



## Get Up!

God is waiting for us. He goes before us. He is there. He hopes that we will come! He invites us to get up. Up to 124 times in the Bible... So... Let us always have “the strong conviction of being expected” by the Lord, as Father Caffarel used to tell us. If we realise this, then we will get up! We will go to Him. We will answer his faithful, patient and benevolent expectation. With our misery, our smallness, our incapacity to love, to pray... We will rest in Him. And our response, no matter how small it appears to be to our eyes, will open our hearts to the Spirit’s action. Because the fruit of the Spirit is joy, love, peace, patience, goodness, benevolence, fidelity, gentleness (Gal 5:22). We do not become faithful through sheer hard work. We measure our imperfection and we entrust ourselves to the Holy Spirit.

Fidelity is a fruit of the Spirit, it is a gift and above all it is an inner state, a disposition of the heart to entrust ourselves to the Lord’s arms, by presenting him our requests, our hopes, our fervent prayers for our brothers and sisters. We will be faithful if we have confidence. The words Believer, Trust and Fidelity all come from the same Greek word, “pistos.” Fidelity to live according to the Gospel, to remain firm in faith, to live our commitments, including that of being an Intercessor next to Him, implies a constant and renewed will, according to our states of life, to choose to respond to his expectation, with seriousness and courage.

And the Lord will come to the rescue of our weakness.

The loyal and faithful heart puts its trust in the Lord’s promises, “And me, I am with you every day until the end of the world.” (Mt 28:20)

**Aude & Olivier de la Motte**

## Spiritual Letter

I remember an old Dominican father, a charming man, a great Bible scholar who had written great works. Yet, very often, health issues complicated his life. One day, I told him of my admiration for his patience and he said to me, *“Oh! You need excellent health to be sick for your whole life!”*

A very witty remark, that belied a fair amount of realism. If we transfer this remark to our lives with God, we understand very quickly. If we are faithful, despite the fact that complications due to our poverty, to our “bad habits” as the prayers say, can complicate our lives... Fidelity remains strong and solid.

Fidelity is that impetus that comes from the depths of ourselves and that is born of the wonder of love. A desire emerges in response to the attraction that comes from God. *“No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him,”* said Jesus (Jn 6:44) It is the same with the apostles. Peter was far from perfect, and went to the point of denial, but his closeness to the Lord kept him faithful.

It seems to me that it is just like this with all of us too. If God is the source of love, conjugal love is also the source of fidelity, a fidelity that can overcome difficult moments. Fidelity is the attachment to others. Fidelity is love in the long term, in its strength when faced with adversity. Fidelity is the merciful gaze brought to bear on you, on others.

If I come back to my old and so endearing Dominican brother, I notice that his successive handicaps did not stop him accomplishing great work. He adapted to his situation and found a balance between his strengths and his weaknesses. We too, we can look “sportily” at all our sorts of limitations, and by taking them into account, can get through them, go around them. We can even say that our sins, once discovered and regretted, can be the occasion for an even greater outburst of love, just as in Peter’s case after his denial. *“All things work together for good to those who love God,”* St Paul said (Rom 8:28), because the forgiven sin induces an extra momentum of love. Reconciliation between ourselves is a daily experience. This is why our human and spiritual handicaps do not thwart the fecundity of fidelity.

Fidelity deserves a reward! Jesus affirmed this in relation to the servants to whom talents were entrusted and who returned with double the amount, *“Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.”* (Mt 25:11) The reward is not only entering into God’s joy, as is often stated. Jesus said firstly, *“I will make you ruler over many things.”* The reward absolutely does not mean that there is nothing more to do! On the contrary, it is the joy of giving more, of seeing our horizon expand to the many other brothers and sister to be helped, to be carried in prayer. The closer we get to God, the more we have the earth to share. Great fecundity!

