

Wisdom Of The WORD

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**“The Word of God on High
is the fountain of Wisdom
and Her ways are everlasting.”**

Sirach 1:5

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1. OPENING WORDS

(1) As I begin this writing, it is the Solemnity of the Birth of St. John the Baptist, and in the Office of Readings St. Augustine concludes his sermon: “John was a voice that lasted only for a time; Christ, the Word in the beginning, is eternal.” Jesus is the Word of words, the Word that speaks beyond all words, the Word that is one with the Father, whose NAME is Silence itself, a Silence that speaks in all words through the power of the Spirit. He is the WORD made flesh and dwells among us, speaking as only He can, with a Wisdom only He owns.

(2) And so His words and, indeed, all of Scripture is pregnant with meaning, meaning that goes far beyond the surface. As the Saints have told us, Scripture is an undrainable ocean and a mine wherein infinite treasures may be discovered, if one seeks them with a mind open to the Wisdom of God, the Wisdom of the WORD. In this work I pray to be blessed to communicate some of that holy Wisdom known only in the Spirit of God, to unearth some of the treasure the LORD offers forth in His Word.

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a. YHWH

(3) I think I should mention first the sign of Wisdom I find in my own life. There is something like a flame fanned by the Holy Spirit when I breathe God's holy NAME (YHWH), His Silent WORD. St. Teresa of Avila believed the soul to be at the top of the head, and perhaps this is what I sense in my skull, especially when I breathe in the first two letters of the Tetragrammaton ("YH"). The wind of the Spirit goes directly into my head, to the top center of my skull, and, as I say, seems to light a flame in my mind. And my eyes are opened wide. And I see beyond sight.

(4) I think this is as it was at the beginning of time, when there was only the wind of the Spirit moving upon the waters... I think this is where the prophet goes. I believe the LORD takes him to the beginning of time, to the moment when He first spoke (and there was Light) so he can speak His words, distracted by nothing of this world. It seems to me this is where Wisdom lies, and whence the Word of God comes - and where we should be, especially when reading His Word.

(5) I think it is most important to remember that "God is Spirit," and He wishes us to be as He is. There may be a surface meaning to His Word, and that surface meaning may have significant value... but we must remember

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that “the flesh is of no avail,” that the Spirit is everything, and that anything that does not lead us to the Spirit is of no worth. We cannot ignore the surface meaning any more than we can remove ourselves from our skin - but it is not the skin that is of ultimate significance, and it should be ultimate meaning and blessing we seek. This, indeed, is what the LORD wants for us; He knows it is all that matters.

b. EXAMPLES

(6) I have written elsewhere on the Finding in the Temple (addendum to *Christian Vision of the Old Testament*), but I will revisit it here because it is a profound example of what I have been saying. The boy Jesus has just been astounding the leaders of the temple with His probing and pregnant questions, and then He turns to His Mother (who is on her knees before Him in great anxiety at the fear of having lost Him) and says: “Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s House?” Now it is true it is in the house of God she has finally found Him... but He is saying much more than, *Why didn’t you look for me here?* or even, *I have work to do.* He is speaking to the soul of His Blessed Mother (who “ponder(s) all these things in her heart” and so is full of Wisdom), astounding her as He assures her that He is always present in her, for she is the Tabernacle of God, the Ark of the New

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Covenant. And He dwells in each of us as in a temple as well. (And so, why should *we* be afraid?)

(7) It is the same with Mary's Visitation to Elizabeth. Does she go to her kinswoman just to help her in her pregnancy? Is this all there is to the Visitation? One can safely assume that Elizabeth has plenty of such assistance. Zechariah is a priest of the temple and there must be many women among her neighbors - like those who later come to celebrate John's circumcision, ready to name him Zechariah - who would provide care to Elizabeth as needed. Not to say Mary does not help with these needs as well... but upon the Annunciation, Mary is compelled in overwhelming joy to go in great haste to the hill country because she has heard that her greatest prayer has been answered: Elizabeth is with child! It is Love itself that moves her, the Love of God; and it is the Love of God she brings to Elizabeth.

(8) Perhaps what I am seeking to explicate can best be seen in the story of Martha and Mary. Is what Martha does all there is to the Faith? Is it of prime importance? We know by our Lord's own words that this is not so. He does not minimize the significance of hospitality (and Mary and Jesus may well pitch in with Martha following this scene), but Jesus makes clear that "Mary has chosen the better part," what really matters. She sits at His feet

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filled with the Spirit as she listens to the teaching of her Savior, and she is indeed filled with the Word of God, her heart set on the Spirit, not the flesh. This is the “one thing necessary.” May we all seek the Spirit of God.

(9) Another good illustration of meaning that goes beyond the surface - beyond, if you will, the earthly - is Jesus’ parable of the man who tears down his barns to build larger ones so he can store up his goods and enjoy the rest of his life. Of course, Jesus would not want us to hoard possessions and is always teaching us not to focus on the things of this world but to trust in Him for our needs... but, again, the earthly is not the Lord’s principal concern. And so I believe in this parable is also a warning not to be self-satisfied with our *spiritual* works, to store things up, as it were, and presume we have done our share. For each day our souls are required of us, always we must do the LORD’s will - we cannot sit back and count our achievements, lest we be denied entrance to God’s Kingdom, like those who cried, “Lord, Lord.”

(10) And lest we think the Wisdom of the Word applies only to the New Testament, let us put forth an example of this spiritual sense from the Old, though perhaps it is a fairly obvious one. When the LORD finally speaks to Job at the end of the book bearing his name, He makes clear His power in part by declaring His

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Creation of the sea in all its strength and majesty, and that it is He who sets its limits. This is meant to inspire awe in Job and indicate to him how little he knows of the LORD. But we should also see that when He says to the sea, “Here shall your proud waves be stilled,” it is not just to the sea YHWH speaks, but to Job himself, telling him that he, too, has reached his limit in the argument he presents of his innocence. And Job learns his lesson and puts his hand over his mouth, knowing there is nothing he can say before the LORD. Job is as the sea.

(11) And should we not see in the destruction of Jerusalem a foreshadowing, an image, of the crucifixion of our Lord - the burning of the temple and all the houses, the tearing down of the wall as they “strike with hatchet and pickaxe”...? Jesus is the Temple, the true Temple, that is later destroyed, this time by His own people - though we should say it was the sin of His people that caused the destruction of the temple of Old as well. And of course we know it is the sins of us *all* that have crucified the Christ, not just those of the Jews. Indeed, “He was pierced for our offenses.” The walls of this Temple are also torn down, torn to shreds by the whips and the thorns. But in three days this Temple is restored, while that of the Old is forever lost.

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c. THE SWORD

(12) And shall I speak of the sword, the sword that pierces the soul of the prophet, even as it has pierced Our Lady and Our Lord? This sword comes to the prophet, who speaks for the LORD, to see that he bleeds for the sake of the Truth; for the Word of God cannot be separated from the crucifixion of Jesus, from His death upon the Cross. His holy blood must course through the veins of the prophet, or there shall be no Truth: the wood of the Cross holds the Truth upon its limbs. And so we should not be afraid to bleed with Jesus, to know His holy blood beating in our hearts and flowing in our veins, nor of the nails that pierce our hands... or the sword that pierces our souls as we read the Word of God.

(13) Surrender. The LORD calls us but to surrender, to surrender to Him and to His Word, that we might listen, that we might hear Him speaking to our hearts, acting upon our souls as the Spirit breathes within us. All His teaching points us to union with His Passion, with His obedience to the will of the Father, even as it leads to the Cross, to the death of our will as it is brought alive by His own. And this surrender is known in His holy NAME (YHWH), for by it He leaves us speechless, by it He leaves us without words, and without our corrupted will. Silent before Him let us remain, allowing Him to act

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upon us and bring us to glory by a path only He
knows.

2. SCRIPTURE AND FAITH

(14) Holy Scripture is written by God, spoken by God through His holy prophets, by His holy will. The Bible is not as any other book, even those by the greatest of Saints. As inspired and as inspirational as they may be, they are not the WORD of God. And though they contain wisdom and are beneficial for the edification of our souls... they fall short of the inerrancy of Holy Scripture. And though the Scriptures themselves will no longer be needed when God's Wisdom is all that is, when we live fully in His WORD, one with Him in His Kingdom - these words carry His Wisdom as no others. Let us read them in this Light.

(15) What we need most is faith as of Mary, for without faith there is no light, and so we are blind; and without a profound faith, like that of the Blessed Mother, we shall never approach the LORD or understand Him. He calls us to trust in Him, to believe beyond our senses, beyond our rational mind. Mary had made a vow of virginity - that is evident from her response to the Angel at the Annunciation, that she had *no man* (even though she was betrothed to Joseph). Yet when called by God to marry Joseph, she accepted, not knowing why a

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virgin would be called to marriage. Who could understand that? Yet her trust in the LORD proved wise, and fruitful, because she would become the Mother of God. Indeed, the LORD's ways are not our ways, and we must follow His way.

(16) And faith must be matched by love. Mary had an equal measure of love, a love as divine as her faith, for she could not but love, could not but think of others before herself and lay down her life as well. She did this, I believe, in her prayer for her barren kinswoman Elizabeth, whom she likely encountered weeping as Hannah in the temple. Her heart could not but go out to her, and she could not but offer her own fertility - making her vow of virginity - for Elizabeth to conceive a child. And she believed her prayer would be answered, as impossible as it may have seemed. Love and faith are what buoy us up to the level of our God, to dwell in His Spirit. May we have both as we approach His Word.

a. PARABLES

(17) We know that Jesus often spoke in parables, in a figurative language that was just as often misunderstood by His hearers. In fact, He has told us that He did so intentionally, that His hearers might not understand and be convicted and converted. So many have "eyes

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to see but do not see and ears to hear but do not hear.” This is the condition of man in his fallen state, so such blindness affects us all. But we must move away from such darkness of mind, a darkness the apostles showed in a remarkable way when our Lord warned them against the leaven (the pride) of the Pharisees: they thought He was chastising them for forgetting to bring bread!

