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The Role of Scripture and Liturgy in Catholic Faith Formation
Week 3: September 18, 2008

*** What is the prime characterization of faith? *Consult Word of the Week on Faith...* How does prayer as the language of relationship interplay with faith?

- VI. The tension between the classics in Greek philosophy and the expression of Christian faith.
- A. The Greeks had concluded that it is impossible to pray to God, since the Eternal One, by being eternal, cannot enter into time relations. *“This ultimately leads to the utter separation of philosophy and religion, of reason and piety, that it heralded the end of religion”* (Ratzinger, 17).
1. Eternity cannot mingle with time and time cannot mingle with eternity (one unchanging and the other changing). The moment one does with the other, it ceases to exist. The separation of philosophy and religion was due to this idea that God has no power with man and man cannot matter to him...in relation to this crisis we see core mysteries of our faith become undermined and uncertain.
 - a. *“Faith is reduced to a rational monotheism where the notion of God simply fades away, irrelevant. Here a praying religion is replaced with ‘self-transcendence...In the end the possibility of prayer being heard dwindles and faith becomes self-transcendence”* (Ratzinger, 22)... (Babel)
 1. Prayer is the discovery of ultimate identity in which I find my own, serene identity with the ground of all being and thus am liberated from the false sense of I. Only a radical abandonment of being, in favor of nothingness, seems to offer hope of real freedom.
- VII. The Structure and content of Christian Prayer: *“The basic reason why man can speak with God is that God himself is speech, a word”* (Jn.1:1). His nature is to speak, to hear, to reply. He is Logos...consider the larger picture of John’s liturgical sense.
- a. *Counsult Word of the Week on Prayer.*
 - b. Man is able to participate in the dialogue with God himself because there is relationship within the Trinity. *“We could say that man is able to participate in the dialogue with God because God himself has first shared in human speech and has thus brought the two into communication with one another”* (Ratzinger, 26).
 - c. A fundamental word from the mouth of the Son is “Abba”...reflect into this truth in relationship with participation. Three keys to understanding the inner intentionality of prayer (the basic act of Being, consider Christ’s act of being Son).
 1. Act of consent...prayer is an act of affirmation of the being as opposed to the Marxist approach, which is an outrage.

- i. The next step is that we say Abba together with Christ; only in fellowship with him can we recognize the world around us.
 - ii. Lastly, we cannot ascertain Christ solely through a historical reconstruction. We encounter him as a living Person, in the foretaste of his presence in the Church...the Church is Christ's body.
- d. Man can only be understood in light of God and the aforementioned affirmation of being and righteousness can only be understood in relation to God. If relationship is a seminal principle in the discussion of prayer that speaking and listening is a prerequisite to understanding God's will in our lives.
 - 1. Thus, prayer is not only relational but demands every discretion that is demanded of spousal love. The language of love is one that is profoundly communicated in the language of the body...consider how you express this love to one another. This love is personal in the uniqueness of the "I" yet realized at a deeper level in the 'we'. The "we" awakens the innermost core of the person...consider Avila and the awakening of her being in her smile.
 - 2. The momentary situation is often the place in which we cry, "Abba Father, yet the relational disposition should be at the bedrock of our soul. Our daily contact with God should be constantly revived and our daily affairs should be related aback to it. The more God is present in ("in the Spirit"-Johanine liturgical image) us the more we will see him in our prayers that are so full of words, images and thoughts.
 - a. The more we are taking care of self in prayer the more we will be open to other in relationships. Pope Benedict XVI in his work Jesus of Nazareth states: *"...This orientation pervasively shapens our whole consciousness, the silent presence of God at the heart of our thinking, our mediating, and our being, is what we mean when we say 'pray without ceasing'"* (Benedict XVI, 130).
 - b. In turn, the Eucharist becomes the foundational prayer in which the Eucharist has become the Word made flesh. Our words and speech have more than a skeleton, but flesh!
 - ii. Lk.11:1... "Lord, teach us how to pray". Watching Jesus pray awakens within them a wish to come to know how Jesus pray. Jesus' entire ministry springs forth from his prayer and relationship with the Father! Thus, our need to be present to not only prayer, but also the Eucharist as the source and summit of creating anew a civilization built on Truth in Love!
 - 1. We become configured to the image that we come to know so well...in this way we reproduce the image of the Son!