

TSP Express

Habakkuk 2:2

Issue #4, January 2017 ... created by Lucy Brown, Spirituality Commission Chair for the
Knoxville Diocese Council of Catholic Women – Knoxville, Tennessee

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TSP Express is an outgrowth of *The Secret Place*,* the KDCCW Spirituality Commission project for
2015 - 2017 which is designed for enhancing one's spiritual growth toward a
deepening personal relationship with Jesus Christ

* <http://www.kdccw.org/commissions.html> -- mellucy1967@yahoo.com



Grant us, we pray, O Lord our God,
The constant gladness of being devoted to you
For it is full and lasting happiness
To serve with constancy
The author of all that is good.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
Who lives and reigns with you in the unity
Of the Holy Spirit,
One God, for ever and ever.

(Collect for the Mass on Sunday, November 13, 2016 as in *Magnificat*, pp. 178-9)

In our last issue we made our introduction into relating to Jesus in that most personal place of prayer, from our hearts, beyond the beautiful memorized prayers we know so well as Catholics. I gave you many easily accessible resources for your encouragement. Now we will go a little deeper.

The simple map of ideas and sources that follow are designed to help you fall more deeply in love with Jesus so that you might even want to name this issue "In the Language of Love." Look closely at Proverbs 30:18-19 and see if the Holy Spirit is not casting at the end, "the Man Christ Jesus" as the prospective Bridegroom Supreme: *Three things are too wonderful for me; four I do not understand ... the way of a man with a maiden.*

The word "cherishes" came to mind some weeks ago when I was pondering St. Teresa of Avila's relationship with Jesus described thusly:

Saint Teresa was a woman of remarkable integration: she worked as hard as Martha at the many tasks of establishing convents of the Carmelite reform, but she drew her energy from the hours she spent, with Mary, sitting at the Lord's feet and listening to him speak. Working or praying, she found her delight in Christ's company. (*Magnificat*, October 2016, pp. 193-4)

These apt verses from Psalm 73 follow ...

*I was always in your presence;
You were holding me by my right hand.
You will guide me by your counsel
And so you will lead me to glory.
What else have I in heaven but you?
Apart from you I want nothing on earth.*

*My body and my heart faint for joy;
God is my possession forever.
To be near God is my happiness.
I have made the Lord God my refuge.
I will tell of all your works
At the gates of the city of Zion.*

From Fr. Donald Haggerty's *Contemplative Provocations: Brief, concentrated observations on aspects of a life with God*, I share these delightful excerpts.

"Lately in prayer," in the words of a contemplative, "I have been roaming around in a search I did not realize would frustrate my soul, seeking to enjoy God's presence close at hand, **when he was waiting as usual for the simple offering of my love in the current hour.**" (pp. 182-3)

We have not taken up in prayer a work that can be mastered. The notion of a successful practitioner is out of place. Indeed, prayer is not a work at all. Efficiency in its practice is a contradiction to its truth as **a sacred companionship**. It may require discipline, commitment, renunciations. But essentially it is **a return again and again in love to someone known more deeply over time**. It is a turn to **a mysterious personal presence** without expectation of what will be received. **Familiarity with God** even as he hides demands a trust in the permanency of this friendship. Sometimes that means a search for him; other times a relaxation with him. **Love alone determines how much we realize over time the privilege of this unequal friendship.** (pp. 88-9)

I am charmed by Ronda Chervin's comparison of a human love dialogue with the heavenly one that is offered to us. You will smile as you read ...

MEDITATION OF THE DAY

Our Unwearying Love Dialogue

If even a human lover knows how much love requires expression in words, how much more God knows this. What is prayer if not a long love dialogue in which the soul lays bare to God all its needs, its delights, its love, and its gratitude.

There are various reasons why what seems obvious in human love seems strange in divine love. One would be that the absence of a visible partner in conversation gives to all prayer a quality of foolishness, unless the viewer believes as deeply as the prayer in the reality of a God who cares. Since the nonbeliever in prayer has great difficulty in trusting that God listens, it becomes even more absurd to him to think that God would be willing to hear about such undivine matters as one's messy set of problems or to the repetitious prayers of the liturgy. Yet the same person, when in love, would not consider it below his dignity to enjoy the repeated hymns of praising love which his girlfriend sings to him throughout the day; nor would a girl, at the peak of her love for a boy, feel bored with hearing his thoughts about daily events. She is interested in everything about him and as eager to help him overcome petty annoyances as to come to his aid in grave difficulties.

RONDA CHERVIN
Ronda Chervin is a convert from Judaism, professor of philosophy and theology, and author of over fifty books.

from pp. 168-9

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How sweetly elegant it is that God enjoys our simple outbursts of love to Him whenever they rise to the surface. How special it is also when we remember that, although He surely does make overtures of love toward us, **we need not wait for those** in order for love to **flower**. He has already initiated and He is within us. He is always ready, wanting and waiting for us to respond to Him. Turn to Him anytime, anywhere with heart in hand/mouth and the flow will begin. This is not just for prayer times!

