Heart of the Journey into God

Bonaventure Abridged

by Josef Raischl OFS & André Cirino OFM

We dedicate this version

of St. Bonaventure's

Journey into God

to every person

who made this journey with us

from 1988 to 2025,

honoring this masterpiece

of St. Bonaventure,

the Seraphic Doctor.

Why this Version?

We have travelled and worked with St. Bonaventure's *Journey into God* since 1988. We have completed 60 eight-day retreats with more than 2000 participants, predominantly in the United States as well as Italy, England, Canada, the Philippines and Hong Kong. And in 2025, we facilitated our last *Journey into God* retreat in Assisi. In 2024 the retreat was filmed and is now available free of charge online. Go to: journeyintogod.org

In 2012 we published a fresh translation from that of the Bonaventurian scholar, Zachary Hayes OFM, yet trying to connect more closely with the language of the 21st century. This recently abridged version uses our original translation: *Journey into God by St. Bonaventure: Itinerarium Mentis in Deum,* translated by Josef Raischl OSF and André Cirino OFM, Tau-Publishing 2012.

During each of the retreats, we re-read the text written in 1259 by Bonaventure of Bagnoregio, the philosopher/theologian of the University of Paris and at the time, General Minister of the Order of St. Francis of Assisi.

Each reading of the text has been insightful, but also sometimes rather challenging to people not used to this type of literature. So occasionally, the question arose: Why not abridge the text and thereby highlight the most important, meaningful, and precious pearls of his text?

We are convinced that St. Bonaventure still offers the postmodern world a valid structure by which to enter into a wholesome spiritual and contemplative experience. This journey can offer a complete understanding of what spirituality is about.

One retreatant, a children's story writer, composed children´s stories from each chapter in order to comprehend St. Bonaventure´s thrust for herself. And it worked! So too, we thought that it is possible to attempt to prune the text to its very essentials. Sections of the text also are dated in the sense that the author included examples of what the natural sciences, like medicine, physics and mathematics of his time, were teaching.

So, by condensing the text, how can one preserve the precious pearls of this mystical work while remaining faithful to its meaning? Perhaps by this abridged version which we present here!

We are grateful to Mary Esther Stewart OFS, a wonderful helper and companion on the Journey, for a critical reading, as well as Josef´s firstborn son, Jona Raischl, who gifted us with a beautiful cover image from Iceland (http://jonaraischl.com/).

We ask pardon from all those who feel that we might have eliminated too much or some precious parts of the text. Nevertheless one can always consult the complete text issued by Tau-Publishing. We believe that this abridged version can encourage anyone to appreciate the Heart of the *Journey into God*!

After each of the sections we added a mantra drawn from Bonaventure's writing in an attempt to capture the meaning of that particular chapter. So if you are a musician, you might try to sing or play it, ruminating over it several times, so you might be able to internalize the wisdom of what you have read. If you want to listen to it, you can do so on our website assisijourney.org. All mantras are Included in the online retreat experience mentioned above.

Buon viaggio! Happy journey!

André Cirino OFM and Josef Raischl OFS
Wappingers Falls
August, 2026

In the beginning…

I call upon that Eternal Source
from whom all illumination flows as from the God of lights
and from whom comes every good and perfect gift.

I call upon God
through the divine Son, our Lord Jesus Christ,
that through the intercession of the most holy virgin Mary,
and through that of blessed Francis, our leader and father,
God might enlighten us
and guide our feet on the path of peace—
that peace which surpasses all understanding.
It is that peace which our Lord Jesus Christ
proclaimed and granted to us.
It was this message of peace
which our father Francis announced over and over,
proclaiming it at the beginning and the end of his sermons.
Every greeting of his became a wish for peace,
and in every experience of contemplation
he sighed for an ecstatic peace.

Moved by the example of our most blessed father Francis,
I eagerly desired this peace.
Around the time of the thirty-third anniversary
of the death of the saint,
I was moved by a divine inspiration
and withdrew to Mount La Verna
since it was a place of quiet.
There I wished to satisfy the desire of my spirit for peace.
And while I was there I recalled that miracle
which the blessed Francis himself had experienced
in this very place,
namely the vision of the winged Seraph
in the form of the Crucified.

As I reflected on this, I saw
that those six wings can well be understood as symbols
of six levels of uplifting illuminations
through which one's being is prepared
to pass over to peace.
There is no other way
but through the most burning love of the Crucified.
This so absorbed Francis
that it was revealed in his flesh,
and for two years prior to his death,
he carried the holy marks of the passion in his body.
The image of the six wings of the Seraph, therefore,
is a symbol of six stages of illumination.
For no one is disposed in any way
for those divine contemplations
without being a person of desire.

