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Prayer-bones And Prayer.

A composite of several students' difficulties regarding prayer can be formulated in the following words:

"I'm not very much given to long spells on the prayer bones, except at Mass. If I try it, a dozen pests get to work -- prayer benches cut, I squirm, shift from one knee to the other, fight off a swarm of distractions and finally stalk off in a huff. I never feel I get much out of that sort of thing.

"At the same time I really believe I'm religious at heart and I know I ought to pray a lot, especially during the summer. Have you any suggestions?"

Prayer, very acceptable prayer, is not confined to any particular posture. If it were how could we fulfill the injunctions of Holy Scripture to pray always, without ceasing, etc.?

In order to pray well, it is not necessary that you be on your knees, or that you visit a church -- though both, of course, are very often advisable.

For one who is going to keep himself in the state of grace during the summer, the morning offering is of primary importance. Offer up to God your thoughts, words, and actions; then whatever you do, that is not sinful, will be a prayer -- a kind of unconscious prayer that you will carry on all through the day. Beautiful to think of and easy, isn't it?

There is a very easy kind of conscious prayer -- the prayer you evidently have in mind. Prayer, after all, can be defined this way: "To think of of God and to say a word to Him." Simple as that; can be said anywhere -- travelling, golfing, at the theatre, working in an office, anywhere. Thinking of the Blessed Virgin, of the angels, and saints, we think indirectly of God. Saying a word to them, we say indirectly a word to God.

What word shall we say? Any becoming word. Peter trying to walk on the water to Jesus, grew afraid of the wind and began to sink. "Lord, save me!" he cried out -- three words. Jesus stretched for His hand, took hold of Peter, and when "they were come up into the boat the wind ceased."

This summer you may find yourself dangerously assailed by temptation. Lord, save me!

Get in the habit of making short acts of contrition, even for sins forgiven. "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom" -- nine-word prayer, immediately answered, of the thief on the cross.

More samples? Make up your own in your own way and in your own words. Your wants, difficulties, situation, will suggest words. And if you put your prayers in your own words they will shoot straight out from the heart.

This habit of ejaculatory prayer will not come to you without conscious effort. There are little knacks, however, that should help. Make the sight of a church, the sound of a church bell, the signal to salute your Eucharistic God. Pay homage to the creative Hand of God manifested in the beauty and majesty of the mountains and the sea; in the glories of the heavens.

And as you try, new methods will suggest themselves.

PRAYERS: Deceased - the father of Vince Turley, 31; a cousin of John McLaughlin. Ill - Ike Voedisch, '28, former football coach, accident victim; John McLaughlin (appendectomy). Thanksgiving for the seven children for whom prayers were requested -- all improved. Two special intentions.