



BECOME A WOMAN OF PRAYER

9 November 1873

In speaking the other day about how we should pay attention to the many prayers we say daily, I did not sufficiently insist on the supreme attention we should bring to become women of prayer. We don't all have the same ease or the same graces. One is helped in one way and another by something else. But to pray well, we don't need extra-ordinary graces. It is a question of putting in the effort and of persevering.

It is not the graces we have received that makes us women of prayer but the attention we bring to it. God, in his infinite mercy, has different plans for each one and different ways of leading us. To be a soul of prayer does not depend on special graces. The people most advanced in prayer have often arrived there through dryness, temptations and struggles and without knowing it. It's what made St Teresa say that "to practice prayer, we need great courage, great generosity and a firm will to suffer for God whatever one has to suffer in drawing near to Him."

The motivation for courage in difficulties and the work of prayer made without taste and consolation is the model we have in the Gospel of Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Olives. Jesus repeated the same prayer with so much anguish and pain. What was this cruel prayer, without consolation, compared with the ecstasies of some saints? Yet, no one can doubt that this prayer of Jesus was infinitely more pleasing to God and of greater price in his eyes than all the prayers of the saints and even than that of the Blessed Virgin.

We have to seek God with a total attention, entirely applied to the invisible. We have to deal with people and with material work but, once in the chapel, we have to make a truce with our busyness and direct our attention to God alone. Our prayer should be practical and lead us to do good, to be generous; but we need not dwell on what we do, feel, are and will do. That is matter for examination of conscience rather than prayer.

To be a woman of prayer, we have to leave the visible things and enter into the world which we don't feel, we don't see, we don't touch - enter into the world which is visible to faith. But there is one thing visible that we cannot have too much before our eyes and that is the sacred humanity of Our Lord Jesus Christ. We don't see him and his mysteries the way the Apostles and disciples saw Him, but they come under our eyes through faith.

And for the Blessed Sacrament that is visible to us, we do not stop at what appears to the senses but go beyond to our Lord, his life, his plans, his prayer, the infinite Love he has for us, his action in us, his will and all that we owe him.

Our faith puts before us the teachings of Our Lord, what we believe, what we hope for, what we love – all that binds us to God. What we must never forget is always to come back in prayer to what is above all, the love of God. We must profit of prayer to grow in love. Try to become servants of God's Love at prayer. Take resolutions that make you practice virtues that will make you advance in love. Thus God will become more and more master of our minds and hearts. (wills)

If some of you do not feel that your lives are animated by the love of God, I will tell you something that will prepare you for that love: outside your prayer times, make many acts of love. It is the recommendation of St Teresa. She says that these acts, frequently repeated, have the virtue of making our heart tender and disposing it to become enflamed with love for God at the slightest breath of grace...