**Paul-Dominique Marcovits, o.p.  
Spiritual Counsellor to the Intercessors**

## **FIDELITY TO GOD**

God’s intervention that we might persevere until the end, until the definitive encounter with Jesus, is an expression of his fidelity. It is like a dialogue between our weakness and his faithfulness. He is strong in his fidelity. Elsewhere Paul was to say that he, Paul, is strong in his weakness. Why? Because he is in dialogue with the God’s faithfulness. And God’s faithfulness never disappoints. He is faithful first and foremost to himself. Therefore, he will bring to completion the work that he has begun in each one of us by his call. This gives us great assurance and confidence: a confidence which rests in God and requires our active and courageous cooperation in the face of the challenges of the present moment.

**Pope Francis’ Homily at the Celebration of Vespers  
with the University Students of the Roman Atheneums,  
November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2013**

## YOU ARE EXPECTED

“A distressing sensation seizes us when we arrive in an unknown town—port, train station, airport—and no one is there to meet us. However, if a joyful face welcomes us, if hands reach out for us, then we immediately feel comforted, and delivered from the cruel impression of being misplaced and lost. Then, these customs, this language, all of this great disconcerting town no longer matter, we are happy enough to be a stranger for all, the moment that we are a friend for someone. How reassuring it is also to find that our hosts were expecting us. Parents and children do not need to say too much for us to be able to guess it: their welcome, a certain quality of eagerness suffice. And in our room, those flowers, that book on art—because they know our tastes—complete our conviction.

I would like, dear friend, that when you go to pray that you always have the strong conviction of being expected: expected by the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, expected by the Trinitarian family, where your place is prepared. Remember indeed what Christ said, *“I am going to prepare a place for you.”* You might object saying that he was talking about heaven. It is true. But prayer, precisely, is heaven, at least for its essential reality: God’s presence, God’s love, God’s welcoming of his child. The Lord always expects us.

Even better: we only start to walk a few steps and he is already coming to meet us. Remember the parable: *“But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him.”* And yet, as you remember, despite the fact that this son had seriously offended his father, he was still expected and awaited, impatiently!”

**Henri Caffarel, excerpts from *Cahiers de l’Oraison***

## HE IS THE ONE WHO CAME TO ME...

“Understanding prayer well means understanding that one is speaking with God.

Thus, there are two poles. One very, very tiny and very, very weak: my soul. One immense and powerful: God.

But here is the first paradox, the first surprise: that he who is so great wanted to speak to me, tiny as I am.

It is not I who wanted prayer. It is he who wanted it. It is not I who looked for hm. It is he who looked for me first. My seeking him would have been in vain if before all time he had not sought me.

The hope on which my prayer rests is in the fact that it is he who wants it. And if I go to keep the appointment it is because he is already there waiting for me.

If he had remained in his silence and isolation, I’d not have been able to break mine. Nobody has ever concentrated for long on talking to a wall or a tree or a star. They would have given it up very soon if they did not get a reply.

I have been speaking with God all my life and I’ve only just begun!

There’s another thing to say about prayer. It doesn’t come from earth, but from heaven. The cry which fills my breast and makes me exclaim, “God, I love you!”; the force which makes Farragi, the blind Muslim, repeat as he walks on the track at my side, “How great God is!”; David’s cry of “Have mercy!”; Mary’s exaltation of “Magnificat”; the tear sparkling in the penitent’s eye as he exclaims “Jesus, have mercy on me!”; the scientist’s sudden ecstatic gasp before the wonders of the universe, all these are the words of the Holy Spirit.

It is the Holy Spirit who fills the world and makes us cry “Father!” and inspires the current of prayer with in us.”

**Excerpt from Carlo Carretto, *Letters from the Desert*, Orbis Books, NY, 1972, 2002, 31.**

*“Come into the desert with me. A life exists that is bigger than your action:  
prayer.  
A strength more efficient than your word: love.”*

## SO, WHAT IS THE ESSENCE OF PRAYER?

“You write to me saying, “Despite the fact that I have been faithful to private prayer (*oraison* in French) for six months, I am not sure of having had more than four or five good prayer sessions.” What do you mean? That all your prayer moments, outside of these four or five, might not have pleased the Lord? You have no idea. That they did not satisfy you, yourself? I can well believe it. But does it follow that they were not good? Please, do not allow yourself to fall into that trap, that all beginners encounter, of judging your private prayer according to fervour, reverence, beautiful ideas, or tangible results. Private prayer is like the sacraments: its value and efficiency are of a supernatural order and therefore are beyond our human measures. If you have grasped the essence of prayer, you will not be discouraged by what you call “the onslaught of distractions.”

