

PRAYER

Prayer according to the Church is raising the heart and mind to God. It means sincerely and consciously communicating with God. It is always asking God for something, it could be to love God more or it could be for something as materialistic as a pay-rise.

Suppose God is essentially about us doing good to each other as most people think. Prayer is an intention of connecting with God. If you are really connecting you will not be going about telling rosary beads and eating communion wafers but will be out connecting with God by feeding the homeless etc.

The Church says that salvation is impossible without prayer. That's discrimination against those who don't pray but do some mighty good work. So prayer is unloving and it cannot do any real good for it deepens darkness in the heart. The virtue it produces is just self-serving vice in disguise.

If you are happy and confident, you don't need prayer. It is strong self-esteem we need not prayer. Prayer is therefore incompatible with self-esteem for it denies this truth. It only bestows self-esteem in some cases in spite of itself.

You would only need to pray if God won't help you unless you open your heart to him. A really good God would help you anyway. He could save you through your sincere effort to live as a good person even without you knowing it is he or that he exists. God will do what is best and he is the almighty boss so prayer is not trying to help anybody. It is an evil God that will abandon people until somebody prays for them. Praying to such a God for them would be insulting them and doing them no favours - it would be like asking Hitler to take a bottle of water to the Jewish family down the road. To pray ardently for people to a God who will do whatever he wants and does not let himself be influenced by you is not trying to help them. Magic would be more moral for it at least is really trying to help by sending power to the person in need. Prayer is not for you can't influence or change God. Its not really trying.

Praying Christians know that Christianity is not a humanitarian religion - it is about God and serving him through helping others - the others are not to be helped for their sake but wholly his. Prayer is for them, just an attempt to feel good about doing nothing. Then rancid selfishness is concealed by piety.

Even the believer has to admit that prayer is really doing nothing for another person. God knows what is best. We might pray for healing. And it may come. Did God answer the prayer then? That depends on his motive. Did he do it to answer the prayer or did he do it just because it was the right thing to do? If he did it because he was asked, then it was not because it was right. Maybe he did it both because he was asked and because it was right? That means he refused to do it entirely because it was right. In so far as God does not do it because it is right he is acting amorally if not immorally. As he claims to be good, he would be showing he is not perfectly good. Then prayer is saying, "I don't care if you are evil or not do what I ask!" How is that supposed to help us become more virtuous? No wonder there is nothing remarkable about the virtue of most believers. Any virtue they have is there in spite of their faith and their prayers.

It is said that if we pray we become more like God in virtue and this alone is an answer to prayer. He helps us. But surely learning right and wrong then matters more than praying? And even those most devout admit they are far from turning into the image of God through prayer!

A tiny minority of believers say that if we want something from God, we must make sure that it is spiritually good for us to get it. We have to make the circumstances right for God to give us the blessing we want. If you want a bicycle and pray for it then you have to acquire virtue so that you will appreciate getting it and having it and try to grow closer to God through using it. For example, you might use it to go to Mass more if you are a Catholic.

This seems to avoid the idea that prayer is an arrogant and prideful attempt to manipulate God and to impose your will on him. But does it? It does not work. Most Christians do not emphasise it or even know of it. This means that their prayers are undoubtedly superstitious. The true devotee will try to be holy for the sake of holiness and not for the sake of a bike. Such holiness would be mercenary and thus it would be fake. And if it will help you spiritually to get the bike you will get it even if you are not paving the way by becoming holier.

As for being good and holy and spiritual so that God will be able to answer your prayers what about the many evil people who think their evil prayers to him are answered? Jack the Ripper would have prayed to get through the streets after his crimes without being apprehended by the police. He would have imagined his prayer was answered. Believers would see

that as proof that his escape was just down to luck not God for God wouldn't hear his unholo prayers. Yet they refuse to admit the truth, "There is no way of telling if an answer to prayer is coincidence or a real answer." They carry on the same way as fortune tellers with their superstition.

To love God with all your heart means to hate sin with all your heart as well. Prayer is opening up to that and trying to do that. That is what really matters if there is a God. Prayer indicates that God is good and so deserves all our love and it urges people to sacrifice themselves on the altar of religion by being eaten up by hatred. Then when they go out of control they can make out its a crime of passion and not fully sinful as they were not completely free.

The prayers of most believers are not motivated by the intention to develop a rabid hatred of sin so they are not prayers to God but to the image they have made of God. The ego lurks behind their piety.

Prayer implies that it is God's will that matters and nothing else - it conditions people to help themselves and others only for God. It implies that God is what matters and people don't. It implies that if God needed you to torture everybody else to death you would. Christians say that is a stupid thing to claim for God would never ask that. But that is not the point and they know it. The point is that it is hypothetical. You have to be willing to do it at least in theory.

