

INTRODUCTION:  
“LEAD US NOT INTO  
TEMPTATION, BUT DELIVER US  
FROM EVIL”



The Spring 2020 issue of *Communio* brings to a close our series on the “Our Father,” turning to the prayer’s final petition with the theme “Lead Us Not into Temptation, but Deliver Us from Evil.” Whence arises the enigma of iniquity in the heart of the creature, and how is the sinner transformed through God’s victory over evil in Christ? We recall St. Augustine’s saying that “he who created us without us did not will to save us without us.” The authors included here wrestle with our responsibility both in turning away from God’s love, and, set free by grace, in enjoying anew “the freedom of the sons of God” (Rom 8:21).

In “*In this Way the Love of God was Revealed* (1 Jn 4:9): Atonement as a ‘Patrogenetic’ Process (Part I),” **Margaret M. Turek** reflects on how the Son’s death on behalf of sinners is rooted in the Father’s begetting love. Turek plumbs the prefiguration of this mystery in the Old Testament, where atonement appears as the converted sinner’s God-empowered involvement in God’s own passionate overcoming of sin. God’s gratuitous desire to take part in man’s suffering is at once his act of regenerating man to collaborate with his saving initiative, which the faithful do by enduring the effects of sin penitently and steadfastly. “*Filial love-suffering is engendered love—love that is mobilized as a result of being loved by a paternally devoted God.*”

In “‘And Lead Us Not into Temptation’—The Our Father as an Inquiry into Our Image of God and Speech about the Devil,” **Helmut Hoping** argues that the sixth petition of the “Our Father” should be patiently interpreted in view of the whole drama of Scripture rather than rationalistically softened by a new translation. God’s action in leading us into and through temptation suggests nothing sinister, but rather expresses God’s companioning will to restore and to sanctify, as is revealed fully in the temptations undergone by Jesus. To ignore God’s role in our temptation is merely to defer the matter, since “it remains the case that it is God who allows the devil to tempt us.” Hoping clarifies that the petition, far from placing suspicion on God, provides us with the utmost reason for encouragement in the midst of spiritual trial.

**Paolo Prosperi**, in “‘And If They Fall as Lucifer Fell’: On the Lure of Anarchy,” ponders the inscrutable root motive for evil in the demonic rebellion against God. Drawing on J. R. R. Tolkien’s mythopoetics, St. Thomas Aquinas’s theology, and St. John’s gospel, Prosperi submits that the rebel vainly desires to be a creative origin apart from God. This represents a will to usurp the Father who alone is “without principle,” rather than to fulfill one’s creaturehood by receiving a share in God’s originality in a filial manner. Sin is thus a failure to accept the truth that “in love the one who takes the initiative, the lover, is not higher than the beloved, than the one to whom the gift is destined, since the fulfillment of the gift in which the act of love consists is in equal measure the product of the *fiat* of both: lover and beloved.”

**Will Desmond** examines the distinctiveness of Christian forgiveness relative to Greek literature, philosophy, and religion in “*Hamartia*, Evil, and Deity in Archaic and Classical Greek Thought.” It is revealing that sacrifice, though a prime requirement of Greek piety, was not directed toward the expiation of sin nor toward the reception of mercy from the gods. In the tragic worldview, “the divine is jealous, and often cunningly malign, if it does indeed lure individuals to their doom. . . . To such deities, one cannot even pray: ‘Lead us not into temptation.’” Not even the classical philosophers present moral failing as in need of or affected by divine mercy. According to Desmond, confession of a God who can forgive us and who calls us to forgiveness paradoxically demands a graver account

of sin’s transgression than was acknowledged by the pagan world before Christ.

In “Sovereignty and Stewardship: Understanding Sin in the Old Testament,” **Anthony Pagliarini** discusses how ancient Israel views evil not only as interior privation but also as a substantial defilement or contagion. Sacrifice addresses both these views of sin, as an externally efficacious work of bearing away the weight of sin that at once transforms the disposition of the worshipping participant in the rite. On Pagliarini’s telling, Israel’s sense of evil as an impurity to be borne away never forgets God’s absolute sovereignty over evil and in no way discounts man’s responsibility for sin. In liturgy, God entrusts to man the power to share in restoring what man himself has wounded by sinning. Israel’s cult “does in fact stay the destructive power of sin, and it does so primarily by rehabilitating the human person to his and her divinely willed role in creation.”

**Veronica Chiari A. Dy-Liacco**, in “The Jewish Tradition of the Divine Presence, Sacrifice, and Substitutive Suffering: The Background to a Catholic Understanding,” investigates the place of expiation in ancient Hebrew worship and how it informs an ethics of representative love. In Israel’s sacrificial economy, approach to God’s self-given presence calls for an obedient, covenantal participation in atoning for sin in which the priest and the offering stand in for the people. In the Jewish diaspora, this pattern of expiation still guides Jewish devotion and life: “The sacrifices continue in the form of ethical living, the fulfillment of the Torah, as the manner by which the human person may ‘cleave’ to the divine presence.” Invoking the ethics of vicarious suffering for the sake of another in the thought of Jewish philosopher Emmanuel Levinas, Dy-Liacco brings this sense of corporate responsibility into conversation with Christian soteriology and the Church’s sacramental life.

In “Unmasking the Pharaoh in the Garden of Eden: A Canonical Reading of Genesis 2–3,” **Matthew A. Tsakanikas** explains why the drama of the Fall should be read with the Israelite experience of liberation from Egypt in mind. Tsakanikas contends that the earliest audiences of the Pentateuch would have recognized a typological relationship between the tempting serpent and the tyrannical pharaoh, as well as a corresponding relationship between the primordial disobedience in Eden and

Israel's idolatry of the golden calf at Sinai. Recovering a sense for these relationships provides a foundation for Christian spiritual readings of the Old Testament that is interior to Scripture itself. "If the historical events of Exodus are rich enough to contain typological meaning of things to come," Tsakanikas notes, "they also are rich enough to tell us about God's eternal covenant 'in the beginning . . .' through a context in which to understand it."

*Retrieving the Tradition* features a translated excerpt from **Gustav Siewerth's** *The Christian Doctrine of Original Sin*. In "The Nature of Original Sin," Siewerth maintains that original sin is best understood as a loss of the grace of intimacy with God in which Adam was created. This loss, though not explicitly a personal rejection of God, hinders the fallen from faithfully willing their end of communion with God and thereby diminishes their reception of the created order wherein God manifests his glory. Though fallen man cannot but desire the good most deeply, Siewerth holds that, lacking grace, even his natural powers and responsibilities will inevitably remain unfulfilled, falling short of their own inborn promise. "Only when creation brings forth love and desire from within itself—letting it flow forth from the heart—is its movement toward God a true image of eternal love, which is simultaneously a pure, holy freedom." □

—The Editors