Our Lady of Perpetual Help Devotions

"WE OUGHT ALWAYS TO PRAY." (Luke XVIII—1.)

By REV. WILLIAM A. DOHERTY, C. SS. R.

(This article has been written exclusively for the Catholic Courier, diocesan newspaper, by Father Doherty, Redemptorist priest in charge of the Wednesday devotions at St. Joseph's Church which are conducted each week in honor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help.)

In the inspired Book we read of a certain judge that feared neither God nor man. For that questionable fortitude, we, of God-fearing habits, do not admire him. This gentleman, however, happens into our thoughts for only a brief moment and since it is not his piety that concerns us now we shall not make any comments much as we would like to.

To this avenger of wrongs came a widow who had been subjected to some unjust treatment. Her pleading arms were unavailing. Her tears were as the dew beneath the feet of this inhuman judge. He dismissed her from his presence. Then came the dawn of selfish reason. If he did not grant her judgment she would bother him continuously. Her troublesome pleas would become wearisome. So her constancy in asking won the vindication of the evil done to her.

It is only a parable. Parables, however, are pointed especially when they fall from Divine Lips. They seem to bring the wisdom of heaven within the grasp of sin-darkened minds. By them Christ tells us what we must do and what we must avoid in order to reach His Kingdom. Lest the lesson of this one be lost, St. Luke prefaced it with these words: "And he spoke also a parable to them, that we ought ALWAYS to pray and not to faint."

Key That Releases

Always! Behold the sentinel-word that patrols our minds! Guardian of God's rights! Bold reminder of our own duties. That word forbids the entrance of exceptions and excuses. There may be a time for speaking and a time for keeping silence but the time for praying is always. Not only ought we to pray when the soul shares a kindred feeling with the angels and dips itself into the sweetness of their prayerful bliss. Not only when the tyrant hand of want or sorrow or fear sends us hurtling to the Feet of Christ; nor should we limit our time of prayer only to the hours when we feel like praying. The time for prayer is always, whether or not we are in need or pain or danger; whether or not we feel the elation of God's warm Presence or the loneliness of His absence. We have our motives for prayer always with us.

Petition is not the only reason for raising up our hearts and souls to God. We can pray without even a thought of asking, without even a desire of making a request. Prayer is born of love—love for God; love for our neighbor; love for ourselves. It is a most effective way of remitting the debts we owe to God—adoration, praise and thanksgiving. By this means too we ask His pardon, and beg Him to condone the sinful guilt and the ensuing punishment. It is the key that releases the treasures of His Divine Goodness and Mercy. Evidently therefore we ought always to pray and not to faint.

Let not these words of Our Divine Redeemer disturb our peace. They do not mean that each moment of the day must find the words of prayer slipping from our lips. They do not mean that we cannot go about our daily concerns without giving them our undivided attention. The Divine Master intended to warn us against the moods that life is heir to; moods that govern too many lives; moods that quicken and slacken our efforts; moods that brighten and darken our days; moods that raise us aloft and cast us down. Life ought not be ruled by moods but by reason.

Prayer Increases Grace

The power of prayer is its constancy. Who are they that can say: "I always get what I pray for?" They who always pray. That is not only a theory; it is a fact. Union with God is the purpose of our existence. That union begins right here on earth. We are united with God when His grace is in our soul, but prayer increases that grace, intensifies that union. Therein lies the reason for the little parable about the judge and the widow. It was her unfailing constancy that overcame him. And Christ adds these words: "And will not God revenge his elect who cry to Him day and night; and will he have patience in their regard? I say to you that He will quickly revenge them." He will quickly hear the prayers of those that come to Him often, not that He wearies of them but because He loves them. They come to Him even in those hours when their coming means labor. When they know that their hearts will be dry as the desert sands and that the sweetness of prayer will be unknown to them. They come nevertheless and they come most especially where two or three are gathered together in His Name. They know that Christ will be in their midst, and that the prayers uttered then will be more availing than when alone.

The custom of the faithful joining together for prayer has always been popular in the Church. A later development of this practice is the novena. One of the first that seems to have had any universality was the novena of mourning. We may class the others of later date as novenas of preparation, of prayer and other indulgenced novenas. In the early part of the Middle Ages there was a novena made in preparation for the Feast of Christmas. This was general only in France and Spain. In one place it was the custom to celebrate nine votive Masses of Our Lady just before Christmas. From that time on the novena has become a most popular way of preparing for the Feasts of Our Lord, Our Lady and the Saints. In our own day however it seems that we combine our efforts to honor God and Mary with an appeal for help in our own needs. There is certainly nothing against combining all the motives of prayer. By doing that we fulfill all our obligations together.