Why is it that one prayer is never enough? A good God wouldn't care about the quantity but the quality. Prayer then is a kind of a spell, trying to control God and it insults his goodness. It puts people into a relaxed hypnotic state of mind that is useful for religion to hypnotise people to believe its lies and obey it. Surely if you pray, "Your will be done!" once you don't need to pray any more? That is the only real prayer. Those who pray for help at job interviews etc are hypocrites. They are trying to disguise magic as prayer. If you pray for a bicycle, it is the bicycle you care about and not God's will. If you trust God and care only for his will you will not be even mentioning the bicycle.

Catholics pray to saints. They say God uses the saints to help those who pray to them get close to him. If they really want to get close to God then they don't need the saints. They can go straight. The saints who pray for you are hypocritical for the essence of prayer is hypocrisy. If you ask their prayers that is what you are asking them to be - hypocrites. If we thought they were merely praying, "You know best O God and your will be done!", we wouldn't bother invoking them. We wouldn't need to and it would be ridiculous to ask. Those who pray to saints are trying to get them to manipulate and fool God for them. Only demons will be interested in responding to such prayers! The prayers are really attempts to bend God's ear and a sign of mistrust.

Miracles supposedly aim to inspire prayer which if true, shows they are signs not of wisdom and grace but of folly and evil. Religion teaches that miracles only happen because people pray as there is no point in God doing miracles unless there is a reasonable chance people will pray. Doing miracles without enough concern for inspiring people from within and building up their relationship with God is merely showing off.

Does prayer matter in itself? If it does, then it is the fact that it honours God that matters. God supposedly has to put up with evil. Hypothetically, he has to put up with people never being happy if evil goes that far. Obviously even then if there is a God we would have to honour him though in our lives there is nothing nice or good. It is not his fault if we suffer. True prayer then involves a willingness to sacrifice a happy eternity for the sake of morality. In that case, most people who pray do not really. They only feel they do. Prayer then is a placebo - you relieve the pain of witnessing the suffering of others and being unable to help and unwilling to help. You feel that it is not as bad as it seems for its part of God's lovely plan. The truly good person does not risk diagnosing evil as less than what it is. That only stops a proper treatment.

Does prayer matter only because it gets us blessings from God? If it matters even partly because of what we can gain then in so far as we do that we are for self and not God. Prayer must matter in itself if there is a God. It follows then that its lesson is that we must be meant to suffer by crying out to God for help and getting nothing from him. God then has the right to do this and even the obligation to.

SAINT

The Roman Church says that we always have some residue of sin in us no matter how holy we are.

“Lord, the end of another messed-up day. I let you down at every turn. I've lived for myself all through” (page 4, Friday Penance, John C Edwards SJ, Catholic Truth Society, London, 1985).

Even the greatest saint has sins (1 John 1:8-10). But to do good while sinning is making it clear to God that you will do good when you feel like it and not because it is right or because it is God's will. That is totally evil as God is so wonderful so the good is not good but defiance disguised as good. To understand this is to understand the reason the Bible says that one sin defiles all the good you do (James 2:10; 3:10-12) and makes you a good actor. The result is spiritual blindness where doing your own will and not God's is made to look good and even pious. So the saints are really sinners who are whitewashed over by the Church. To honour them as saints is to honour their sins.

The Catholic Church prays to saints. If you really trust God and find comfort in him you will not be asking saints to pray to

him for you. You will pray to God. The Church says that praying to the saints is really praying to God through them, it is giving them the prayers to give to him. If praying to the saints is really praying to God as the Church says then why don't Catholics simply pray to God? The reason must be that praying to saints is really satisfying our natural liking for having many human gods. Humankind did it for countless centuries so we haven't changed.

If praying to dead saints is fine, then why don't Catholics pray to the living? The reason is that the saints are thinly disguised gods and it is easier to believe the dead know all things for the living clearly do not. It is no reply to say that the saints have God's power to help and not their own power. In paganism, many gods had no power of their own but they were still gods.

The Bible teaches that Jesus intercedes for us before God (Hebrews 7:25). That blasphemously infers that God would ignore us and refuse to help us unless Jesus asked him. A perfect God will give help when its needed and will not need intercessors. Our asking is not important. God has to do x or its opposite anyway regardless of whether we ask or not. It is not that he is rude but it is just the way things have to be. He cannot keep waiting for our consent.

If God would bless you if Jesus never asked then clearly Jesus is not an intercessor for intercessor means a person who tries to influence a higher authority for you on your behalf and this authority has to make the decision if your request will be granted or not. To teach that Jesus or Mary or any saint can influence God is to deny that God is perfect. It is declaring them more powerful than he is. It is declaring them to be the real Gods.

The asking is about trying to feel you have some control when you do not. That is why prayer feels good but it is selfishness hidden as devotion to God.

If God won't help you until you ask or get a saint to ask, then you or the saint is better than God and God can be manipulated. The saint for example must be wiser than God.

Praying to saints is really turning to demons for it shows contempt for God and resorting to beings that are against him. They must be against him if they listen to your prayers and want them.

You can honour and respect the saints without praying to them.

Prayer when dissected is alarming and offensive and pays homage to fanaticism. Involving a saint adds insult to injury.

