

HOW TO BE HAPPY
HOW TO BE HOLY

HOW TO BE HAPPY HOW TO BE HOLY

by

Fr. Paul O'Sullivan, O.P.
[E.D.M.]

“Pray without ceasing.”
—1 Thess. 5:17

TAN Books
Charlotte, North Carolina

CUM PERMISSU SUPERIORUM.

APPROVED BY HIS EMINENCE CARDINAL M. CEREJEIRA,
PATRIARCH OF LISBON.

All rights reserved. First published in 1943 by Edições do Corpo Santo, Lisbon, Portugal. Retypeset and reprinted in 1989 by TAN Books, with permission of Saint Martin de Porres Apostolate, Dublin, Ireland.

Typography is the property of TAN Books, and may not be reproduced, in whole or in part, without written permission from the publisher.

ISBN: 978-0-89555-386-7

Library of Congress Catalog Card No.: 89-051901

Printed and bound in the United States of America.

TAN Books
Charlotte, North Carolina
www.TANBooks.com

Read, dear friend, these pages, and you
will pray as you have never prayed
before.

PATRIARCHAL PALACE
LISBON

My dear Father Paul O'Sullivan,

I approve and recommend with all my heart the new book that you have just published: *How to be Happy—How to be Holy*.

The subjects you treat of are of the very highest importance and vital interest. The counsels you give are so easy and yet so useful that everyone without exception can put them into practice. They guarantee what we all so earnestly desire, namely, a happy life and the abundant blessings of Almighty God.

I sincerely hope that this book will be read not merely once, but repeatedly by all who wish to be good Christians. From its reading they will reap the greatest benefit.

I bless you, dear Father.

✠ M., *Cardinal Patriarch*,
Lisbon, November 10, 1943

CONTENTS

Introduction: Read, Catholics, Read	1
1. The Morning Offering	11
2. Morning and Evening Prayers	17
3. The Sign of the Cross	21
4. The Our Father	29
5. The Hail Mary	37
6. The Power of the Hail Mary	41
7. The Creed	45
8. The Confiteor	51
9. Hail Holy Queen	55
10. The Gloria Patri	61
11. The Rosary	65
12. The Old Irish Woman's Rosary	73
13. The Popes and the Rosary	81
14. Meditations on the Mysteries	95
15. The Annunciation	99
16. The Visitation	105
17. The Birth of Our Lord	111
18. The Presentation in the Temple	115
19. The Finding of Jesus in the Temple	119
20. The Sorrowful Mysteries	123
21. The Agony of Jesus in the Garden	127
22. The Scourging at the Pillar	129
23. The Crowning with Thorns	131
24. Christ Carrying His Cross	135

25. Jesus Dies on the Cross	139
26. A Lover of the Passion	143
27. The Resurrection	149
28. The Ascension	153
29. The Descent of the Holy Ghost	159
30. The Assumption	163
31. The Coronation of Our Lady in Heaven	165
32. The Wonders of Holy Mass	169
33. What Is the Mass?	175
34. The Joy of the Saints at Mass	181
35. Priests, the Happiest of Men	187
36. The Benefits of the Mass	193
37. Priests, Angels on Earth	201
38. How to Hear Mass with Profit	207
39. The Value of Small Things	211
40. Ejaculations	217
41. What the Saints Say of Ejaculations	233
42. Our Angel Guardians	237

Introduction

READ, CATHOLICS, READ

We venture to say that very few books will give such genuine pleasure and do so much real good to their readers as this precious booklet.

Hundreds of thousands of Catholics are daily saying their morning and evening prayers without deriving the grace, strength and consolation they might so easily derive from these lovely prayers.

They learned to pray as children, and during all their lives they continue to say their prayers with the vague ideas, the imperfect understanding that they acquired as children.

They have done little to develop, to improve, to make more clear the ideas that they got in their childhood. The result is that a vast number of Christians merely repeat the words without giving any attention to the sense of what they are saying. In other words, they have not an intelligent grasp of the act they are performing.

As a consequence they get comparatively little benefit from their prayer and do not enjoy the consolation of prayer.

This booklet has in view to teach Christians:

- a) How to pray.**
- b) How to derive immense benefits from prayer.**
- c) How to enjoy the deep consolation of prayer.**

It is not necessary to be a saint to enjoy prayer. Everyone who *knows* how to pray finds intense delight in prayer.

To pray well demands no hard or difficult effort, nothing that the ordinary Christian cannot do with pleasure if only he *knows* how to do it.

