

How to make a Good Intention

It is often said that religion should effect a transformation in the lives of men. This means, of course, that religion provides the motives through which sinful actions are avoided and good actions, like prayer and deeds of charity, etc., are performed. But it means more than that. Religion provides the means whereby all indifferent actions are transformed into expressions of love of God and means of merit for the soul. This is done by the use of the good intention — neglected by so many people:

1. God wants not only the direct service and homage of His children, as it is given in attending Mass and saying prayers, and receiving the Sacraments; He wants everything they do to be directed to Him. St. Paul makes this clear, when he says: "Whether you eat or drink or whatever else you do, do all to the glory of God."

2. It is impossible for a person to be thinking constantly of God, and consciously directing to Him all, whatsoever he does. God does not expect that. But He does ask that at intervals frequent enough to carry over from one to the other, a conscious intention be made by which every thought, word and deed is given to Him.

3. There are certain opportune times for making such an intention. The most obviously so is the morning, when one awakens. At meal times is another such occasion. Before beginning one's daily work is another. Before entering a period of recreation is another. In a time of suffering or pain is another.

4. The expressions by which indifferent actions are transformed into prayers should be very simple, "All for Thee, O Lord," "O God, I give you all my thoughts, words, and deeds as expressions of my love," "May this day, or this action, or this recreation, be to the glory of my God."

The reward of habitually using the good intention is beyond conception. It covers the whole of one's life with the vesture of prayer; it obtains the special Providence and protection of God. It makes the avoidance of sin easy because it keeps the soul mindful that there are so many positive actions that can be pleasing to God. It takes away the feeling of futility that so many people experience because they have time for so few prayers. It makes holiness out of the ordinary stuff of the ordinary man's life — and **God Himself asks for no more.**