(18) One might ask how they could be so dumb, but do we not all display similar stupidity at times... and are not the dumbest among us often those who (like the Pharisees) should be the sharpest - like those who compose Biblical commentaries? (I have tried to witness to the prevalence of this phenomenon in the book *Turn and Become like Children*.) So many cannot see beyond the nose on their face, or even the nose itself! Wisdom. It is only the Wisdom of God that can open our eyes, else we shall indeed remain blind, however many degrees we may have. And to receive such Wisdom we must indeed become as children, obedient to the Father with hearts made pure before Him. Filthy glass lets in no light.

(19) Yes, we must “pour new wine into new wineskins,” for though the most obvious meaning of Jesus’ word regarding fasting is that His New Covenant subsumes the Old and so cannot be beholden to it, it must also be clear that we must be the new wineskins into which

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He, as the new wine, is poured; and we cannot hear or accept His Word if there is any corruption in us, if there is any obstinacy in us refusing to purify our hearts as necessary. We shall remain paralyzed by sin and deaf to the Word that would heal us, that would raise us up, if we do not become those new wineskins, if we have not hearts ready to be filled with His Wisdom and grace.

b. SPIRITUAL HEALING

(20) Here we have touched upon another deeper meaning to the Lord's actions, and to our own condition. There may be those among us who are physically paralyzed, as there were in Jesus' time - those who cannot walk, those who cannot talk... those who suffer from some physical malady that prevents them from living an active life. And it is a blessing when these handicaps are cured and our bodies are made whole. Praise God. But the paralysis which Jesus comes to heal is that which besets us because of sin, as He has made evident in the gospels. It is this paralysis that really harms us, for it may become an eternal condition, not one that will disappear with the death of the body.

(21) And what do we do when we come upon apparent contradictions in the Word of God? If we are fraught with sin and lacking faith, we will find fault with the Bible rather

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than ourselves. If we cannot resolve these questions, our faith is insufficient for the Kingdom. For how can a virgin give birth, or how can God become Man....? We will never fathom these mysteries if we are thrown (as many commentators are) by one evangelist saying Jesus' Sermon took place on a mountain while another says it was a plain. If confused by a contradiction like this, which has a simple explanation - the Mount of Beatitudes has a long stretch of level ground - how will we ever approach the ineffable LORD?

(22) We must ALWAYS remember we cannot put our finger on God, we cannot limit His infinite Wisdom. His ways are indeed FAR above our own - all we can do is be obedient to His Word, and then we might approach Him. As ineffable as His Silent NAME is the Wisdom of our eternal God. It indeed may say two things that appear to our mortal minds to be utterly contradictory, but, if we are wise, we may find that it is these contradictions that hold the greatest Truth. We fall so far short of comprehending the LORD (YHWH), and move only further away as we try to do so with mere rationality. His glory shines eternally while our corrupted souls wallow in the mire.

(23) "Raise your minds to think of things that are above," do not dwell upon the things of the earth or be swallowed by them. Lift your hearts to praise God's NAME and your eyes to

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look upon His glory! Why should you sink in the mire? Why should you lose yourself in doubt and dwell in darkness? Have Faith. Seek Wisdom. Believe in the Word of the LORD and you will walk in Light, and you will know the Truth, and the Truth will set you free... free from all doubt, free from all fear, free from all the darkness of sin and error. Do not put the LORD and His Word to the test - but believe and you will be healed, and you will see the Light of His Day (and it will illumine your day, and your mind).

(24) If He tells you to die to yourself that you might live, do not question His Wisdom - seek the ways in which you may leave the things of this world and your own desires aside, and you will know the joy of drawing closer to God and His Kingdom. Do not scoff at His declaration that the humble are exalted or be confused by it. Humble yourself before Him and He will lift you up and you will know the Truth of His words and that He desires only what is best for you, what you yourself would desire most, if only you had eyes to see. We must die. Praise God that He will take our lives and all the darkness therein... Praise Him for this grace! But praise Him most for the Life He instills in us thereby.

(25) Paul has told us that "eye has not seen, ear has not heard, what God has prepared for those who love Him" with all their heart,

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mind, soul, and strength, those who set aside all else and find that nothing but Jesus matters, that our entire focus should simply be upon Him. As we approach this Truth, as we approach His Presence, we begin to see what is beyond our sight; we begin to hear His Silent Word speaking to our heart - we approach union with Him, which is all we should desire. It is only the Wisdom of God, the Wisdom of the Spirit, that teaches us this Truth, that reveals His Presence to our poor souls. By the Spirit we see what cannot be seen: we see the LORD high up and seated on a Throne.

(26) And how do we approach His Presence? Today is the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, the Queen of Contemplation, and by a marvelous stroke of providence the Office of Readings yesterday spoke of Elijah's conquering the prophets of Baal on Carmel, and today of his experience of the Presence of God on Mount Horeb. He found the LORD in the *still, small voice* (not in strong wind or earthquake or fire)... And this voice is the speaking of God's Holy NAME, even as God's NAME was revealed to Moses on this same mountain. I cannot help but come back to the Tetragrammaton (YHWH), the Silent NAME of the LORD... maybe because it is so forgotten, but principally because it serves so well to bring us into His Presence.

(27) And if we can remember His NAME as He has commanded us, if we can speak His

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Silence, silencing ourselves both in word and thought, both in our bodies and in our hearts... if we can open our mouths and remain quiet, dying to ourselves as we open ourselves up to the LORD in these simple letters... we may come more readily into His Divine Presence. And then we will have a firm foundation on which to stand for our spiritual lives; then we will have a place from which to begin to understand God's Word, for then we will be close to Him whose Word we hear, whose Word we read. Apart from this central point, we may get lost.

3. PASSAGES

With His NAME breathing in our souls, illuminating our minds, let us seek deeper meaning in specific Scripture passages...

a. SUFFERING AND LIGHT

(28) **“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”** The LORD has said He will not abandon His people; repeatedly He assures us of His presence with the just, with His chosen ones. And yet so many suffer, so many have been martyred - so many seem abandoned. Everyone has some tragedy in their life, some more than others, wherein it seems God has left them. The Son of God Himself expressed this

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sense of abandonment on the Cross. And yet we know that Jesus was not forsaken by His Father... and if it has seemed so, it is but to show us that it is *not* so. For He has been raised from the dead; He lives and reigns eternally in Heaven. Perhaps we would do best to remember that this is not our world. And He is with us in all suffering, and in death.

(29) **“Our ruin is complete.”** But it is not just the suffering innocent for whom Jesus has died and been raised, for whom He has seemed abandoned by the Father... It is most especially for sinners, as He has repeatedly made clear in the Gospels (and as He told St. Faustina). So when we hear of the plaintive chant sung by the wicked that their ruin is complete, we should know this “ruin” also the Lord takes upon Himself, that even the worst of sinners may find salvation, may find release from their burden. For all our burdens the Lord would carry; His mercy is for all who would be washed in the blood of Christ, all who seek forgiveness from the Most High God. For He would see all of us raised to the Kingdom.

(30) As the prophet Micah tells us, “**The Lord delights in clemency,**” a wonderful expression, and so true. For God is love, and the way we humans know the love of God is by His mercy; for if we are anything, we are all sinners, and so His love is revealed to us in His mercy, in His forgiveness of our sins... in our

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being washed clean by the blood of Christ, by Y'shua, whose very Name means "God Saves" - for Jesus brings us the cleansing waters of YHWH. And truly, it is in this the LORD delights, for He is love and wishes only to share that love with His creatures, with His sons and daughters, indeed as a father loves his children, that we might become "brother and sister and mother" to the Lord Jesus. O glorious God, draw us all up to where you are, by your grace and mercy!

(31) "**Then the LORD extended His hand and touched my mouth, saying, 'See, I place my words in your mouth!'**" Could it be any more obvious that the prophet speaks for God and not himself? Here Jeremiah's mouth is touched by YHWH; elsewhere Ezekiel and John eat scrolls with the LORD's words on them, and Isaiah has his mouth touched by an ember from the altar of Heaven. And yet there are those 'scholars' who say that the prophet is speaking from his imagination or his own thoughts and desires, despite Peter telling us no prophecy comes by man's willing it. The prophet speaks the Word of God! When Scripture says, "Thus says the LORD," it means, "Thus says the LORD"! Do not fail to understand this or you will be terribly lost to Truth, and to God.

(32) "**If it dies, it bears much fruit.**" You must know that you are called to die. Jesus was born to die, to lay down His life for us on the

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Cross, and we too are led to such sacrifice of our lives. Though our ultimate home and goal is union with God in the glory of Heaven, singing His praises around His throne... it is union with His death that is our immediate call. Do you know this? Can you remember this? Can you accept this and live this? You cannot. You cannot, except by the grace the LORD offers when you turn to Him in prayer and penance and truly desire only to die with His Son. Then what freedom you will know! Then what joy will come. For His burden is light (since He carries it with you and for you) and indeed leads to glory.

