

Coming into The Presence of God

by St. Francis de Sales



Perhaps you do not know how to undertake mental prayer since many people in our day do not practice it. Let me show you a short method which you can use until you are more practiced in it. You will find that there are many good books which go into greater detail on mental prayer or meditation.

Two points are always used to prepare oneself for the meditation: place yourself in the presence of God, and ask for his help in praying.

"The presence of God" means a lively, attentive realization of God's absolute presence -- God is everywhere, in all places, in all things, in all people. Wherever birds fly, they encounter the air; so wherever we go or wherever we are, we find God present.

When a prince walks among blind men, they do not see him so they do not honor him. When told about him, they acknowledge him, but soon forget him, because they do not see him. Unfortunately, we do not see God, so we often forget he is there, or hold back on the honor due him. We are like that with God. We know the theology that God is here, right now. What we have to do is to put our whole heart into acknowledging that he really is with us, now.

The next way to place yourself in the presence of God is to remember that he not only is in this place with you, but in a very true way he is in your heart in the very center of your spirit. St. Paul reminds us that "we live and move and have our very being" in God. (Acts 17:28) Excite in your heart a very real reverence for the God who is present to and in you.

A third way to practice this is to imagine that Christ in his sacred humanity is gazing at us from Heaven, on all humanity, on Christians who are his special children, but especially on us when we are in prayer.

Finally, we can imagine that Christ in his sacred humanity is drawing close to us, as a friend might. If the most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar is present, then Christ's presence is real, not just imaginary. The real presence of the Risen Christ in the Eucharist is a most sacred item of our theology.