



St Luke's in the City

150 years - 2009

Celebrating at the Crossroads

2nd Sunday after Pentecost

25 May 2008

The Essence of Prayer

Whenever we approach God the contrast that exists between what he is and what we are becomes dreadfully clear. We may not be aware of this as long as we live at a distance from God, so to speak, as long as his presence or his image is dimmed in our thoughts and in our perceptions; but the nearer we come to God, the sharper the contrast appears. It is not the constant thought of their sins, but the vision of the holiness of God that makes the saints aware of their own sinfulness. When we consider ourselves without the fragrant background of God's presence, sins and virtues become small and somewhat irrelevant matters; it is against the background of the divine presence that they stand out in full relief and acquire their depth and tragedy.

Every time we come near God, it is either life or death we are confronted with. It is life if we come to him in the right spirit, and are renewed by him. It is death if we come to him without the spirit of worship and a contrite heart; it is death if we bring pride or arrogance.

Therefore, before we set out on the so-called thrilling adventure of prayer, it cannot be too strongly stated that nothing more significant, more awe-inspiring, can occur than meeting the God we set out to meet. It is essential to realise that we will lose our life in the process: the old Adam we are must die. We are intensely attached to the old man, afraid for him, and it is very difficult, not only at the outset but years after we have begun, to feel that we are completely on the side of Christ, against the old Adam.

Fr. Peter

Reference: Metropolitan Anthony