Is Special Devotion

At the present time there are countless novenas that are in favor all over the country and abroad. Of course these columns are concerned with only one of these, namely those to Our Mother of Perpetual Help. The nine Wednesdays, as a special form of devotion to Our Mother of Perpetual Help, is fast sweeping over the country. Every Wednesday of the year thousands of Her clients throng around Her shrines to offer their constant prayers to God through Her Immaculate Hands and to beg of Her the intercession that Christ cannot refuse. These souls cry out to this loving Mother and ask Her help for the poor and the distressed; for the unemployed and those in financial difficulties; help for those carrying the heavy cross of sickness and pain. Mothers and fathers that are deeply concerned about their children come to Her and ask Her help. Thousand upon thousands come to Her every Wednesday to plead for this help—help in every need and trouble; assistance in the unending fight against sin; help for all in their spiritual and temporal wants. Does She heed these prayers?

There is one undeniable proof that She does and in many, many instances this help has the semblance of the miraculous. Just consider the rapidity with which this devotion has spread. All hearts have caught fire with it and when once ignited it is inevitable—each heart goes forth to set other hearts aflame in order that the entire world may benefit by this devotion to Our Mother of Perpetual Help. And then if we need other proofs that She needs our prayers just consider the countless number of thanksgivings that flow into each of Her Shrines. And remember only one of the lepers came back to thank Christ for having healed him. That forgetfulness in the other nine has its counterpart in many Catholic hearts today. But if they thank God and our Blessed Mother in the quiet of their own homes or before the shrine that is all that is required of them and they are not at fault. It is merely encouraging to us all to know that Mary has helped a fellow being. It gives us the pluck to continue praying despite the growing tendency to think that our prayer is unheard. But remember who it is that says: "I always get what I pray for." The one whose prayer is constant; the one who always prays and does not faint."

The Wednesday Devotions form a perpetual Novena to Our Mother of Perpetual Help. Begin on any Wednesday in the year and continue for nine consecutive Wednesdays. What a splendid manner of praying ALWAYS. When we honor Mary we honor God Himself. She is the reflection of His Eternal Beauty—letting a ray of Heaven shine on the earth. Up from the earth come the prayers of the faithful. If we send them through Mary to God the beauty that is in them when She presents them to the Trinity will captivate the Three Divine Persons and our prayers will be cherished and granted.

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FR. HILBERT'S CHOIR BOYS RENDER IN CHINESE THE "ADESTE FIDELIS"

(From "FIELD AFAR")

Father Hilbert, of Rochester, N. Y., the pastor in Siaolok, Kaying Prefecture Apostolic, China, called us from our Chinese books to see the native carpenters at work on the roof of the church. In spite of the freezing wind every one was barefoot, and the warmest garment on even the best dressed of them all was a foreign-style vest. They worked on throughout the day seemingly oblivious to their scanty protection from the cold. They were almost as anxious as Father Hilbert to have the church finished in time for Christmas.

And finished in time for Christmas it was—to the great joy of all the faithful, especially those who came in from the outlying districts. Heretofore there had not been room for all, but now there is plenty, although our means have not as yet permitted the construction of new seats or decorations.

Groups began to trickle in at noon on the day before Christmas, and from that time until midnight Frs. Hilbert and Downs were kept busy in the confessionals. The numbers in the lines grew until two of our guest-priests (German Dominicans exiled from their own mission) had to be called to assist in hearing the six hundred confessions.

Brother Augustine took charge of decorating the church, and was ably assisted by our cook, who answers to the name of Joe. The day before, Joe had led a party of schoolboys and a few elders to the mountains to get pine trees for the Crib. Even the Star of Bethlehem was there, lighted by a small oil lamp. No crib in the homeland could have been more attractive than ours, as it stood banked in Christmas trees. The Virgin Mother was kneeling beside the Infant Whose arms were outstretched to receive the tiny tots and their parents who came to pray before the Crib.

At midnight there were more than a thousand people in the church, most of them Catholics, but the pagans were well represented too. The German Dominicans had sent to one of their parishes for vestments for Solemn Mass, and a Christian had walked sixty miles in two days to get them here in time. When Frs. Hilbert, Rhodes, and McCormick, as celebrant, deacon, and sub-deacon, respectively, entered the sanctuary, fifty small Chinese boys began the familiar "Adeste Fidelis." The strains were familiar, but the words were strange, for Father Hilbert had translated it into Chinese for the boys. They sang as if they appreciated the difference the Infant Saviour has made in their lives.

Father Hilbert preached his Christmas sermon, the fruit of many hours of hard labor, and it had its effect on both the Catholics and pagans in the congregation. In the morning we heard some of the Chinese repeating parts of it to others who had not been able to attend Midnight Mass.

At eight o'clock in the morning we had another Solemn Mass, celebrated by our guests according to the Dominican rite. Frs. Down and McCormick took the chanters' posts, and sang those parts of the Mass which the children could not.

At noon we thought of all at Maryknoll, who at that time were only just preparing for Midnight Mass. We thought too, of our Father General extending his Christmas greetings to all from the altar after High Mass, and we knew that we were included in his thoughts and prayers. In turn we breathed a prayer for him, and for all at the Home Knoll.

