

Christ the Sole Mediator

My father passed away two years ago; since then I cannot speak to him, nor can he talk to me. That is the painful reality of death, and that's why it is futile to pray to the saints in heaven. We have no means of communication with them. Since God alone knows the hearts of all people, the Bible exhorts us to pray to him alone.

In response to the previous letter, a Catholic friend commented, "A sinner may feel that God will not listen to him, and that is why he may ask a saint to intercede in his behalf." That is an honest admission why Catholics seek the intercession of the saints. Aware of their sinfulness, they appeal to the saints to intercede for them on account of their merits.

In his book 'The Glories of Mary,' St Alphonsus states plainly why we should seek intercession. He writes, "Hence St. Bernard exhorts every sinner to pray to Mary, and to feel great confidence in praying to her; because if he does not deserve what he demands, yet Mary obtains for him, by her merits, the graces which she asks of God for him." Please note the reason why he exhorts us to seek Mary's intercession. *Conscious of his unworthiness, the sinner is taught to hope in her merits.*

This point is rarely discussed by the defenders of the Catholic religion. Over the years I have observed how Catholic apologists side-step the core issue by shifting the discussion on matters of secondary importance. Thus if a Christian points out that the Bible says that there is one mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ, the Catholic apologist simply responds that the Bible itself commands Christians to intercede for one another, and surely that does not violate the sole mediatorship of Christ. In this we all agree.

But how does Christ's mediatorship differ from our intercessions for one another?

Do we ever pray on account of *our merits*? Do we expect God to hear us because *we deserve* something from him? Do I ask a Christian brother to pray for me because of his superior merits? Or do we rather ask God on the basis of his grace, pleading for his mercies?

On what grounds, then, do we approach God? Surely it is not our 'good merits'! We approach God in *Christ's name*, confident in his infinite merits, for he alone is the mediator between us and our Maker. "For there is one God. There is also one mediator between God and the human race, Christ Jesus, himself human, who gave himself as ransom for all" (1 Timothy 2:5, 6). He is the one and only mediator for he is the unique God-man who fulfilled his redemptive mission by giving himself '*as ransom for all*'.

That is the only reason why God can be gracious to us; his Son gave himself and shed his blood on the cross to free us from sin and reconcile us to him. We do not approach God with our puny little merits, or the merits of the Saints, as if to say, 'Hear me because I deserve it', or, 'Hear me because so-and-so Saint deserves it'! Away with such fancies! We come to God as we really are, at best, unprofitable servants; we are encouraged to pray to him only because he himself provided for us a Mediator who purchased our redemption.

My response to my Catholic friend is simply this - A sinner rightly feels that God will not listen to him because God abhors sin. But thank God, he himself has provided a perfect Mediator, his Son Jesus Christ, and in his name we boldly come to the throne of grace to receive mercy and help. God will not turn anyone who comes to him in Christ's name; God will turn away anyone else who comes to him presenting his 'merits' or that of anybody else, whether on earth or in heaven.