

*THE COLLECT*

**ALMIGHTY God, who seest that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves; Keep us both outwardly in our bodies, and inwardly in our souls; that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

1. Have we any power of ourselves to help ourselves without God's assistance?  
A. \_\_\_\_\_; for without me ye can do nothing (John 15:5)
2. In what two things do we beseech Him to keep us?  
A. Outwardly in our \_\_\_\_\_  
B. Inwardly in our \_\_\_\_\_ (I Thessalonians 5:23)
3. What do we pray to be defended from?  
A. From all \_\_\_\_\_ which may happen to the body  
B. From all \_\_\_\_\_ which may \_\_\_\_\_  
the soul (Psalm 139:23-24)

INTRODUCTION: Read St. Matthew 15:21-28

**Today we learn about Prayer**, but it is much too big a thing to learn all about in one lesson. We read in the holy Gospel today about a woman who prayed. Let us think about this one example, and see what it has to teach us about prayer.

## I. WHAT DID SHE PRAY?

**She prayed for something she needed, mercy and help from Christ, for herself and her child.** She knew something of what Christ had done for others, and she hoped He would help her. And so we should pray because we are weak and helpless, and need strength and help beyond our own. Prayer is not simply saying so many words, but telling God what we need and what we feel. It is the same thing as children talking to their father. We are God's children speaking to *our* Father.

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## II. WHAT HINDERED HER PRAYER?

**Christ was silent.** When He did speak it only seemed to drive her from Him. We too are hindered in prayer. Sometimes our own coldness and dullness comes in the way. Sometimes we seem to get no answer. Sometimes it seems to do more harm than good, and again, it seems as though nothing can alter the working of God's laws. But we must remember—

- a. **That when we are cold and dull we need to rouse ourselves** and pray more earnestly, just as people nearly frozen must be stirred up and roused to action.
- b. **That God is master of His own laws**, and He can bring one law to modify the action of another. It is interesting to notice that many, many prayers we naturally pray are actually asking God to suspend a certain law of nature (i.e. God, help me to remember what I studied for the exam— God is being asked to “enhance” your brain; God, please heal my friend— God is being asked to intervene in the natural course and kill the infection which otherwise would have thrived). This is because we know that God is in control of all nature.

## III. HOW DID SHE PRAY?

1. **With humility.** She was willing to be a dog if only Christ would give her the dog's portion.
2. **With perseverance.** She kept on and on through Christ's silence and seeming sternness (Remember how St. Paul prayed three times for a certain thing (2 Corinthians 12:8) and how Moses persevered (Ex 32 & 33).
3. **With unselfishness.** It was for her child, not for herself. So in the Lord's prayer it is “give us” and “forgive us,” &c. This is called *intercession*. Remember Abraham's intercession (Gen 18:23-) and Moses' for the people (Ex 32:31-32).

## IV. WHAT GOOD DID HER PRAYER DO?

1. **She got the blessing she asked.** Her child was healed.
2. **She gave pleasure to Christ.** (St. Luke 11:11-14)
3. **She gained spiritual blessing for herself.** Christ gave more than she asked. All prayer helps us to submit to God's will and so brings peace. (Philippians 4:6-7)



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