(33) The prophet Jeremiah tells us, "**They shall no longer say, 'The ark of the covenant of the LORD.' It shall not come to mind, or be remembered.**" And indeed in his own time it is lost and the temple destroyed... and the temple is destroyed permanently in a few hundred years. Yet he says that all will be gathered at Jerusalem. What is this Jerusalem? The city of Jerusalem will also be destroyed, so the prophet speaks not of earthly things, of the earthly town - He prophesies the New Jerusalem, and I would say in a particular way Mary, the Mother of God, who becomes the new Ark of the Covenant where the LORD dwells, and who is Mother of the New Jerusalem, the Gate of Heaven, the Church. All are called now into the blessed confines of Holy Mother Church.

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(34) **“I am the resurrection and the life,”** says the Lord to Martha at the tomb of Lazarus. He has risen and we rise with Him; the Father is Life itself and so is He. But it is not just at the end of time that we rise from the dead, for Martha states this and Jesus corrects her, clarifies for her that the life of God that we will all share is present now, is available to us now – it stands before her at her brother’s tomb. And His raising Lazarus is just a sign of this eternal life that is in our midst this day. O Lord, how can we grasp the blessed gift of life you offer to us, which you long to share with us? How can we know that even now we are alive in you, and shall never die? Grant us the grace and wisdom, Lord; grant us the grace and wisdom to hear your words and receive your life.

(35) **“Bring forth the precious without the vile,”** the LORD instructs Jeremiah, for our hearts should not be fields of both weeds and wheat, but while there is time we should repent of the evil that remains within us... for soon there will be no time to repent and the sin within us will become hardened as clay in a kiln. Yes, even the prophets have to watch and fight against inclination to sin, for temptation is with us always on this earth. And as the great servant Moses failed to show the sanctity of the LORD because of his anger toward the people and their persistent rebelliousness, so Jeremiah is overcome by indignation at their hardness of

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heart. But never can we judge, never condemn - we must be as Jesus on the Cross, by God's grace offering mercy even to those who crucify us.

(36) **"In the world you will have tribulation..."** The prophets were surrounded by their persecutors, David was surrounded by his persecutors, the apostles were surrounded by their persecutors... Jesus was surrounded by His persecutors. This world is a world of persecution where evil surrounds all those who would walk in the path of righteousness, following the Lord in His Way. There are temptations from within and evils from without - this is simply the way it is in this world of darkness. But Jesus brings His light to all those who suffer for His sake. As He did for the prophets and David and the apostles, He does so even today for His disciples and prophets. And His protection is greater than any persecution, even for those who are martyred in His Name. There is no dimming His light, which conquers all, even death.

(37) **"Who appointed me judge or arbiter over you?"** Jesus asks the man who calls out to Him requesting He tell his brother to give him his share of their inheritance. This has always seemed to me a petty thing to bring to the Lord, but we must realize the man likely had a just case, and that this would have been something that would have been brought to Moses to

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resolve. So it is not as petty as it seems. Would it not be appropriate for the New Moses to address? Knowing this, we see just how far Jesus is calling us from our old way of thinking to His new Way - calling us beyond the physical, the material, to the spiritual. And we are reminded how severe He can be in this call, as elsewhere He has said we must love Him above mother and father and anything of this world. He is calling us to Himself, to God, and that is not an easy thing to discover.

(38) **“Please, Lord, for even the dogs eat the scraps that fall from the table of their masters.”** This plea by the Canaanite woman begging for the healing of her daughter is one of the most poignant, one of the most beautiful verses in all of Scripture. It cannot help but bring a tear to the eye. It is infused with a truth most would seek to turn their faces from, but not this woman. She recognizes she is not of the Chosen people, that she is of a race that worships a false, if not demonic god, and that the wicked practices of her people isolate her from God and His love. She is not unlike all of us. For we are all sinners, of a sinful people (as Isaiah states) and greatly in need of God’s mercy. And how should we come to Him but on our knees, recognizing our state, that by such truth, by such a just posture we might be saved? Bless you, woman, and your faith. For it shows us the way.

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(39) **“You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do.”** Isn’t this the heart of the problem, the source of the questions that trouble men’s souls? Peter desires to save Jesus from His Passion, from torture and death at the hands of fierce bulls. Wouldn’t that be the thought of every one of us, that the most innocent person that has ever lived should not have to suffer, and to suffer so grievously, more grievously than imaginable? And yet Jesus calls Peter “Satan” for thinking as He does. Does this not mean we are thinking as Satan, too, when we question why the innocent have to suffer? Oh how the Lord calls us to His Kingdom and His way of thinking and being, to acceptance of His will above all. And how hard it is, that road that leads to eternal life. What can we do but accept our cross as Jesus has, knowing it leads to glory?

(40) **“Take up your cross and follow me.”** The Lord indeed calls us to take up our cross, the cross He provides us, the light cross – the cross that leads to glory. And if we do not take up His cross, we end up making our own cross, a heavy cross, a burdensome cross, a cross wrought in pride – a cross wrought in sin. What foolishness man is subject to! For the cross we make turns our vision only upon ourselves and the troubles we make by our disobedience; we cannot see beyond them as we long to be free of them. But we can only be free

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of such troubles by taking up the Cross of Christ, the Cross which turns our vision outward toward God and others and so frees us from the bonds of our own ego, of our own pride and sin. Kick not against the goad.

(41) **“The glory of the LORD filled the tent”** in the desert, filled the temple in Jerusalem, and it fills our souls when we receive the Blessed Sacrament; for as we receive the LORD into our very being, into our very bodies, we indeed become temples of the Holy Spirit, temples of God, as was our Blessed Mother in a preeminent way. Do we know the glory that is upon us and within us as baptized Christians living in a state of grace and receiving the Body and Blood of Jesus, the Son of God and God Himself? How can we? For if this holy fire were truly known to us, we could not bear it in these earthen vessels. But praise God that He transforms these poor vessels into His temples with our barely knowing what is happening day to day, maturing as the wheat of the field from seed to full growth in the Spirit.

(42) **“Turn and become like children.”** Ahh the child! Upon my conversion, I found no better image, no better thing to hold on to than the heart of the child, and the remembrance of being a child. And it seems Jesus has found it useful as well. For He sets a child in the midst of the apostles and calls them to be like this innocent, humble creature. Repeatedly He tells

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us we must be as children to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. What is more necessary than innocence and purity of heart? The image of the child is not perfect, for children are not perfect, but it is something every man can relate to, a call everyone can hear and understand... and so our Lord presents it to us, that we might indeed see and understand, and turn and become like children. May it be so.

(43) Today is the **Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary** body and soul into Heaven, and I wonder why others wonder, or rather question, the truth of this teaching, especially those who consider themselves Bible-believing Christians, since there is undoubtedly precedent for such an event. And so, why indeed should it be disbelieved on its face? We read in the first pages of Holy Scripture that Enoch was taken up and seen no more; and of course Elijah was taken to Heaven in most dramatic fashion by a chariot of fire (and they could not find his body). It is indicated, too, that Moses was likewise assumed, since Scripture tells us "no one knows the place of his burial to this day," and he appeared with Elijah at the Transfiguration. And so, why should it be difficult to believe the Blessed Mother of our Divine Lord would be taken similarly by the One who prepared her for such a preeminent call?

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And will not all who believe by the grace of God be present one day in the Kingdom?

(44) **“Full of Grace.”** And how can a Christian question the sinless nature of the Virgin Mary? Would not the LORD God properly prepare a person, a woman, for her call to give birth to His Son? Can the perfect God be born of sin? And if there remains any doubt about Mary’s sinless nature, one need only look at what the Archangel Gabriel, who stands in the Presence of Almighty God at all times, said of her, the title he gave her when he called her to be the Mother of the Christ: *Full of Grace*. If one is full of grace, filled with the presence of God by His holy will, is there any room for sin to make its home? Grace and sin are as exclusive as God and the devil. She who is full of grace can have no sin in her.

(45) **“Sell everything.”** Yes, we must sell everything to find God, to walk with Jesus. For some of us that is material goods that weigh us down; for others it is our pride that must be sold, must be given away and sought no more... or it could be any number of sins or goods that possess our souls and block the light of Christ from entering our hearts and taking possession of us, that we might be free of whatever enslaves us. The man in the gospel was possessed by his riches, attached to the wealth he had gathered in this world, and sadly become defined by it, so much so he could not see how

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to live without it, how thus to approach Christ. But each of us has that which possesses and defines and limits us from believing and answering the call of Christ. May God give us the faith to rid ourselves of it.

(46) **“The first will be last.”** In one of His parables Jesus speaks of a landowner who goes out all times of day, including the last hour, to hire workers for his vineyard. At the end of the day all are paid the same, so those hired first complain. Jesus tells this parable to His disciples, to those who are called first, to “endure the heat of the day.” And should they complain that others are gifted with the Kingdom as well, even if they must stand at the door and usher all others in before they themselves can enter - even if those who convert last minute are given the same as them? Would such complaint not show ingratitude to the Lord who calls them to such a special mission, who gifts them so greatly to do His work, as difficult as that work might be? Would they rather have frittered most of their lives away? We should see it as a blessing to suffer with Christ.

(47) **“The last will be first.”** We must be of the mind of deserving and desiring to be the last of all. Then we will be blessed, for then we will be like Jesus, who suffers and dies for all yet is the first in the Kingdom. We must somehow come to realize the Cross is the

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greatest blessing we could have, that humility is a grace, that serving others, bearing the heat of the day with the Lord, should be an absolute joy. For as Jesus puts Himself last though He is first, we will discover for ourselves the same Truth: in the Cross we will find our glory, as St. Rose of Lima emphasizes so well in the Office of Readings for this her feast day. We must put ourselves last, as have all the Saints, as has our Lord, and then we will know the glory of God. Alleluia!