First of all, what is prayer and how should we pray?

Prayer is certainly not the mere repetition of words without giving any attention to their meaning though, unfortunately, this is the way that thousands of otherwise good Christians are praying every day.

What then is prayer? Prayer is nothing else than talking to God, conversing with God Himself.

When we kneel down and make the Sign of the Cross reverently, God at once turns to us and gives us all His attention as fully as if there was no one else in existence.

Can this be true? It is absolutely true, and as a consequence, when we pray we are enjoying an intimate, personal conversation with God Almighty. What a joy! What a privilege! What an immense consolation!

We are speaking to God as truly and as really as Moses spoke to Him on Mount Sinai, as truly, as lovingly as Peter and John and Magdalen when He was on earth.

True, we do not see God with the eyes of our body, but we are perfectly sure by our faith that God is really and truly listening to every word we are saying.

Oh, if Christians would only grasp this glorious truth, what delight would they not have in prayer!

This was the secret of the Saints, but it is a secret so clear and easy that anyone can understand it.

Why did the Saints love to pray? Just because they knew and they felt that they were talking to God. Therefore, far from being wearisome it was an immense joy for them to pray.

This then is the first clear idea we must have when praying, *viz.*, that we are talking to God in the most real and true sense of that word. There is nothing clearer, easier to understand, nothing more certain.

The second great thought is that God has bound Himself most solemnly to hear our prayers.

“Ask and you shall receive, seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you.” What words could possibly be clearer? These and similar promises our Blessed Lord made over and over again.

It is quite certain that we never send up a prayer to God lovingly and confidently that He does not hear, and that does not bring us a great grace in return.

We never yet said one prayer, never yet sent up one cry to God that was not heard. Of this there can be no possible doubt.

Sometimes God may not give us what we ask because He sees that it would not be good for us, but undoubtedly in this case He will give us another and a better grace.

This, too, is an idea that we must thoroughly understand.

A third truth which we must bear in mind is that every prayer we say with reverence and trust, such as any ordinary Christian can say, gives God immense glory and pleasure.

What a joy it should be to feel that we are giving real joy to God.

But does God really bother about us? God does not only love us, but He most earnestly desires our love and affection in return. “Behold the Heart that loves men so much, but is so little loved by men.” These are His own very words addressed to each of us.

Fourthly, our prayers obtain for us many important graces and blessings which we shall never get and never enjoy if we do not ask for them.

If a Christian believes these truths, as he is bound to do, is he not a madman if he omits his prayers?

Fifthly, all men desire happiness, all men seek happiness, all men work for happiness.

Unfortunately, men seek happiness in a thousand different ways and never find it. They lose their time.

God alone gives happiness, as God alone gives life and health. Happiness is God’s greatest gift, for it embraces what is best for us.

God, as we have said, promises to give us all good things if we ask for them. What can be easier than to ask God every day in our prayers for happiness?

Why do not men ask God for happiness? They do not think.

True, it is not possible to have perfect happiness in this life, because we are in a vale of tears due to the sin of Adam and due to our own sins, which bring so much sorrow and suffering with them. However we can have a great measure of happiness in this life, and it is God and God alone who can and will give us this

great measure of happiness if we confidently and lovingly ask Him for it. There is no better, no surer way of attaining happiness than by praying for it. Men who do not pray for happiness must be very ignorant, or very foolish.

On the other hand, all of us have to face some suffering. No one can avoid suffering, sickness, pain and disappointments.

But here again God helps us. No pain comes to us without God's permission; not even a hair falls from our heads without His consent.

When God permits suffering He always helps us to bear it. He always gives a grace, a strength, a consolation which enables us to bear the cross He sends us. But once more, we must ask Him. The very suffering He sends is a reminder to us to go to Him, to ask His help. In pain and sorrow and danger we run to God as the little child runs to its mother in the moment of danger.

One may ask, "But do we not see men in the world happy who do not pray to God?" God allows all in His infinite mercy and compassion a certain measure of the goods of this life. He makes His sun to shine on the just and the unjust, but the pleasure, the joys, the happiness of men who do not love God are full of bitterness and sadness. Their lives are exposed to many and cruel disappointments, and in their sufferings they have no real comfort, they have no one to go to for consolation.

The good Christian knows that for every pain he has, he will have a great reward in Heaven. He knows that his sufferings are nothing else than a part in the sufferings and Passion of his Lord.

Every word and act of Our Lord was a lesson for us to learn, an example to follow. The greatest lesson of all, the greatest proof of His love for us was His suffering for us.

