
How To Pray

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Nihil Obstat: Benjamin L. Marino, Vicar General

Imprimatur: Amado H. Paulino, Auxiliary Bishop of Manila, June 27, 1975

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"How To Pray" may seem like a strange title for a booklet. Most people probably think that they know how to pray well enough and that their real problem is getting themselves to do it. In part they are right. Most people do know how to pray — to say a certain number of vocal prayers learned as a child, and to pray in their own words in times of special need or at church or especially right after receiving our Lord in Communion. Problems arise, though, when they begin to realize that God is asking more of us in the way of prayer — that he is asking us to devote some time each day to mental prayer, perhaps only ten or fifteen minutes, maybe more.

In this booklet, Father Luna discusses the need for mental prayer and provides helpful hints on how it can be made fruitful. {Editor's note}

It takes all kinds to make a world. And so it's not surprising to find people who have pushed God to the very edge of their awareness and live oblivious of the fact that God not only has given us life, but also has become man, died for us, and loved us so much that it is by his will "that we should be called children of God; and such we are" (1 Jn 3:1).

The fact that we have been created by God should (as a natural consequence) lead us to obey his divine will with gratitude and love, and the fact that we have been adopted as his children should make us even more thankful to him.

God wants our love; he will be satisfied with nothing else. That is what he principally looks for in our works. The things that we do or achieve are not of primary value to God, for he can create them by a mere thought; or with just as much ease he can raise up other free agents to do what we do. But the love of our hearts is something unique, something no one else can give him. True he could create other hearts to love him, but once he has created us and given us free will, the love of our particular heart is something unique and in a way irreplaceable.¹

For this reason, when God made his will known to us, the first thing he demanded was: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with thy whole heart..." (Deut. 6:5). The life of a Christian can only be barren and unsteady if it is not grounded on the fulfillment of this, the greatest of the commandments.

Is it possible to love God?

God wants us to love him, and he wants our love to grow. But how is it possible to grow in love for him? Philosophers say that we cannot love what we do not know. This means that it is impossible to love and desire God without knowing him. And how can we know him unless we make his acquaintance through prayer?

Christ our Lord had already told us that we must "pray always" (Lk 18:1). Nor was he satisfied to teach us this truth by word; he also taught us by example. Time and again the Gospel tells us our Lord "spent the night in prayer."

The very mention of the words "mental prayer" conjures up for many people something so difficult that only the saints or a few specially gifted persons are capable of it. Such an idea is far from the truth. Indeed, if we stop to ask ourselves what mental prayer is, we see at once that it not only lies within everyone's reach, but is actually easier than vocal prayer. Vocal prayer requires a given formula of words, either read or recited from memory, but nothing of the sort is required for mental prayer—it wells up spontaneously. For instance, in moments of great need we call on God naturally: "Help me, Lord!" "God give me this grace!" These cries, short as they are, are the beginning of a dialogue with God, our Father.

"You wrote to me: 'To pray is to talk with God. But about what?' About what? About him, and yourself: joys, sorrows, successes and failures, great ambitions, daily worries—even your weaknesses! And acts of thanksgiving and petition—and love and reparation. In short, to get to know him and to get to know yourself—to 'get acquainted'!"² These short lines summarize the essence of prayer. Prayer is simply talking with God—honest talk, uncluttered by well-practiced phrases and complicated syntax.

Since mental prayer lies well within everybody's reach, it should come as no surprise that the Church recommends it with insistence. On our part, we ought to stop hiding behind excuses prompted by laziness and comfort which keep us from a serious effort at prayer. Such phrases as "I don't know how to pray," or "I don't need it," are just rationalizations to excuse the lack of effort and steadfastness needed to devote some time to mental prayer each day. It is not that people don't know how to pray, but that they are simply unwilling to try.

In a submarine

A little boy went to a beach resort with his parents. He was learning how to swim. One morning he went to the village church with his mother and received Holy Communion. When the Mass ended, his mother was pleasantly surprised to see her little boy quietly recollected in thanksgiving for some time. Once they were out on the street she asked him why he had spent so much time with our Lord that morning. The child replied that he'd been telling Jesus all the exciting things he was going to do that morning. "We're going to the beach. You'll see how

much fun it is. I'm learning to dive and swim under water. You're coming with me aren't you? Nothing to be afraid of. You'll find it exciting! Just like riding in a submarine!"

