

OF PRAYER

Since prayer is our chief purpose, we must come to a clear understanding of it. We must also come to a clear understanding that some time each day must be given to vocal prayers. However, our entire day should in some way be given to prayer, to the lifting up of our minds and hearts to God, as we move about throughout the day. Many of us make the mistake of looking upon a life of prayer as a life separated from the living of everyday life and each day's tasks and labors. Prayer is often looked upon as a work, a duty, that suffers under the burden of a schedule; a duty that competes with the legitimate works of our daily obligations. When daily obligations predominate ("I just don't have **time** to pray!"), disturbance of conscience begins to sting. The sooner we come to a clear understanding of prayer, the sooner will we feel the peace and joy and serenity that such understanding inevitably brings. Absolutely everything we do, sin of course excluded, can become prayer – excellent prayer. As we walk through life in the fervor of our love for God, the concentration we place on the work at hand serves to squeeze out temptations and distractions. St. Benedict places great importance on work. With a well-disposed attitude of mind, our spiritual prayer life can very well thrive and prosper while we are in the performance of good and legitimate labor. The following suggestions may be of some help:

- We must learn how to pray as we speak.
- We must learn how to pray as we breathe.
- We must learn how to pray as we walk and as we sleep.
- We must learn how to pray as we work and as we play.
- We must learn how to pray as we use the familiar gestures of the daily round.
- We must learn how to pray as we drive our car, buy groceries, wash clothes, and go to the bank.
- We must learn how to pray as we clean the toilets, put out the garbage, and everything else we have to do.
- We must learn how to pray under a wide open and ever present heaven.
- We must learn that every good work we do in God's honor is His work and therefore is prayer.
- We must learn how to pray under the rich light of the glory of an all-loving God, Who gives warmth and strength and serenity and peace and perseverance and energy to every child of His who truly loves Him.
- We must learn how to prevent the madness that is all around us from interfering with our prayer. □