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"Prayer Is Good With Fasting And Alms."

The other day a boy came in to ask why his prayers were not answered. We couldn't tell him, of course, just why in God's wisdom the particular favor for which he was praying had not yet been granted, but his question suggested a need for instruction on prayer. An investigation in this particular case showed that the boy was a pious but spoiled child, who had never learned the need of self-sacrifice simply because his parents had tried to anticipate his wishes. He wanted something now that his parents could not give, and he was peevish with God because God was possibly teaching him a lesson his parents had neglected.

His prayer had consisted of words, spoken perhaps from the heart, but from the emotional surface of the heart, not from a will steeped in the love of God. And they were selfish words - not consciously so, but selfish nevertheless; his prayers were "Gimme" prayers. His attitude was all take, and no give.

The instruction he needed was the one given by the Archangel Raphael (whose feast was celebrated yesterday): "Prayer is good with fasting and alms more than to lay up treasures of gold." The archangel told the faithful Tobias why this is so: "For alms delivereth from death, and the same is that which purgeth away sins, and maketh to find mercy and life everlasting." (Tobias, xii:8,9)

Sacrifice does not appeal to youth, unless it is an immediate, short sacrifice, for an immediate, urgent want. And yet youth, when properly trained, is capable of great sacrifice. Not all athletes train, but athletes can train with the rigor of a Trappist - and all "for a corruptible crown," as St. Paul reminds us. Young men make the best soldiers in war, older men in peace.

Wise young men can learn to fast for an incorruptible crown; they can learn to be good soldiers of Christ. Our foreign missionaries are recruited from the ranks of young men in whom the love of God is tried and true - the romanticists are frozen out by the trials of the novitiate; and the same love of God, proved in self-denial, gives us the young laymen of rugged character who withstand flattery, bribery, and seduction in public life.

What was the "fasting and alms" of Tobias? He was a Jewish captive in Assyria, in a time of heartless persecution. His beautiful service is best described by the words of Raphael: "When thou didst pray with tears, and didst bury the dead, and didst leave thy dinner, and hide the dead by day in thy house, and bury them by night, I offered thy prayer to the Lord."

What sacrifices can you make? You have no occasion to bury the dead, but you can offer prayers and sacrifices for them. You can, for the love of God, rise early in the morning and go to Mass, you can bridle your tongue, you can take the pledge and keep it. If your imagination has a good side - whose hasn't? - it can suggest all manner of acts of self-denial, and your spiritual director can approve a reasonable use of these suggestions. -- And in your prayers remember that prayer has four ends, not one: adoration, thanksgiving, and reparation, as well as petition.

You Are Beginning To Find The Dillon Chapel.

Late Communion in the Dillon Hall Chapel are at last beginning to pass the 100 mark (109 yesterday, 130 today). And you are beginning to learn also that the lights in that chapel after supper indicate that a priest is waiting there for confessions!

PRAYERS: Deceased relatives of Wally Curry, Harry Nortman, and John Carr. A friend killed in an auto accident. Five special intentions.