Mental prayer is not really difficult, as that little boy's dialogue shows. To begin you only have to put yourself in the presence of God. Just say to yourself: "I'm going to talk with God for a little while." And immediately you're in the presence of God. Could anything be simpler, or easier? As a matter of fact, from the moment you say to yourself, "I'm going to spend a little time talking with God," you've actually begun to do so.

Each person should speak to God in his own way. God does not make class distinctions. He understands us perfectly even if we have trouble finding the right words.

It helps if our prayer sounds like a simple conversation. If you happen to be alone you can even pray aloud if you find that this helps. You should talk to God with simplicity about things which concern you. Of course he knows about them already, but we also know that he likes to hear them from our own lips. So tell them to him as a child tells his father the things that have happened to him at play or school. For instance: "Today I only behaved so—so. I didn't do my work well, and I forgot to offer it to you. I hardly thought of you the whole morning. But I think I did better at home. I was able to keep my temper, and I didn't take anything out on anybody else."

Things that happen to us during the day, things that we would chat about with our family or friends who care—these things can be subject matter for our prayer. Gradually as we get to feel more at home with God, the conversation turns to more substantial matters and grows more intimate. Almost unconsciously there will be a change in the themes of conversation, which will concentrate more and more on God and on what he wants from us.

Always the same tune?

Up to now I have explained how we can begin to practice mental prayer. However, since our lives normally follow the regular routine of our jobs, and since most of the time nothing spectacular or unusual happens, we have to expect that after a while we are likely to get bored with repeating the same themes over and over. We must be on our guard against this, to avoid our falling into a rut or into lukewarmness and indifference.

Sometimes this boredom results from lack of preparation, and this lack leads to a dull monotony similar to that which meets the eyes of a shipwrecked survivor adrift in the ocean, who sees nothing but waves and the line where sea and sky meet on the horizon.

Prayer is far from being like a shipwreck. Sometimes, however, people who pray find themselves in a situation comparable to the man on the raft. Why? Because instead of preparing themselves, instead of laying up stores, they come to their prayer "to see what's going to happen," or "what's going to come to mind." They don't realize that when one goes to pray with

such dispositions, it's likely that nothing is going to happen or come to mind. And so they will simply float around in a vacuum of ideas as it were, or waste their time fighting off distractions.

Nobody, therefore, ought to come to mental prayer like a spectator. One ought to prepare oneself, and the best way is to find a topic for conversation. This doesn't require study or consulting books. It simply means looking around among the events of our day. Any activity can serve as a conversation piece. Everything we do, and everything we think of, ought to find place in our prayer somehow.

Our jobs, our attitudes and behavior toward others, our families, our friends, the house we live in, food, the things we do for amusement or recreation, our character traits, etc., are all good sources of material for prayer.

Scenes from the Gospels, the life of our Lady, the lives of the saints, the way we behave toward our guardian angels, the Holy Mass, prayer itself, and so many other things can also be, and ought to be, themes of conversation with God.

We do not always need to have a given theme. Often it will suffice to put ourselves in God's presence and remain there basking quietly and comfortably before the eyes of him who gives rest and solace to our hearts.

"Doing your thing"

The reason we should discuss things with our Lord is because we are asked to imitate him. The exercises of the spiritual life—Holy Communion, prayer, mortification, spiritual reading—all have imitating him as their purpose. If we live true Christian lives, we get to resemble him more and more. Mental prayer is one of the best means of achieving this resemblance.

Each person has his own particular faults: Tom is temperamental; Dick is lazy; Harry neglects the upbringing of his children; Jack shows little concern for his professional obligations; etc. In short, we are usually far from being what we would like to be.

Awareness of our defects should not discourage us, provided we have a desire to improve. There is hope for betterment as long as Tom wants to be more pleasant to his neighbors, Dick more diligent in his work, and Harry a better parent to his children. If these defects have penetrated so deeply into our bones that we no longer want to rid ourselves of them—that would be cause for alarm.

Of course we are weak. But our stumbles and falls should not always be charged solely against our weakness. They could also be accounted for by the lack of firm resolve to change, a lack of resolve resulting from deep-seated self-love which makes us feel at home with our defects.

In prayer we will find help we need to reform ourselves. There can be no doubt that if I plainly and humbly discuss with the Lord those stumbling blocks that keep me away from him, I will find myself armed with new strength to fight the next time an occasion of sin arises. First, because I have asked our Lord for his grace, and second, because my will is more resolved not to give in.

