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If I pray when I don't feel like it, is it really prayer?

A student asks whether praying when you don't feel like it is a bit hypocritical.

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- Father, I'm a student, and people in my class often say that you should only go to Mass and pray, when you feel like it, because doing things when you don't really want to is just

*hypocritical. What can I tell them?
How can I make them see that they're
mistaken?*

- Listen, my daughter, I very seldom really feel like it. We have to do things we don't feel like doing, and then, as they're based on sacrifice, and are difficult, they are much more fruitful and are worth much more, before God, they shine like stars in the night.

When you go to do some prayer and you don't feel like praying and you can't think of anything to say, put yourself in God's presence and tell him: "Lord," -- as you've just told me -- "I really don't feel like talking to you, I don't want to spend a minute on you, I feel as if I'm doing you a favor."

And you'll hear in the depths of your heart like a sudden shout, loving, but strong, a cry from God: "I'm the one doing you a favor when I call you to

serve me, when I call you to have a conversation with me, when I tell you that I want to make friends with you, with your very soul."

And then, whether you feel like it or not, you'll go and spend time praying every day, at home, or in the street, or at the office, or in the University, or your studio, or on the motorway, traveling, or in church, in front of the Tabernacle, because Christ Jesus is there, our Lady's son, the son of the Blessed ever-virgin Mary; Jesus, who was born in a stable, who worked with St Joseph, and learned from him how to work, and then preached and suffered his Passion and was crucified for love, letting himself be nailed to the wood of the Cross.

He is waiting for us there; because you and I know through faith that hidden in the sacramental species is Christ. Christ is there: his Body, his Blood, his Soul and his Divinity, a

prisoner of love. We'll go there, not feeling like it, but knowing that he's listening to us, to tell him that we don't feel like it, -- and we are already praying.

And you'll see how he speaks to you, how he moves you, how you end up learning how to converse, to chat with our Lord, and how the day you don't talk to God, whether you feel like it or not, that day you'll be hungry to pray, you'll feel the need to pray.

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