Who, then, is not ready to suffer a little for the love of that God who suffered so much for us?

Our Lord, who was God, suffered; His Blessed Mother suffered. All good men suffer, but they feel that they are only having a little share in the sufferings of their dear Lord. They know full well that every pain will have its reward forever in Heaven, that five minutes' suffering is worth far more to them than years of pleasure and joy.

Above all, they feel that God is helping them to suffer.

Therefore real peace and happiness God and God alone can give and gives to all who ask Him for it in prayer.

PRAYER IS THE GREATEST POWER, THE GREATEST CONSOLATION IN THE WORLD

Let us give one clear example: Solomon was the wisest of men. He enjoyed all the delights which wisdom gives. He was immensely rich; there seemed to be no limit to his wealth. He had pleasures, honors and power.

Yet he tells us that in all these pleasures he found no real happiness. It was only in God that he found happiness and joy.

Solomon is no exception, for it has become a proverb that "Uneasy is the head that wears a crown." If kings and the great ones of the earth fail to find

happiness, how can other poor mortals hope to achieve it?

Finally, whatever little happiness worldlings may claim is lost in death, and they are always afraid of death. Death always has terror for them. Whereas, God's friends not only enjoy the great measure of peace, joy and happiness which God gives them, but they are sure of a still greater happiness after death for all eternity.

Death for them is not the grave, the tomb; it is only the gate of infinite joy and bliss for ever and for ever.

Oh, Christian man, pray, pray much to the good God for happiness!

Lastly, our prayers deliver us from countless evils and dangers.

How many people, for instance, would have good health did they earnestly ask God for it? Doctors and remedies are necessary, but it is God who gives doctors and remedies the power to preserve our health or restore it to us.

Only recently an eminent American doctor, a Protestant by religion, published a striking article on the power of prayer in restoring health of mind and body. He says, "How very, very often have I not seen my patients restored to health when all my skill and the skill of my colleagues had utterly failed. Prayer—and I mean the prayer of the ordinary Christian—is the greatest power in the world." To any observant Christian, especially a doctor, this fact is manifest.

Without referring to the thousands and thousands of people miraculously cured every year at Lourdes, at Fatima in Portugal and at many other shrines,

also by the intercession of St. Philomena, the Little Flower and other saints, prayer is every day obtaining from God relief from suffering and restoration to health.

We do not know what evils and dangers may lie in wait for us during the day. Therefore, let us pray.

PRAYER DELIVERS US FROM THE GREATEST EVILS

We have a striking case of the power of prayer in the history of the pious King Ezechias.

Sennacherib, the powerful ruler of Assyria, gathered together a mighty army and besieged King Ezechias in Jerusalem. There seemed to be no hope of delivery.

The King, full of faith, went to the temple and poured forth his soul in fervent prayer before God and also besought the Prophet Isaias to intercede for him. The Prophet sent him word not to fear, because God had heard his prayer and would Himself destroy the army of the Assyrians.

The same night God sent His angel to the camp of the Assyrians and slew one hundred and eighty-five thousand of the enemy.

The Assyrian King fled in terror to his country, where he was miserably slain by his own son.

Some time after this extraordinary answer to prayer King Ezechias fell gravely ill, and the Prophet Isaias announced to him on the part of God that his hour had come and that he must prepare himself.

The holy King, while thoroughly resigned to God's

will, still, full of confidence prayed earnestly for some more years of life if such were pleasing to God.

Once more the Almighty showed His divine pleasure at the confidence of His servant and granted Ezechias 15 more years of life.

How many Christians would regain new life if they prayed fervently and received the last Sacraments, in time and with faith, instead of putting them off until it is too late.

Chapter 1

THE MORNING OFFERING

On rising in the morning we should drop on our knees for a moment and make the following offering to the Sacred Heart of Our Lord:

Sacred Heart of Jesus, through the pure hands of Mary I offer Thee all the prayers, works and sufferings of this day and of all my life for the intentions of Thy Sacred Heart, for the Apostleship of Prayer and for all my own intentions. (Some like to add:)

Every breath I draw this day, every beating of my heart, every step I take, every word I say, every movement of my body and mind I wish to be an act of love for Thee such as Thy Blessed Mother herself performed.

This act is short, but we should say it with full deliberation. It is of the highest importance, for it transforms every act of the day, every work, every suffering into an act of love, into an act of merit.

What thousands of acts of love we can thus perform! What immense graces we shall receive! What glory we shall give to God!

And if we do not make this short act, what thousands of graces we lose each day.