(48) Paul expresses this well in his (1st) letter to the Corinthians: “**As I see it, God has put us apostles at the end of the line, like men doomed to die in the arena,**” most graphically calling Christ’s disciples “the scum of all.” And he chastises those who are honored by the world even as it persecutes those who follow Jesus. This leaves little room for excuse or misunderstanding of the call we have as Christians to be the last of all, *at the end of the line*, rather than prospering in the ways of the world. And so, suffering should not come to us as a stranger we do not know and refuse to welcome. We should not be bewildered by it but give it to the Lord, accepting our cross.

(49) Simeon declared to Mary, “**A sword will pierce your heart,**” the apostles were all martyred (save John), and every Christian is indeed called to carry his cross. This is as it is. How often the Lord has made clear in His Word

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that it is a narrow gate that leads to Heaven, and that the broad way leads to destruction. It is difficult to understand how this can be misunderstood when it is so obvious. But man is remarkably capable of blindness, of either not hearing what he does not want to hear or going along with the culture around him. And the culture around us is certainly averse to suffering, doing all it can to avoid it, including causing even greater misery - including the killing of the innocent.

(50) Today we commemorate the Martyrdom of St. John the Baptist, **“the voice of one crying out in the wilderness”** of this world, crying out the Word, preparing His path, crying out the Truth... and so suffering and dying at the hands of a wicked king. John the Baptist is clearly a prime example of the suffering that comes to the Christian soul: he is thrown in a dungeon and beheaded for speaking the truth. This is indeed what happens in the wilderness of this world to those who stand up for the Word. And so we must ask ourselves, are we walking in the way of the Lord, speaking His truth and living His Word? Are we suffering for His sake? If not, we best examine our lives and begin to seek the way He calls us, else we shall not know the healing wound of Christ - in the measure we suffer with Him, so shall we be consoled (as Paul has said).

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(51) Jesus asks Peter, “**Do you love me?**”

(3x) before calling him to follow Him in the laying down of his life for the Church. “Do you love me?” It is a question most particularly addressed to Peter, the Rock upon which Christ builds His Church, but it is a question posed by the Lord to every one of us. “Do you love me?” Will you lay down your life for Him? Are you willing to die for His sheep? If you love Him, you will indeed embrace the Cross, you will stretch forth your hands and let another take you where you would not go... you will indeed be ready to be crucified like the Lord, as was Peter. “Do you love me?” Listen to Him speak this word every day to your heart.

(52) Paul also tells us Christ crucified is “**the power of God and the wisdom of God.**” This is the Wisdom of which we speak here, not human wisdom, which is vain, but God’s Wisdom, which human wisdom cannot fathom. How can a crucified man show the power of God - what power is there in such indignity? It is opposite our thought, our understanding... yet it is true, and understood by those who have the mind of Christ, who have come *to see as God sees* - who have known the *weakness* of God working through them in power. “We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God,” who is God. Those without this Spirit can never understand Truth, or live it.

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(53) **“The wisdom of this world is foolishness in God’s eyes,”** Paul continues, and so we should become fools so as to be wise. Man’s thoughts, his “wisdom,” is so limited, is so blind. Therefore, since it can see only so far and thus fails and falls short of the Truth, wallowing in scenarios of its own making rather than subjecting itself to God, the Creator, and living in His reality, the only lasting, the only true reality... rather than subject himself to the LORD, rather than realize he is a creature and God the Creator, he foolishly assumes for himself the role of God. And truly there can be no greater foolishness than this, the consequences of which are terribly tragic, as instead of being set free by the truth, he enslaves himself to the works of his own hands, of his own mind, and is lost in darkness.

(54) **“He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness.”** Paul speaks here of the judgment of the LORD when we stand in His Light at the end of time, but I believe it also indicates the Light that is the Word of God. I was wondering how fathers have conveyed to their sons the story of their people - for example, how has it come down to this day that we know the story of the Passover, thousands of years later? How is this communicated? Of course it is by the word, spoken from generation to generation. The word brings light to minds. And we must see the significance of

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the word, and that Jesus is the Word, the Word (the Logos) made flesh, spoken by the (Silent) mouth of God, that He is even as the first Word of “Light” spoken at the beginning of Creation (before which was just the Spirit upon the waters) and that that Light is in every word that serves to bring the light of communication between souls. And in that same Light of God we shall all be judged.

(55) “**YHWH.**” But where do the words come from? Whence do they originate? From, as we have noted, the Spirit moving upon the waters, from God Himself... from the Silence. All words are founded in silence (though we do not hear that silence well); within all words speaks the NAME of God: YHWH... or they are not at all. Without this Light they have no meaning; losing this Silence they fall into chaos, they lose all sense of order and purpose... and become as the babbling tongues which spoke at the Tower where God confused men’s speech - man was thus rendered useless. He could not communicate and fell into disunity, fracturing across the globe. Remember the Silence as best you can, that all comes from God and returns to Him, or you will not escape the darkness.

(56) Yes, Jesus is “**the Light of the world,**” whether we know it or not. He is in the beginning with the Father, and the Father speaks this Word, His Son, and all comes to Light, all is seen - the invisible is made visible

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by the power of the Spirit. And we live in this Creation, we live in this Light – we are indeed the crown of God’s Creation. Oh that we would but recognize the One who made us and so live in His Light! Oh that we would but surrender our will to His and so become one with the LORD of all! Why do we turn our backs to this call? Why do we fix our gaze upon the creature, upon creation and the works of our own hands, and so become blind to the glory all around us and within us...? O LORD, give us eyes to see and the desire to live in your Light.

(57) **“Be still and know I AM God.”** Be silent. Be still. Be as the LORD, with the LORD, present to Him, present with Him. He who is still is silent, and He who is silent is still; and He waits in that stillness, in that silence, calling to us. As I sit here before Him present and exposed on the altar (as I have throughout this writing), I see Him. I see He is still, I see He is silent... and waiting... and calling, calling us to come to Him. He is God. Truly. He is God and He is present here. And He is present everywhere, calling to us always... and He is present here, revealing His Presence to us. Be still as He Is. Listen for His Silence. His NAME is Silence, you know, and this is His language. For He is God and far beyond us – but He is present here.

(58) **“Silence before Him, all the earth!”**
He is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning

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and end of all things and holds all things in His hand - and would you speak in His Presence; would you question Him? Only a fool would venture so. This is why Job, though a just man, “put his hand over his mouth” when the LORD appeared to him. This is why we MUST be silent, why we must set aside all our own thoughts and words, all our plans and devices... indeed all our lives, and be “quiet as a child on his mother’s lap” before our LORD and God. Then we may know Him; then we may be blessed, though even then it may be difficult to stand in such overwhelming Light. For He is an awesome God.

(59) **“I told you these things long ago, before they happened,”** the LORD declares through the prophet Isaiah, and it is so. He knows all, He sees all - He brings all about by His power. Yet how many there are who do not believe this, who cannot conceive this; and so we find scholars seeking to debunk every miracle and prophecy in Holy Scripture because of their lack of faith (and observation). How can they believe that before the fall of Jerusalem the LORD prophesied that Cyrus would return the Jews to their homeland seventy years later? They do not understand that “before [we were] formed in the womb, the LORD knew [us],” but consider themselves the creator of God, knowing all there is about Him, not seeing they know nothing, not seeing that they are blind.

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How very sad, and very tragic, for those souls who follow their unbelief.

b. CHRIST

(60) Paul tells us he has “**become all things to all to save at least some**,” and how he seeks to imitate His Savior in this; for the LORD of Heaven and earth has assumed our flesh, has taken on the weight of humanity and of each individual person – an unbearable weight – that He might save the many. Paul says he has made himself “slave to all,” and this is what Jesus does, perfectly, and what Paul follows by imitation, as should we all. It is difficult to imagine taking the weight, of the flesh and the sins, of even one person, or two or three... but to take the weight of sin of all humanity – how can it be done? Only by the Creator of Heaven and earth, only by Him who has made us and through whom we have been made... only by the Christ and, in a pale manner, by Christians like Paul.

(61) “**He emptied Himself.**” This short sentence from the Letter to the Philippians seems to me to encapsulate the work of Christ, His whole attitude and His whole call: His sacrifice. This is what He does for us, and this is the call upon our souls, one which we should continually check ourselves for. Are we emptying ourselves? In such emptying is

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humility, is a guard against the pride that (as the capital sin) always threatens our souls and leads to all sorts of sin. We must continually empty ourselves of ourselves, of our will, of our pride, and seek to be like Christ. There is even a physical sense to this for me, one hard to describe. It is not unlike the speaking of God's NAME, but seems more in the bloodstream, like allowing oneself to bleed inside in a kind of weightlessness, perhaps as Jesus on the Cross being bereft of life.

(62) I would like to describe this sense of surrender further, if I am able. It is like being cleansed in a kind of purgatorial darkness where one finds oneself being bled clean of sin. I have found it useful, for instance when ill, to 'let go' of my body, my arms, my legs... to retain no strength in them, no resistance to gravity, if you will. It feels as if the blood has stopped flowing and all the evil in it is rising out of me, making me whole, making me well. There is a certain light upon me (for it is the light that heals)... and it is as if I am internally stabbed throughout my body (releasing the light), again, perhaps as Jesus on the Cross or in His Passion generally. He is being emptied of His blood as He empties us of our sin, taking the punishment, the blame, upon Himself for our sakes. And it makes Him shudder.

