



THE SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

Formation in the Christian Contemplative Life

"Into Unity Consciousness"
Excerpted from
God Is Love: The Heart of All Creation

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The awakening of the eye of faith which is the awakening of the contemplative process to a certain point, where you now begin to see the Divine Presence in everything. To see God present there is an enormous elevation of the capacity to see because it's seeing not just through a microscope but it's seeing the Presence and Source and the Love and the Person of the Trinitarian relationships that are present in the smallest particle that we know of and beyond. He's always speaking to us, but not in our language, in his language which is basically silence. But it's intuitive; it's telepathic. What I've noticed when I've felt that God is trying to tell me something, the phrase comes up on the screen, you might say – not a computer because I don't know how to use them – but inwardly. It's as if you have the whole sentence at once. A computer, you know, waits for the words, sometimes they're all there. So, it's like that. You get a kind of nudge or a kind of hint or a kind of suggestion and it's all there in a few words that are not spoken, that are perfectly clear, sometimes clearer than at other times. And that's because the Divine Presence is always within us. This can be understood as the glorified Christ, or as the Holy Spirit, or as the Trinity, or as the Higher Consciousness, or as the One Self, or as the Higher Self. I think God has many ways of communicating and they're all valuable, infinitely valuable. Some will be more suitable for us at certain stages of our journey. The practice of silence helps them all because that gives God a greater freedom to act as our interior life becomes freer from our predispositions and predetermined mindset.

The first thing then is: God hides behind and in visual things in such a way that he is never absent. The person whose interior eye, whose third eye of faith, has opened, sees that, not as a particular object but as a presence in some way that is intuitive rather than just sensible. Then hearing things in such a way that we're always listening no matter what is being said to this sound of sheer silence which is God's presence passing by.

Between the syllables, between the words, by just sitting still, deep listening, this can be done in Lectio too by going slowly and pausing when you feel drawn to silence. This is

allowing silence to morph into Presence and Presence is clearly God's presence. And when that Presence is functioning, the other ways of getting there become immediately obsolete, for the moment at least.

The sense of attraction to silence, that's the sense of smell is an attraction to pleasant odors, or to move away from stinks. Basically, it's an attraction to something delightful. Silence, or solitude, or prayer draws people inwardly and that is how God is hiding behind some perfumes and I suppose incense, and fragrant candles and so on have the same purpose.

Then we have touch which is the sense of being kissed or embraced or held or cuddled or embraced, which is when the Presence actively steps out of the Presence into some kind of activity that applies that Presence to our bodies and minds and spirits.

Then taste would be the arising within of the presence of God. So, you'll notice if you look at Scripture from this perspective, it's often talking about the perfume of God, the taste of honey in the mouth and, of course, in the *Song of Songs*, it's filled with all those images.

They're not the end of the journey; they're kind of a romantic aspect of it that is perhaps more important than people think. On the night of Christ's Resurrection, he visits the disciples upstairs in the room. He first says, "Peace be to you." And he shows them his wounds. Then he said it again, "Peace be to you." Peace is like a divine kiss. It establishes a certain disposition of enjoyment or contentment or readiness for the relationship, whatever it is. And then he breathes on them. This is a very significant symbol because he clarifies it in case there's any doubt: "Receive the Holy Spirit." So, the kisses become even more passionate, you might say, in the spiritual sense and the giving of the Spirit is the interpenetration of spirits.

The oneness of the continuing experience of loving with fidelity and trust and love begins to move into a unity consciousness in which the presence of God and us are not distinct anymore. This isn't usually a permanent state in this world because of the other things you have to do to survive. But this presupposes that after the Transforming Union, a new level of Christian life opens up that is meant to go further from a union, as wonderful as that is, with God to a unity in which God takes over the faculties more and more. And as in Jesus, [God] manifests himself in everything we do by suggesting what the right response to every situation is from the perspective of divine love. All self-interest is transformed into abandonment to the divine will and the openness to manifesting it.

This is heaven on earth, that's for sure. But it's extremely down to earth and it doesn't need extraordinary consolations, or still less, visions or things. It's just leading ordinary life from this extraordinary perspective of allowing God to manifest in us rather than ego or false self or anything else.