

Chapter XV: On the Prayer for the Blessed Resurrection of Bodies

The prayer for the blessed resurrection of bodies is a form of charity toward the dead, through which we wish for them and ask God that their bodies may rise to eternal life on the last day.

This does not contradict faith:

Because it is commanded by Christ: When He instructs us to pray that the kingdom of our Father in heaven may come, He refers not only to the kingdom of grace but also to the kingdom of glory, which will not come without the resurrection of bodies. Therefore, when we pray, "Thy kingdom come," we are also praying for the future resurrection of the dead. We do not thereby seek to hasten the kingdom of glory and the resurrection of the faithful beyond the time predetermined by God, but rather we testify to our faith and desire for the consummation of God's glory and our salvation.

Because we have the promise of the resurrection of the flesh to eternal life. Whatever is promised to us and to others, even to the deceased in Christ's faith, it is right to pray for its fulfillment.

Because it is supported by approved examples: Revelation 22:17 says, "The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come.'" And in verse 20, John says, "Come, Lord Jesus." What does this mean but "reveal yourself in your glory, resurrect all the dead, bring your faithful into the kingdom of glory, and lead your bride into that heavenly city"?

This is the true and faithful concern for the dead, which differs from the pagan concern for the dead. For the pagans, their custom was to engage in mourning rituals for their deceased parents, often excessively, and to hold superstitious feasts. The Greeks called these *parentalia*, and the Romans referred to them as memorial feasts, where they would perform rites for their deceased parents. They would even involve their religious leaders and priests to pray for the dead. Weak and poorly instructed Christians retained or imitated this impious custom to appear no less dutiful toward their deceased parents than the pagans themselves.

Chrysostom rebukes this custom in his earlier homilies on Matthew, in Homily 32: "Nothing of this sort is written about the future, but the opposite is true. 'Grief has fled away, sorrow and sighing are no more.' And again, 'From the east and the west, they will come and recline at the table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.' And elsewhere: 'The chambers they are in are spiritual, with an inextinguishable lamp, a celestial life.' Why then do you disturb the dead? Why do you cause others to fear death and be afraid? Why do you give occasion for some to dare to accuse God for bringing so much evil upon us? Truly, why do you summon the poor after the death of your loved ones? Why do you press the priests to pray for them? I know your response: 'So that the deceased may find rest, so that they may find a favorable judgment.' Do you think these things require weeping and wailing? Do you not see how you contradict yourself? For while you imagine that they are in the blooming meadows, you still stir up storms of grief against yourself."

However, despite Chrysostom's strong rebuke of this impious custom, the Papists call Christians back to it.

Prayers for the dead, asking that their sins be forgiven and that they be delivered from the place they are in, are displeasing to God and useless to the dead:

Because they are not modeled after the prayers prescribed in Sacred Scripture.

Because they are sinful: they are not of faith. That they are not of faith is evident because there is no divine command, no promise, nor any approved example for them in Sacred Scripture.

Because the dead can no longer repent. For this life is the time of grace, not after this life.