

Mass Thurs. of St. Francis
of Paula, p. 781. 2nd col.
of Church or Pope, p. 661

University of Notre Dame
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Father Hoff preaches to-
night at 7 and 7:30. --Jim
Dougherty slightly better.

New Kind of Prayer.

Philip Kinsley, writing in the graphic section of the Chicago Tribune last Sunday, tells of an interview he had recently with Dr. Shailer Mathews, emeritus dean of the University of Chicago divinity school. A bold headline--"Chasm Between Religion and Science is Bridged"--tops the article. Many scholars (including scientists) won't like the way Dr. Mathews builds his bridges; but that's a long, long story that doesn't fit into the Bulletin.

In his "leisurely interview at the University Club," Dr. Mathews does hit off this vague and cumbersome idea of prayer. "Prayer," he says, "is the utilization of the technique of personal communication in development of personal relations with the activity of the cosmos. It is not to persuade an angry God, but it is possible to accomplish through prayer something that could not be otherwise accomplished. It is not necessarily only useful thinking, the dynamics of the mind. It is all that, but it is something more. All religions recognize that somewhere one comes up against the not-self and gets what otherwise he would not have--strength and direction."

Now let's see, after all those polysyllabic words, just what, according to Dr. Mathews, is prayer? It is not "only thinking"; in other words, it doesn't begin and end in one's own mind. It is not "trying to persuade an angry God." No, it is, simply stated, personal communication with the activity of the cosmos.

Are we right to say this, that to obtain the strength and direction of prayer, a man ought to make signs to an earthquake or thunderstorm, or talk to a turbulent sea? The mildest of gentlemen grows impatient if he talks five minutes over the telephone, unless there be an intelligence functioning at the other end of the wire. But what of talking indefinitely longer to the "activity of the cosmos?" Strong houses with barred exits, sometimes called asylums, confine queer ladies and gentlemen who seriously talk to the stars. Is conversation with cosmic activity a far different activity?

No, Doctor Mathews, it is simply a waste of time to pray unless there be a real, personal God to pray to. Cosmic activity doesn't understand mental communication and it wouldn't care about anybody else's difficulties even if it did understand. Otherwise it would be a person.

But there's an old-fashioned kind of prayer that, for thousands of years, has really brought strength and direction. It can be defined as "the referring of a life to the good God." The most direct form of this prayer is to turn thought or speech to God, in which case it is either mental or vocal. An indirect form is to live and to work for God.

And there are very many sensible things that a man can talk about to the personal God. There is the excellence of God Himself, as it is manifested in all the wonders and beauties of creation. To acknowledge and honor that excellence is the highest form of prayer. Since everything good comes from God, it is really fraudulent if man doesn't thank God. Since man sometimes balks against what he knows God wants him to do, it is well if, in his better moments, he expresses sorrow and the determination to work more obediently in the future. And since there is such an abundance of things that man needs and wants, why it is only natural that he ask the good God for help in obtaining them.

Is this kind of prayer satisfactory to real scientists? Well, Wasmann and Copernicus and Volta and Ampere and Pasteur and Schwann and Bernard and Stenson and Laennec were reputable scientists who didn't see the necessity of building a bridge that leads away from it. In fact, they frequently engaged, with profit, in just this kind of prayer. PRAYERS; (deceased) grandmother of Miller Mallott (Walsh); Elizabeth Storch, Sister M. Ferdinand's mother Ill, Fred Digby's father; Charley McNichols aunt (3or.)