

Fr. David's Weekly Newsletter



February 10, 2012

Sixth Sunday of Ordinary Time

O God, who teach us that you abide in hearts that are just and true, grant that we may be so fashioned by your grace as to become a dwelling pleasing to you.

Jesus' Prayer On Cross Shows God Hears Prayers

The cry of Christ on the cross should remind everyone that God always hears their prayers, even when he seems distant, Pope Benedict XVI said.

'Let us bring to God our daily crosses, in the certainty that he is present and listens to us,' he said at the Wednesday general audience, held with several thousand people in Paul VI Hall.

Pope Benedict made his remarks as part of his ongoing series of weekly reflections on prayer. Today he focused on the prayerful cry of Jesus Christ during his final agony on the cross on Good Friday 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'

'This cry comes after a three-hour period when there was darkness over the whole

land,' noted the Pope, dwelling upon the accounts given in the Gospels of Saints Mark and Matthew.

'Darkness is an ambivalent symbol in the Bible ' while it is frequently a sign of the power of evil, it can also serve to express a mysterious divine presence,' he said.

'Just as Moses was covered in the dark cloud when God appeared to him on the mountain, so Jesus on Calvary is wrapped in darkness.' So 'what is the meaning of Jesus' prayer?' asked the Pope.

He replied, 'the words Jesus addresses to the Father are the beginning of Psalm 22, in which the psalmist expresses the tension between, on the one hand, being left alone and, on the other, the certain knowledge of God's presence amongst his people.'

*I turn to you, Lord, in time of trouble,
and you fill me with the joy of salvation.*

The psalmist, he explained, ‘speaks of a ‘cry’ to express all the suffering of his prayer before the apparently absent God. At moments of anguish prayer becomes a cry.’

Pope Benedict said that the same thing should also happen ‘in our own relationship with the Lord.’ When people are faced with ‘difficult and painful situations, when it seems that God does not hear, we must not be afraid to entrust him with the burden we are carrying in our hearts, we must not be afraid to cry out to him in our suffering.’

The Pope pointed to Christ on the cross, who ‘at the moment of ultimate rejection by man, at the moment of abandonment,’ is still ‘aware that God the Father is present even at the instant in which he is experiencing the human drama of death.’

But even if people are convinced of God’s presence, a question still remains in many hearts, the Pope said. ‘How is it possible that such a powerful God does not intervene to save his Son from this terrible trial?’

He replied that it is important to understand that ‘the prayer of Jesus is not the cry of a person who meets death with desperation, nor that of a person who knows he has been abandoned.’

Instead, by appropriating Psalm 22 to himself ‘the psalm of the suffering people of Israel ‘ Jesus ‘takes upon himself not only the suffering of his people, but also that of all men and women oppressed by evil.’

He subsequently takes that ‘to the heart of God in the certainty that his cry will be heard in the resurrection,’ so that ‘his is a suffering in communion with us and for us, it derives from love and carries within itself redemption and the victory of love.’

Therefore, just as ‘the people at the foot of Jesus’ cross were unable to understand’ his cry, so ‘we likewise find ourselves, ever and anew, facing the ‘today’ of suffering, the silence of God,’ the Pope said. But we also ‘find ourselves facing the ‘today’ of the resurrection, of the response of God who took our sufferings upon himself, to carry them with us and give us the certain hope that they will be overcome.’

Pope Benedict explained that the ‘prayer of the dying Jesus teaches us to pray with confidence for all our brothers and sisters who are suffering, that they too may know the love of God who never abandons them.’

FEBRUARY 14 - Ss. CYRIL and METHODIUS

Saints Cyril and Methodius were two brothers born in Thessaloniki in the 9th century. They became missionaries of Christianity among the Slavic peoples of Bulgaria, Great Moravia and Pannonia. Through their work they influenced the cultural development of all Slavs, for which they received the title “Apostles to the Slavs”. They are credited with devising the Glagolitic alphabet, the first alphabet used to transcribe Old Church Slavonic. After their deaths, their pupils continued their missionary work among other Slavs. Both brothers are venerated in the Orthodox Church as saints with the title of “equal-to-apostles”. In 1880, Pope Leo XIII introduced their feast into the calendar of the Roman Catholic Church. In 1980, Pope John Paul II declared them co-patron saints of Europe, together with Benedict of Nursia.