God helps those who help themselves

"God helps those who help themselves." In our prayer we should not expect God to do everything. We must contribute a genuine determination to pray well, resting assured that God in turn will help us make our prayer fruitful. It may happen that, despite all we have said here, we find ourselves at a loss for a suitable conversation theme or, having found one, seem unable to exploit it. On such occasions the best course is to get a good book and use it as an aid. The Holy Gospels, which contain the teachings and counsels imparted by Jesus to his disciples, can be a great help. We can reap great benefits from simply reading a Gospel passage and asking our Lord in prayer to open its meaning to us.

It is not a matter of just reading the Gospel, or of committing it to memory, but rather of applying the Gospel text to our lives and circumstances. To illustrate, let us take the scene of the adulteress brought before our Lord. The Scribes and Pharisees ask him what is to be done with her. Jesus bends to write on the ground, and when they press him, he replies saying that he who is without sin should cast the first stone. We can react to this story in various ways. We can think that our Lord's supreme wisdom enabled him to solve the most complicated and difficult problems easily. Or we can dwell on the maliciousness of those more concerned with rigidly enforcing the law than with mercy and forgiveness. And so we could go on in a manner more suitable to a study of Scripture than to personal prayer.

But what we should do is try, with God's grace, to see something further in this Gospel scene. In the eyes of God we should contemplate it as if it were a scene from our own lives: the woman was a sinner as I too am a sinner; Jesus forgave her as he has so often forgiven me; her accusers left in acute embarrassment, their ears ringing with the lesson in charity given them by our Lord, and that lesson was also directed at me. And this is what matters. For when I begin to identify myself with the sinners in this Gospel scene, my prayer begins to come alive.

Among the first stumbling blocks on the path of mental prayer, for those who have left behind the initial fervor and enthusiasm of beginners, is a kind of depression or emptiness that subtly and by degrees invades their souls. This depression can even lead them to feel that it is pointless to go on exerting themselves because they will never be capable of praying well.

Ordinarily this feeling is not the result of lack of good will, but rather a lack of clear ideas. Such people believe themselves unprepared for spiritual life because they do not feel the effects they had expected from prayer. They had expected an immediate change; they had the notion that

their faults would vanish, that prayer was some kind of wonder drug that would at once restore the patient to health.

As they grow aware that the reality is not as they had imagined, they draw what appears to them to be an obvious conclusion: "I am just the way I was, I haven't changed in the least, this medicine does nothing for me. Besides, God doesn't hear me; or if he does, he doesn't answer. I do all the talking myself, and frankly it is beginning to weary and bore me."

When we complain that "God does not hear us," we only show that we don't know what we are saying. If we had just a little more faith, we would be convinced that our Lord sees and hears us all the time and everywhere.

To expect to change overnight is to expect a miracle. We do not expect God to cure a sick man by working a miracle. So why would we complain when he bides his time and expects us to do something to help ourselves before he gives us what we ask from him? Besides, isn't it a mistake to say that we haven't changed at all? Any person who practices mental prayer, even if he did nothing else, has already shown a significant improvement. There is a lot of difference between a man who regularly drops in for a chat with God, and a man who does not bother to talk to him.

God's answer

However, it must be admitted that there are times when it seems as though God does not answer. I have used the word "seems" because, as a matter of fact, such is not the case. On such occasions what really happens is this: we would very much like to see ourselves transformed all of a sudden by prayer. We would very much like to feel God's grace working in our hearts, to hear his voice, or to perceive him in such a way as to remove all doubts about his response. We forget that God does not have to communicate with us through the medium of our senses or emotions.

What then does take place when we pray? Is it true that God does not speak to us? Of course he does. But ordinarily he does it in a simpler way, without apparitions or other mystical phenomena. God's ordinary manner of answering may lead us to think that we are not getting any answer from him, that we are coming out of our prayer exactly the same as when we began it.

We can't expect extraordinary manifestations of God's power when we pray. But God always answers anyone who brings good will and effort to prayer. Otherwise, what is the source of the good thoughts that come to us during meditation, of the resolution to reform our lives, to be more generous? Where does the feeling of revulsion at the emptiness of our lives come from? Are we to say that these good reactions come from ourselves? Such is not the case. On the contrary, it is God himself who, by his grace, brings these thoughts and affectations forth within us.

