

## 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 heart 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.