

# Doctrinal Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the RCIA  
Thy Will Be Done on Earth as It Is in Heaven

*With all wisdom and insight he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ . . . to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.*

Ephesians 1:8b–10

## Insight

Called together by Ms. Judy, the principal, the meeting included Kevin’s parents and his homeroom teacher. The school year was more than half completed and Kevin, an eighth grader, was looking to graduate. The principal began, “I asked to meet with you because there are serious issues regarding Kevin’s behavior. His teachers report a pattern of disrespect toward them, harassment of his fellow students and fighting.”

As Kevin kept his gaze focused on the floor, his parents grimly faced the principal. She continued, “As parents, you are aware of his many detentions and how his grades are slipping. What you may not be aware of is that, according to the school handbook, Kevin could be expelled from the school—which at this late date in his final year would be disastrous for him. We don’t see much of an alternative because he hasn’t reformed any of his behavior.

Before his parents could respond, the principal forged on, “But I’ve also spoken to the pastor, and he feels that we must expend all our energy on an all-out salvage effort to reclaim Kevin. Let me tell you though, Kevin must choose to do what is right. And all of us have to pursue God’s will in this matter. *That* means, in this instance, changing for the better.”

### Additional Background

**Catechism of the Catholic Church:** 2822–2827

**United States Catholic Catechism for Adults:** pages 486–487

**Compendium—Catechism of the Catholic Church:** 591, 2822–2827

## For Reflection . . .

The will of God is that all men and women be saved and arrive at knowledge of the truth.

*How do you go about discerning the will of God in a specific situation?*

*Who has been a mentor in faith to you and why do you cherish their mentoring?*

## Church Teaching

In times past, a person might have asked, “What is your will in this matter?” That is not, however, how most people would ask today. Usually questions about will are expressed by saying, “What do you want?” or “What do you wish?” All three questions seek to make explicit the volition (the will) of another. The will is the mental faculty by which one deliberately chooses a course of action.

The third petition of the Lord’s Prayer prays that God’s will be done in human affairs. Because God is mystery, we will never fully know the height and breadth of his will. Yet one particular aspect of it does shine forth clearly: the Father seeks the salvation of all. He wills for us to be saved in Christ.

Salvation, achieved in Christ, was made possible because Jesus—in his earthly ministry and with his life—submitted to the will of his heavenly Father. In the prayer of his agony on the Mount of Olives before he is arrested, Jesus declares, “Father if you are willing, remove this cup from me; yet, not my will but yours be done.” (Luke 22:42).

The Son consents totally and completely to the Father—even if it means the Cross—in order to deliver us from evil and sin. In this, Christ won for us a place in the kingdom of God. In this petition we ask for the grace to emulate Christ’s example of obedience to God’s will in all the circumstances of life.