

Fifth Sunday after Easter

The Power of Prayer

“*Ask and you shall receive*” (John, 16:24)

Christ made a very extraordinary promise to His followers which is expressed in today's Gospel. Our Lord said, “*Ask and you shall receive.*” This promise of Christ was intended to urge us to make frequent use of prayer.

Prayer, in general, is the raising of our minds and hearts to God. We may pray for any of four purposes--to adore God, to thank Him for His blessings, to ask Him pardon of our sins, and to seek His favours. It is this last type of prayer, the prayer of petition, to which Our Lord referred when He said, “*Ask and you shall receive.*”

In a word, Our Lord promises to prayer infallible efficacy. He tells us that any favour we ask in prayer will be granted. Of course, this promise must be taken with proper qualifications. Christ was referring mainly to prayer for *spiritual favours*. Often the temporal favours we ask in prayer --a better job, recovery of health, success in business, etc.,-would not be for our spiritual welfare, and we cannot expect that Christ would grant those petitions. But when we ask for some benefit for our soul, such as a greater love for God, patience in trials, the light to see the course of action God wishes us to follow, etc., we have absolute assurance, based on the promise of the Son of God, that we shall obtain what we seek.

This promise is especially applicable to the graces we need to overcome *temptation*. For this reason we can be certain that if we pray in time of temptation we shall preserve God's grace in our soul. No one can ever claim that he did not receive the grace to overcome any temptation.

If he did yield to the temptation it is an indication that he did not pray or at least that his prayer did not possess the proper qualifications. For undoubtedly Our Blessed Lord was referring only to prayer endowed with the necessary qualities, such as humility, confidence and perseverance. When we pray with these dispositions of soul we have nothing to fear during the entire course of life, for God is with us by His all powerful grace.

Practical Application

Fill your souls with a great desire to make use of prayer as Our Lord wills, and pray frequently for all your needs of body or of soul.

The next three days, preparatory to the feast of the Ascension, are called *Rogation Days*, days set aside by the Church as a time of *special prayer*, both for temporal favours (such as an abundant harvest) and for all the spiritual needs of our soul.