Following are several helpful **signposts** for your journey to “falling in love afresh” with your Lord (*Revelation 2:1-7*). These range from the sublime to the simple and, some might even say, the ridiculous. The time involved varies. Just be open to the Holy Spirit’s leading.

*I will bless the LORD at all times;
his praise shall continually be in my mouth.
My soul makes its boast in the LORD;
let the humble hear and be glad.
O magnify the LORD with me,
and let us exalt his name together.
Psalm 34:1-3*

Jesus the Bridegroom: The Greatest Love Story Ever Told, Brant Pitre

https://www.amazon.ca/Jesus-Bridegroom-Greatest-Love-Story/dp/0770435459/ref=sr_1_1?s

Oremus: A Guide to Catholic Prayer

<https://shop.ascensionpress.com/t/category/study-programs/catholic-prayer/oremus>

Revelation of Love (translated by John Skinner), Julian of Norwich

https://www.amazon.com/Revelation-Love-Julian-Norwich/dp/0385487568/ref=sr_1_1?ie

(especially pp. 85-88)

Bernard of Clairvaux on the Song of Songs, IV

<https://www.amazon.ca/Bernard-kClairvaux-Song-Songs-IV/dp/0879077409>

(sermons 83-85, pp. 195-210 -- especially pp. 206-210, paragraphs 12-14 dealing with spiritual marriage)

“The Triumph of Love,” Dan Burke

<http://www.spiritualdirection.com/2016/11/10/the-triumph-of-love>

“As if Already in Eternity: Saint Elisabeth of the Trinity’s Wisdom,” Anthony Lilles

<http://www.spiritualdirection.com/2016/11/08/as-if-already-in-eternity-saint-elisabeth-of-the-trinitys-wisdom>

Do you already know this playful hint?

Recall or recognize certain secular love songs (on live radio as you’re driving in the car, for instance) that, as led by the Holy Spirit, can “transfer,” either whole or partially, into thinking of your love relationship with Jesus. (Usually, the older songs lend themselves more readily to this “transfer” than the newer ones though, of course, there are exceptions.) Make a list of such songs (with their lyrics easily accessible if your memory fails you) and even save a favorite youtube version in an online “favorites” folder if you’re so inclined.

Some on my list are: Once I Had a Secret Love, Till There Was You, On the Street Where You Live, Unchained Melody, My Cup Runneth Over With Love, Mary in the Morning, In the Misty Moonlight, Only Love Can Break a Heart, How Glad I Am, Almost There, For All We Know, Some Enchanted Evening ... and on and on. (Now you know my age ...)

Oh, I know what else you are saying! Ridiculous, right? Then take a walk down Pope Saint John Paul II’s Theology of the Body teachings and tell me that again.

But, just so you know, my list of much loved sacred songs goes on and on as well. As yours does too, I am sure. Right at the top of mine are: In the Secret of His Presence, The Stranger of Galilee, My Jesus I Love Thee, Fairest Lord Jesus, When I Survey the Wondrous Cross, Broken and Spilled Out (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aPXAju9z7Cs>), Here We Are (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q6wcPQ01-Ho>), Even Unto Death (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uAfp8vg4Jz8>) ... and on and on.



Think ... aquiver with love’s delight, in unknowing expectation, standing on tiptoe, proceeding with trust and abandon, led on with courage and hope, joy and peace, in the safe arms of the Lover. Childlike, pure in heart.

Think ... interplay of love in the minutest details through the simple progression of every second of the day, striving to be lovingly obedient to His beneficent will.

Isaiah 33:17-22

NOTE: All underlining/highlighting in quoted material throughout these pages is mine for emphasis and does not appear in the original sources.

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(<http://theourskids.blogspot.com/2011/10/all-about-narnia.html>)

A VERY PERSONAL AFFIRMATION **or** FRAGRANCES SHARED

A couple of mornings ago I woke with my feathered pillow severely dented by my head screwed around to the left behind me as I lay on my left side. Oddly enough this position was not painful. On opening my eyes and not moving at all, I could see only directly upward onto our California king bed's huge (over 6' high) solid dark pecan headboard at very close range. Slowly I realized that, of all things, at its surface, our headboard looks VERY much like the wardrobe that C. S. Lewis' Lucy discovered beneath the dusty covering cloth in her uncle's deserted upstairs attic room. Our interior panels are not carved as are those of that wardrobe but, no matter. I stayed in this position for some time, steeping myself in the stupor of the moment for I realized something seemed to be descending from the courts of heaven.

"Hmmm. Well, THIS is fitting," I thought for, actually, my early morning prayer/pondering/scripture reading time is usually spent exactly in this very bedroom spot, beginning with my often indiscernible murmurings to Jesus, smearing myself with my non-sacramental anointing oil from the Holy Land and, finally, reaching for my Master's voice lying on the stubby oak file at my side of the bed.

This is my holy place that also beckons to me during the day, drawing me irresistibly with every breath when I am away from it. Fortunately, our Lord goes with me everywhere and always so I am not at a loss. When I return to lay me down at night, still within His presence, His fragrances continue washing over me for He is good and His mercies endure forever and ever and ever, Amen. And He wants me.

Blessed be Your Name, oh Most High, King of my heart.

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