(63) In a word, "**God is love**," and so He "bears all things," patiently, kindly...

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completely. Love is at the heart of all that is good and love is what remains, as Paul tells us, for God is at the heart of all and only He remains - we can only by His grace remain with Him. And so, let us bear all things; let us be patient, kind, remaining in the Truth and calling upon His NAME, for He will hear us, and He will answer us. It is His desire to hear our prayers and answer our prayers, to bless us with a heart like His own. At the heart of all is love, is God, and so it is with Holy Scripture. This is what we must remember; this is the key to the Word of God and our coming to Heaven: "God is love." Do not forget it.

(64) "**That Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that He was buried, [and] that He was raised up on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures**" is the central message of the gospels, and of Scripture as a whole, because all Scripture points to and speaks of the death and resurrection of the Son and the salvation He has won thereby. "You would do well to be attentive to it, as to a lamp shining in a dark place." For this is a dark place, with the corruption of sin threatening all souls, and the light of Jesus and His sacrifice is all we have to hold on to. If we turn away from this light, we shall have no hope of overcoming the darkness - we will have cast aside the only anchor we

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have and forever find ourselves drifting upon the murky waters of this world.

(65) **“He is not here.”** These are the words the angel spoke to the women looking for Jesus at His tomb. “He has risen as He said.” Here is our great hope; here is the foundation of our faith: that He is not here, that He is risen from the dead. He lies in the tomb no longer, and so we need no longer dwell in such darkness - the Light has come! And if He can rise, as He said He would on the third day, then we can rise with Him, for this is His promise to us, and He is not a liar but has proven Himself true in His rising from the dead. (He is Truth itself!) He is not here and we need not be “here,” weighed down by worries and cares and temptations... by the evils of this world. He calls us to where He is. Let us rise with Him.

c. FOLLOW HIM...

(66) **“Set your light on a lampstand”;** do not hide it away “under a bushel basket” or “under the bed,” but let it shine forth and give light to all in the house. Do not be afraid to speak the truth, to declare the LORD’s love and glory even to souls who may not want to hear it, even to those who turn away from you - even at the risk of persecution. Do not let the Word of God rot away within you, but let the fire of the Spirit break forth from your soul that others

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might know what you know, that they might have what you have... that they might come to where you are, and to where Jesus is. What you have you must share with others - *bury not your talent in the ground*. The LORD gives us all gifts for a purpose, to build up the Body of Christ.

(67) **“Like a stream is the king’s heart in the hand of the LORD; wherever it pleases Him, He directs it.”** Jesus is the King, the King of kings, and so the Scripture refers in the first instance to Him, for He truly did the Father’s will in complete fashion, absolutely led by the Father even to His Passion and death. It refers also to David, the model king, whose heart it is said was always with his God. But of course it is for each of us, for each of us should give our heart to God; we should in all things let the LORD direct and guide us... and our hearts should bleed as has our King’s, pouring out the love of God upon the Cross, and in all His life. Praise the LORD!

(68) **“Would that all the people of the LORD were prophets! Would that the LORD might bestow His Spirit on them all!”** This prayer of Moses, in response to Joshua’s plea for God’s servant to stop two men from prophesying in the camp, has been answered by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles (after His death, resurrection and ascension)...

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and by extension upon all who are baptized in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God is freely poured out upon all who call upon His Name, who long for His blessing. And for this we should indeed praise the LORD (as I'm sure Moses does in Heaven) for His all-encompassing Love and Truth, for His grace and mercy upon us His poor children, His *menservants and maidservants* who await His Word.

(69) **“Behold, all that he has is in your power; only do not lay a hand on his person.”** These words of the LORD to Satan as He permits him to test Job indicate what belongs to Satan, and what belongs to God alone. All the things of this earth are in the power of the evil one, but our very lives are in God’s hands and cannot be touched by him. And this is why Jesus exhorts us to renounce all our possessions, to have no attachment to the things of this world, because they are not our lives, our souls, and can easily serve as a distraction, a temptation to lose our souls in what does not matter. And when we do indeed renounce all these things, then it is we find ourselves, we find ourselves in God. Nothing must come before Him or we shall not find Him, and so lose our lives.

(70) **“I know that my Vindicator lives, and that He will at last stand forth upon the dust.”** Here Job prophesies the coming of Jesus,

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the Christ, who takes the dust of our flesh upon Himself and stands before us as God, as the WORD made flesh, whom we can touch and see and know. He indeed is in our midst this day, our Redeemer, and seeks to justify all souls who would come to Him, who would trust in Him for their salvation. Truly, He will save us from all our travails, from the evils of this world which the devil inflicts upon us – yes, He lives, and we may live with Him, for in Him we find the redemption of this dust we are, and come to our place in Heaven. Alleluia!

(71) “You are my inheritance, O LORD.”

It is the feast day of St. Francis of Assisi, the image of Christ at the heart of the Church, and this verse from the Psalms seems to encapsulate the call of Il Poverello and his life, for he so famously renounced his inheritance, the riches of his father, the wealth of this world, to take the Father in Heaven and His Kingdom as his inheritance, giving up absolutely everything, completely heeding the call of Jesus, that he might find the great riches of the LORD, the greatest riches there could be. O may we all be able to imitate his thorough commitment to the way of Christ and so know the absolute joy and glory of having as our inheritance the LORD of all. Praise God!

(72) “Go and do likewise.” The last verse of the Good Samaritan parable is one of the most poignant in Scripture, making clear that

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this is not just a nice story but a call to action, a command to imitate the generosity of the Samaritan traveler. It often brings a tear to my eye and a sword to my heart, for it does so convict us and call us. And who of us can be like Francis or Mother Theresa and reach out continually to those in need? Who of us can escape the walls in which we hide ourselves in fear and in selfishness and focus entirely on others and their needs, thus following in the way of our Lord? Who among us is not lukewarm in his faith and in his living it out? O may the Lord help us! May we indeed do likewise and show His image to this world.

(73) **“Is it time for you to dwell in your own paneled houses, while this House lies in ruins?”** Here the prophet Haggai chastises the people of Judah (who have returned to Jerusalem after the Babylonian exile) for neglecting the rebuilding of the temple, instead focusing on their own dwellings. But it echoes throughout the secular world, especially the one we live in today, which has so neglected God, which has so focused on its own homes and possessions and desires and wants, and thus lost all sight of the LORD. And where will this lead but to its own destruction... unless it turns to the LORD and seeks His Kingdom? It is time for us, too, to rebuild the House of God, each of us individually, and all of us as a people.

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(74) I must credit the **Fathers of the Church** with teaching me by example how to read Holy Scripture, for they go far beyond the surface to find spiritual significance often quite profound. In the Office of Readings today (Feast of St. Luke), Pope St. Gregory the Great sees in the Lord sending His disciples out two by two a call to love both God and others, and that if we fail in charity toward others, our preaching can but fail as well. And he says of the verse from Psalms about "**Him who rises above the sunset**" that Jesus does so by rising from the dead and that "in His resurrection He trampled underfoot the death which He endured." By such spiritual insight he and so many others indicate the richness of the Word of God, its Wisdom, which can't be measured or limited (as so many seek to do).

(75) St. Augustine tells us, "**When we say, 'Your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven,' we are asking [the Father] to make us obedient so that His will may be done in us as it is done in Heaven by His angels,**" and this is a profound insight by one of the greatest Fathers of the Church. But I think more than asking for His will to be done in us, we also ask that His Spirit come to all, come to the world, so corrupted and sinful, that His will might be done in all things and this poor place indeed become as His Heavenly Kingdom. How else can we deal with the evil we see all around us except

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to pray that all souls be converted to obedience to the holy will of the LORD, though this must indeed begin with ourselves?

(76) **“Love your enemy.”** It seems to me this is part of loving one’s enemy, Jesus’ essential call, to pray that the LORD will shine His light upon all souls, the good and the bad, indiscriminately as He does. For indeed we want all to come to God, we desire all evil to cease and the glory of the LORD to shine forth upon this land... and so we pray His will be done on all the earth, in all souls. And what a glorious thought this is, what a glorious prayer; for who can tell the evil from the good, and who among us has not some evil in himself? Thus we must pray for all, lest we ourselves be left out of the prayer, or our loved ones, or our enemies.... O LORD, shine your Light down upon us all. Alleluia!

(77) Augustine also provides this insight: **“If you study every word of the petitions of Scripture, you will find, I think, nothing that is not contained and included in the Lord’s Prayer.”** And he gives examples of verses calling for the LORD’s will to be done, and seeking forgiveness, and begging to be delivered from evil.... I don’t think it should surprise us that Jesus was able to sum up in one short prayer all the petitions of the human heart, for the entirety of Scripture, the whole Word of God, can be summed up in one WORD, YHWH,

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the Divine NAME from which all the words of Scripture and indeed all Creation comes. O let our hearts be set on the LORD and call always upon His NAME.

(78) **“I have come to set the earth on fire,”** Jesus declares, and has that fire not been cast upon the earth, upon all souls baptized in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit? Has Pentecost not come and the Holy Spirit not set us ablaze? Has Jesus not undergone His Baptism in His Passion, death and Resurrection that we might indeed be baptized and filled with the Spirit? But is that Spirit alive in us; do we fan it into flame, as Paul instructs, or do we let it grow low and fall to mere embers? Jesus has set the earth on fire – every baptized soul now has the Holy Spirit within him.... O LORD, please let your Spirit come alive in us all. Let your Kingdom come.