In this way, God sows in us the seeds of a better life. And one day we awake to the conviction that we have to change—that is God's answer—or it dawns on us how selfish we are and that things cannot go on like this—again, that is God's answer; or we finally come to realize that there ought to be a great deal more generosity in our lives. All these resolutions and aspirations plainly show that we are treading the right path in prayer, and that God is getting through to us.

And yet, there might be times when we feel ourselves empty of even such thoughts and feelings. This emptiness, however, is no cause for panic. Often we are unaware of the thoughts and feelings generated in prayer. It might happen that at the end of our prayer we find it impossible to lay a finger on any results, on any improvement. Nonetheless, we can safely assume the existence of unformulated resolutions, of barely noticed—or even totally unnoticed—aspirations. They lie beneath the level of consciousness as the seeds which the farmer plows under the earth, to break out in God's good time.

Resolutions

We don't have to come out of mental prayer with a new concrete resolution every time. Often it's enough simply to repeat good resolutions made earlier and, as we talk things over with our Lord, ask for strength to carry them out better. Otherwise we would simply be piling resolution upon resolution. Of course it would be just fine to be able to say of every resolution we make: "Mission accomplished!" But this is not always the case, sometimes because we reverse our decisions, sometimes because we carry them out half-heartedly, and sometimes because we simply forget them. But to say that we needn't always come out of prayer with a definite resolution doesn't mean that we shouldn't try to form one. A resolution is simply the desire and readiness of will to do what God wants of us.

When we make a resolution, our will remains in a state of expectation, waiting, so to speak, for the opportunity to carry it out. When the occasion arises, we will be prepared for it and in a good position to overcome difficulties since we will be attuned to act in accordance with the dispositions we have acquired during our prayer.

Thus the soul not only converses with God, but also lives in a state of permanent prayer, as it were, which enables it to receive still greater graces from him.

The great lever

We come now to an interesting point. Love is the force behind everything we do in life. We love our parents, our brothers and sisters, our children. We love people, and we love things. Love is woven so deeply into our existence that it can be truly said that whatever we do, we do out of love.

But we need clear ideas on this point. First of all, a distinction must be drawn between sentiment or feeling, and love. Feeling is not always the same as love. Too often people make the mistake of identifying the two as one. When this mistake is carried into the spiritual domain, it causes people to lose their bearings and discourages them from keeping in close touch with God.

Now if we take feeling as the criterion of love, we logically must conclude that there are many people whom we should but don't love. Even in the case of a mother looking in on her child as he sleeps or does his homework, if she does this matter-of-factly or in a routine way she would not, according to this criterion, be loving him. This, of course, is nonsense since, while not feeling any warmth of affection at a particular moment, she would still be ready to lay down her life for her child.

Obviously then, we must not confuse love with feelings. What is love then? How can we know—and this is the problem—that we love God or not? The answer is that love is in the will. It is with our will that we love people or things. It is, then, to the will and not to feelings that we must turn to find out whether we love. With this simple yardstick, many persons who thought they had little love for God will be surprised to find out that they do love him above all things, since they are willing to give up everything rather than displease or offend him. This is genuine love, even if it is unaccompanied by tender feelings.

Disinterested love

This kind of prayer—one unaccompanied by feelings of warmth and tenderness—is excellent prayer because it is convincing proof that we seek or Lord selflessly. We spend some time with him but find ourselves devoid of feelings, and instead have to find something with which to pass the time profitably and ward off distractions. To all appearances, at prayer's end it might seem that it all has been a waste of time. But can there be a more disinterested love than that shown by a person who goes to mental prayer knowing that he will not derive satisfaction from it?

On the other hand, let us assume that a person experiences a sense of well-being or satisfaction during mental prayer. In this case is he really seeking God or himself? The question is intriguing and has far-reaching consequences for the spiritual life.

To feel, or not to feel, our love for God is not the essential thing in prayer. The essential thing is to will what God wills, and to will to be with him, to spend time in his company. This thought should reassure anyone who might imagine he has lost the way because he no longer experiences the fervor during prayer that marked his rebirth to the spiritual life.

On the streets?

God is everywhere. This may be a truism, but it's important because, even if we're usually not aware of it, it's a fact that God sees us and hears us at every moment of our lives.

And this means that, in principle, we can pray anywhere. I say "in principle" because, although it is true theoretically that anyplace is a good place to engage in conversation with God, practical experience shows that generally prayer is not well done in just "anyplace."

