

PRAYER'S DOXOLOGY: FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM, THE POWER, AND THE GLORY FOREVER, AMEN

MT 6:13; Ps 9:1-2; Eph 3:14-21

“Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires are known and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.” —Gregorian Sacramentary

I. PERSONS, BY NATURE, DESIRE (and deserve) PRAISE or GLORY

A. Evidence:

1. Children—“look at me, grandma”
2. Teens—hunger for parents’ approval—fathers especially important
3. Students—proper praise often more significant than accomplishments
4. Adults—husbands & wives continually hungry for affirmation; employees need encouragement

B. Reasons justifying the desire for praise

1. Desire for Dignity: recognition of one’s being, who one is; worth, status
2. Desire for Recognition: work “well done, good and faithful servant”
3. Desire for Love: reassuring words, demonstrative acts
4. Desire to bask in Glory

C. Golden Mean

1. Neither Depreciation—improperly undervaluing
2. Nor Flattery—untrue exaggerations
3. But Praise—truthful kindness, gratitude

D. Ultimately, C.S. Lewis says: “It is written that we shall ‘stand before’ Him, shall appear, shall be inspected. The promise of glory is the promise, almost incredible and only possible by the work of Christ, that some of us, that any of us who really chooses, shall actually survive that examination, shall find approval, shall please God. To please God . . . to be a real ingredient in the divine happiness . . . to be loved by God, not merely pitied, but delighted in as an artist delights in his work or a father in a son—it seems impossible, a weight or burden of glory which our shouts can hardly sustain. But so it is.”

“For glory means good report with God, acceptance by God, response, acknowledgment, and welcome into the heart of things.”

“Perhaps it seems rather crude to describe glory as the fact of being ‘noticed by God. But this is the language of the New Testament.” (“The Weight of Glory”)

E. Utterly appropriate, then, to praise and give glory to God

II. GRATITUDE a GREAT VIRTUE—“make gratitude your attitude”

A. To Cicero: it’s the “mother” of all the virtues

B. To Peanuts: “Every day is beautiful of it begins and ends with being grateful.”

C. Revealing:

1. Healthy Orientation: others (true humility)
2. Holy Character: inner self, heart condition (real integrity)

III. OBJECTIVELY REAL GOD (ONE IN THREE PERSONS) TO BE PRAISED

A. **Father:** Supreme Being

1. **Creator:** “O thou whose pow’r o’er moving worlds presides, / Whose voice created, and whose wisdom guides, / On darkling man in pure effulgence shine, / And clear the clouded mind with light divine. / ’Tis thine alone to calm the pious breast / With silent confidence and holy rest: / From thee, Great God, we spring, to thee we tend, / Path, motive, guide, original, and end.” —Boethius

“Lord, purge our eyes to see / Within the seed a tree, / Within the glowing egg a bird, / Within the shroud a butterfly. / Till, taught by such we see / Beyond all creatures, Thee / And hearken to Thy tender word / And hear its ‘Fear not; it is I.’” —Christina Rossetti

“Let my soul praise you that it may love you, let it praise you for your mercy and kindness. Without ceasing, your whole creation speaks your praise. Man speaks his praise, animals and lifeless things praise you through those who see and speak on their behalf. Your creation helps our souls to rise up to you and wonder at your love. In that wonder we find strength and refreshment.” —Augustine

2. **Sustainer:** “O God, the Father of our Saviour Jesus Christ, Whose name is great, Whose nature is blissful, Whose goodness is inexhaustible, God and Ruler of all things, Who art blessed forever; before Whom stand thousands and thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand, the hosts of holy angels and archangels; sanctify, O Lord, our souls and bodies and spirits, search our consciences, and cast out of us every evil thought, every base desire, all envy and pride, all wrath and anger, and all that is contrary to Thy holy will. And grant us, O Lord, Lover of men, with a pure heart and contrite soul, to call upon Thee, our holy God and Father Who art in heaven.” —Liturgy of St James
 3. **Judge:** “Lord, God almighty, Father of Jesus Christ, your beloved Child, through whom we have come to know you, God of the angels and powers, God of all creation God of the are that lives in your present, the race of the just.
 “I bless you because you have thought me worthy of this day and hour and worthy to be numbered among the martyrs and to drink the chalice of your Christ so as to rise and live for ever, body and soul, in the immortality of the Holy Spirit.” —Polycarp of Smyrna (just before martyrdom)
- B. Son: Savior**
1. **Incarnate:** one of us—“O blessed Jesus Christ, who didst bid all who carry heavy burdens to come to thee, refresh us with thy presence and thy power. Quiet our understandings and give ease to our hearts, by bringing us close to things infinite and eternal. Open to us the mind of God, that in his light we may see light. And crown thy choice of us to be thy servants, by making us springs of strength and joy to all whom we serve.” —Evelyn Underhill
 2. **Crucified:** saving us—“The Old Rugged Cross”
 3. **Risen:** leading us Home—“O Lord Jesus Christ, who hast said that Thou art the way, the truth, and the life; Suffer us not at any time to stray from Thee, who art the way; nor to distrust Thy promises, who art the truth; nor to rest in any other thing than Thee, who art the life; beyond which there is nothing to be desired, neither in heaven, nor in earth; for Thy Name’s sake.” *Book of Christian Prayers, 1578*
- C. Spirit:** Sanctifier—“Creator Spirit, by whose aid / The world’s foundations first were laid, / Come, visit every pious mind, / Come, pour thy joys on humankind; / From sin and sorrow set us free, / and makes us temples worthy thee.”—Attributed to Emperor Charlemagne
- D. Recognizing, applauding, anticipating**
1. **Kingdom:** “Grant, Lord, that we may hold to you without parting, worship you without wearying, serve you without failing; faithfully seek you, happily find you, and for ever possess you, the only God, blessed, now and for ever.” —Anselm
 2. **Power:** “O Thou, who fillest heaven and earth, ever acting, ever at rest, who art present everywhere and everywhere art wholly present, who art not absent even when far off, who with thy whole being fillest yet transcendest all things, who teaches the hearts of the faithful without the din of words; teach us, we pray Thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord.” —Augustine
 3. **Glory:** “O gracious and holy Father, give us wisdom to perceive thee, diligence to seek thee, patience to wait for thee, eyes to behold thee, a heart to meditate upon thee, and a life to proclaim thee; through the power of the Spirit of Jesus Christ our Lord.” —Benedict of Nursia

IV. SUBJECTIVELY APPROPRIATE WAYS TO PRAISE

- A. Words**
1. Poems—*Psalms* & T.W. Eliot’s Four Quartets
 2. Histories—*Exodus* & Eusebius’s *Church History*
 3. Creeds—NT passages & Apostles’ & Nicene
- B. Music**
1. Instruments—OT illustrations & Church history (i.e. organ)
 2. Anthems, hymns, choruses—*Psalms* patterns; cultural adaptations
 3. Classical, sacred choral works, popular gospel
- C. Art**
1. Architecture: St Peter’s in Rome; Notre Dame in Paris;
 2. Icons—Orthodox emphasis & Catholic church paintings
 3. Decorations:
 - a. Churches: Christmas, Easter, Pentecost
 - b. Homes: religious plaques, pictures