(79) **“I want to see”** is the plea of the blind beggar sitting by the side of the road as Jesus passes by. “I want to see you” is my own plea to the Lord, for I am so blinded by the things of this world, so lost in its artificial light that His Light cannot penetrate my eyes, my mind... and so I remain in darkness, and cannot find my way home to Him whom my sights should be set upon. What does the blind man see upon being healed but Jesus Himself? And what does he do but immediately follow Him up the road, wherever He goes? Jesus tells him to

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go his way and his way is the way of the Lord, even to Jerusalem and the Cross. O how it must be so for me or I shall have no wisdom at all, or I shall ever be lost and seeking my way home down empty streets, blindly groping along. O help me, Lord! I want to see you.

d. ...IN WISDOM

(80) What does Wisdom tell us but that **“the souls of the just are in the hand of the LORD, and no torment shall touch them.”** Though they be **“condemned to a shameful death,”** yet they shall live; they shall live to the LORD and never die, for the LORD is Life itself and they are with Him. This is what Wisdom tells us - that there is a resurrection of the just, that this world and the corruption upon it is not all there is... that we live not for the riches and honors of this dying place, but for God, from whom all true riches and honors come. So let the wicked scoff, let them persecute and oppress us. We shall pray for them and their salvation, that they will turn from all darkness to the Light of God, and in His hand make their home.

(81) **“The sword of the Spirit... is the Word of God.”** We know from Scripture that God is **“the guide of Wisdom”** and **“we and our words are in His hands.”** For His Word is indeed piercing as a sword; His Spirit speaks through

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His Word and cuts with the Truth, that our hearts might bleed with His love. And if we seek this Wisdom, the Wisdom of the Spirit, His Word we will speak with our words - He will guide every word we say. And so we will be blessed as we give all praise and honor and blessing to Him who speaks in us. O what grace this is! That our tongues might speak of the Spirit and by His power. Guide us, O LORD, by your Wisdom.

(82) Blessed be all the Saints on this **All Saints Day!** Blessed *the meek and the merciful, the just and the pure, the peacemaker and the persecuted....* It is as if in Jesus' litany of the blessed, each of the Saints is being honored for his particular charism. There are only ten invocations, but one imagines them referring each to one of the twelve apostles, and that each of the apostles declares his particular charism as, in Jesus' absence, after His ascension, they indeed go to the ends of the earth proclaiming His words, these words... as indeed the Lord's disciples do even to this day (as indeed was done by our priest at Mass today). May we all declare and live the blessings of the LORD.

(83) **“And no one dared to ask Him any more questions.”** How profound is the silence before the absolute Truth of the LORD, in His awesome Presence. This is how we should be before our God - silent. And so His NAME

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(YHWH), which He grants to us, invites us to this blessed Silence. Again, what can we say before God? How can we poor creatures question Him who reigns in glory? Let us find our place and we shall indeed be blessed, we shall indeed be free of all question and doubt and filled with the most profound peace. Those of you who doubt, speak His NAME, let His Silence fill you - and all doubt will flee, for you will be in His undeniable Presence, in His surpassing peace, free of all words. There is nothing we can say before Him. Let us embrace this truth and know Him who made us.

(84) Jesus tells those who give freely without expecting return, "**You will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.**" Yet we know that even while here on this earth, when we embody the generosity of our God we find ourselves more blessed than blessing. This is a common experience of generous souls, for they share thus in the unconditional love of God, and what could be more blessed than that? And we remember what Jesus told Martha at Lazarus' tomb when she said she knew her brother would rise at the resurrection: "I am the resurrection and the life." If Jesus is the resurrection and the life, then those who share in His life of sacrifice experience the resurrection with Him even here where we stand. Yes, the glory of the LORD is known to us even now when we follow in His way.

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(85) **“Blessed is the one who will dine in the Kingdom of God.”** Brothers and sisters, that banquet is set before us this day, it is in our midst now, but who comes to partake of this heavenly food, who answers the invitation of the Lord to eat His Body and drink His Blood? Do not so many have excuses just like those in Jesus' parable, so many reasons they cannot come to the feast? How very blessed we are that the Kingdom of God has come into our midst, that the Son of God has been born among us and dwells with us, leaving us the Holy Eucharist to remember Him by, to become one with Him? Every day Mass is celebrated throughout the world, and no greater gift could we know... yet so many do not come to the table and eat, and so, how very sad it is.

(86) **“This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.”** Words, words, words... How many words have we; how many words have I? I grow tired of listening to words, of speaking words, when I know by these alone I cannot approach God. And so, much of what I read and say seems so vain. I write and write and write – and hopefully I am being led by the LORD, open to His call – yet these are only words. What of my life? I long for silence, long to quiet my tongue. When will I live in the silence of God; when will I remember His NAME? A great gift He imparts, and yet I am so ignorant

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of it... and yet how little I live it. May the LORD help me to be silent before Him at all times.

(87) **“All that I have written seems to me as so much straw.”** This from St. Thomas Aquinas, perhaps the wisest man who has lived, about his particularly prolific writings as he realizes even the greatest works are nothing in comparison with the beatific vision of God, which He may allow us to glimpse in this life. Though such writings as his may be useful in bringing us to that vision, to the glory of the LORD (and if they aren’t, they are indeed worthless, even here), yet the writings themselves will be of no use anymore when that vision is reached. Words mean nothing compared to the Silence of God, His awesome Presence. May we all come to such Wisdom as the great philosopher about our own lives and works.

(88) **“Behold, the Kingdom of God is among you.”** As Jesus speaks these words, I imagine Him looking into the eyes of His listener (you and me) as if to say: Do you see me? Do you recognize me? For indeed He is the Kingdom of God come among us. Though it is true that the Kingdom of God is among us when we do the will of the Father (as Jesus has done perfectly) and love our neighbor as ourselves, though we may be a reflection of the LORD’s glory... the clearest and most complete Presence of the Kingdom is Jesus Himself. And

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so, can we look Him in the eye and see the Kingdom? Can we turn from all distractions and temptations and know the LORD in our midst? May it be so. Then we shall indeed reflect His glory.

(89) **“Where the body is, there also the vultures will gather.”** But they cannot touch our soul. They have power only over the flesh. The devil may threaten us with torture and death, but our spirits remain in the hand of God. Alleluia! And so, let us not become attached to the flesh and its pleasures; may the temptations the devil employs by means of the flesh be cast aside by the power of the Spirit and we make our home with the LORD and not on this corrupted earth. Let us not look back like Lot’s wife at the sin we have left behind – let us not desire it in any way. Only then will we be free of the chains of the flesh and ready to fly unto Heaven, where our Lord awaits.

(90) **“You have lost the love you had at first.”** At the beginning of any venture that has captured our heart, with how much zeal we act, with how much love. When we are young in faith, our whole heart we give to the LORD, and with all our energy we serve Him. But as we age, both in years and in the faith, how easy it is to forget our early love and begin to go through the motions. How do we recapture that zeal we had at first, how again to be filled with God’s love? I think of Nicodemus’ sad question to the

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Lord about being born anew - “Can a man enter again into his mother’s womb?” It seems as impossible as this. But of course we know it is the Spirit that brings rebirth in Baptism, and it is only the Holy Spirit that can make us new in the faith and as we once were in our youth. Let it be so, O LORD. Let it be so.

4. CLOSING WORDS

(91) “**I am the Light of the world,**” says the Lord Jesus. And this Light is not the light of sun and moon and stars; it is indeed, as St. Andrew of Crete so beautifully puts it, “The Light that was in the world from the beginning, through which the world was made.” It is, *He is*, “the everlasting Light, the timeless Light revealed in time.” As we have stated previously, when the LORD first spoke and said, “Let there be light,” it is of Him He spoke... and when physicists trace back the origins of the universe, they come to a wall of light, and can go no further, for we cannot fathom anything before this Light which is our very origin, the origin of all the world. And He exists now in all things, if we but had eyes to see.

(92) “**God is Love.**” This is as good as words can express, for as St. Gregory of Nyssa says of the LORD, His “true Name is above all other names; it is unutterable and

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incomprehensible to all rational creatures.” YHWH. And so St. John, the greatest of evangelists, the seer of great visions, of heavenly revelations, can but call Him Love, for there is no utterable word that carries greater weight and meaning than this little word. He is Love and we must love Him who is Love, and then all will be well. Yes, we must ultimately come to the Silence that is His holy NAME and bow before Him who is beyond our understanding, but here on this earth, we who speak in words call Him Love.

(93) “**I gasp with open mouth in my yearning for your commands.**” Here again Scripture speaks of our speaking the NAME of God, YHWH, for it is in silence, with mouth agape, that we come to the Silence of God and the Wisdom of God, as we long for His Presence, as we seek His love. And indeed His commands are *like honey to our mouth*, sweeter than anything nature could make, beyond description in the preciousness of their taste; for they carry truth, they carry love - they carry the Wisdom of God and fulfill all our longing. May we always be as children sitting in wonder before the glory and majesty of our loving Father. May His beauty surround us and His love fill us as we rest in His holy Presence. Alleluia!

(94) How blessed are “**the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes,**” the virgins and martyrs who give their lives, their

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entire lives, to service of the Lord and do His will in all things. They are like Him, truly made in His image... and so are the first blessed of the redeemed in Heaven. But how blessed they are here as well, to be so close to the Lord even on this earth. Can there be a greater blessing than to remain in His company all the days of our lives, at every moment of our day? I know I am far from these unblemished souls who from the womb remain pure in His sight. I have great need of having my robe washed in the blood of the Lamb. But I can exult at the glory these souls know and praise God for such blessings upon mankind. May they pray for us.