Indeed, when we make our way along the streets, God sees us walking, and even sees to the very bottom of our hearts. Therefore the streets are a good place for mental prayer. But there are also the crowds, the neon signs, and the window displays designed to catch the eye of the passersby. All of this means that streets are ordinarily not the best place for mental prayer. No matter how great our powers of concentration, we will get distracted; or if we do succeed in maintaining our concentration, we might suddenly find ourselves under the wheels of a car, or in a hospital, or even having an unforeseen interview with St. Peter.

Undoubtedly the best place for mental prayer will always be a quiet church, where our Lord himself is sacramentally present. There are two reasons for this. One is the obvious fact that, since our Lord has decided to stay with us in the Blessed Sacrament, he therefore desires our company. The other is that the quiet and seclusion of a church is a great help in avoiding distractions.

Of course it isn't always feasible to pray in a church. The pressures of time, family commitments, or professional obligations often prevent us from finding a suitable physical environment for prayer. Notice that I say "commitments" and "obligations" because I'm referring to genuine reasons, not excuses inspired by laziness or disorderly habits. Usually a little ingenuity will overcome difficulties. It's only when, with a spirit of self-sacrifice, we've genuinely sought to pray in the presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and found it impossible that we may in good conscience seek some other secluded and quiet place for our prayer.

At home?

Many, if not most, people, simply have to do their praying at home or in some other less-than-ideal place. For example, the housewife whose time is fully taken up with household chores; the employee, worker, or professional who has to work overtime to make ends meet; the sick or disabled whose physical movements are restricted.

People who find themselves in these and similar circumstances should be as generous as they can towards God. But they need not worry, since it is God himself who permits these circumstances which make it hard for them to find a good place to pray.

At home, at the counter, in the office, in the shop, on the streets, wherever they happen to be, people should try to pray well in spite of the interruptions and involuntary distractions caused by those around them.

The housewife who tries to get away from her children for some recollection with God will, of course, find herself suddenly interrupted by the children quarreling or crying or falling off of a chair. The man who has no choice but to pray at his desk knows he might have to break off his prayer because of a telephone call, a summons from his boss, or a client who must be responded to. Neither the one nor the other need worry, because these inconveniences are not due to a lack of good will, but to circumstances beyond their control.

Usually, however, we do not find ourselves in such circumstances. The inconveniences we experience are often the consequences of our own disorganization or lack of self-control in little things.

Why is it, for example, that mental prayer is often left for last so that we have to pray on the way home? The answer is simple: it is usually because we have been overly easygoing or careless, we have not planned our day with foresight, or we have not given our spiritual life the importance it deserves. In short, we do not take enough interest in prayer.

Here we ought to be honest with ourselves. Often we blame our circumstances for something when we ourselves are to blame. True enough, these circumstances sometime do involve a real difficulty. But more often than not, we could overcome the difficulty if we tried to.

Making use of the means

Since it is not always workable to completely avoid circumstances that make it impossible for us to achieve suitable quiet and peace, we may find ourselves forced to pray under difficult conditions. In this case we have to use the right means to withdraw from whatever hinders our conversation with our Lord.

A little ingenuity usually is needed to achieve such a result. People burdened with many tasks often resort to making themselves unavailable from time to time, and they generally succeed in their purpose. How? Simply stated, they just put some barrier around themselves that can be almost impossible to breach. When calling on somebody, we have often been told: "He's not in. This afternoon, maybe, or possibly tomorrow." These are polite phrases to tell us that he cannot see us then and there.

Closing ourselves in our room, leaving word that we are not to be disturbed, going somewhere where we cannot be reached—these are some of the means that can help us achieve the silence needed for mental prayer.

Ordinarily little or no harm is done because a visitor is made to wait until we are through with our meditation, or because a certain piece of work is delayed for a few minutes. Why is it that it is always prayer, or one of our devotional practices, that is elbowed aside and made to wait? Why not our work, our friend, our having fun? We seem to think—or we behave as if we believed—that our work, friends, fun, cannot wait, but God yes, God can wait. Why? Is it because we will be reprimanded by the boss, chided by our friend, nagged by our self-seeking comfort,

whereas God remains silent? To put it plainly, aren't we being very inconsiderate with our Lord, always pushing him to the rear?

