



**TIMES OF THE LITURGY**

**Sunday** - 7.45am - Lauds | 8.15am - Low Mass | 9.15am - Dominican Rite Mass (Extraordinary Form) | 11am - Sung Conventual Mass | 6pm - Low Mass | 7pm - Vespers.

**Monday - Friday** - 7am - Lauds | 7.30am - Conventual Mass | 6.15pm - Devotions and Meditation | 6.30pm - Vespers. [N.B. First Fridays of the month, Vespers in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament with a period of Adoration from 6.15pm.]

**Saturday** - 9am - Lauds | 9.30am - Conventual Mass | 4.30-6pm - Confessions | 6.15pm - Sung Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary | 6.30pm - Vespers.

**THIS WEEK**

Sun 5 **EPIPHANY**

Mon 6 *feria*

Tue 7 S. Raymond of  
Penyafort

Wed 8 *feria*

Thu 9 *feria*

Fri 10 *feria*

Sat 11 *feria*

Sun 12 **THE BAPTISM OF THE  
LORD**



Lauds, Mass, and Vespers are broadcast daily on Radio Maria.

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**2025 AQUINAS LECTURE**

**HOW TO SURVIVE YOUR OWN DEATH:  
A THOMISTIC APPROACH.**

**DR GAVEN KERR**

**TUESDAY 28 JANUARY, 6PM.**

*The lecture will be followed by a drinks reception.*

**THE LORD'S PRAYER**

**IN THE GOSPEL OF ST MATTHEW**

*Forgive us our debts as we have forgiven our debtors.*

In the Lord's prayer, we ask for the kingdom to come which is at the end of time but then we ask for what is necessary while we await the kingdom of the Father. So we asked for our daily bread, or howsoever we translate the word 'daily' which is for the needs we will encounter in our journey to the Father. The next prayer is also for what we need while we pass through life.

We might think that the forgiveness of our sin comes with the kingdom, and that is true in the sense that we enter the process of forgiveness after our life on earth has ended. That there is a process of forgiveness has already been suggested in the Sermon on the Mount, in these words:

***Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison. Truly, I say to you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny (Matthew 5:25-26).***

The analogy is of someone being taken to court for a dispute. When we come to the court we are judged definitively and the words 'to the last penny' suggests a process which occurs after that judgement. These words have been used by Christians to suggest something of the Catholic doctrine of Purgatory, a doctrine taught clearly by the Orthodox churches too. It certainly implies a limited time of punishment or requital for our sins. In fact, there is some suggestion of a sort of purging of sin in Islam, and indeed it is present in Greek and Roman beliefs too. We find this in Book 10 of the Republic and in the sixth book of the Aeneid, though it is a purging for those who are to return to earth.

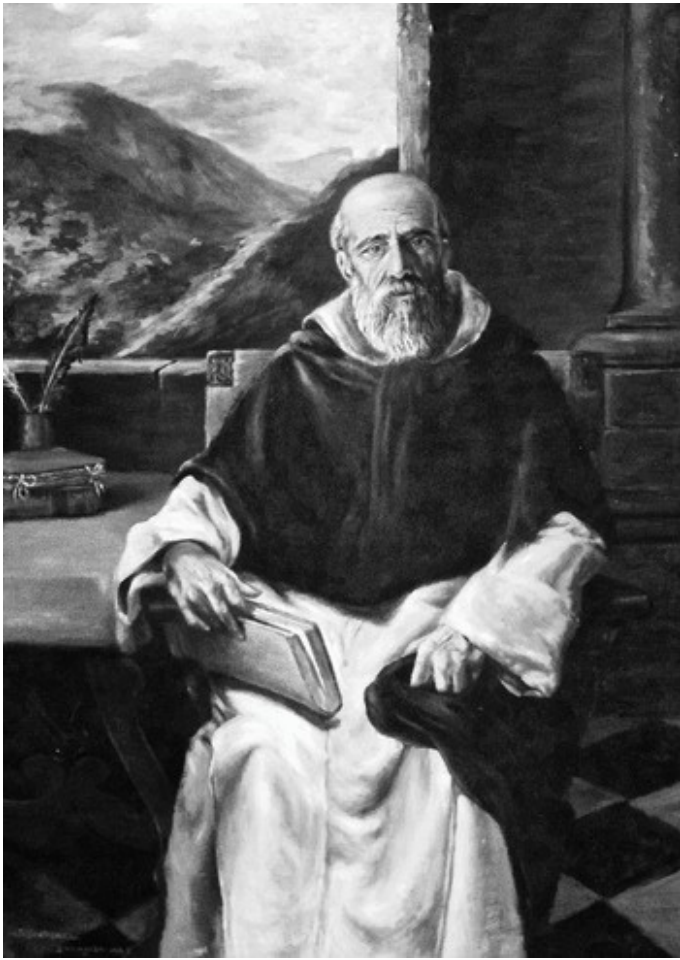
The prayer for forgiveness in the Lord's prayer which we are looking at here is not just about forgiveness in the next world, but also about what we are to do while we live on earth. The quotation from 5:25-26 is about reconciliation with an adversary. The literal meaning of 'come to terms' in this quote is 'Be well minded' which includes both forgiveness and being forgiven but is also about being committed to someone else. This is what we must be with our enemies. We should at least pray for those who have done us wrong. Perhaps even take some responsibility for their lives, though that would not be easy, and probably not required. This does not mean we should forego the need to bring people who represent a danger to humanity to court, where the state must make some decision about them. Sometimes punishment is for the good of the person who has done wrong, and we may have to make a statement about some crimes.