But desire of this type is enkindled in us in two ways,
namely through the cry of prayer
which makes us cry aloud
with groaning of the heart,
and through the brightness of contemplation
by which we turn our attention
most directly and intently to the rays of light.

Therefore, I first of all invite the reader
to groans of prayer
through Christ crucified.
Do not think that
reading is sufficient without fervor,
reflection without devotion,
investigation without admiration,
observation without exultation,
industry without piety,
knowledge without charity,
intelligence without humility,
study without divine grace,
or the reflecting power of a mirror
without the inspiration of divine wisdom.

To those already disposed by divine grace;
and to those who wish to give themselves
to glorifying, admiring, and even savoring God,

I propose the following contemplations.
At the same time I ask them to keep in mind
that the mirror of the external world is of little significance
unless our interior mirror is cleansed and polished.

I ask, therefore, that you give more attention
to the intent of the writer than to the work itself,
more to the things said than to the uncultivated language,
more to the truth than to attractiveness,
more to the stimulation of affect than to intellectual enrichment.
So that this might happen, it is important
that you not run through these contemplative reflections
in a hurry,
but that you take your time
and ruminate over them
slowly.

Way to Peace

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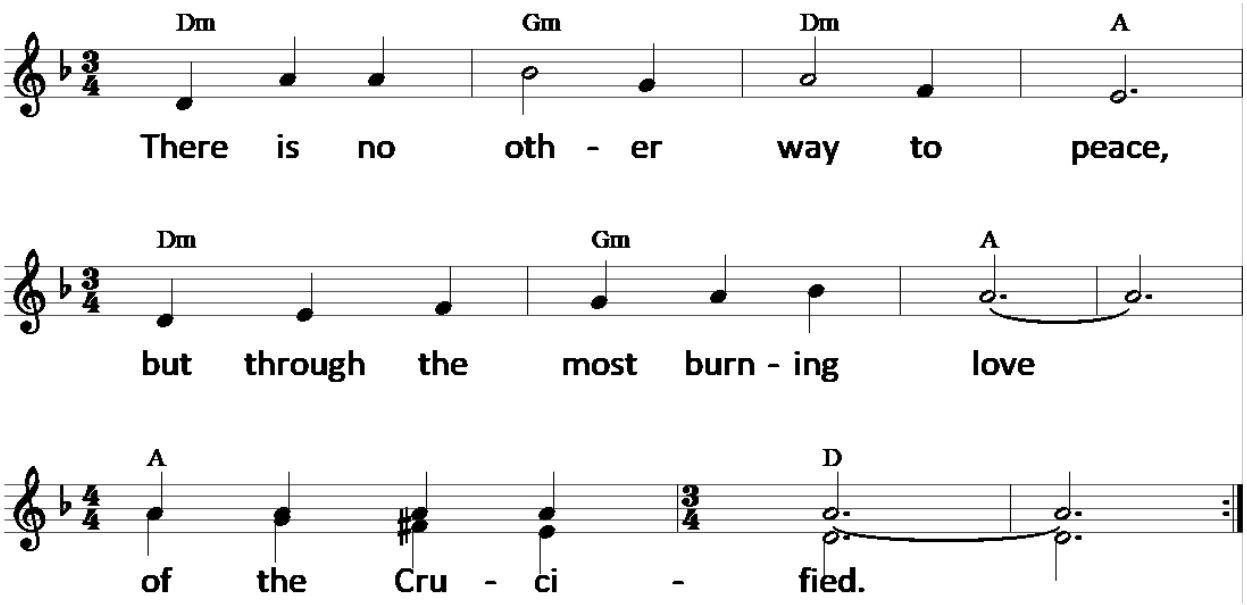
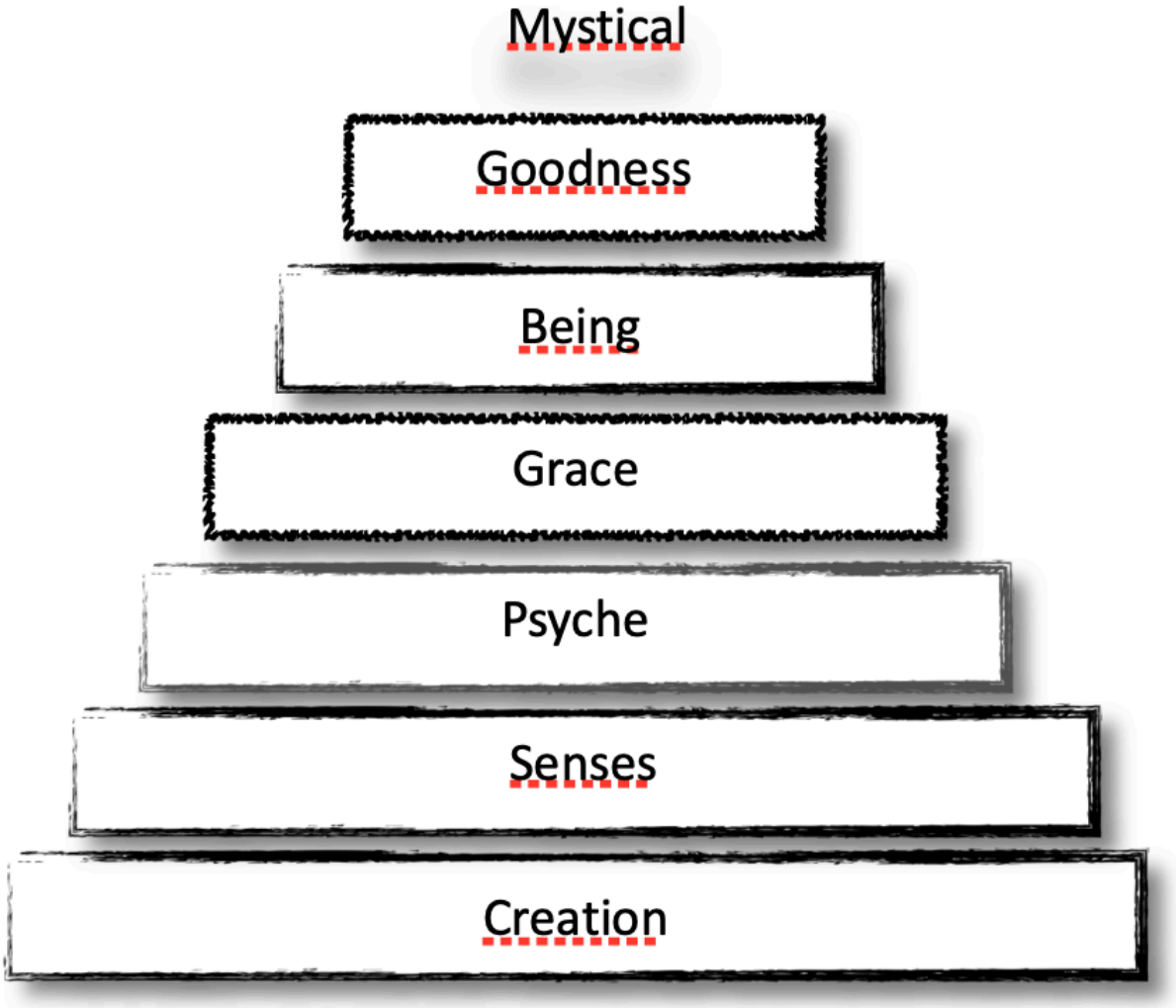


