

ROGATION TUESDAY

Love for prayer

38.1 First Point

In order powerfully to induce us to pray, Jesus Christ assures us explicitly that all that we ask for we shall receive. Whoever asks, he says, will receive.²⁵⁷ Prayer has this efficacy of itself; this is precisely what God promises us; the more we ask of him, the more he gives, because he takes great delight in granting our prayers. He would not urge us so strongly to make requests of him, says Saint Augustine, if he were not disposed to give us what we ask and if he did not will this efficaciously.

Be ashamed, then, to be so slothful and negligent in praying to God, who has a greater desire to give than you desire to ask. He has more compassion on your wretchedness than you have the desire to be delivered.

Take courage, therefore, to believe the One who so strongly addresses you. Make yourself worthy of his promises, and take pleasure in having recourse to him. Is there anyone, asks Saint Augustine, who has been confident of obtaining something from God and has been disappointed?

38.2 Second Point

In the holy Gospel Jesus Christ gives two reasons for the efficacy of prayer. The first is the faith and confidence we have in praying. Whatsoever you ask in prayer with faith, says Jesus Christ, you will receive.²⁵⁸ He says all whatsoever, and he makes no exceptions. Would anyone believe that faith would have such an effect that we would obtain infallibly whatever we ask of God if the Son of God, who is truth itself,²⁵⁹ had not assured us of this?

Not only has he made this known to you by his words, but he has given you a great example of it in the Canaanite woman.²⁶⁰ She had insistently prayed and entreated with Jesus Christ to deliver her daughter who was possessed by a demon. She merited that Jesus Christ give her what she asked because of her faith. Oh woman! exclaimed Jesus, how great is your faith! let it be done as you desire.²⁶¹

Be convinced, then, that God is ready to refuse you nothing that you ask of him with faith and confidence in his goodness.

38.3 Third Point

The second reason why God grants everything to those who pray is the humility with which they ask him for what they need. As the Wise Man so rightly says, God resists the proud and gives his grace to the humble.²⁶² In other words, he grants nothing to the proud and refuses nothing to the humble.

This is what Jesus Christ made abundantly clear in the parable of the Pharisee and the publican, who were both praying in the Temple. The publican went home justified, says Our Lord, but not the Pharisee. The reason for this, as he immediately adds, is that whoever exalts himself shall be humbled, while whoever humbles himself will be exalted.²⁶³ This was like saying that the Pharisee's prayer was not heard, because it was accompanied by sentiments of pride, whereas the publican, in spite of the serious sins he had committed, received a full pardon for them on account of the contrition and humility he showed in the presence of God, and he went home justified.

When you pray to God, then, let it be with such deep humility that God will not be able to refuse you anything you ask.

257 Lk 11:10
258 Mt 21:22
259 Jn 14:6

260 Mt 15:21-28
261 Mt 15:28
262 Prv 3:34

263 Lk 18:14