

"The Dark Night Of The Soul"

Upon a darkened night the flame of love was burning in my breast
And by a lantern bright I fled my house
while all in quiet rest Shrouded by the night
And by the secret stair I quickly fled
The veil concealed my eyes while all within lay quiet as the dead

Oh night thou was my guide
Oh night more loving than the rising sun
Oh night that joined the lover to the beloved
transforming each of them into the other

Upon that misty night in secrecy, beyond such mortal sight
Without a guide or light than that which burned so deeply in my heart
That fire t'was led me on
and shone more bright than all the midday sun
To where he waited still it was a place where no one else could come

Within my pounding heart which kept itself entirely for him
He fell into his sleep beneath the cedars all my love I gave
By the fortress walls
the wind would brush his hair against his brow
And with its smoothest hand caressed my every sense it would allow

I lost myself to him And laid my face upon my lover's breast
And care and grief grew dim
As in the morning's mist became the light
There they dimmed amongst the lilies fair
There they dimmed amongst the lilies fair
There they dimmed amongst the lilies fair

Prayer Leader:

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What keeps us from praying?



Our prayer is characterized by silence ~

Be still and know that I am God!

In that silence we listen for a new word.

God is present in all our lives.

God cares for us, and
our life experiences are a source
of deepening knowledge of God and self.

Inspired by God's Word in the silence
we share from our hearts.

Renew · Refresh · Refocus

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To Ponder:

Silence is a frightening thing. Silence leaves us at the mercy of the noise within us. We hear the fears that need to be faced. We hear, then, the angers that need to be cooled. We hear the emptiness that needs to be filled. We hear the cries for humility and reconciliation and centeredness. We hear ambition and arrogance and attitudes of uncaring awash in the shallows of the soul. Silence demands answers. Silence invites us to depth. In the end, we must know that silence heals what hoarding and running will not touch. [Joan D. Chittister](#)

Prayer never touches us as long as it remains on the surface of our lives, as long as it is nothing but one more of a thousand things that must be done. It is only when prayer becomes "the one thing necessary" that real prayer begins. Prayer begins to take on its full dimensions only when we begin to intuit that the subtle nothingness of prayer is everything.

The inner self is as secret as God and, like God, it evades every concept that tries to seize hold of it with full possession. It is a life that cannot be held and studied as object, because it is not "a thing". It is not reached and coaxed forth from hiding by any process under the sun, including meditation. All that we can do with any spiritual discipline is produce within ourselves something of the silence, the humility, the detachment, the purity of heart and the indifference which are required if the inner self is to make some shy, unpredictable manifestation of presence.

Merton's Palace of Nowhere by James Finley

Reading: [Merton's Palace of Nowhere](#) by James Finley

This is what you are to do:

Love God. Go to a quiet place. Calm yourself.

And with a gentle stirring of love lift your heart up to God, loving God not for any gifts, but instead, love God for God's sake alone.

Sitting thus, do not think about the presence of feelings that God is near.

Do not cling to any thought of God, regardless of how sublime the thought might be.

Do not pray for anyone or for yourself, regardless of the immensity of the need.

Let your love for God alone be your sole concern.

Of course, you will make mistakes, for, after all, you do not know what you are doing.

You do not know how to life up your heart "with a gentle stirring of love."

The very simplicity and radicality of what you are led to do leads you into the obscurity of the contemplative way.

But no matter, led by God's promptings you learn (without knowing how)

to listen to God's gentle stirrings of love within you.

As the gentle stirring is meek, so, too, is your lifting up of it to God.

The Awakening Call by James Finley

Sharing...

a word...

a phrase...

a reflection...