



## St Francis of Assisi Parish



### REFLECTION

#### PRAYER

(By Tertullian)

PRAYER is the offering in Spirit. It has done away with the sacrifices of old. What good do I receive from your many sacrifices, asks God. I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and goats. I do not want the fat of lambs and the blood of bulls. Who has asked for them from your hands?

What God asked for, we learn from the Gospels. The Lord says: The hour has come when true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. God is Spirit and He is looking for worshippers who are like himself. (John 4:23...) God is Spirit and those who worship God must worship in spirit and truth.

We must be true worshippers and true priests, who must pray in spirit and so offer in spirit the sacrifice of Prayer. Prayer is an offering that belongs to God and is acceptable to him. It is the only offering he has asked for and planned it as his own. So, we must dedicate this offering with our whole heart. We must fatten our Prayer on Faith, tend it by Truth, keep it unblemished by Innocence, keep it clean by Chastity and crown it with Love. We must escort the Prayer to the altar of God in a procession of good works to the sound of psalms and hymns. Then it will gain for us all that we ask of God. Since God has asked for Prayer in spirit and truth, how can he deny anything to this kind of prayer

Of old, Prayer was able to rescue from fire and beasts and hunger even before it received its perfection from Christ. How much greater is now the power of Christian Prayer?

No longer does Prayer bring the angel of comfort to the heart of a fiery furnace or close up the mouth of lions of transport to the hungry food from the fields. No longer does it remove all sense of pain by the grace it wins for others. But now, it gives armour of patience to those who suffer, who feel pain, who are distressed. It strengthens the power of grace so that faith may know what it is gaining from the Lord and understand what it is suffering for the name of God.

In the past, Prayer was able to bring down punishment, rout armies, withhold the blessings of rain. But now, the Prayer of the just turns aside the whole anger of God, keeps vigil for its enemies, pleads for its persecutors. Is it any wonder that it can all down water from heavens when it could obtain fire from heaven as well?

Prayer is the One thing that can conquer God. But Christ has willed that it should work no evil and has given it all power over good. Prayer only art is to call back the souls of the dead from the very journey of death, to give strength to the weak, to heal the sick, to exorcise the possessed, to open prison cells and to free the innocent from their chains. Prayer cleanses from sin, drives away temptations, stamps out persecutions, comforts the faint-hearted, gives new strength to the courageous, brings travellers safely home, calms the waves of the seas, confounds robbers, feeds the poor, overrules the rich, lifts up the fallen, supports those

who are falling and sustains those who stand firm. All Angels pray ...every creature prays. Cattle and wild beasts pray and bend their knees, as they come down from their barns and caves they look out to heaven and call out, lifting up their spirit in their own fashion, The birds too rise and lift themselves up to heaven opening out their wings, instead of hands, in the form of a Cross and give voice to what seems to be a Prayer.

What more need to be said on the duty of Prayer? Even the Lord himself prayed. To Him be honour and power and glory forever. Amen.

“The Father seeks such worshippers who pray in Spirit and in Truth.”

God bless.

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Parish Priest

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