

John of the Cross

“During these days, *let your heart be taken up in wanting the Holy Spirit to come*; and at Pentecost and after, be taken up in the Spirit’s constant presence. Let this be so important to you that nothing else will matter to you or draw your attention; nothing painful, no unsettling memory. Throughout these days, even if others’ behavior at home is not as it should be, let it be, for love of the Holy Spirit. You owe it to your heart to give it this peace and stillness, since *your heart is a place where the Spirit is pleased to dwell.*” ~ Letter to a Carmelite nun

The Need for God

One of the deepest truths of the human person, is that we have been created with a need for God. This need, this longing is our first resource to lead us to God. “What prepares the soul to be united with God is: the desire for God.” (*Living Flame*, 3.26)

God Seeking You

God is not a distant or indifferent God but an “infinite fire of love,” who is pouring Himself out for us, always seeking us out. “If the person is seeking God, much more is her Beloved seeking her.” (*Living Flame*, 3.27)

Making space

“But to all those I answer, that the Father of lights, whose hand is not shortened, and who *pours himself out abundantly*, without partiality, *wherever he finds space*, like a ray of sunlight, and joyfully discloses himself to people on the footpaths and highways - this God does not hesitate or disdain to find his delight among the children of men.” (*Living Flame*, 1.15)

Blockages

We become as big or as small as the objects of our love. When the horizon out of which I am living is God, there is room to breathe. When it is less than God, the world can become suffocating. “Step free of your longings and you will find what your heart really longs for...” (*Sayings of Light and Love*, 15)

Nada Doctrine

Freedom is found in saying no to that which is less than God. Every no allows us to make a greater and more complete YES to God. “Outside of God, everything is narrow.” (Letter 13)

God Within

“Be glad, find joy there, gathered together and present to him who dwells within, since he is so close to you; desire him there, adore him there, and do not go off looking for him elsewhere.” (*Spiritual Canticle*, 1.7-8) Prayer is a being with, a loving attentiveness to God. A receptiveness to the loving inflow of God who “fires the soul in a spirit of love.” (St. John of the Cross)
“Prayer is nothing else than a close sharing between friends; it means taking time frequently to be alone with Him who we know loves us.” (St. Teresa of Avila)

Praying from our Need

Our need, our weakness, our brokenness is a way of prayer. The place of poverty within us is the threshold at which Christ stands. John is telling us to go there, and stay. Not to run away from it.

The Spiritual Canticle

Where have you hidden
Beloved, and left me moaning
You fled like a stag
After wounding me;
I went out calling you, but you were gone. (Stanza 1)

¿Adónde te escondiste,
Amado, y me dejaste con gemido?
Como el ciervo huiste,
habiéndome herido;

salí tras ti clamando, y eras ido.

You looked with love upon me
And deep within your eyes imprinted grace;
This mercy set me free,
Held in your love's embrace,
To lift my eyes adoring to your face. (Stanza 32)

A Matter of the Heart

“It is important in these matters *to put your heart into it*, and try to align your will to want it, because if you work at it with the heart, very quickly you will come to find great delight and comfort.” (*Ascent*, B1, 13.7)

Faith, Hope, and Love

The encounter with God in prayer, whether we experience it, sense it or not, is one of faith, hope, and love. We know that we are loved, and that our identity rests on the unshakeable foundations of God's love for us. Our response of believing, hoping, and loving is more than enough. It is itself a sign of God's presence in our lives.

“Who can free himself from his meanness and limitations,
If *you* do not lift him to yourself, my God, in purity of love?
How will a person
brought to birth and nurtured in a world of small horizons,
rise up to you Lord,
if *you* do not raise him by your hand which made him?
You will not take from me, my God,
what you once gave me
in your only Son, Jesus Christ,
in whom you gave me all I desire;
so I shall rejoice:
you will not delay, if I do not fail to hope.” ~ *Sayings of Light and Love*, 26

Themes

Knowing Christ is Life - John 17:3 (a favorite of St. John of the Cross)

Sonship - Rom 8:14-30; Gal 4:4-7

Divine Indwelling - Gal 2:19-20

The Struggle, Life in the Spirit - Rom 7:14 - Chapter 8:13

Strength in Weakness - 2 Cor 7b:-10

Nothing can separate us from Christ's love - Rom 8:31-39

God is Love - 1 John Chapter 4

Knowledge and Trust in God - 2 Cor Chapter 4

Freedom in Christ, Life in the Spirit - Gal 1, 13-26

Pursuing Christ - Phil 3:7-14

Sharing life in Christ - Col 3:1-4

Keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus - Heb 12:1-3

Courage and Confidence - 2 Tim 1:1-12

Rejoicing and Peace - Phil 4:4-9

Psalms:

42 - "my souls longs for you my God"

86 - "Hear me, Lord, and answer me"

25 - "In you, Lord my God, I put my trust"

139 - "You have searched me Lord, and you know me"

16 - "you will not abandon me"

57 - "Have mercy on me, my God"

32 - "blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven"

34 - "taste and see that the Lord is good"

Gospel Passages:

John 2:1-11 - The Wedding at Cana

John 4:4-26 - The Woman at the Well

John 6:60-69 - "Lord, to whom shall we go?"

Luke 15:11-32 - The Prodigal Son

Luke 18:9-14 - The Pharisee and the Tax Collector

Luke 18:15-17 - Receiving the Kingdom like a little child

Mark 10:46-52 - Bartimaeus receives his sight