

Prayer of the Month • April 2015

Lord Jesus Christ, who wills that no one should perish, and to whom supplication is never made without the hope of mercy, for you said with your own holy and blessed lips: “Anything you ask in my name, shall be done for you”; I ask of you, O Lord, for your holy name’s sake, to grant me at the hour of my death full consciousness and the power of speech, sincere contrition for my sins, true faith, firm hope and perfect charity, that I may be able to say to you with a clean heart: Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit: you have redeemed me, O God of truth, who are blessed for ever and ever. Amen.



St. Vincent Ferrer, 1350–1419

This is very much a prayer for the future, for a good outcome, but prayed now, the implication being, before it is too late. Some people would say this is unduly pessimistic, but it is rather full of hope and confidence – confidence on God’s mercy, rather than in ourselves. The author has taken scripture to heart and is using it in prayer, both his quotation of the promise of Jesus (John 14.14), and at the end of the prayer, ‘into your hands ...’ (Luke 23.46) He very much identifies with Christ himself. It is a very real dialogue with the Lord. It is marvellous to be able to pray like this.

St Vincent Ferrer had a ministry, for the last twenty years of his life, of preaching all over Europe about judgement, and you can see that theme coming into this prayer. He was born on 23 January, 1350, in Valencia, Spain. At the age of seventeen, he entered the Dominican Order. He admired St Dominic and his love of learning and of the scriptures, and had a great devotion for the Virgin Mary. He did well at his studies and a few years later he was teaching philosophy and also preaching, in Barcelona and Valencia. Vincent lived at the time of the Black Death and of the Great Schism, with a pope installed in Avignon as well as in Rome. Vincent had a controversial role and supported the popes in Avignon, Clement VII and Benedict XIII. The schism was a source of great distress to the Church. Conferring with popes, kings, emperors and bishops, he helped to end the schism. The strain made him ill, and he was affected by a fever that nearly killed him. On recovering he was renewed with spiritual power and went about preaching, prophesying, peace-making and healing throughout Europe. He often preached on the text: “Fear God, for the hour of his judgment is coming” (Revelation 14.7) and earned the title ‘Angel of Judgement’. He died in the city of Vannes, eastern France, aged 69, on 5 April 1419. He was canonised in 1455. His feast day is 5 April.

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