But can there be any doubt of this fact? None whatever.

St. Paul, the great Apostle of the Gentiles, tells us clearly to do everything we do in the name and for the love of Jesus Christ.

He mentions even the most ordinary and material actions of the day. He says, "Whether you eat or drink or whatever else you do, do all in the name of Our Lord, Jesus Christ."

And what can be more natural? Let us see why. It was God who made us, who gave us all our faculties, our eyes, our ears, our head, our heart.

He gave us all these faculties that we may use them to serve and love Him.

It was He who gave us those wondrous eyes that constantly offer us such visions of beauty. They bring us into contact with the sun and moon and stars. With them we see the great mountains and the vast ocean, and the green valleys, and the beautiful flowers and trees.

They, too, help us to look on the faces of our dear mother and father and friends and enjoy their sweet and loving smiles.

Do we ever thank God for those wondrous eyes? How natural and how right it is to say, "O my God, I wish that every glance of my eyes be an act of love for Thee."

Who gave us this wonderful heart that is beating, ticking every moment like a clock, for the last twenty, forty, sixty years?

It is God that keeps it beating. Should it stop for one moment, we would die.

How many countless times does this wonderfully

delicate organ pump the purple blood through our bodies every day!

Do we ever thank God for this heart?

How natural, how easy, how right it is to say once and many times a day: "O dear God, I wish that every beating of my heart be an act of love and gratitude for Thee!"

And so with our other faculties we should wish to thank God for all those glorious organs that He has given us.

Do we ever thank Him for our intelligence and free will, which make us like the angels, nay like to God Himself?

How easy, how proper it would be to say frequently: "O my good God, I wish that every thought that passes through my mind be an act of love for Thee. I wish that every act of my free will be in union with Thy Divine Will."

In this way every day of our lives would be full of numberless acts of love and merit.

HOW ST. GERTRUDE EXPLAINS THIS TRUTH

St. Gertrude, to make this doctrine perfectly clear, tells us of a wicked man, full of hate for God, who on arising in the morning made this impious act: "O God, I believe in You, but I hate You with all the power of my soul. I wish that every act I do this day be an act of hate and blasphemy against You. I wish that every step I take, every word I say, every single act I do be a blasphemy against You, a blasphemy like to those that the devils in Hell are ever uttering."

Not satisfied with this diabolical act of wickedness,

he repeated these words many times each day so that his every act was a blasphemy and an act of hate against God.

Now the Saint asks, why do not Christians do the contrary?

Why do they not make their Morning Offering with great deliberation? It will only need a moment. It will make their every act an act of the love of God, as truly as the acts of that wicked man were acts of diabolical hate.

Better still, if they sometimes during the day repeat this offering in a few words. For instance, when one is walking: “O my God, I wish that every step be an act of love for You.”

What is to prevent us saying a few times every day: “O my God, every word I say I wish to be an act of love for You.”

When writing we may pause for a moment and say to God: “My God, every word I write I wish to be an act of love for You.”

Some ladies, when sewing, have the pious custom of saying, “O my Jesus, I wish that every stitch I give be an act of love for You.”

The wonderful thing is that we thus make every act an act of great merit for ourselves. For every such act, we shall have a great reward in Heaven.

Our Lord said to one of His great servants: “Any Christian can make an act of love in a moment that will last for all Eternity.”

Yet another time, He said: “One act of love gives Me more pleasure than a thousand hideous blasphemies give Me pain.” Now if one mortal sin deserves the

awful pains of Hell for all eternity, surely one act of love, one good act must obtain a great reward for all eternity in Heaven. For every little cup of water we give to a poor man in God's name, God gives an eternal reward.

No sin, however small, goes without punishment. For every idle word that man shall speak he shall have to render an account for it in the Day of Judgment. So no good act goes without its special reward.

What a wondrous thought! Every good act, no matter how small, will have an eternal reward in Heaven! This is what Our Lord tells us: "Taste and see how sweet My yoke is, how light My burden." God's Religion is truly most beautiful and consoling.

Surely, then, every intelligent Christian should make his Morning Offering with great attention and deliberation. It means only one short minute. It is, as we have explained, so easy.

If he does not do it, what countless merits he loses and what glory and love he takes from God.

To obtain the protection of God's Holy Mother we would do well to say daily this beautiful little prayer after the Morning Offering:

My Mother and my Queen, I offer to thee this day my eyes, my ears, my mouth, my heart, my head, my soul, my whole being. Since I belong to thee, dearest Mother, protect me as thine own property and possession.