

## A Monastic Mass in the Spirit of Thomas à Kempis' The Imitation of Christ

### Musical Offering (Cantor):

Come, my Way, my Truth, my Life"

(verses: G. Herbert, attr. to Thomas a Kempis; tune: R. Vaughan Williams)

### Celebrant:

"Without the Way, there is no going,  
Without the Truth, there is no knowing,  
Without the Life, there is no living."  
(Thomas à Kempis)

**A period of reflective silence follows**

### The Lighting of the Candles

#### Celebrant:

Almighty God, we give you thanks for surrounding us,  
as daylight fades, with the brightness of the vesper light;  
and we implore you of your great mercy that,  
as you enfold us with the radiance of this light,  
so you would shine into our hearts  
the brightness of your Holy Spirit;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Cantor:** sings the Phos Hilaron

The **Phos Hilaron** is the earliest known Christian hymn recorded outside of the scriptures that is still being used today and is generally sung during the lighting of lamps or candles.

O Radiant Light,  
O Holy Glory of God  
the immortal blessed Father in heaven,  
O Christ Jesus!

Now as the sunset comes upon us  
and we see the evening lights,  
we praise God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit!  
It is right at all times to sing your praise  
with all the universe,  
O Son of God:  
You are the life of the world.

**A period of reflective silence follows**

**Celebrant:** Let Us Stand

**2 Samuel 22**

**Cantor:** Indeed, you are my lamp, O Lord,  
the Lord lights up my darkness (v.29).

**All:**

The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer,  
my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge,  
my shield and the horn of my salvation,  
my stronghold and my refuge, my saviour;  
(vv. 2-3)

**Cantor:** Indeed, you are my lamp, O Lord,  
the Lord lights up my darkness (v.29).

**All:**

With the loyal you show yourself loyal;  
with the blameless you show yourself blameless;  
with the pure you show yourself pure . . .  
His way is perfect;  
the promise of the Lord proves true;  
he is a shield for all who take refuge in him.  
(vv. 26-27a; 31)

**Cantor:** Indeed, you are my lamp, O Lord,  
the Lord lights up my darkness (v.29).

**All:**

For who is God, but the Lord,  
and who is a rock, except our God.  
The God who has girded me with strength  
has opened wide my path.  
He made my feet like the feet of deer,  
and set me secure on the heights.  
(vv. 32-34)

**Cantor:** Indeed, you are my lamp, O Lord,  
the Lord lights up my darkness (v.29).

**Everyone Sits and a period of reflective silence follows**

**(Revelation 22)**

**Cantor:** They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the  
sun, for the Lord God will give them light.

**All:**

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life,  
as clear as crystal,  
flowing from the throne of God  
and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city.  
On each side of the river stood the tree of life,  
bearing twelve crops of fruit,  
yielding its fruit every month.  
And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.  
No longer will there be any curse.  
The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city,  
and his servants will serve him. They will see his face,  
and his name will be on their foreheads.  
(vv. 1-4)

**Cantor:** They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light.

**All:**

There will be no more night.  
They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun,  
for the Lord God will give them light.  
And they will reign for ever and ever.  
The angel said to me,  
"These words are trustworthy and true.  
The Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets,  
sent his angel to show his servants  
the things that must soon take place."  
(vv. 5-6)

**Cantor:** They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light.

**A period of reflective silence follows**

**Centering Prayer**

**Celebrant:**

"Be still and know that I am God (Ps 46.10)" are words that should encourage us to "let go" and surrender ourselves to a divine presence. Therefore, let us quiet our thoughts and desires and center ourselves in God's presence. There is an ancient spiritual saying that quotes God as follows "You will never be able to hear my words if you cannot first hear my silence." Let a period of silence move us beyond conversation with God and into an intimate voiceless communion.

**A period of silence follows**

## **Narrator: A Meditation**

The Imitation of Christ, Thomas à Kempis  
"Of the Inward Speaking of Christ to a Faithful Soul"

Blessed is the soul who hears the Lord speaking within her, who receives the word of consolation from God's lips. Blessed are the ears that catch the accents of divine whispering, and pay no heed to the murmurings of this world. Blessed indeed are the ears that listen, not to the voice which sounds without, but to the truth which teaches within. Blessed are the eyes which are closed to exterior things and are fixed upon those which are interior. Blessed are they who penetrate inwardly, who try daily to prepare themselves more and more to understand mysteries. Blessed are they who long to give their time to God.