What we ask for in this petition is the remission of our debts. This is different in the Lucan version of the prayer where we ask for remission of our sins, though the version in Luke does say that we remit to everyone who owes us. Luke does not deny that Christ says we might sin against each other, as we see in Ch17:2, where he speaks of forgiveness of the brother who might sin against you. The Lucan writer might have been worried about the idea that we could stop being in debt to God. Luke 17:10 So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty.'" Duty is properly here, 'what we owe to do' though most translations fail to bring out the use of the verb which means to owe. The difference between the Lucan version of the petition and that of Matthew is not very great. Matthew in this petition is not suggesting that we ever stop being in debt to the Father. There are different kinds of debts or things owing to the Father. We never stop being in debt to the Father for our own creation, for the gift of redemption, and for the joy that he offers us, both on earth and most completely in heaven. To deny that debt is to be in Hell. Yet there are the debts which come from our sins, debts which cause us to suffer in this life, but which are the debts which have to be removed, if we are to be able to live in perfect friendship with God. Yet these debts cannot be removed without accepting that they exist. In fact, these debts by their existence on earth help us to

forgive. Self-knowledge, which is to say knowledge of who we are before God, helps us to forgive others while on earth. In heaven, or even in Purgatory, forgiveness of others is not an issue. This is certainly not because we don't have to forgive others but because the forgiveness of others is the base line of living before God. From the moment we are forgiven by God that forgiveness flows through us to others. Dante understood this well in the Purgatory section of the Divine Comedy, where there is no hint of enmity between those who are being purged on their way to heaven. No one is asked to forgive anyone in Purgatory because if they hadn't already forgiven others, they wouldn't be there.

Here on earth, it is different. We struggle to forgive others, and so many of the parables are drawn from the idea of financial debt. The story of the unforgiving debtor in Chapter 18 who receives forgiveness for his debts to his master but refuses to remit others debts is a good example. The kingdom has not come yet and we continually incur debts to each other but this means that we have to look forwards to the rest of our life. In the future we may incur other debts to our fellow servants, so the petition is looking to the future. This may explain another difference between the Lucan version and the Matthaean form. Matthew has 'as we have forgiven our debtors', while Luke uses the present tense; '...and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us' (Luke 11:4). If we see that the Matthew form is thinking of the life we have yet to live, we can see that the perfect tense is not just about our past at this moment. It is about the need to seek forgiveness in this life, by what we will have done when a moment when we seek mercy may come upon us. If we have forgiven, then we will be forgiven. This is an aspect of the Catholic practice of confession that we should never forget. When we seek forgiveness in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, as it is currently called, we are not just seeking forgiveness for ourselves but for forgiveness for all. The parables of the kingdom in Chapter 13:1-53 tell us that as long as human life continues, there will be a mix of good and bad, the weeds and the wheat, the fresh fish and the rotting fish, but there is a treasure to be found in the field which is the world, the treasure of God's mercy, which we must live by and with, if we are to live at all.

*fr* Euan Marley, OP



## RAYMOND OF PENYAFORT

Raymond was born at Penyafort near Barcelona in Catalonia around 1175. He became a distinguished theologian and doctor of canon law at the university of Bologna, where he joined the Order in 1222. He had great zeal for the formation of priests, for which he wrote his *Summa de casibus pœnitentiæ* for the aid of confessors. At the order of Gregory IX, he compiled the *Decretals of the Roman Pontiffs* (1234). He was elected third Master of the Order, in succession to Bl Jordan of Saxony in 1238. He resigned in 1240 and returned to Catalonia. He devoted himself to the apostolate to Jews and to missions in North Africa. He fostered dialogue with Islam and encouraged the brethren to learn Arabic and study the Koran. He died at Barcelona on 6 January 1275. He was canonised by Clement VIII in 1601.



## PRAYER BEFORE THE CRIB

Jesus, born in humility of a humble handmaid, thus humbly born you chose to be wrapped in the swaddling clothes of humility and laid in a manger; grant, most merciful Lord, by your ineffable birth, that the holiness of a new life may be reborn in me, and that I may be so humbled in the habit and swaddling clothes of religion that I may be able to attain to the summit of true humility by being laid, as in a manger, within the narrow pursuits of life under a Rule. You deigned to share in our humanity and mortality; grant that I may share in your Godhead and eternity. Amen.

## THE PRIORY OF ST MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL

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