BOYS
Their Interests

What and how do you join the Gran'pa Hezzie Story Contest? Just take a piece of paper and a pencil and sketch out some adventure of old Gramp's. Make it as funny as possible. Get the family in on it and let each suggest some foolish events. Do not worry about how the story is written; the story will be judged on how funny it is, and not how nicely it is written. Take some title like this, "Gramp Among the Injuns." Then write your story. Send it in before January 10. That is when the contest closes. Come on now, get busy. If you win first prize, you get a week at Camp this summer. Hotcha!

Some have shocked us by asking who Gran'pa Hezzie is, what he looks like, etc. Here is his description. Hezz' is 234 years old by his last birthday on February 29. He is bent over so far by old age that when he walks he knocks himself in the chin. (To prevent this he usually walks backward.) His beard is snow white and 34 feet long the last time it was filled with anti-freeze. This set of whiskers is tensile like a monkey's tail and Gramp can do anything with it from buttoning up his raincoat to threading a needle. Then he talks many languages, is very powerful, very wise, and very, very cunning. His full name is Hezekiah Wettaman Snops. That ought to help.

During the last two weeks, both Ithaca and Auburn have organized Columbian Squires. We wish to congratulate those who were responsible for instituting these new units. When Rochester organized there will be four units in the diocese. To Elmira belongs the honor of the senior unit. (This ought to promote a few good basketball games, what?

The checker tournament at the Center, conducted by Jim Ehmann, for the junior members of the Boys Club, is getting exciting. The finals ought to come off this week. The first prize is a year's subscription to the new magazine "The Catholic Boy."

We are very glad to announce to the Campers that Bob Kehoe who lost his leg from an injury in a football game, is on the recovery. Bob fought a game fight and was cheerful through it all. His gameness and courage was an inspiration to all his friends. The old fight, Bob!

Did you attend the amateur boxing matches at Columbus Civic Center? Lose no time in coming. They are a whirlwhind from start to finish. There seems to be no need for chairs as most everyone is standing during the fights.

When and where will Stella Maris have their Powwow this year? It will be on January 27, 1934. The location has not yet been picked. There are two reasons for putting it later than the Christmas holidays. We would like to have some snow for the toboggans and we want the counselors from St. Bernard's to be present. The Head counselor, Walter Fischer has sent word that all the counselors will be there to greet the boys and have a grand time. Mark that date on your calendar!

When you go uptown to see old Santa and whisper in his ear on Saturday afternoon, stop in the Columbus Civic Center, come down to the basement and inspect the Craft Lodge. It is like a beehive, everyone working and laughing. Airplanes seem to be the rage. Painted bookmarks are also popular.

Returns must be made for the popularity contest sponsored by the Boys' Department of Columbus Civic Centre by Saturday, December 16. The prizes for this novel contest will be awarded at the Christmas party to be held Saturday, December 23. Christmas tree, games, candy, everything—so come and join in the fun.

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Father Bleier Celebrates Mother's Funeral Mass

Funeral services for Mrs. Eleanor S. Bleier, mother of the Rev. Henry Bleier, assistant pastor of Holy Family Church, were held Wednesday of last week at the home, 1104 Joseph Avenue and at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church.

Solemn requiem Mass was celebrated by Father Bleier assisted by the Rev. Joseph H. Gefell, D.D., deacon, and the Rev. Charles Azzi, sub-deacon. Archbishop Mooney, the Rt. Rev. Msgr. William M. Hart, V.G., the Rt. Rev. Msgr. Joseph P. Schellhorn and 27 other priests of the diocese were in the sanctuary.

Besides Father Bleier she is also survived by seven other sons, Wendell, Joseph, Charles and John of Chicago and Leo, Richard and Stephen of Rochester; two daughters, Mrs. Charles Bleile and Mrs. Joseph Litt; three sisters, Mrs. Minnie Czarnowsky, Mrs. Genevieve Schoenrock of Thompsonville, Conn., and Mrs. Blankensh of Los Angeles; two brothers, Henry Scherf of Chicago and Albert Scherf of Rochester; 42 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Legal Aid Given In 583 Cases In Month

The Legal Aid Society was called upon to handle a total of 583 cases during the month of November according to the report of Emery A. Brownell, Executive Attorney, at the meeting of the Board of Directors of the Society held Monday. Of this number, the largest group represented wage claims, foreclosure matters and domestic relation cases. The Society disposed of 320 cases during the month and carried over 263 cases for service during December.

Prelate Blesses Probatorium

Bedford, Mass.—(NCWC) — The Maryknoll Probatorium has been formally opened here. His Eminence William Cardinal O'Connell, Archbishop of Boston, was present in person at the formal opening, and, assisted by Bishop James A. Walsh, Superior General of Maryknoll, blessed the chapel and houses. The property, a large farm above Lexington on the banks of the Concord River was acquired a year ago, and its buildings have been connected into living quarters for students and Brothers, with accommodations for the Maryknoll priest in charge.

He who truly gives sympathy makes some personal bestowal of himself, of his own strength, his own life, into the weakness and deadness that he tries to help. It is indeed a wondrous gift from man to man!

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