

It is of Catholic faith that the grace of God is indispensably necessary to salvation, that our nature still languishes under the wounds inflicted by the first sin, that our intellects have become clouded and our wills weakened, that, of ourselves, we have no power to resist temptation or merit heaven. These are truths lamentable in themselves, but concerning which our holy religion does not allow us to entertain the smallest doubt. The very first desire of doing good which arises in the human heart must be awakened by Him who is the sole Author of whatever good we possess. "For we are not sufficient of ourselves to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God."—*2 Cor., III., 5*. And impossible it must be for us to gain heaven unaided by God's grace, since we cannot approach Him who is our only hope unless we are drawn by the Father.—*John VI., 44*. St. Paul goes so far as to assert that we cannot pronounce the sacred name of Jesus in an acceptable manner except by the Holy Ghost.—*1 Cor. XII., 3*. Now, in this state of absolute dependency and utter weakness to which fallen nature has reduced us, what chance of salvation remains if God does not come to our assistance and if we do not implore His help by prayer?

Moreover, in the human heart are implanted and engendered the baneful seeds of every wickedness which will naturally grow up and develop unless repressed and controlled by the influences of grace. Our enemies are strong, powerful, malicious. On one side is the world with all its fascinating influences, stretching out before us its deceptive allurements, unfolding to our bewildered senses the phantom of happiness and hurrying our poor souls daily to ruin; on the other is the devil going about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour, ready to take advantage of our unguarded moments by entrapping us into sin. And that nothing may be wanting to render our condition miserable in the extreme, there is our corrupt nature in league with both. In the deplorable state in which we are placed, encompassed by dangers at every turn, assailed by numerous and formidable enemies who aim, with all their