

## PRAYER (2-2-18)

It has been said that the perfect prayer  
is that in which one is no longer aware of praying.  
There is a beautiful truth in this.

When the human heart becomes so transparent  
that the divine light shines through it, undimmed,  
and it does not grasp, for its mere enjoyment,  
for its possession and control, this light.  
Rather, it allows itself, simply,  
to be mingled together with these rays  
as they penetrate its whole being  
and spread out to touch the world,  
to touch the broken and aching hearts of all.

Prayer is not a mere matter of thoughts and ideas,  
nor of feelings and formulated desires  
—at least it is not primarily this—  
for there is something deeper.  
I myself am not my ideas, my emotions,  
my affections, or even merely my desires,  
though these are all essential to who I am  
in the fullness of my concrete humanity.  
Rather, I am who I am in you, my God,  
I am what you unceasingly see and love in me.  
And prayer is simply a matter of abiding in this,  
in the truth of who I am, beloved, in your embrace.

Yet from this inner place light penetrates me;  
its spreads out to irradiate all that I am,  
to envelop in its unity my fragmentation,  
transfiguring it and drawing it back into integrity.  
Thus, in an ineffable way, often unnoticed,  
my being is gathered from multiplicity into unity,  
and dwells in the sanctuary of the heart, abiding.  
Here everything is important, everything relevant,  
and yet, on the other hand, Love alone remains,  
for within it alone does all find place.

All words, all thoughts, all multiplicity  
is bound together by the cord of Silence.  
All yearning for intimacy, all hope for life,  
all desire for relationship is embraced  
and gently held in the arms of Love.  
Yes, you come to dwell with me, my God,  
in my longing, my loneliness, my pain,  
in my joys and hopes, my very life.  
You make my heart, in all its experience,  
your very home, your place of repose.  
Thus the heart is both satisfied and enkindled,  
through a glimpse of your restfulness in me,  
to yearn and to thirst yet more deeply  
for the consummation that heaven alone will bring.  
Yet all of this enkindling, all of this hope,

all desire, thought, and intention  
is enfolded within a deeper, encompassing repose.

*Abide in me, and I in you*, Jesus said.

And this is it.

Within the Heart of the Beloved, my dear Jesus,  
I abide also in your bosom, my Father,  
within the Spirit of love uniting you both.  
And here, ultimately, there is nothing but rest,  
something like the relaxation of a little child,  
who, frightened and tearful, is taken gently  
into his loving mother's arms, and held.  
Soon the child releases his tension  
and nestles himself deep within her bosom,  
falling fast asleep in simple trust and love.

Repose within your Love, my God,  
this is simply what prayer is.  
You have come to share my experience,  
and to make your repose within my heart,  
and in this way I begin to repose in you,  
sharing, through grace, in your experience.  
And in this repose within that truth  
from which nothing, nothing can separate me,  
I can also repose, my God, in all else too.  
In the uniqueness of each time of prayer,  
in the meaning of each particular moment,  
I can dwell, I can abide, I can repose  
within the affection, the love, the desire  
that you, Holy Trinity, bear within yourself.  
At times I repose within your gladness,  
at times I repose within your pain,  
at times I repose within your aching compassion,  
but at all times, my God, I repose within your Love,  
and within the undying peace and joy it gives,  
the peace and joy, my God, which you are yourself.

## WOMB OF SILENCE (2-3-18)

Your silence, my God, is like a womb  
in which your little children grow.  
It envelops us so tenderly,  
conforming to our every thought and need,  
sheltering and upholding us by its presence,  
ineffable and unfelt by us,  
but here precisely in its impalpability.

For one cannot always be speaking,  
and, indeed, the more one speaks  
the less weight one's words begin to carry.  
But when one is always silent  
and speaks only when necessary,  
then not only are words full of power  
but one's silence itself becomes a word.  
My God, this is so true with you,  
for, in order to always speak to us,  
in every event, every circumstance, every care,  
you are always silent, speaking in this way.

The problem is that we cannot hear,  
for in sin we have lost this ability,  
this readiness to welcome silence  
and the meaning it bears within itself.  
You created us, Father, in deep interiority,  
in a state in which we dwelt, unceasingly,  
within the sanctuary of the inner heart  
where we are alone with you in mystery.  
Here in the sacred chamber of the soul  
you espouse your beloved to yourself,  
offering to her the wedding-band of silent love.

But this silence is, at the same moment,  
a place of vulnerability and nakedness.  
To dwell within this interiority  
is at the same time to experience vulnerability,  
and the invitation to lay this bare  
before the gaze of the Silent One.  
Interiority and vulnerability, together,  
exist in a profound relationship,  
one safeguarding and deepening the other.

And yet here precisely sin cuts off the way,  
for through it we let ourselves be dragged  
out of the realm of interiority, to the surface,  
and we flee in fear from sacred vulnerability,  
cloaking over the naked parts of ourselves.  
But what we don't realize, dear God,  
is that this naked interior place,  
which we hide in shame and fear,  
is also a place of breathtaking beauty.

In this inner silence, Father,  
you envelop us unceasingly in your love,  
speaking that ineffable word in our heart:  
*You are my beloved child, in whom I delight.*  
Beyond all of the brokenness, all of the wounds,  
there burns this mystery like a tender flame,  
the mystery of our belovedness in you,  
and our call to experience your intimate embrace.

And the amazing thing is that,  
however far we may be from you,  
fleeing from the silence and the vulnerability,  
you, dear and loving God, are never far from us.  
Rather, your silence—and your silent word—  
ever envelops us and shelters us.  
It is like the water of the sea  
in which fish, coral, and plant live and grow,  
sheltered and protected by it.  
It accommodates itself to their every movement,  
shifting its mass and volume to their contours.  
And in this way it allows them to flourish  
while also sustaining and protecting, gently.

This, my God, is what your Love is,  
this abiding silence of your tender Presence,  
and what we are, beloved, within you.  
Like a little, tiny infant in its mother's womb,  
held gently in the water bag.  
Teach us this, my God, so we may not fear,  
since our vulnerability, already and always,  
is sheltered in that place of protective Love,  
welcomed, embraced, and tenderly held.