

What God Already Knows ...

Telling God What He Already Knows

Am I allowed a little parental pride? (*Well, as long as there is not too much of it.*) Recently, my daughter, Dr. Kate Thomas, launched a website called **For The Wynn**, which draws on her studies of Anglo-Saxon and Early Medieval literature, particularly involving liturgy and prayers (apparently *wynn* is an Anglo-Saxon runic letter expressing the W sound).

One of the first articles on the site is called *Telling God What He Already Knows: How to Pray Like An 11-th Century Monk*, and is based on Ælfwine's Prayerbook, which exists today in two separate manuscripts held by the British Library, and *De Laude Psalmorum* ('On the praise of the psalms'), a Latin guide to prayer, written some centuries earlier.

The key phrase is (translated as) "No man can tell God so effectively, in his own language, of the hardship and oppression of the temptations which come to him, nor ask his mercy ...". As Kate says, "God must know about the monk's temptations already – isn't he supposed to know everything?" Indeed. But the important thing is telling God, particularly, asking, telling God our needs and desires.

This is found in the book which I have reviewed here recently, Fr. James Martin's *The Jesuit Guide To (Almost) Everything* (2012); Chapter 3. Here, Martin draws on the key text, the story of Jesus's healing of the blind man, Bartimaeus (Mark 10: 46-52). What, Jesus asks, do you want me to do for you? – and it is obvious to all (Jesus, his immediate audience, and the reader) that everyone knows what Bartimaeus wants. What Jesus wants is that the blind man expresses his desire, acknowledges his need, speaks openly about his condition – and that, all those centuries later, I think, was the experience of the 11th century monks; and equally ourselves today.

<https://forthewynnblog.wordpress.com/>

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