**A period of reflective silence follows**

### **Lectio Divina: A Dialogue with God**

*The practice of Lectio Divina includes dialoguing with God in prayer by hearing scripture as God speaking and responding in similar thoughts and words to what God said.*

## **Narrator:**

The scriptures express God's desire for us to grow spiritually every day. "Lay hold of my words with all your heart" (Prov 4.4) and "they will guide you when you walk" and "speak to you when you are awake (Prov 6.21) are a few divine quotes that express spiritual disciplines found in Proverbs and other books within the scriptures that urge us to transform ourselves daily.

Let us hear what God has to say to us about spiritual growth and let us respond by expressing our desires to grow.

**Celebrant:**

Listen, my children, to my instruction;  
pay attention and gain understanding.  
Lay hold of my words with all your heart;  
keep my commands and you will live.  
Get wisdom, get understanding;  
do not forget my words or veer from them.

(Proverbs 4. 1, 4-5)

**All:** Dear God, we will lay hold of your words with all our heart.  
We will keep your commandments and not forget or veer  
from your words.

**A period of reflective silence follows**

**Celebrant:**

My child, keep my commands  
and do not forsake my teaching.  
Bind them upon your heart forever;  
fasten them around your neck.  
When you walk, they will guide you;  
when you sleep, they will watch over you;  
when you awake, they will speak to you.

(Proverbs 6. 20-21)

**All:** Dear Lord, we will bind your teaching upon our hearts  
forever and will fasten them around our necks. When we  
walk your teaching will guide us, when we sleep your  
commands will watch over us, and when we wake they will  
speak to us.

**A period of reflective silence follows**

**Celebrant:**

I love those who love me,  
and those who seek me find me.  
and walk in the way of righteousness,  
along the paths of justice. (Proverbs 8. 17, 20)

**All:** We love you and will walk in the way of righteousness and  
along the paths of justice.

**A period of reflective silence follows**

**Celebrant:**

The scriptures are filled with prayers for spiritual growth that we are encouraged to pray for ourselves and others. Such prayers encourage us to realize "how wide, how long, how high, and how deep God's love really is (Ephesians 3.18)," to increase our "spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that we might grow in your knowledge of God (Ephesians 1.17)," and live in ways that will always honor and please the Lord" so that our "lives will produce every kind of good fruit (Colossians 1.10)." Let us pray scriptural prayers for spiritual growth. You are invited to read one of the following prayers.

**Reader 1:**

I pray that from God's glorious, unlimited resources you will be given mighty inner strength through the Holy Spirit. And I pray that Christ will be more and more at home in your hearts as you trust in him. May your roots go down deep into the soil of God's marvelous love. And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep God's love really is.<sup>19</sup> May you experience the love of Christ, though it is so great you will never fully understand it. Then you will be filled with the fullness of life and power that comes from God. (Eph 3. 16-19)

**A period of reflective silence follows**

## **Reader 2:**

I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know God better. I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which you have been called, the riches of the glorious inheritance in the saints, and the incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of God's mighty strength, which was exerted in Christ when he was raised from the dead and seated him at the right hand of the Father in the heavenly realms. (Eph 1. 17-21)

**A period of reflective silence follows**

## **Reader 3:**

I ask God to give you spiritual wisdom and understanding. Then the way you live will always honor and please the Lord, and your lives will produce every kind of good fruit. All the while, you will grow as you learn to know God better and better. (Col. 1. 9-12)

**A period of reflective silence follows**

## **Reader 4:**

I pray that your love for others will overflow more and more, and that you will keep on growing in your knowledge and understanding. For I want you to understand what really matters, so that you may live pure and blameless lives until Christ returns. May you always be filled with the fruit of your salvation--those good things that are produced in your life by Jesus Christ--for this will bring much glory and praise to God. (Phil 1. 9-11)

**A period of reflective silence follows**

## The Lighting of the Incense

### Psalm 141

**Cantor:** Like incense, may our prayers rise before you O God,  
the lifting of our hands like an evening oblation. (Ps  
141.2)

**All:** Like incense, may our prayers rise before you O God,  
the lifting of our hands like an evening oblation.

**Cantor:** O LORD, I call to you; come quickly to me.  
Hear my voice when I call to you. (v.1)

Like incense, may my prayer rise before you O God,  
the lifting of my hands like an evening oblation. (v. 2)

But my eyes are fixed on you, O Sovereign LORD;  
in you I take refuge. (v.8)

**All:** Like incense, may our prayers rise before you O God,  
the lifting of our hands like an evening oblation.

**Cantor:** sings once before everyone joins in the meditation

O Lord Hear My Prayer  
O Lord Hear My Prayer  
When I Call Answer Me  
O Lord Hear My Prayer  
O Lord Hear My Prayer  
Come and Listen to Me.

