



## ATTENTIVENESS AND FIDELITY TO PRAYER

*2<sup>nd</sup> November 1873*

I was thinking this morning that to practice what is unceasingly required of us - regularity, silence, good spirit, humility - to do good to the children, and to lead a consistently religious life, we need a means. And what is this means? Prayer

Do not think, however, that prayer consists in extraordinary formulas added to those we already recite. This is not always possible. If we were always attentive when we say our prayers, we would have an immense treasure in heaven. It is precisely on this matter that I invite you to reflect today.

Prayer is the foundation of our life. We give our hearts to God from the moment we wake up; we pray while dressing up; we go to our "meditation." We sing the Office, hear Mass. We say the *Angelus*, the *Benedictus*, etc...

It is necessary to examine often the degree of attention that we bring to all these prayers and try to increase it every day. Do not say your prayers only with your lips, but from the heart, as St. Augustine recommends in his Rule: "When you pray to God by the recitation of the psalms and hymns, meditate in your heart what your lips utter." If you are reciting the "Our Father", pay attention to the words you say, to the petitions contained in them; concentrate with all your heart. If it be the "Hail Mary" or the "Creed" - do the same, plunge deeply into the words that you say.

I am not entering individual consciences; but I think that this attentiveness at prayer is one of the things often lacking in us. If we made more acts of love during the Office, if we joined ardent aspirations of love to the recitation of the psalms, if we asked God for His graces and aid unceasingly, there would be more graces in religious houses and God would grant more abundant help...

I admit that at times it is difficult to pray, that we encounter distractions, dryness, repugnance, in prayer: but they are trials. All these are part of God's plan and we must accept them as one of the difficulties of the spiritual life. For our part, let us bring our attention. Distractions should not be a result of our negligence. If the mind wanders and we let it wander; if we do not make an effort to occupy ourselves with God, we waste our time. We are in the Chapel, we seem to be in an attitude of prayer, we join our hands, we kneel or sit, but our minds are elsewhere, not only because of human weakness but through willful negligence. We waste our time.

And yet, Sisters, prayer is necessary for everything - to draw the students, to overcome difficulties, to be free from temptations, to practice virtue. That is why I ask you to make all your prayers without exception, all, from the depths of the heart, and with all possible attention. It is on this that I feel obliged to speak to you and it seems to me this will go a long way towards solving everything.

## **The BLESSED VIRGIN and PRAYER**

In speaking to you of prayer, I have not said anything about the Blessed Virgin. You know that she is called the “all-powerful suppliant. As, during her existence, prayer was her life; because she remains a creature in heaven, she is still the all-powerful suppliant. We don’t ask her to have pity on us, although she has the power over her Son to obtain all things from him, but to pray for us. She prays that we may be heard. We should have recourse to this all-powerful suppliant. God has given us the gift of having a mother in heaven who cares for us. She is pleased by the prayers of her children. Let us love her and count on her.

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