Private prayer is a complex act. A person’s whole being comes into play: body, soul, intelligence, heart and freedom. But it is important to properly discern the essence, that which, if it is lacking, deprives prayer of its whole value. Could it be the body? Obviously not. Otherwise, it would mean that a paralysed person, because they cannot adopt the right attitudes of prayer, cannot pray. Which is absurd. Could it be the words? But it is too obvious that the words, in prayer just as in human relationships, can never be the essence. Could it be sensitivity, fervour? But if so, then it is rather disappointing, because so little is necessary to perturb this sensitivity: a worry, a trouble, a joy, a passion, a toothache.

Truly, it is not conceivable that the value of our prayer could be at the mercy of the slightest interior or exterior event. Or reflections? Certainly, meditation is important: knowledge of God arouses a love of God. But if it were essential for prayer, then the person who is not too spoiled in terms of intelligence would be condemned to mediocre prayer, since perfection is reserved for the intelligent. Or attention to God? If it were so, you would drown in despair, you whom all “distractions” assault. Because very often, it is not up to us to eliminate them; our attention is, like our sensitivity,

particularly unstable. It is as difficult to keep it turned towards God as to keep the compass needle fixed in the direction of the north, while walking.

So, what is left? Feelings: an ardent love, a lively confidence, a moving recognition? Our feelings, it is true, in comparison to our sensitivity and imagination, manifest a certain stability. And yet, it must nonetheless be recognised that they partially escape our control: since we do not order them, the heart's fervour does not depend on our decision.

So, what is the essence of prayer? Will, willingness. But do not go seeing here in willingness that psychological mechanism that makes us take a decision, or forces us to do what displeases us. Willingness, like a good philosopher, is the capability of our deepest being to direct itself freely towards an object, towards a man, an ideal, let us say, "to commit," to use a word that is beloved of our generation.

When our whole being turns towards God and gives itself up to him, freely and deliberately, then there is true prayer, even if our sensitivity is inert, our reflection poor, our attention distracted. And our prayer is worth what this orientation and this fundamental gift are worth. Despite the fact that sensitivity, attention, and feelings even are fleeting and ever-changing; our will is infinitely more stable and permanent. (...) Wanting to pray is praying. (...) Ideally, it is true, prayer that springs from our deepest will ought to mobilise our whole being. Nothing in us, in fact, ought to remain foreign to our prayer—nor indeed to our love. God wants us completely: "*You will love the Lord your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength.*" Therefore, we have got to try and banish the noises and external activities, to gather ourselves together, to collect ourselves completely in order to offer ourselves completely. But, and I repeat, fortunately it is not necessary to succeed in order for prayer to be good."

**Henri Caffarel, excerpts from *Cahiers de l'Oraison***

## GENERAL INTENTION

Teams of Our Lady all over the world are turning towards Fatima next July. May this momentum renew the vocation of couples and priests, so that they will bear witness even more generously to the love that fills them. May the Holy Spirit increase the faith of Teams' members. May Mary, who is particularly present at Fatima, assist and bolster the International Leading Team and fill all those participating in this great international gathering with grace.

Lord, hear our intentions for all our brothers and sisters throughout the world, and for the Teams of Our Lady.

## PARTICIPATING IN THE INTERCESSORS' LIFE

Dear Intercessor Friends, send us your testimonials! How did you decide to become involved with the Intercessors? What did you choose: prayer, fasting or offering up your life? How do you find your commitment? What helps you? These exchanges will be an occasion to get to know you better, to help our letter evolve and to share what each and every one of you experiences in Intercession. Thank you so much!

Send your testimonials to: [intercesseurs@wanadoo.fr](mailto:intercesseurs@wanadoo.fr)



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