

Window to a Soul

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Welcome, my friend. I call you my friend in expectation that these lines shall meet you as a brother or sister in the Lord, that you come to this writing with the love of God. If so, perhaps we shall share together in that love, and come to know one another as souls united in Christ.

Here in these pages I will do my best to open my soul to the eyes of your heart. I pray here we will meet in the light of God. Welcome.

I

I see when I look inside myself a soul searching for Jesus, a soul approaching His purity, His light – His love – yet not having attained perfection... yet in a measure lost. The doubt seems never to leave entirely; questions continue to arise. Though of the Lord's love I am certain, yet my eyes do become blind.

As I sit here now before the Lord's Tabernacle, having just received Communion and just gone to Confession, my soul is at rest; I am at peace... I am ready and watchful for His coming, and He is here with me, and I am in His light. Why do I think I may soon depart?

He remains, I know. He is faithful. But I, on the other hand, am weak and frequently led astray. May He give us strength, brothers, sisters, and may we work with Him.

II

Confession this evening has been particularly strong; the priest shoots arrows into my soul, turning my eyes unmistakably upon my pride. How I place myself in the stead of God! The judgment that is so much a part of my soul. How I protest at every humiliation, at everything that goes wrong in my day... blind entirely to the hand of God attempting to rouse me from my swollen state by His chastisements. How I rebel.

How can it be that I have come from such marvelous understanding of the beauty, the joy of suffering, some two years ago, to this rebellious state, wherein the sweet cross of Christ cannot make entry into my soul? Why do I not thank God for His blessed persecutions?

And why do I not thank Him for His mercy? Why do I fail to see the wretch I am and praise Him for His grace, His salvation, that stands me on my feet? Why indeed do I seek to build myself up, as if I could make my own perfection, instead of humbling myself in the sight of the Almighty?

O Lord, forgive me.

III

All my life I have been in a prison
Of concupiscence come from original sin.
Sexual sin is the source of the lie,
Which is buoyed up by my selfish pride.
Laziness takes all strength from me,
And I have not the love to set myself free.
So in anxiety I sit
Without the wisdom to see any of this.

As I come from Confession and Eucharist, I
pray upon my rosary for release, for myself and for
all needy souls. Jesus has come to set prisoners
free; His light will banish the darkness, His blood
will cleanse sin – His presence will bring you
peace.

To this dark prison, come with the key, my
Lord, my God. Amen.

IV

Judge not. How difficult it is. When one's eyes and heart and soul are so poisoned by pride. Everyone he looks at is subject to his condescension, to his presumptuous eye. And how this kills our Savior, who has died for all our sins.

Shall I be a judge of the law? Shall I take into my hands the role of Christ? Is there a greater sin than to think I can look into a man's heart, and, finding that which is not to my approval, invoke his condemnation in my heart, in the words whispered under my breath – or even aloud.

There is no more miserable soul than this, none so in need of God's mercy – none so far from His mercy. What shall take me from this state but His blood, but His grace? and yet how blind my eyes are to the light of His face.

The Lord is entirely hidden from the proud soul... Break my pride, O Lord! Let me judge not, that I not be so severely judged. I beg you, let me not exalt myself. (O sweet humility, come to me.)

V

Here at Holy Face Monastery on the feast of St. Jude, I have just come from Confession and praying my penance, anointed with oil while kneeling before a statue of the saint in this blessed chapel.

This past week St. Paul commiserated, “Who shall set me free?” free from the bondage of sin, free from doing what our wills do not desire – free from the flesh that we might live in the Spirit... and, of course, the answer is to praise the grace and glory of Jesus our Savior.

The priest mentions this passage of Scripture in my Confession, calls me to sing to the Lord, to thus give praise to Him in joy, that the inner man might be cleansed, healed of its wounds of memory.

O Lord, by the intercession of St. Jude, may it be so that my confusion finally be cleared and that I walk upright in your presence. May I dwell indeed in the holy light of your face, led by your Spirit alone.

Thank you for forgiving my sins!

VI

I cannot say how beautifully the priest speaks in his homily of God's love, even as I have come from Confession of my own lack of love and forgiveness, and my seemingly intransigent pride.

He says we must indeed love ourselves, a phrase I would tend to scoff at, seeing it as an excuse for sin, but which really cannot be argued with – for we *are* made in the image of God, God loves *us*, and we are called to love others *as God loves us*, and as we love ourselves. If we do not have the sense of God's love for us in our hearts, if we do not love ourselves, what will our love of others be like?

I have no love in my heart. I have seen it quite clearly. As the Pharisees were blinded by their pride, unable to see the love of God standing before them in the Person of Jesus, I am unable to love because of the pride which robs me even of any possibility of love. I am just so blind, blinded by my own knowledge, which puffs me up as it has them.

And I cannot accept the Lord's forgiveness, cannot accept His love. In tears I cry out for what my sins would force Him to endure in my stead. And how can I? Yet I must... Yet I must.

VII

Silence. It is a silent tongue I need. It is a silent tongue I lack.

Quiet. In quiet I find my soul. But how infrequently this quiet is with me.

Eternally. Eternally I should be in the LORD's presence, speaking His NAME... with a quiet tongue.

But I do not. I forget. I become lost. I find myself confused. For there is no silence in which to hear God speak. And so, from where do I find my direction?

And thus the cross do I shun, not knowing its sweet presence upon my back, piercing my soul... Who am I without the Lord?