Mental prayer can be done at home, in the street, in the office, etc. If nothing else is available, we can pray while making a trip by plane or bus. We can close our eyes and begin our chat with our Lord while seeming to enjoy a nap. Or we can look at the countryside, as many do, with this difference: while they gaze at it listlessly, with nothing in particular on their minds, we keep our minds busy with aspirations and acts of love of God.

My mind wanders off so easily

"When I go to pray, I keep thinking of everything except God. No sooner do I get a grip on my imagination than it is off again. My mind wanders off so easily!"

It is true that things are not always this bad. There are times when God seems to open himself to us, and our prayer proceeds smoothly without a hitch. But this experience is something out of the ordinary. Normally we should expect to exert effort in order to pray.

In the eyes of God we are only small children. "Before God, who is eternal, you are a smaller child than, in your sight, a two-year-old toddler. And besides being a child, you are a child of God. Don't forget it."³ A mother who carries her child in her arms is not offended at the child's distractions, nor will God hold it against us if the same thing happens to us involuntarily. Voluntary distractions on the other hand are another matter. Voluntary distractions always displease God. To entertain them is to be deliberately inconsiderate towards God.

The doorman

It's not necessary to behave during prayer like a doorman at a reception, determined to keep gate-crashers out at any cost. Imagination can be a help instead of a hindrance if we know how to handle it prudently. Why not employ it to reinforce what we are telling our Lord, or to picture to ourselves more vividly the scene we've just read about in the Gospel? Our strategy here should be to turn this God-given power of imagination into an ally. At times these distractions proceed from the worries that beset everyone. Our jobs, our relationships with others, financial difficulties, etc., are the factors that are grouped under the title "struggle for existence." To try to eliminate these things from our prayer would take too much energy. How can we ask a mother to forget her children? How can we ask a man with a demanding job not to think about his work while he is praying?

These and other concerns and preoccupations will come to mind during the meditation, and we don't have to treat them as if they were evil thoughts. On the contrary, why not talk about them quietly and even at length with God? It is he who will give us the strength we need to confront these difficulties and worries. To attempt to drive them away, not to consider them in God's

presence, is to shy away from what he wants us to do—talk our troubles over with him. Prayer is our way to ascertain God's will in these things.

Our Lady, a model of mental prayer

We may imagine that to love God we have to do something great or extraordinary. But our lives seldom afford an opportunity for anything like that. Instead we must learn to turn the little things in our daily lives into material for our prayer.

The life of Our Lady was mostly a simple and uneventful life. We can easily imagine the things that made up her days: going to the well to draw water, lighting the fire, preparing the meals, sweeping Joseph's shop, taking care of Jesus. But these common domestic chores did not distract her from the presence of God. On the contrary, they furnished her with opportunities for a constant flow of dialogue with him.

One should not imagine that her holiness and intense life of prayer and of love of God kept Our Lady aloof from the ordinary concerns of living and that she conversed with God only about exalted topics that had nothing to do with the prosaic realities of every day.

In the Gospels we find the exact opposite to be the case. At Cana, Mary is the first person to notice the wine was running short. Anyone absorbed in the kind of prayer just described, concerned only with spiritual and sublime themes, certainly would have failed to notice such a commonplace thing. Yet of all the guests, it was she who seems to have noticed the wine problem first. More to our purpose: out of this prosaic happening, she took the opportunity for dialogue with her Son.

We ought to learn from Our Lady the art of mental prayer. Anything and everything can be of use; a stroke of good luck, a piece of bad news ... we can bring it up and talk it over with our Lord in order to enrich our spiritual life. The Vatican Council recommends this to all Christians:

Neither family concerns nor other secular affairs should be irrelevant to their spiritual life, in keeping with the words of the Apostle, 'Whatever you do in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him' (Col 3:17).

The perfect example of this type of spiritual and apostolic life is the most Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Apostles, who while leading the life common to all here on earth, one filled with family concerns and labors, was always intimately united with her Son, and in an entirely unique way cooperated in the work of the Savior. Having now been assumed into heaven, with her maternal charity she cares for these brothers of her Son who are still on their earthly pilgrimage and remain involved in dangers and difficulties until they are led into the happy fatherland. All should devoutly venerate her and commend their life and apostolate to her maternal care.⁴

¹ E. Boylan, *This Tremendous Lover*, Christian Classics, p. 68.

² J. Escriva de Balaguer, *The Way*, no. 91.

³ *Ibid.*, no. 860.

⁴ *Apostolicam actuositatem*, Decree on the laity, no. 4.