(95) **“Men impelled by the Holy Spirit have spoken under God’s influence.”** Prophecy. I suppose we have spoken of this before, but it is everything really in coming to comprehend the Word of God. It is prophecy. It “has never been put forward by man’s willing it.” It is the Word of God, set apart from all other words – holy. And we must take it as the Word of God, read it as the Word of God, speaking to our hearts. It is not just another book; it is no product of man’s imagination. It is inspired by the Holy Spirit, who directs every thought, every word, according to the will of the Father. We must understand this – we must believe this, or we will indeed be lost. May the LORD give us the faith to hear His Word. Praise God.

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(96) **“A mute beast spoke with a human voice to restrain the prophet’s madness.”**

Peter speaks here of Balaam and his donkey, who saw the angel waiting to slay the prophet and refused to go forward, despite Balaam’s beatings, and whom the LORD gave power to rebuke the prophet. But how many “prophets” there are in our own age who need the chastising restraint of mute beasts who possess more intelligence than they. Their blindness is like that of Balaam, for they too are unable to see and comprehend spiritual matters, being beastly men themselves, concerned only with the flesh. Oh that they would come to their senses and hear the voice of God speaking to them in His Word, that they might not continue forward to their destruction.

(97) **“Blessed are the eyes that see what you see... and hear what you hear.”** For we see before us what the prophets longed to see, what they prophesied from of old – He is here before us, and we have His voice ringing in our ears. Praise God! Yet there are those living in these blessed days after the coming of the Lord who do not see and do not hear, even some souls within the Church. How can this be? How can they fail to recognize the blessing in their midst? It must be a willful ignorance, or a tragic falling into sin. Greater blessed will be the eyes that see Him coming again on the clouds of heaven and celebrate such vision with

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joy... but we are blessed now, here, for the words of the prophets have been fulfilled.

(98) **“Out of gloom and darkness, the eyes of the blind shall see.”** This heavenly vision of Isaiah touches us all, does it not? Are we not all blind; do we not all need our eyes opened to see the LORD and His glory? Yes, we must recognize our blindness or we shall never see, we shall never come to the Kingdom of God, the Heavenly Jerusalem. And to the extent we recognize and repent of our blindness, to this extent will our eyes be opened by the LORD. First the gloom and darkness in which we dwell we must see... and then even this darkness will serve as a purgatorial agent to our coming to the Light of God, enabling us to enter into His glory. Alleluia!

(99) I believe I should explore further how it is *out of darkness we come to the Light*. In the most obvious sense, we certainly must repent and leave the darkness of sin behind - as Jesus was called out of Egypt, so we are called away from our sins. But there is also the sense in which from the darkness blessings can come. There is no greater darkness than the crucifixion of the Son of God, and yet it is this darkest of deeds that leads to our salvation; for God has the power to turn the darkness into light. The darkness cannot overcome the light and its efforts to do so just bring greater light in the end. But we must indeed submit to the

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purgatorial darkness the LORD brings to save our souls, for if we do not repent, there will be no Light for us.

(100) “A star shall advance from Jacob.”

And so, Balaam, who is indeed a pagan and seeking to curse Israel for monetary gain, instead recognizes the beauty of Israel’s encampment and becomes “one who sees what the Almighty sees,” even prophesying the coming of the Christ; for the LORD God can use anyone to accomplish His will, to prophesy in His Name, even a corrupted pagan like Balaam. And are we not all useless servants, corrupted vessels whom the LORD blesses with His Word to declare His glory, to do His will? Of what good are these “earthen vessels” except that the LORD God touches them and makes them instruments of His grace? May we all recognize how useless we are, that His grace might work through us.

(101) “He will save His people from their sins.” Isaiah tells us the Israelites will no longer declare how the LORD has freed them from slavery in Egypt, but how He has brought them back from exile in Babylon. And we now declare how He has saved us from our sins. Greater than the release from slavery or exile is the freedom from sin we now know by Jesus’ blood, by His sacrifice. The other two pale in comparison. For now we are freed in an eternal manner; now we are led to our eternal home.

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Now it is to Heaven we come, pure as the angels. And so, how much greater our celebration should be, how much more gratefulness we should show to God. As the LORD lives, let us praise Him for His grace and mercy upon our poor souls!

(102) **“Things of the past I foretold long ago, they went forth from my mouth.”** The LORD speaks to the faithless heart that refuses to believe in God and His omnipotence and omniscience. Isaiah prophesies the coming of Cyrus, who will release God’s people from exile, before they are even taken to Babylon, and so those who read Holy Scripture without faith say this must have been composed well after the exile. For how can it be known beforehand what will come? What they ask by this is how there can be a God, and how can He speak through His prophets. For them it is impossible, and so they make things fit their faithlessness. Indeed, how stubborn and treacherous man is, how blind to the presence of God. What hope can there be for them if they persist in refusing to see the LORD’s hand at work?

(103) **“God loves nothing so much as the one who dwells with Wisdom.”** For that one dwells with Him. There is nothing about him that departs from the LORD. And who is the One who dwells with Wisdom but the Son of God, Jesus Christ? And those who follow Him, who are obedient to His Word and His way, to

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His Wisdom, approach the throne of the LORD God with their Savior. And what could we desire more than this blessing - what could be wiser for us to strive for than this grace? There is no wisdom in settling for less, much less rejecting this gift. Thus the one who is wise truly dwells with God, while the foolish soul crawls along like a crab at the bottom of the ocean, or a snake in the grass. Choose God, my brother.

(104) **“Nothing escapes its burning heat.”** Here the Psalmist speaks of the sun, which covers one end of the sky to the other; but most importantly he indicates the coming of the LORD to judge the world at the end of time. For who shall escape His judgment? And this burning heat, this all-encompassing Light, cannot but reveal man's deeds as they are - there is no hiding from it. And those whose deeds are good will rejoice in this Light and the blessing it brings them... while those whose deeds are evil will foolishly attempt to hide from this Light, and be burned up by it. The Light is the Light and our deeds are our deeds - this is a simple truth which cannot be denied, or avoided. I pray you rejoice on that day.

(105) **“They left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed Him.”** What is most striking about this passage is James and John leaving behind their old life so readily and so completely. Though they had

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met Jesus before and spent time with Him, now that the time has come, they do not look back - going as we all should. But what I notice about the scene is the hired men who are left in the boat with Zebedee. I think of the difference between the son and the slave, between Isaac the freeborn son of Abraham and Ishmael the son of the slave girl, if you will, but also how this difference is brought into play throughout Scripture, as with the hired hand who runs when the wolf comes, and the Son who lays down His life for the sheep. May we all be so free to follow Jesus.

(106) **“All wisdom comes from the LORD and with Him it remains forever.”** All wisdom *is* from the LORD, and He is never without wisdom - all He says and does is wise. And so all His words, and most especially His Word, Holy Scripture, speak wisdom. But are we of wisdom that we might be able to hear and recognize the wisdom contained therein, or do we fall short? Do we think it is we who are wise, wiser than the ages, wiser than He who created all things and the times and places wherein they dwell? We must subject ourselves to His Light, to His Wisdom, if we wish to be truly wise; we must acknowledge that He is Wisdom, or else what foolishness will be upon us, a foolishness from which we may not be able to escape.

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(107) **“Hold the beginning of the reality firm to the end.”** This is an intriguing quote from Hebrews. The most common interpretation, reflected in many translations, is a call to maintain our initial “confidence” in Christ, or perhaps our “first love”, as Jesus is quoted in Revelation. The Douay-Rheims version uses the term “His original substance” (firm to the end), which indicates a meaning I find relevant to my own spiritual life, since it suggests to me remembering the LORD’s NAME, and, again, in particular the beginning of all things, when there was but the wind (or Spirit) moving upon the waters, into which the LORD has given me a glimpse. For when doubts begin to creep in, I indeed recall His silent NAME – which admits no doubt, or question – and the time before the world was born.

(108) **“Do not be anxious about tomorrow.”** These words which led the Father of Monks into the desert, giving up all his worldly possessions, are some of the most beautiful, the most poignant, uttered by the mouth of Jesus. They call us to a complete trust in the LORD, where our true happiness is found. When we discover all we need is Him, that He cares for us more than we or anyone could, what joy comes, what freedom! And St. Anthony lived to 105 trusting entirely in God. How many tomorrows he knew in the LORD’s arms! Truly we should look at the birds of the

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sky and the fish of the sea and see how the LORD cares for them, and ask why the human does not simply be. Let us hear this call, O LORD, and step out in faith toward you.

(109) **“Kindness and truth shall meet.”**

One might say, love and truth shall meet. And these two meet in Jesus Christ. And these two must meet or they cannot be. Love without truth is not love, and truth without love is not truth. If truth is used as a stick to beat souls down, it loses all its worth. And if love encourages falsehood and sin, it has no love - for love does not desire the other's destruction but his salvation. And this cannot be done without truth, just as truth cannot stand, cannot maintain its purpose, if it loves not the soul it would teach. This, as we said, is most clear in Jesus our Savior, who has only love for the poor lost soul and ever offers him the truth to set him free. Let us check our own words and ways, that they may be as His.

(110) **“All the people were weeping as they heard the words of the law.”** This as Ezra read Holy Scripture to those who had not heard the Word of God for so long, who had been living far from Him. And so they were convicted as they realized the sin in which they had been dwelling, as they saw indeed how far they were from the LORD and His law, and His love. These were blessed tears the people shed; the guilt they felt was a blessed guilt, for it was

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a sign of their turning from their sin to the light of God, to the path He marks out for us – it is a sign of their salvation. And what of us who have the Savior come into our midst...? Do we weep as well? We have so much clearer light upon us, and a greater blessing awaiting us if we turn to it.