CATHOLIC VOCABULARY

con·sub·stan·tial

Part of speech: *adjective*

Pronunciation: \kän(t)-səb-'stan(t)-shəl\

Meaning: of the same substance

Origin: Late Latin *consubstantialis*, from Latin *com-* with + *substantia* substance

First Known Use: 14th century



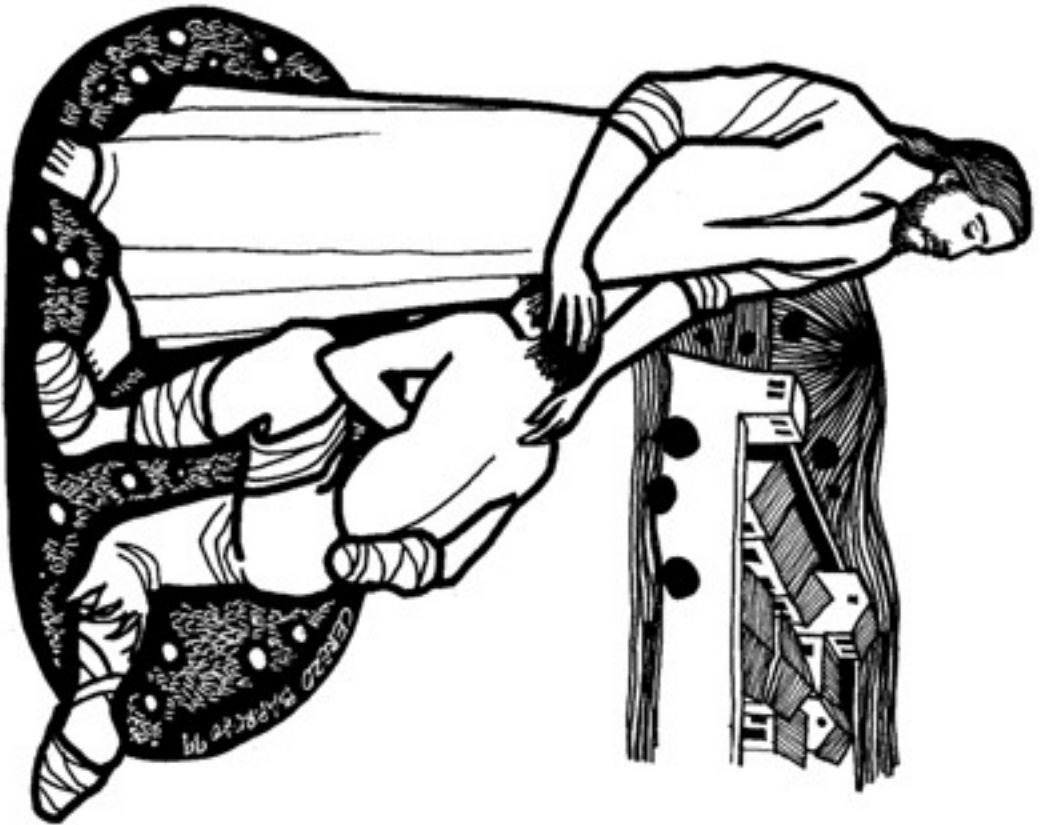
What ‘consubstantial with the Father’ means

For the last 40 years or so, Catholics have become accustomed to express their belief in the sameness of the Father and the Son by the expression, “one in Being with the Father.” This translation came about because certain experts had opined that a literal translation of the Latin term “*consubstancialem*,” that is, consubstantial, would be too unfamiliar to the everyday churchgoer.

However, the expression “one in Being with the Father” does not translate “*consubstancialem*.” The expression is too vague. Since God creates and sustains all that exists, everything in some sense can be said to be one in being with God. Not that everything is the divine nature but that everything outside of God remains dependent on the divine nature for its borrowed existence. The sameness that the Eternal Son enjoys with the Father is not like that. Instead, this sameness arises from the specific substance or nature of the Godhead. Catholic faith holds that each of the three Divine Persons share one and the same divine nature or substance. Just as the mystery of the Blessed Trinity stands at the heart of our belief, so also it grounds our salvation.

The Greek expression adopted at the Council of Nicaea is “*homoousious*,” which is translated into English as “consubstantial.” The Eternal Son, who was born of the Virgin Mary, is neither “like” the Father nor “practically the same substance” as the Father. The Eternal Son enjoys the very same substance as the Father. The Son possesses fully the Godhead of the Father. So today, the Church again confesses in the English rendition of the Creed that Jesus Christ is “consubstantial with the Father.”

– *Father Romanus Cessario, O.P.*



A leper came to Jesus and kneeling down begged him and said, "If you wish, you can make me clean." Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand, touched him, and said to him, "I do will it. Be made clean." The leprosy left him immediately, and he was made clean.

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| hand | remained |
| immediately | report |
| impossible | see |
| Jesus | show |
| kept | spread |
| kneeling | sternly |
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| leper | tell |
| leprosy | touched |
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