

Vain and Repetitious Prayer

Have you ever heard a non-Catholic tell you that repeating a prayer is displeasing to God? They will tell you that the Bible speaks against this practice and will usually point to the following passage: “***And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.***” (Matt. 6:7). As Catholics, aren't we violating the word of God with such devotions as the Rosary or the Divine Mercy Chaplet? Nothing could be further from the truth.

Despite what our non-Catholic friends may say, the Scriptures do not speak out against repetitious prayers to God. What they fail to understand is that when Jesus made this statement in **Matt. 6:7**, he was speaking about the nonsensical babbling of pagans to their gods – not the sincere prayers of the faithful. We read about them in **1 Kings 18:26-29**, where the pagan prophets on Mount Carmel tried to invoke Baal all day long, repeatedly calling on his name and performing ritual dances

In **Matt. 26:44**, our Lord himself prayed the exact same prayer three times in the Garden of Gethsemane after the Last Supper. In the *Parable of the Determined Widow* in **Luke 18:-87**, Jesus emphatically states that God hears those who keep petitioning him in sincere faith: “***Will not God then secure the rights of his chosen ones who call out to him day and night? Will he be slow to answer them? I tell you, he will see to it that justice is done for them speedily.***” In **Luke 18:13**, the tax collector kept beating his breast and praying, “*God be merciful to me, a sinner.*” This was pleasing to God.

We see in **Rev. 4:8** that the angels pray the same prayer day and night without ceasing in the presence of almighty God, “***Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty.***” **Psalm 136** goes on for 26 verses in a row, repeating the *exact* same prayer, “***God's love endures forever***”. Similarly, in **Dan. 3:56-88** we read the exact same prayer for 32 verses, which is “***bless the Lord; praise and exalt him above all forever.***” This is far more repetitious than a decade of the Rosary.

Could any of these examples be considered the *vain repetitions* that Jesus spoke against? Of course not. When reading the Old Testament Scriptures, Jesus himself recited these prayers in repetition. **Rom. 1:9**, **Rom. 12:12** and **1 Thess. 5:17** all command us to pray without ceasing. Whether they are prayers of adoration, repentance, contrition or petition - God loves us immensely and never tires of hearing our prayers.

For more information, please visit:

<http://www.catholic.com/thisrock/2004/0405sbs.asp>

http://www.scripturecatholic.com/vain_and_repetitious_prayer.html