

# philippine studies

Ateneo de Manila University • Loyola Heights, Quezon City • 1108 Philippines

---

## **The Lord's Prayer and Today's Christian: We Dare to Say our Father**

Review Author: James J. McCann

*Philippine Studies* vol. 13, no. 4 (1965): 878–880

Copyright © Ateneo de Manila University

---

Philippine Studies is published by the Ateneo de Manila University. Contents may not be copied or sent via email or other means to multiple sites and posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's written permission. Users may download and print articles for individual, noncommercial use only. However, unless prior permission has been obtained, you may not download an entire issue of a journal, or download multiple copies of articles.

Please contact the publisher for any further use of this work at [philstudies@admu.edu.ph](mailto:philstudies@admu.edu.ph).

<http://www.philippinestudies.net>  
Fri June 30 13:30:20 2008

the very nations that Professor Cohen and others want the United States to defend.

In other parts of the book the author opposes American-sponsored military alliances and military allies. Yet he contradicts himself by upholding the need for the United States to maintain "a global network of military and political alliances" to increase world trade and acquire the strategic materials needed by the United States to support its military strength.

Other weaknesses in the book are apparent but they are less serious. Professor Cohen discusses very well the many forces which keep Western Europe divided and disunited as an independent geopolitical region. Yet he does not explain why he includes Western Europe as a "power core" on the same level of importance as the Soviet Union and the United States. The section on the Middle East and Southeast Asia poses these geopolitical regions as "Shatterbelts" or areas where a direct confrontation is taking place between the two superpowers. Here again the author reveals too much stress on geography and insufficient consideration of politics. Are not the Congo, the Dominican Republic, Cuba, and Angola which are far from these Shatterbelts also areas of confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union? Are not these distant nations involved in the global ideological and political struggle because of actual or possible Communist expansion rather than because of their geographical location? Might not other countries far from the Sino-Soviet periphery such as Venezuela, Haiti, Ghana, Guinea, Tanzania, etc. likely become immersed in this conflict in the future?

The book ends with an appendix written by Professor Andrew Gyorgy also of Boston University on "International Relations: Concept and Application." It discusses the four historical approaches to the study of international relations: the legalistic, the organizational-idealistic, the strategic-realistic, and the contemporary problem approach to the Cold War. It is not clear to the reader just why this brief general discussion of the much wider field of international relations was added at the end of a study on the specific topic of geopolitics. Yet it is also useful and presents additional material that may be helpful to the layman and the new student of the field.

FRANK C. DARLING

## THE LORD'S PRAYER AND TODAY'S CHRISTIAN

WE DARE TO SAY OUR FATHER. By Louis Evelyn. New York: Herder and Herder, 1965. 129 pp. The original edition, NOTRE

**PÈRE—AUX SOURCES DE NOTRE FRATERNITÉ**, was translated by James Langdale.

**UNDERSTANDING THE LORD'S PRAYER.** By H. Van den Bussche. New York: Sheed and Ward, 1963. 144 pp. The original edition, **HET ONZE VADER**, was translated by Charles Schaldenbrand.

"If a man says, 'I love God', and hates his brother, he is a liar" (1 John 4:20). In a manner equally succinct, direct and cogent Father Evelyn presents his commentary on the Our Father. He expresses his thoughts always in crisp, sometimes in pungent, language and succeeds in his aim: again to point up in sharp and demanding clarity the truths contained in the Our Father and their meaning for daily life. "The tragedy of our generous but desperate age is that we want a brotherhood without a Father. But it is even more tragic to watch so-called Christians who want fatherhood without brotherhood, who want to be sons of the Father without being brothers of other sons".

Father Evelyn is a man of his times. With deep sympathy he grasps the doubts and uncertainties that beset men today. He shares their impatience with sham, their deep-down longing for personal integrity, for complete honesty in their relations with God and with their fellowmen. Furthermore, he writes as a man who has probed the deeper reaches of spirituality expressed in the Our Father, not merely through study and prayer, but through that experience wherein only by suffering does a man make Christ's doctrine his own possession. "We must not tolerate injustice, yet tolerate that God should tolerate it. This is what was asked of the priest-workers: a heart-rending acceptance, a faith that went beyond scandal, in spite of scandal, giving up what appeared to us to be the most urgent, the most obviously just and necessary form of atonement. This was the only thing that God could still demand from those beloved sons who had given up everything else to follow Him, the only thing which He could still give them to give, the only deeper fulfilment of their devotion".

On rare occasions the author allows himself a literary freedom not substantiated by available evidence; for instance, stating that Our Lady's trial of obedience was increased by the fact that "her betrothed quarreled with her" (p. 76). Nor does the commentary, taken as a whole, enjoy the same consistent excellence; for instance, the two chapters, "Forgive Us Our Trespases" and "Lead Us Not Into Temptation", do not seem to maintain the same high quality excellence found in other chapters.

The book, however, is recommended to all. It is not a book to be read through at one sitting. Rather it is for slow reading, with

many a pause for pondering and prayer, in order to sound and relish the truths presented in its pages.

Father Van den Bussche examines the *Our Father* clause by clause, basing his commentary on Matthew's text but with constant reference to the shorter version of Luke. His commentary throughout is richly illuminated from scripture. His concern is to place the prayer in its true context in the life of the Risen Christ, within which the Christian lives. He sees its meaning in the light of what we are now and what we shall be. "The Christian who prays the *Our Father* must always remain conscious of his intermediate state; he lives between an 'already' and a 'not yet'; within a reality already present advancing toward a reality yet to come".

Thus the first three requests of the *Our Father* are concerned with realities already present, but more so with those same realities as they are destined to reach their eschatological plenitude only at the end of time. These realities, however, concern the disciple here and now. When he asks that God sanctify His Name, make His Kingdom come and bring His Will for salvation to fulfilment, the disciple at the same time commits himself here and now to sanctify God's Name, to work for the advancement of the Kingdom and to accomplish the divine Will. Moreover, since he prays for these realities in their eschatological plenitude, the disciple's present actions with regard to the Name, the Kingdom and the Will also acquire an eschatological value. They are decisive in what concerns the final judgment. The last times, ushered in at the end of Jesus' life, are no longer for the Christian something purely and simply in the future. Each position he takes here and now has an eschatological dimension, and his prayer for the realization of the end of time implies the complete gift of himself now to the service of the Kingdom.

The last three requests of the *Our Father* concern the needs of the intermediate period. Fully conscious of his condition as wayfarer the disciple, aware of his needs, asks for his daily subsistence, the bread of the poor, for pardon for his sins and ends with an urgent request to be delivered from the power of the Evil One.

Finally, all the requests are formulated by the disciple in so far as he is part of a community. It is the entire community together that is orientated toward the sanctifying of God's Name, the coming of the Kingdom and the fulfilment of God's salvific Will. It is the community together that prays to obtain the bread of the poor, the remission of its debts and the deliverance from the grasp of Satan.

Father Van den Bussche's scriptural scholarship illuminates but never overweighs his commentary. This work is a rich source for meditation.