

The Necessity of Prayer.

Many men and women nowadays are so taken up with the affairs of this world (business, education, riches, pleasure) that they have scarcely a minute to devote to the great and important question of the salvation of their immortal soul. They go to Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation, it is true, and to Confession and holy Communion two or three times in the year; and then they feel that they have fulfilled their duty as good, practical Catholics. To some of them the question of prayer is of little consequence. They may perhaps bless themselves in the morning when they get up; but they seldom or ever go down on their knees to offer up their hearts to God. Now why is this? Because these very people do not understand what prayer really is, and they have not the faintest idea of how useful and necessary it is for Christian men and women. The catechism tells us that prayer is the lifting up of our minds and hearts to God, to adore Him, to thank Him for His benefits, to ask His forgiveness, and to beg of Him all the graces we stand in need of for soul and body.

On one occasion our Blessed Lord speaking of this necessity of prayer said: "We ought always to pray." Besides, His disciples regarded this subject as a matter of such great consequence that they asked Him one day: "Lord teach us how to pray." And He gave them a form of prayer and held out to them the hope that they should obtain what they asked. The Apostles moreover recommended this duty to all the converts who embraced the religion of Jesus Christ, besides exhorting the Christians to watch and pray lest they enter into temptation.

It can not be denied that we all stand in need of many helps and graces for the wants of our soul and body. How are these to be obtained? There is no better way than by prayer. It stands to reason then that those who neglect this pious and useful exercise deprive themselves of an excellent means of obtaining special gifts and favors which are so necessary for our temporal and spiritua