I am no one.

VIII

Oh how the tongue does wag! How the mouth does run, unchecked in its foolishness. How such pride escapes unnoticed; how in the mire I sink.

I can't seem to control my speech, my breath, my spirit... Recollection is gone before I open my eyes, and I but drift down into empty thought, empty words (even when alone).

How shall this pride be broken, this foolishness? When will I no longer have need to confess?

I must trust in His mercy, His forgiveness. It is there, I know it. Keeping from it, we keep from heaven, we keep from grace. It is what keeps us in this place. The souls in purgatory suffer because they cannot believe in the mercy of Christ.

But He does offer it, freely. And I do accept it, but not completely, not so readily as He provides. Oh what a struggle this is! To break our pride, to allow Him in – to accept His infinite grace and forgiveness. How can we be worthy? How, indeed? It seems impossible. But freedom is with Him, and He would have it be with us.

IX

There is a certain light when I confess, when I bare my soul. I can hear the priest listening; the Spirit is present in truth. And the grace of God brings light.

And this is true every time, regardless of the priest. The Lord would ever use him to wash my sins away. And I let them go. But in my impatience they return.

I pray they not make their home in me. Let them pass through on their perilous journey. I want nothing to do with such company.

O Lord, let your light be eternal. Let darkness not come back to me.

Oh to be so free!

X

You are no different than anyone else. You are no different than anyone else. You are worse in certain ways. Worse in certain ways. How difficult, how difficult to remember. But what a blessing to know this truth.

Humility is such a great grace. It gives us breath, gives us life. It enables us to be who we are, to fulfill our call: to be a child in God's sight.

But I am so certain that I am better than everyone else, how can I see my pride? For to me it is not pride; it is simply fact that I am far better. And so, how can I see my blindness? How shall I be saved from this wretched state?

Only by the cross, only with it upon my shoulder, will I be purged of such sin, will I be able to remember who I am – and who the Lord calls me to be.

XI

My body is to be a house of prayer. A temple of the Lord He would make me. But the sacrifice I offer is too often empty: no incense rises up from this altar.

If the temple sleeps, can it be effective? And if no prayer rises from the temple, what is the fate of the Body of Christ – and of the world? Will not the earth spin out of place? And so, who is to blame for the state of the Church, for the condition into which the world has fallen?

If the prayerful soul is dead, there can be no life in the body.

XII

Do you think you will ever be as free as you are now upon confessing your sins? Do you think the Lord's purity and light will ever make its home with you, become you, your blood, your mind...?

I want to say something, but the words seem short of its unspeakable beauty... this love, this light... it's encompassing... and I stutter in wonder, rapt by the piercing arrows in my soul... my tongue still but seeking to speak, searching for words, for sounds... but only light... only love – love so glorious (and now tears come). There we shall meet, my friend, in heaven... I am sure; I can see... it comes.

Though now I seem to babble, Advent is here. The day is upon us. (I want to tell you that my heart loves, your heart, your heart... Jesus, in you. Jesus, the kingdom comes. Let us be there, with you. I...)

You will be as free as you are now upon confessing your sins.

XIII

How do we give all things to God (as He has given all things to us, including Himself)? How do we believe in Him, trust in Him, setting our hearts on heaven, and nothing else? How do we love Him as He has loved us?

Help me, Lord, to give all things to you, to trust in you, to believe in you. Do not let the darkness overcome my limited vision, but bring your light, your encompassing light, to dispel all anxiety, all fear... all foolish wandering from you, our Rock, our Redeemer, our Lord – our God. For you *are* God, and with you, what do we need? You take care of all, if we but believe, if we but love.

I am yours, and all I have. Teach me your ways, day to day. Alleluia.

XIV

Prayer. Prayer is the answer; it is our only recourse, our means to trusting in the Lord: the one needful thing, it is what brings us into God's presence, which is where we must be, where we must remain.

Apart from God nothing is of worth, and without prayer we do not know Him, are far from Him. We must communicate with the Lord, pray to Him; only this shows our trust in Him: that He is near, that He loves us, that He wishes to save us – that He desires us to depend on Him, for how He wishes to bless us!

O Lord, let me remain in your presence. Let me open my mouth and speak with you. Let me call out to you in my sin, that you might enter into my day, that your Spirit might come upon my soul to save me from darkness and keep me in your eternal light, in your presence.

I love you. Teach me love, who am so blinded by selfishness.

Conclusion

God have pity on the man who listens to the whisperings of the devil preying on his pride, convincing him to contravene the laws of God and the promptings of his own conscience. He could only be so blinded by believing insinuations the evil one persuades him are true; as he closes his eyes to what is otherwise plain as day, what shall he not stoop to put faith in? And so, how shall he be redeemed, released from such convoluted trappings?

What is right is right and what is wrong is wrong. This keep always in mind. There needs no vision or dream to lead a soul to such simple conclusion. The guidance of the Church and common sense quite suffice. But how can the proud soul hear this humble advice? Let him be mortified.

Obedience is bliss. Only the cross... always the cross... No other path – nothing of our own making. Let all else die. Tear down the walls supporting the soul's inflated pride. Do only what is right.

In the End

Incidental blessing. Incidental blessing is all I receive, for I am but an instrument used by the Lord.

What honor is there for the pen with which the writer composes? There is none. Except that he is held by the hand of the Author, and so cannot but be touched by His light.