

Whom are You Trusting?

It is sometimes said that praying to the saints in heaven is like asking a fellow Christian to pray for you. Every devout Catholic knows in his heart that this is not so. Praying to the saints is more akin to praying to God than it is to making a prayer request known to a Christian brother.

Praying to God is an expression of our trust in Him. When I share my needs with a Christian brother and ask for prayer, I am still trusting in God (for I'm asking him to pray to God for me). I would be foolish if I had to trust in a fellow Christian for my needs and salvation. Just as the Scriptures say, "It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man" (Psalm 118:8).

Sadly, this is not the case with Catholic prayers to the saints. Take, for example, the most popular Marian prayer, the Hail Mary, and notice the words: "Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb. Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death."

Is this not an expression of trust in Mary? Though it is a request for Mary to "pray for us" it is much more than that, as the Catechism of the Catholic Church explains:

"Pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death: By asking Mary to pray for us, we acknowledge ourselves to be poor sinners and we address ourselves to the "Mother of Mercy," the All-Holy One. We give ourselves over to her now, in the Today of our lives. And our trust broadens further, already at the present moment, to surrender "the hour of our death" wholly to her care" (paragraph 2677).

When you pray the Hail Mary, you give yourself over to her, which means that you are trusting in her. In fact, your trust in Mary goes beyond the present time, since you even surrender the hour of your death completely to her care.

Shouldn't these words be applied to the Lord rather than Mary, or to any other creature, for that matter? Shouldn't we rather say, "We give ourselves over to the Lord Jesus now, in the Today of our lives. And our trust broadens further, already at the present moment, to surrender the hour of our death wholly to His care!"

Isn't that what Stephen did when he was dying? "And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit" (Acts 7:59). Stephen trusted in Christ in his life and in the hour of his death. Indeed, all those who know the Lord, place their confidence in Him:

"And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, LORD, hast not forsaken them that seek thee" (Psalm 9:10).

You must make a choice and ask yourself, "Whom am I going to trust in life and death?" I appeal to you from my heart that your answer would be clear and decisive, "I trust in the Lord alone. The Lord will take care of me in life and death because I am sure he will not forsake them that seek Him."