

It was only after I had posted last month's reflection that I realised I had forgotten to mention one of the most important things of all about intercession, so this month's "thought" is really part 2 of what I wrote in August.

Last time I wrote about how when we pray we share in the prayer of Jesus, who "ever lives to make intercession for us." Jesus continuously prays to his Father for the world he loves. But as he himself made clear his disciples are not simply his followers but also active participants in his own work. He even said they would do greater things than he did, "because I go to the Father."

So when we intercede, when we pray (as for example when we make our "Shrine Prayers" on the first evening of our pilgrimage) we are not simply echoing what Jesus is doing but are making our own contribution to his prayer.

What however could we possibly add to what Jesus has already done and continues to do?

Nothing of course. But remember that that the Risen Christ is in heaven and we are members of his body on earth.

St Teresa of Avila wrote:

*Christ has no body but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
Compassion on this world,
Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good,
Yours are the hands, with which he blesses all the world.
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,
Yours are the eyes, you are his body.
Christ has no body now but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
compassion on this world.
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.*

When we pray, therefore we are not "adding to" what he has done, but are rather the earthly part of his heavenly work. Our intercession is a contribution to Christ's eternal intercession; it's not something that happens remote from us or independent of us but something in which we are intimately and personally involved.

So, what is "our part"?

Every one of us, every single human being, is unique. There never has been, nor ever could be, another person who is exactly like us. Nobody has exactly the same network of relationships, interests and experiences as anyone else. That means that nobody could ever stand before God (in intercession) with exactly the same set of concerns on their heart as anybody else. It is as if God has given each one of us a responsibility to hold before him the needs of the particular set of concerns that make up our own unique context of life. A corollary of this is of course that nobody else can do this instead of us because no one else occupies precisely the same space that we do. What a responsibility - and what a privilege!