

## The Mystery of Intercession

**F**ather Benson taught us to look always to the glory of the ascended Christ and find the meaning of all we do in union with him. We shall enter into the mystery of intercessory prayer only if we realize our oneness with Christ the great High Priest, who lives forever to make intercession for all the world. Christ makes this prayer to the merciful Father through the prayers of all the faithful who are baptized into his body. His voice does not appeal to God separately from theirs: ‘They are... so many mouths to Himself; and as they pray... His voice fills their utterance with the authority and claim belonging to Himself.’ The Father hears the voice of his beloved Son in our prayers and accepts them as Christ’s.

It is the Spirit of Christ who stirs our prayer and weaves the movements of our hearts into his great offering. Because the Spirit moves so deeply within us we cannot always be conscious of the full meaning and substance of our prayer. Often our intercessions will feel weak and incoherent. Yet the Spirit is helping us “in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.”

Through faith we see Christ not only in his majesty in heaven, but in his lowly presence in every creature. He suffers with and in everyone in need. Our intercession does not call down the divine presence to come to the place where we have seen a need, for the Christ who fills all things is already in that place. It is his Spirit who calls us to join him there by offering our love in intercessory prayer and action, to be used by God for healing and transformation.

It is a wonderful thing that God makes us his fellow-workers and uses our love, acting in intercession, to further the reconciliation of all things in Christ. We offer thanks with joy whenever prayer results in the transformation for which we had hoped. However, we must often suffer the pain of seeing no visible result to our prayer. But we should let no frustration wear down the trust that sustains our

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waiting on God. Every offering of love will bear fruit. “I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son”.

According to an ancient monastic saying, “A monk is separated from all and united to all.” The pioneers of monasticism believed that the monk was called to the margin of society in order to hear within himself the deepest cries of humanity, and to discover a profound unity with all living beings in their struggle to attain “the freedom of the glory of the children of God”. In our intercessory prayer this solidarity will find its deepest expression. We shall also experience through faith our communion with all the saints in glory who pray unceasingly with us and for us.

*[The Rule of the Society of St. John the Evangelist]*

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## **SAINTS:**

**Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, 21 March.** Born in Aslockton in Nottinghamshire in 1489, Thomas Cranmer, from an unspectacular Cambridge academic career, was recruited for diplomatic service in 1527. Two years later he joined the team working to annul Henry VIII's marriage to Catherine of Aragon. He was made Archbishop of Canterbury in 1533 and duly pronounced the Aragon marriage annulled. By now a convinced Church reformer, he married in 1532 while clerical marriage was still illegal in England. He worked closely with Thomas Cromwell to further reformation, but survived Henry's final, unpredictable years to become a chief architect of Edwardian religious change, constructing two editions of *The Book of Common Prayer*, in 1549 and 1552, the Ordinal in 1550 and the original version of the later Thirty-Nine Articles.

Cranmer acquiesced in the unsuccessful attempt to make Lady Jane Grey Queen of England. Queen Mary's regime convicted him of treason in 1553 and of heresy in 1554. Demoralised by imprisonment, he signed six recantations, but was still condemned to the stake at Oxford. Struggling with his conscience, he made a final, bold statement of Protestant faith. Perhaps too fair-minded and cautious to be a ready-made hero in Reformation disputes, he was an impressively learned scholar, and his genius for formal prose has left a lasting mark on Anglican liturgy. He was burnt at the stake on this day in the year 1556.

**Oscar Romero, Archbishop of San Salvador, 24 March.** Oscar Arnulfo Romero y Galdamez was born in a small village in El Salvador in 1917. Ordained priest, he was known as a quiet and unassuming pastor. By 1977, amidst the political and social turmoil suffered by his country, he was therefore seen as a neutral choice to be its Archbishop. Courageously, however, he began to speak out against violence and his homilies supported the demands of the poor for economic and social justice. He refused to be silenced and continued to preach even under threat of assassination. On this day in 1980, whilst presiding at Mass, Archbishop Romero was assassinated by a gunman. He has since been widely regarded as a martyr for the faith.

**HOLY WEEK @  
HOLY TRINITY**

**April 2. Palm Sunday**

- 7:30a.m. & 9:30a.m. Blessing of the Palms & Holy Eucharist

**April 6. Maundy Thursday**

- 7:00p.m. Holy Eucharist & Washing of the Feet

**April 7. Good Friday**

- 11:00a.m. Stations of the Cross
- 12:00noon Liturgy of Good Friday

**April 8. Holy Saturday**

- 7:00p.m. The Great Vigil of Easter.
- Baptism & Confirmation

**April 9. Easter Sunday**

- 8:30a.m. JOINT Eucharist Rite 1.
- Baptism