



LIVE UNDER THE GAZE OF GOD

23 July 1876.

Saint Thomas defines prayer as: “*Oratio est ascensio animae ad Deum*,” a raising up of the soul towards God. Saint Alphonsus of Liguori teaches, and all the spiritual books repeat, that prayer is the great means of salvation. Prayer is the means of obtaining all the virtues and final perseverance which we should desire above all. Are you worried? Are you fearful? Pray. By

praying we are sure of obtaining all, for prayer which ascends from a humble and docile heart will never be refused or rejected by God.

Since prayer is the raising of our soul to God, we should form the habit of living under God’s gaze. What makes prayer difficult? It is usually the dissipation of the mind which is not attentive during the simple activities of the day. The more you try to live in God’s sight in the midst of your work and the necessary distractions of life, the more easily you will be able to recollect yourself and raise your heart towards God in prayer.

The Saints give us numerous examples of this habit of living in God’s presence. Saint Jane de Chantal once asked Francis de Sales if it was easy for him to live in the presence of God. “My daughter,” he answered, “I make the effort at least twice in a quarter hour.” You can imagine that it was easy for him to enter into prayer. This depends on you, on your interior work.

You cannot always have the feeling of being in the presence of God; that’s a grace. God accords it sometimes and only for a while, even to privileged souls. To feel the presence of God continually does not depend on you, but you can place yourself in God’s presence, think of God’s presence, of the God who continually sees us - that we can do. The more this becomes habitual and effortless, the more profit you will gain from it.

If you are in the hospital and someone is in the bed next to you, it’s not hard to be aware of that person’s presence. Without even wanting it, you have the feeling that you are not alone. I choose this example to help you grasp the truth that God is present everywhere, that God sees us at all times and follows our every action with a fatherly and loving gaze. Like a father who takes pleasure in seeing his children walk, play, do this or that and rejoices when the children are good and behave.

This example is not exaggerated: God is truly our Father. In Jesus Christ, we became God’s children and God takes paternal pleasure in us. God rejoices in the soul of the just as it says in the Bible, especially in the Covenant Jesus Christ came to establish between us and his Father.

A bad or little fervent person might experience fear at the idea of God’s continual watchfulness but we should turn towards God’s presence as a help, a companionship, a consolation, as towards a life of mutual love. God looks on you and loves you; you look towards God because you love Him.

This loving gaze of God will be a continual support, a help, a protection you can always count on. You will find in it praise, joy, adoration for in God alone is found complete satisfaction of our heart's need to be loved. It will be the "*Laudamus te*, We praise you," the "*Benedicimus te*, We bless you," the "*Glorificamus te*, We adore you," the "*Adoramus te*. We adore you," ceaselessly sung in the depths of your heart in God's presence - in an easy, gentle and consoling way. Seek then, the divine gaze as you once sought the approving and loving look of the people you love, and with a still more ardent desire. For God is greater, more loving for our soul than any creature. If you do this, recollection at prayer will be easy and the habit of living in the presence of God will add affection and unction to your life. God's loving gaze gives more help, strength and unction [than any other] in [time of] danger, anxiety, temptation, sadness and neglect. And with this help, how easy it is to forget the transitory things of this world.

I would add only this for your meditation: if God looks down on the soul who belongs to Him and serves Him, with so much pleasure and love, we cannot imagine the love and attention with which the Blessed Trinity is attracted and concentrated, so to speak, there where the humanity of Christ resides, that is in the tabernacle. The Trinity finds in Jesus Christ present in the Blessed Sacrament and offered in the sacrifice of the Mass, all glory, all joy, all love. There is a perfect proportion in this: the one who adores is worthy of the one adored; the one who sacrifices self is a worthy victim of the one to whom he is offered; the one who dwells among us in the tabernacle makes a perfect and infinite adoration rise to God, perfect praise and love proportionate to the love of God, as it is our Lord Jesus Christ, God and man together, the Son of God and the second person of the Trinity [who offers].

This idea should help us to be recollected and to pray better. When the Holy Trinity sees the honor, glory, praise and satisfaction, the love from Our Lord, God and Man, that ascends to the Trinity from the tabernacle, you who are united to Our Lord and belong to him, easily place yourselves with Jesus under God's gaze so that you will be looked on in almost the same way as the Trinity looks on Our Lord –especially when you are at one with his sentiments.

Seek how you can correspond to God's gaze by the purity and the attention of your mind and heart, by continual union of your will with the dispositions and feelings of Our Lord Jesus Christ. All during the day, in the midst of distractions, and more easily at prayer, to raise your mind and heart towards God through Our Lord Jesus Christ. Live under God's gaze, like our Lord, through Our Lord and with his intentions. You will then enjoy the same complacent gaze and consolation that the Holy Trinity fixes on Our Lord wherever He is. On your heart where Jesus dwells and where He is a movement and life...

I believe that I have treated here the essence of prayer and you should never forget it.

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