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**“Blessed are the Poor” (Mt 5:3)**  
**Introduction to Letters 21-29**  
**Fr. Henri Caffarel**  
**being present to God; Letters on Prayer**  
**1983**

To before the God of mercies, aware of one’s sinfulness and deep-rooted poverty, and at the same time with the assurance of God’s indefectible and generous tenderness—such is the fundamental attitude needed for mental prayer.

Mental prayer is a privileged moment for taking cognizance of our spiritual misery, and for offering ourselves to the embrace of divine mercy.

21        *The mental prayer of the sinner*—Sometimes it is the freedom that has lost the strength to resist the evil enticing it.

22        *The woolen yarn*—Once sin has been acknowledged, confessed and rejected, it becomes poverty entrusted to God’s gentle pity.

23        *“As for me, I know my sin”* (cf. Ps 51:5)—The Father’s forgiveness calls into being a brand-new love within the soul’s impurity and darkness.

24        *To someone who believes he is unworthy of praying*—The sin that is confessed cannot be an obstacle to encountering God. The sin that we refuse to acknowledge, especially the failure to love others, makes our mental prayer sterile.

25        *From head to foot*—But the feeling of total impotence during mental prayer is not necessarily the effect of sin. The Lord may

permit it to inculcate in us the conviction that, in the realm of the spiritual, we are the poorest of the poor. To deploy one's poverty before God's eyes, is to pray.

26        *The mental prayer of poverty*—Anyone who is in the habit of knowing, willing, and doing things, finds it bitter to be reduced to indigence and impotence. It can be as fruitful as it is bitter: he learns to go from "I want" to "I beg you."

27        *Declaring bankruptcy*—Sin, impotence and poverty make us discover our dependence on God. But anyone who loves, experiences dependence not as a servitude, but far more as a demand of his love.

28        *Dependence*—This dependence on the Lord is not accidental. It is congenital, radical, and total. To recognize it, to consent to it without reservation, that is giving oneself to God. Then the bond of dependence is converted into a bond of love.

29        *The watermark.*