

## INTEGRITY

### I.

Integrity of heart, soul, and body,  
this is our deep vocation and your pure gift.  
In the garden of Eden, Adam and Eve  
lived in this wonderful truth,  
integrated in the depths of the heart  
because dwelling in the realm of your gift,  
in your all-enfolding, paternal arms.

Beloved children, at peace within themselves  
because at peace, Father, with you,  
they were also open, naked without shame,  
before one another in spousal love and gift,  
and open, indeed, to the whole creation,  
with hearts sensitive to its beauty and its grace.  
This openness of love, in childhood and in nuptial love,  
was also transparent in the beauty of fruitfulness,  
in the union of two in one flesh,  
but also in all manner of work and creative act.

You presented all creatures to the man,  
and in a single glimpse he knew and understood,  
naming them, a sign of his childlike, grateful gaze,  
as well as of his loving, free stewardship,  
receiving them, Father, from your trusting hands,  
and carrying them in his own filial trust,  
back to you again, in and through himself, transformed.

### II.

But when the tempter comes in  
and leads the two of them into sin,  
he strikes the very root of childhood,  
their filial acceptance of your loving gift,  
which purely, freely, and unreservedly gives all things  
into their open and receptive hearts.  
They are led, through a spirit of fear and greed  
(both mingled together, confused)  
to grasp for something apart from your loving will.  
They are cut off from the wellspring of childhood,  
and the deep unity in the sanctuary of the heart is fragmented.

The union of the two, therefore, is also fractured,  
and alienation is experienced in relation to the whole world.  
The open transparency of love and gift  
gives way to shame, fear, and the spirit of possessiveness.  
When Eve looked on the fruit of the tree  
she saw that it was “good for food,  
delightful to the eyes,  
and desirable for gaining wisdom.”  
Ah, she experienced what the Apostle John named,  
and what we all, now, experience:  
“The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of  
life.”

The pure sacramentality of the body,  
radiating with the beauty of the inner person,  
and vehicle of their complete acceptance and reciprocal gift,  
then becomes a broken, fractured vessel,  
reaching out for enjoyment, pleasure,  
apart from the truth for which it was made.  
And the heart itself, deep within,  
bears wounds and disorder, sinful concupiscence,  
seeing the other person, and the world,  
no longer with a gaze of pure, grateful love,  
but with a movement of possessiveness,  
as well as of prideful domination, greed.

But the inner root of all this disorder  
is to be found in the cutting-off of the truth,  
the beautiful reality of childhood.  
And the healing, therefore, begins and ends,  
and is penetrated through and through, with this truth:  
the return to the joy of sonship and daughterhood  
before you, loving Father, wonderful God,  
healing our disordered image of you  
and rediscovering, within this light,  
the reality of all things, renewed and transformed.

### III.

Then the lust of the flesh is purified  
and the body becomes a pure vessel once again,  
a temple of your wondrous presence,  
a sacrament of your love, and a home, indeed,  
where I dwell, and offer a beautiful hospitality  
to the other who comes to me.

So too the lust of the eyes,  
weaned away from disordered gazing,  
is slowly transformed back to its original truth  
(and indeed something even more, in Christ)  
to look upon every thing, every person,  
within the radiant light of your eternal love,  
seeing in each person a beloved child of God,  
a spouse of the eternal Son of the Most High,  
and someone transparent, shining  
with the image of your own creative life.

Finally, the pride of life,  
this disordered desire to “be like God,”  
a god whom we assume to be living  
a kind of exalted, solitary life of autonomy,  
a domineering authority and possessiveness,  
gives way to the true, ardent thirst, my God,  
to be like you: One wholly open in love,  
in trusting acceptance and reciprocal gift,  
yes, an eternal Communion of blessed Love  
and the delight and joy of endless Embrace,  
Father and Son, abiding with and in One another,

in the single Breath and Kiss of the Spirit of Love.

IV.

This threefold fragmentation, loving Father,  
into which we have fallen in sin,  
is healed by a threefold movement inward,  
yet expanding out in the openness of love.  
You reveal to us the beauty of love, again,  
in your incarnate, crucified, and risen Son,  
and he himself teaches us the way,  
the path of integrity, unity, and joy,  
in the radiant reality of poor, chaste, and obedient love.

For each of us, in the unique path that you mark out,  
indeed, upon which you lead us, hand in hand,  
this threefold reality, which is only one,  
unfolds its beautiful, inner truth.  
We find ourselves sharing, mysteriously,  
in the threefold life which is your own.

From the possessive grasping of sin  
we return to the poverty of childhood,  
open hands and an open heart, receptive of your gift,  
and surrendering, wholly, in simple trust,  
to you, Father, who approach us through every thing.

From the disordered desire of broken love  
you lead us back to the virginal place  
deep within our heart, alone with you,  
and thus transform our very eyes and flesh,  
to love in a chaste and beautiful way,  
enfolded wholly within your own radiant light,  
within the dimension of your will and your gift.

From the pride which springs, more deeply,  
from the insecurity that we are truly loved, and lovable,  
you draw us back to the place of acceptance,  
where we drink, unceasingly, from your endless Joy,  
as you gaze upon us with those wondrous eyes of Love,  
delighting in the beloved child and spouse whom you see.  
Thus we descend into the truth of humility,  
not exalting ourselves, falsely, to what we are not,  
nor abasing ourselves in shame and hatred of self,  
but returning home to our inmost truth, beloved,  
and opening out to embrace others in pure love.

