

St. John Cassian (February, 29): How Should We Pray

[Ξένες γλώσσες / In English](#)



Feast of St. John Cassian the Roman is on February 29, and for non-leap years on February 28. St. Cassian (360-435) was a monk, known for his mystical writings. He visited many Fathers in desert and wrote about their life and teachings. Because of his disagreement with St. Augustine's teachings and Roman Church's accusation for semi-pelagianism (although he also disagreed with Pelagius' teachings), he was dismissed by Western Church.



“If we had to beg a Lord, not to save our lives, but simply make us a little “kindness” – wouldn’t we fix Him our eyes and our hearts? Wouldn’t we literally “cream” from the front of his staff, with strong attention to receive his consent even with a nod? Wouldn’t we tremble, whether an inappropriate or clumsy word of us make him angry and cut his proper mood for us?

If we were in a court against us and we had the other party, and at the most critical time we start coughing, spitting, laughing, yawning or sleeping, then the watchful opponent’s bad mood wouldn’t be rushed immediately to rouse against us the strict judgment of the court?

Now, that will please the Heavenly Judge, the infallible witness of all the secrets of our heart, and beg him to redeem us from eternal death – while we have towards our malicious and cruel devil accusing us – shouldn’t we pay greater attention and do more as possible we can warm our prayer? Shouldn’t we keenly please the Lord, give us mercy and compassion?

What do you say? Shouldn’t we be certainly guilty – and not for some light sins, but a very serious disrespect – if, while we stand before God, we cease to have the sense of His presence and feel like we have in front us just a blind and deaf listener?

Otherwise, why not pour even one tear for our lukewarmness or laziness, which removes us from the prayer?

Otherwise, why do not consider as our fall, that during prayer we leaves the mind captured – albeit briefly – by thoughts irrelevant and alien to the words of our prayers?

Why not to mourn and ask for this drop the divine mercy?

Why not to understand, what great harm our soul suffers when the mind gets out of the memory of God, and it becomes to think other things? Don't we understand that this makes demons mocking us?

These for ourselves.

Instead the Saints, even if for a moment were beaten from thoughts and cut the prayer, that was considered as a kind of sacrilege; although at lightning speed they reset “eyes” of the heart to God, accusing themselves to be disrespectful. The darkness of earthly thoughts, even fleeting, were unbearable for them. And they used to hate anything that removes the mind from the true light.