want.” and start saying, “Lord, teach me to want what You know is best.”

The *Our Father*, then, is not a transaction – it is formation. When we pray “Your will be done,” we are letting God reshape our expectations, our desires, and even our grief. We are letting go of fear and anxiety – not because the road will be easy, but because we know Who walks with us. It is like letting go of the steering wheel and trusting that the One who created the road knows where it leads.

Sometimes we fight so hard to stay in charge, thinking surrender means weakness. But real surrender is not collapse; it is relief. It is realizing we were never meant to carry everything or figure everything out alone. When we stop clinging to our own plans and start trusting God’s, we do not fall apart – we finally fall into peace.

Maybe today you are praying for clarity, healing, direction, or hope. Jesus invites us to pray boldly, but always anchored in this line: "Your will be done." Because what God wills for us is never destruction. It is always love, growth, and eternal life. God's will may not always give us what we want *right now*, but it always leads us to what we need forever.

So today, let us pray not just with our lips, but with our lives. Let us dare to pray:

"Your will be done..." even when we are scared... even when we do not understand... even when we are waiting.

Because the will of God is not a threat... it is our hope. And when we surrender to it, we are not losing... we are finally becoming free.