

OUR DAILY BREAD

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“Give us this day our daily bread” (Matthew 6:11).

In saying these words of the Lord’s Prayer we are acknowledging a truth that is easily lost sight of in our complex civilization—that our material food, clothing and shelter, and the other necessities of life come to us from the Lord’s bounty. But it is not our bodies alone that require nourishment. Every plane of our minds also has its proper food, and the food of the human spirit—the nourishment by which it lives—is good and truth from the Lord. This is what the Lord meant when He said, “The bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world” (John 6:33).

Note that this request in the Prayer does not look to the future and its needs. Instead, day by day, we ask the Lord for bread for that day’s needs. For the Lord does not provide for our welfare to eternity by a single act. Rather He continually offers us food that is suited to our present state, as He daily provided manna—the bread of heaven—for the Children of Israel in the wilderness. Therefore, we must seek His spiritual nourishment continually, and there are two ways in which we do that. We can see these two ways reflected in words that the Lord Himself spoke while on earth. He said, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God” (Mathew 4:4). And on another occasion the Lord said, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me” (John 4:34).

Everything spiritual comes to us in and as Divine truth. It is a primary tenet of the New Church that a person go to the Lord in His Word for the bread of life—by daily reading or hearing the Word, reflecting on it, and then attempting to do as it teaches. We must live by the words from the mouth of God—divine truth—and we must do His will—put these truths into action. Together with these, there is contentment in God and with one’s lot; trust in the Divine Providence; trust in the Divine mercy; and a willingness to acknowledge that from the Lord alone, in His own time and way, come the things that give us peace. These are the things for which we pray when we ask the Lord for our daily bread.