(111) **“Whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never have forgiveness.”** Jesus had been casting out demons and healing people body and soul, and the scribes came and said, “He has an unclean spirit.” It cannot be denied that Jesus was doing holy works, works that can only be accomplished by the Holy Spirit, and these lost souls call the Spirit upon the Lord evil. What hope can there be for them? If we sin in any other way upon this earth, forgiveness is possible by the blood of Jesus; but if we call good evil, there is no hope for our salvation... for we have chosen the evil. We have rejected the power of God and His love and chosen to remain in the darkness of sin. If we reject the arm of God that brings salvation, how can we be saved? We are lost in our own hatred of the Good.

(112) **“The LORD is my Shepherd, there is nothing I shall want.”** This is one of the most well-known verses in all of Scripture, and the most common interpretation is that the LORD provides for all our needs and so we will not find ourselves impoverished or lacking our

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daily bread in any way. But another meaning to ponder is that we will not *desire* anything of this world but are satisfied with the LORD alone; we shall not want more than we need, by greed or lust or pride or any of the deadly sins (thus perverting the goodness of the LORD's blessings), but remain faithful to Him and His love. Then indeed we will find ourselves blessed by our Shepherd's protection and His divine providence. Praise God!

(113) **“See, now that this has touched your lips, your wickedness is removed, your sin purged.”** With an ember taken from the altar on high, the Seraphim touched the prophet Isaiah's lips and he was purged of sin and made ready to declare the Word of God. And every day the Lord Jesus touches our mouths with His own Body and Blood as we receive Him in Holy Communion... but are we purged and made ready to do His will? Do we realize the great gift, the great blessing that is upon us in this Sacrament? Should we not be ready to stand before the LORD and go as He directs? Should His Word not be in our hearts and on our lips? O LORD, I beg you that I not waste this absolute blessing by failing to go forth in your Name. Somehow let me be purged of sin and speak your Word.

(114) **“They scurried about the surrounding country and began to bring in the sick on mats to wherever they heard He was.”**

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They heard where He was and they heard who He was, and they came running to Him. They *heard*. I want to emphasize the power and reach of the spoken word, which has been greatly demeaned as it has been lost in our age of the written word, and even more so by electronic communication. We can no longer fathom, except perhaps in some small towns that still exist, how fast and how completely the spoken word can travel. People used to be as one in towns and villages and did not need newspapers to know what was going on around them. We can see in the above passage how the Word of God spread like fire wherever Jesus went. But in our fractured world where words can be communicated to the ends of the earth instantly, no one knows what is going on in their immediate surroundings... knowing not even who their neighbors are. What kind of communication is this?

(115) **“You will be like gods.”** This is the promise with which the devil tempts the woman (and man) to eat of the forbidden fruit. It is ironic, and very sad, because they are already like God, made in His image as His son and daughter... and when they try to become more than they are, they become less - they become like beasts, clothed even in their skins. Horrified to see their humanness once they have fallen, unable now to look beyond the flesh, what can they do but hide, hide from

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themselves, from the eyes of one another, and, most tragically, from God? Their spirits having died, their vision now blinded, into such hell they fall. And what hope is there for them? How shall they again be like God? There is only one answer, and it is the Christ.

(116) St. Ephrem has asked, "**LORD, who can comprehend even one of your words?**" And it is true, He is far beyond our understanding and our ears fall far short of His voice. But what little we can understand, by His grace and favor to us - how marvelous it is! How marvelous are His words, and His Word, and how blessed are we even to begin to approach Him. As the Psalmist has said, His words are like honey to the mouth, bringing light to the mind, and truly, nothing compares with their wonder and glory. So let us open ourselves up to His Word, surrender to the LORD and beg His blessing... and He will impart to us such treasure as we may comprehend. And more is given to him who has.

(117) "**To him who lacks understanding, I say, Come, eat of my food, and drink of the wine I have mixed.**" So does Wisdom call to our souls, to those who are humble enough to know their need for her. Those who are wise in their own eyes will not come to the table of the LORD and feast on His riches, for they find no need. Only the humble, only the poor in spirit, come to Him. But the LORD does not cease to

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call to all; His maidservants do not restrain their voice, for it is the will of God we all hear and understand, that we are all blessed with His Presence. Oh what a blessing it indeed is to know we are blind, to recognize how far short we fall of the LORD! For then our souls hear His call and enter freely into His Presence to receive the food He provides. Alleluia!

(118) **“Let us then speak of the Lord Jesus, for He is Wisdom, He is the Word, the Word indeed of God.”** Such is the exhortation of St. Ambrose to all who call themselves Christian, to all who seek God. Yes, we should listen to the Word of God, for the Word speaks Wisdom, the Word is Wisdom... and we should speak of Jesus, for He is the Word made flesh in our midst, and flesh we too must make this Word. Let us go forth then as bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh, walking as Jesus through this world, bringing the Light of the Word of God to the four corners of the universe. If we believe then let us act, for He has called us to be doers of the Word and not hearers only - He has called us to put this Word into practice. Speak of Him with all your life.

(119) **“Faith is the foundation of the whole Bible, a lamp and a key to its understanding.”** This quote from St. Bonaventure is found in the Office of Readings for Monday of the 5th Week in Ordinary Time. The whole passage I would encourage all to

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read, for it is rich in explication of the glory of the Word of God. In it the Saint also states that “the extent of our faith is the measure of the wisdom which God has given us,” and that “the fruit of reading Holy Scripture … is the fullness of eternal happiness,” which is the *fullness of God*. His comprehension of the significance of the Word of God and the Wisdom contained therein, and our need to have faith to come to this Light, sums up what this writing has sought to expose. It falls far short, but perhaps Bonaventure, among others, may fill in some of its holes. God Bless You!

EPILOGUE

Holding my mother's hand as she lay dying and I drifted in and out of sleep in the dark early morning hours, I felt us communicating beyond words, beyond consciousness... and I clearly sensed her departing. After she died (still before sunrise), I stood over her praying as I looked down at her body; several times my head was involuntarily raised, to look upward. - and there was a light filling the room. To her spirit my attention was immediately turned, and it brought only joy.

I share this experience because it seems to indicate the theme of this book, that we must focus on the Spirit, the Wisdom, of the Word (rising above the flesh). A quote from Hamlet comes to mind: "There are more things in Heaven and Earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy" (Act I, Scene 5). And truly there is more to the Word of God than we can imagine, for our LORD (YHWH) is beyond words.

God Bless.

OTHER BOOKS by JAMES KURT

Our Daily Bread:

Exposition of the Readings of Catholic Mass -

A page of writing for every Mass of the liturgical calendar for the Roman Rite; reflections drawn from the readings.
727 pp. 2004 (reprinted 2018). w/ imprimatur.

Our Daily Bread: Lent - 86 pp. 2019. w/ imprimatur.

Prayers to the Saints (Updated) -

A page of prayer to each Saint on the General Roman Calendar for the United States.
237 pp. 2019 (original 2007). w/ imprimatur.

Christian Vision of the Old Testament -

Synopsis and exhortation; faith-filled overview of all books of the Old Testament as prefiguration of Jesus, with a focus on the prophetic nature of God's Word.
273 pp. 2013 (reprinted 2019). w/ imprimatur.

Chapters of the Gospels -

Exposition of the four gospels, chapter by chapter; in the style of *Our Daily Bread*.
114 pp. 2009 (reprinted 2021). w/ imprimatur.

YHWH: Order of the Divine NAME -

On the significance of the contemplative Silence that is the NAME of God, and its application to a spiritual life.
260 pp. 2008 (reprinted 2019). w/ imprimatur.

Two Books:

Paradox and the Christian Faith / Hippie Convert -

The apparent contradictions of the Faith are explained for those who seek wisdom; and a member of the flower generation addresses true love and peace, in poetic form.
238 pp. 2016 (reprinted 2019). w/ imprimatur.

Blessed Guilt: A Universal Conversion Story -

Extended parable on the life-giving repentance found in Jesus' blood; vaguely autobiographical but without particulars. 119 pp. 2013. w/ imprimatur.

***Remembrance of Things Present* -**

A mystical work seeking the presence of the LORD in the moment, where He dwells at all times.
100 pp. 2018. w/ imprimatur.

The Most Holy Trinity

***and the Four Corners of the Universe* -**

A collection of writings on the Persons of the Trinity and their reflection in Creation; founded upon the Shema.
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Lines of Grace:

Meditations on Verses of Holy Scripture,

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A Catholic devotional especially for the encouragement of the practice of plenary indulgence. 195 pp. 2016.

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Reflections of the profound counsel of Fr. de Caussade to embrace the Cross and find the Lord's will (and joy) even in our greatest sufferings. 82 pp. 2019.

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Refuting the Presumed Contradictions of the

***Jerusalem Bible Old Testament Commentary* -**

A case study recounting the problems afflicting modern biblical scholarship as exemplified in the JB.
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***HOME: A Year of Miracles* -**

A search for home in a year of journaling focused on the miracle of the everyday (during 2020). 176 pp. 2021.

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Autobiographical depiction of vocation search through pilgrimage to Medjugorje and stays at a hermitage or two.
230 pp. 2004.

Songs for Children of Light: Ten Albums of Lyrics -

A white on black conceptual work abstractly tracing our human life, with simple drawings for each song.
Requiem for my sister. 150 pp. 2003.

silence in the city -

Short contemplative poems; moments of divine silence in the midst of city life. 148 pp. (74 pieces). 2003.

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