

# Conforti: Prayer is our Homage to God

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*"Prayer exercises a gentle violence on the heart of God." St. Guido Conforti insisted a great deal on the importance of Prayer. He spoke constantly about the motivations for prayer and the fundamental reasons that explain the beauty of a life of prayer.*

## Prayer is the elevation of the spirit to God

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God has no need of our prayer, but we do. We need to pray to placate the divine justice, glorify the divine Majesty, obtain the blessings of divine Providence, fight, win and gain merits, so that we might not perish, but save ourselves.

This is a pressing and constant need, but at the same time it is very good and salvific because prayer can do everything to our advantage and the advantage of everyone. What is prayer? As I said to you before, prayer is the elevation of the spirit to God, to the God who is the source of life; it is the mysterious bond of the wonderful exchange between man and his Creator. It raises our soul high above this vale of tears and takes it into the heart of God. Man speaks and God listens to him, man asks and God grants his requests, man orders and God, in a certain sense, obeys because prayer exerts a gentle violence on the heart of God, who has already given His word to those who pray: ask and you shall receive. This explains why Augustine cleverly called prayer the strength of man and the weakness of God. If I were to give you concrete examples of the efficacy of prayer, I would never finish speaking.

Countless times, prayer has proven to be stronger than the laws of nature, even stronger than hell itself. Remember the pages of sacred and profane history and you shall see how, from age to age, the most terrible scourges receded before this mysterious power, which we could say is the supreme law of all the laws of the universe. Pestilence and war, hunger and thirst, rain and drought, all kinds of storms, illness and death: you shall see that they all bowed down before those who prayed.

*(1913, 6 January, Parma, Homily on the Feast of the Epiphany; FCT 21, 42)*



## Prayer is a universal phenomenon

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The obligation of prayer as an act of worship and part of religion is so rooted in the human heart that it has survived all kinds of catastrophes and goes back to the origins of the world. The entire Hebrew religion was an offering and a prayer to the God of Jacob and the One awaited by the peoples. The same can be said about paganism: in the most barbarian nations, even though they could not have an adequate idea of God, lost as they were in the darkness of idolatry, they nevertheless offered prayers and sacrifices to Him everywhere.

*(1913, 6 January, Parma, Homily on the Feast of the Epiphany; FCT 21, 39)*

## Prayer is the homage of the creature to the creator

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God is the supreme and very wise author of all things and all things are in his hands. Who could deny this without denying his own reason? *In him*, says the Apostle, *we live and move and have our being* [Acts 17:28]. He has given us our being and he preserves our being in every moment. If, therefore, our earthly life is his gift, if we do not belong to ourselves but to God, it is obvious that we owe him the perennial homage of our gratitude, the offering of our submission, the tribute of our praise, the worship of our adoration and the offering of our entire selves. This offering is prayer, worship is prayer, praise is prayer, our gratitude is prayer, since prayer in its widest and most noble meaning is an elevation of the mind and the heart to God, it is the homage of the creature to his Creator.

*(1913, 6 January, Parma, Homily on the Feast of the Epiphany; FCT 21, 39)*



**XAVERIAN MISSIONARIES**

[missionmedia@xaverianmissionaries.org](mailto:missionmedia@xaverianmissionaries.org)

[www.xaverianmissionaries.org](http://www.xaverianmissionaries.org)