-Psalm 143.1ff-

## An Examination of Conscience:

**Narrator:**

The Examination of Conscience is an ancient spiritual practice that helps us reflect on God's daily activity in our life. Let us ask God to help us examine ourselves by reflecting on questions that

may have already been asked silently by some of us after our prayers for spiritual growth.

**Celebrant:** God, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep is your love?

**A period of reflective silence follows**

**Celebrant:** God, how enlightened are the eyes of my heart?

**A period of reflective silence follows**

**Celebrant:** God, am I living my life in ways that are not honoring and pleasing to you?

**A period of reflective silence follows**

**Cantor:** Bless the Lord, my soul  
And bless God's holy name.  
Bless the Lord, my soul  
Who leads me into life.  
-taken from Psalm 103-

**All:**

Bless the LORD, my soul, and all that is within me,  
bless God's holy name.  
Bless the LORD, my soul, and do not forget all his benefits—  
who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases,  
who redeems your life from the Pit,  
who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy,  
who satisfies you with good as long as you live  
so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.  
The LORD works vindication and justice  
for all who are oppressed. (vv. 1-6)

**Cantor:** Bless the Lord, my soul  
And bless God's holy name.  
Bless the Lord, my soul  
Who leads me into life.

## The Nicene Creed

**Celebrant:** Let us stand and profess our faith together

We believe in one God,  
the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is, seen and unseen.  
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, light from light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made,  
of one Being with the Father;  
through him all things were made.  
For us and for our salvation  
he came down from heaven,  
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary  
and was made man.  
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.  
On the third day he rose again  
in accordance with the Scriptures;  
he ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.  
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.  
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.  
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.  
We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

**Everyone sits**

## Eucharist Begins

**Celebrant:** The scriptures encourage us to examine ourselves before Holy Communion. Let us reflect upon the following words of Christ and our desire to fulfill these words

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself"<sup>1</sup>

### A brief period of reflective silence.

**Celebrant:** Let us pray

**All:** Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent, for the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.

**Cantor:** sings once then everyone joins in the following meditative petition Kyrie eleison/Christe eleison (Lord have mercy/Christ mercy)

Kyrie eleison, Kyrie eleison, Kyrie eleison, Kyrie eleison  
Christe eleison, Christe eleison, Christe eleison, Christe eleison  
Kyrie eleison, Kyrie eleison, Kyrie eleison, Kyrie eleison.

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew 22.37-39

**Celebrant:**

On the night he was handed over to suffering and death, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Therefore we proclaim the mystery of faith:

**All:** Christ has died.  
Christ is risen.  
Christ will come again.

**Celebrant:**

We celebrate the memorial of our redemption, O Father, in this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Recalling his death, resurrection, and ascension, we offer you these gifts.

Sanctify them by your Holy Spirit to be for your people the Body and Blood of your Son, the holy food and drink of new and unending life in him. Sanctify us also that we may faithfully receive this holy Sacrament, and serve you in unity, constancy, and peace; and at the last day bring us with all your saints into the joy of your eternal kingdom.

All this we ask through your Son Jesus Christ: By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever. Amen.

## **The Breaking of the Bread**

The Celebrant breaks the consecrated Bread.

A period of silence is kept.

**Celebrant:** Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;

**All:** Therefore let us keep the feast

**Celebrant:** The Gifts of God for the People of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

***NOTE: Everyone is invited to take communion.***

**Cantor:** sings once before everyone joins in the meditation

Eat this bread, drink this cup,  
Come to me and never be hungry.  
Eat this bread, drink this cup,  
Trust in me and you will not thirst.

## **The Prayer of Thanksgiving**

**Celebrant:** Let Us Pray

Holy, gracious and loving God, you have drawn us to your heart, and nourished us at your table with holy food and drink, the body and Blood of Christ. Now send us forth to be your servants in the world, and to proclaim your truth, this day and evermore. Amen.

**All:**  
May your unfailing love be my comfort,  
according to your promise to your servant.  
Let your compassion come to me that I may live,  
for your law is my delight.

Deal with your servant according to your love  
and teach me your decrees.  
I will delight in your decrees;  
and I will not neglect your word.  
(taken from Ps 119)

**Celebrant:** Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

**Everyone is Invited for Light Refreshments Next Door.**

**Afterwards, Everyone is Invited  
to a No-Host Dinner at a Local Restaurant**

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