

GENERAL DEVOTIONS.

Prayers for Daily Devotion.

HOW TO PRAY.

"Before prayer prepare thy soul, and be not as a man that tempteth God." Eccli. xviii. 23.

Prayer is the lifting up of the mind and heart to God, and constitutes one of the first duties of a true Christian. There are two different kinds of prayer, namely, mental and vocal.

MENTAL PRAYER, or MEDITATION, is when we pray silently in our hearts, without using any set form of words, or speaking with the voice.

VOCAL PRAYER is that which is uttered by the voice, and commonly is made according to some form; in other words, it is to say, or recite prayers.

To make our prayers good and pleasing in the sight of God, they must be offered:

1. With a pure heart, or at least a sincere desire to obtain a pure heart through penance. *"The Lord is far from the wicked: and he will hear the prayers of the just."* Prov. xv. 29.

2. A lively faith. We ought to have a firm and child-like trust in God, that he will grant our prayers, if what we ask is really for the good of our souls. *"Let him ask of God, but let him ask in faith, nothing wavering, for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea that is moved and carried about by the wind. Therefore let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord."* St. James, i. 6.

3. Profound humility. *"He hath had regard to the prayer of the humble, and he hath not despised their petition."* Psal. ci. 15.

4. Earnest attention. *"I cried with my whole heart, hear me, O Lord!"* Ps. cxviii. 145.

5. Unwearied patience. We must not leave off praying, even if our prayer is not heard at once. *"The continual prayer of a just man availeth much."* St. James, v. 16.