

EXPLANATION OF THE SECOND PART OF THE METHOD OF MENTAL PRAYER WHEN WE CONSIDER A PARTICULAR VIRTUE

- 247 We can turn our attention in the second part on some particular virtue, making it the subject of our silent prayer.

CHAPTER 11

WHAT WE MEAN BY A VIRTUE.

- 248 We call virtues
the holy actions,
sentiments,
dispositions and affections
contrary to vices and sins.
For example,
 chastity is opposed to impurity;
 humility to pride;
 penance to sensuality, and so on.
- 249 Our Lord taught us the practice of virtue
 by his example
 and by his words
as something necessary for salvation.
This made Him say that he is the way Jn 14,6
because by practicing these virtues
we walk forward on the path to heaven
and arrive at last at true, eternal and blessed
life, cf Jn 8,12
 a life which makes the angels and the saints infinitely
 happy,
 a life our Lord communicates to them
 by the gift of His grace in this world
 and of His glory in the next.
Now, we merit to share in this blessed life
in the degree to which we have practiced virtue.
- 250 We should begin by convincing ourselves interiorly
of the necessity of the virtue which we are considering.
This we can do in two ways.
- 251 First, by a conviction of faith,
by recalling a mind a passage of Holy Scripture
 which speaks of the virtue.
For instance, to convince ourselves of the need for humility
we can recall to mind the words of St. James, Ch. 4:
 God resists the proud, Jas 4,6

but gives grace to the humble. quoting Prov 3,34
Then we remain in a sentiment of interior respect,
concentrating on the thought of the virtue taught us in this
passage.

252 The second way of convincing ourselves of the need for this
virtue is to make some reflections on the virtue itself,
which persuade the mind our need of practicing it.
The reflection should be based on what is said of the virtue
in Holy Scripture,
and especially in the New Testament.

253 We might, for instance, make this reflection on humility:
O my God, what a dreadful misfortune it is to be proud,
since Thou dost resist such people and showest Thyself
their enemy.

Jas 4,6

254 Or again,
Lord, how happy are the humble,
since it is to such
Thou grantest Thy grace.

Jas 4,6

255 Or again,
My God, Thou are the friend of the humble;
how strongly this should incite me to become such.

256 Having thus established ourselves firmly on faith,
we proceed to make the nine acts of the second part,
which should be applied to the virtue on which we make
mental prayer, and which we should consider in Our
Lord,
as teaching it to us by His words and example.