## THREEFOLD MYSTERY

### I.

The human heart yearns, my God,  
for greatness and nobility.  
The word "heroism" strikes a cord,  
deep within us, our heart-strings, vibrating.  
We feel within us a sense of integrity,  
and a responsibility, responding  
to the gift of love given every day.  
And this sense only increases and expands  
as the gift is received more deeply.

But we can also be numb, in sin,  
to such integrity, disintegrated,  
to such responsibility, unresponsive,  
as we close our eyes and hands to the gift.  
Then a sense of shame and guilt remains,  
and a gnawing emptiness within,  
perhaps buried over, ignored,  
but never extinguished entirely.  
We feel that we have turned away  
from the covenanted relationship,  
and hurt the heart of the One  
who so deeply loves us  
and calls us to himself.

The Wellspring of Gift, ever flowing,  
carries in itself every invitation,  
every call and command and task.  
These themselves, it becomes clear,  
are only further expressions of the gift,  
and gifts given by One who loves.  
Yet they are not the primary or ultimate gift,  
for this place belongs to pure love alone,  
to the intimate, gratuitous abiding embrace  
between Lover and beloved, Father and child,  
in a joyful and blessed communion  
with no end outside of itself.

### II.

What a difference this makes, my God,  
to the way we approach life every day.  
No longer is it so much a matter  
of striving forward to become,  
some day, what we are not.  
Rather, it is a matter of receiving,  
in gratitude and filial trust,  
and of surrendering back in response,  
the gift borne in every instant, every thing.

A young woman who feels unloved,  
unworthy, does not find herself  
pressed on to greater, freer action  
by this feverish need within her.

Rather, she finds herself numbed,  
paralyzed by the emptiness she feels.  
She may grope about, seeking for something,  
or simply move, feverishly, to escape.  
Her heart-strings are trying to create,  
from within themselves, a song,  
but her fingers cannot pluck them  
in such a way to make them vibrate, thus.

But the moment she realizes that  
she is held and cherished, deep within  
the heart of another person, beloved,  
her hearts expands, spontaneously,  
echoing by the touch of love, without.  
Now she begins to think:  
I want to truly be, in every day,  
the beauty that he sees in me.  
He sees something, and it must not,  
no, it cannot be a lie.

Something noble and beautiful  
begins to awaken, gently, in her soul,  
and her body too begins to show,  
not its insurmountable inadequacy,  
but a unique beauty that is hers alone.  
She descends more deeply into her self,  
and thus she is raised up more freely  
to what she yearns to be.  
She is integrated by the gift of love,  
from without, given,  
and thus drawn from without  
deeper within, in integrity and love.  
The heart's yearning, bubbling up from within,  
returns to peaceful self-acceptance,  
like a tranquil lake reflecting the moon,  
in response to the light shining  
from the eyes of the one who loves her.

Now she yearns, indeed,  
not in feverish insufficiency,  
but in a joyful sense of responsibility,  
of being connected, united,  
by the mysterious bonds of love,  
to allow the call of love to draw her,  
and to cause her to blossom more deeply,  
every day, in beauty, goodness, and love.  
Yet this deep yearning itself springs,  
not only from her inmost need,  
implanted in her from the beginning,  
but from the gift of love offered  
anew to her each day.  
It is in being that she at last becomes.

### III.

In this blessed love she discovers

that, as a daughter, she is also spouse.  
The two go hand in hand,  
the one contained within the other.  
Loved freely by a Father's gaze,  
she can also let herself be loved  
by a Bridegroom's heart.  
And when she is loved in this way,  
in deepest nuptial embrace,  
she finds herself returning,  
more deeply, to daughterhood as well.

The bond created by gratuitous gift,  
by the love flowing from the Father's Heart,  
makes possible her reciprocal gift,  
the giving of all she is and has,  
to be taken up within the Father's gift  
and to become something wholly pleasing,  
a reality that delights, always, his loving eyes.

Enfolded as bride within the Bridegroom's arms,  
she is drawn also, as daughter, to abide,  
in the Bridegroom-Son, against the Father's breast.  
She is united, in this way, as daughter,  
in the unbreakable bond of reciprocal gift.  
Each moment and each day,  
what is given by him is received,  
and what is returned by her, welcomed.

And above all particular things  
the gift which the two exchange  
is nothing but they themselves, united.  
There is no greater joy than this,

the fulfillment of her every hope and desire,  
the quenching of her every thirst,  
yet ever deepened, in this life,  
to drink more deeply from the Wellspring of this Love.

IV.

And such fullness, given to her freely,  
yet calling her anew every day,  
also begets within her heart and life  
a mystery that expands for others too.  
In the womb of her loving faith  
she bears and nurtures the gift of life,  
the image of the Son of God.  
Yet turning out to the world,  
she gazes on it with the Father's eyes,  
and so is able to welcome in  
the beauty and gift of others too,  
bearing them, in the womb of love,  
before her God in prayer's pangs of birth.

As daughter and as spouse  
she finds herself becoming mother too.  
A vessel of God's expanding, overflowing gift,  
and a place where this gift,  
nurtured, cherished, loved in every one,  
is able to trace its way back to the Source.  
Indeed, in her very motherhood  
the spousal love of God, and filial peace,  
enfolds everything and shelters it,  
within the arms of God which embrace the world.