Cross-Veneration Friday

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"The evil bows down before the good, the wicked at the gates of the righteous."

Proverbs 14:19

Evil has been and is a part of the reality of life upon this earth. The power of evil in the world has been terminally conquered by Jesus through the Holy Wood of His Precious Cross. However, each of us must still deal and struggle with this concept. God created His people good, yet evil can live in each person because of brokenness. At times, there are those urges which seem to control our very desires and needs. Then there are those nasty feelings which one has towards another. What about those slips of the tongue which we really did not mean? These arise from the unconscious. Does that mean that one cannot help oneself—that one, therefore, is not responsible? Or can something be done?

As one grows in a dynamic relationship with God, the various faces and forms of evil become more easily discerned. A growing, living relationship enables one to face the unknown, the feared, the evil within. This relationship is called prayer. Prayer can be words from a book, memorized or recited in a group, but this is only the first step in a prayer relationship. More advanced prayer in an animated relationship with the Lord acknowledges, talks to, dialogues with, expresses oneself totally: emotionally, spiritually and psychologically. It breathes, cries, sings, works, plays, sleeps, and eats. In such a relationship, God is a real, living Person! The season of the Great Fast calls us to prayer—to intimate prayer with God where one listens and hears. Prayer is as necessary as breathing.

The urges, nastiness, or slips of the tongue are not handled in the open, but hidden, repressed or relagated to some deep, dark unknown. In health, it is a known fact, that germs multiply in a dark, damp, and warm area. Could it be true that evil when hidden grows in power and strength? Such things as shame, guilt, and ignorance provide the same dark atmosphere for evil to grow. As the power of evil grows, it can take possession of the person through the unconscious.

This world of evil and unknown that is within us does not readily reveal itself. But in the context of prayer—a meditative prayer and a living relationship with God—the Lord reveals this unknown world to us. Once this unknown world from which evil arises is revealed, dialoging with God enables one to place the evil outside oneself. Only with God can this unknown evil be identified and cast out as Jesus does in the gospel account of the Holy Evangelist Mark: "This kind, you can drive out only by fasting and prayer." *(9:16-31)*

SCRIPTURE READINGS: Isaiah 29:13-23
Genesis 12:1-7
Proverbs 14:15-26