



BOOK REVIEW

Published in the *Holy Trinity Parish Bulletin*

TITLE: *Courage to Pray*

AUTHOR: Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh and Georges LeFebvre

Courage to Pray is a collection of reflections on prayer by Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh and George LeFebvre, a Benedictine monk. Both authors write about prayer in a way that exhibit how profoundly acquainted they are with the aspirations found in man's spiritual conversation with God. I will compare and contrast each author's views on the meaning of prayer.

According to Metropolitan Anthony, prayer is a spiritual encounter with God. Our proper attitude during prayer is to be obedient and listening in silence, in order to hear and profit by it. Our encounter with God must be one of complete humility, modeled after our Lord Jesus Christ's submission to His Heavenly Father. All true prayer is made in humility and surrender to God. LeFebvre says our Lord Jesus Christ is present at the heart of all humility towards Him. When we come to God in prayer with humble, trusting, and obedient hearts, the mystery of God is revealed to us. Therefore, both authors conclude that the presence of both humility and obedience form the basic requirements of an effective prayer life.

Metropolitan Anthony further explains that prayer is mankind's search for God. Each person naturally longs for God in his or her soul. Man is made for relationship in the image and likeness of the Triune God. Metropolitan Anthony believes that man's action to seek God through prayer is man's own choice of free will. In contrast, LeFebvre believes that prayer is the expression of the special relationship God has given to us freely as His gift. This search is expressed through both intercessory and liturgical prayer. When man finds God, he also finds his fellow man. Prayer then becomes active rather than passive. We seek and love God and therefore it causes us to pray for and love our neighbor. LeFebvre explains that prayer is an outward expression of our relationship to God. True prayer ends our isolation and begins our discovery of the presence of God in our daily lives. When we pray, we receive the gift of God's presence in the here and now. Every Christian who prays to God can experience his or her unique and special relationship as a child of the Kingdom.

Courage to Pray serves as a guide for those of us who wish to end their isolation and enter into communion with the Infinite God. I found this short book a wonderful devotional aid which helped me understand how to enhance my personal prayer life.

Reviewed by Anastasia Vassilakis

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