

Camaldolese, went so far as to maintain -- as his biographer Bruno di Querfurt states -- that the Psalms are the only way to experience truly profound prayer: "Una via in psalmis" (Passio Sanctorum Benedicti et Johannes ac sociorum eorundem: MPH VI, 1893, 427).

4. With this statement, which initially might appear exaggerated, he, in fact, remained anchored to the best tradition of the first Christian centuries, when the Psalter had become the book of ecclesial prayer par excellence. This was the victorious choice in the confrontations with heretical tendencies that continually undermined the unity of faith and communion. In this respect, it is interesting to note a wonderful letter that St. Athanasius wrote to Marcellino in the first half of the fourth century, when the Arian heresy raged, which attacked the faith in the divinity of Christ. In face of the heretics, who attracted people to themselves with songs and prayers that pleased their religious feelings, this great Father of the Church dedicated himself with all his energy to teach the Psalter transmitted by Scripture (see PG 27, 12 ss.). It was thus that the psalmodic prayer, which soon became a universal practice among the baptized, was added to the "Our Father," the Lord's prayer par excellence.

5. Thanks also to the communal prayer of the Psalms, Christian conscience is reminded and understands that it is impossible to turn to the Father who lives in heaven without an authentic communion of life with brothers and sisters who live on earth. Not only this, but vitally inserting themselves in the praying tradition of the Hebrews, Christians learn to pray recounting the "magnalia Dei," namely, the great wonders accomplished by God, be it in the creation of the world and humanity, or in the history of Israel and the Church. This form of prayer, drawn from Scripture, does not exclude certain freer expressions, and these will continue not only to characterize personal prayer, but also to enrich liturgical prayer itself, for example with hymns and tropes. Therefore, the Book of Psalms remains the ideal source of Christian prayer, and the Church of the new millennium will continue to be inspired in it.

[Translation by ZENIT]

- The full text can be accessed from our web site.



A p o s t o l i c A c t i o n I t e m s

- Purchase copies of the psalms and give them to your friends. Encourage them to recite them daily
- Encourage friends to enroll in the brown scapular of our lady of Mount Carmel
- Inundate your neighborhood with the green scapular of the Immaculate Heart of Mary and thus begin the process of the conversion of many to the Catholic faith.
- Support good initiatives---for example the conference on sacred architecture in the service of the Roman liturgy---why not attend---May 12, 2001---at the Yale Club in New York---9 am to 5 pm---phone 212 682 1336 for details!