Steps of the Journey

Here begins
the contemplation
of the poor one
in the desert.



Happiness is nothing other
than the enjoyment of the highest good,
and since the highest good is above us,
we cannot find happiness without rising above ourselves,
not by a physical journey
but by a journey of the heart.
But we cannot be elevated above ourselves
unless a superior power lifts us up.
No matter how well-ordered the steps
of our interior life may be,
nothing will happen if divine aid does not accompany us.
But divine aid comes to those
who pray from their heart humbly and devoutly.
Therefore, prayer is the mother and the well-spring
of the upward movement into God.

When we pray we are given the light
to recognize the steps of the journey into God.
The universe itself may serve as a ladder
by which we can reach out to God.
Next we must enter into our inner reality.
And finally we must pass beyond that
by raising our eyes to the Source itself.
And this will bring us to rejoice in getting to know God
and to stand in awe before God's majesty.

This is a three-day journey
in the solitude of the desert.
This is a triple illumination of a single day:
the first is like dusk,
the second like dawn,
and the third like noon.

On the journey into God, all three illuminations ought to be used
so that God will be loved
with one´s whole mind,
one´s whole heart,
and one´s whole soul.

In each of the above-mentioned ways
we consider God through a mirror or in a mirror.
Humanity ought to be led
to the quiet of contemplation.

Corresponding to the six steps of the journey into God
there are six levels by which we ascend.

At creation humanity, indeed, was made fit
for the quiet of contemplation.
Therefore, God placed the first human being
in a paradise of pleasures.
But turning from the true light to a changeable good,
the first human was bent over through a personal fault,
and the entire human race became bent over by original sin,
and does not see the light of heaven
without the aid of both grace and justice.

All this comes about through Jesus Christ,
who by God has been made
wisdom and justice and sanctification and redemption.

No one arrives at wisdom
except through grace, justice, and knowledge;
so no one arrives at contemplation except by means of
profound meditation,
a holy lifestyle,
and devout prayer.

Journey of the Heart

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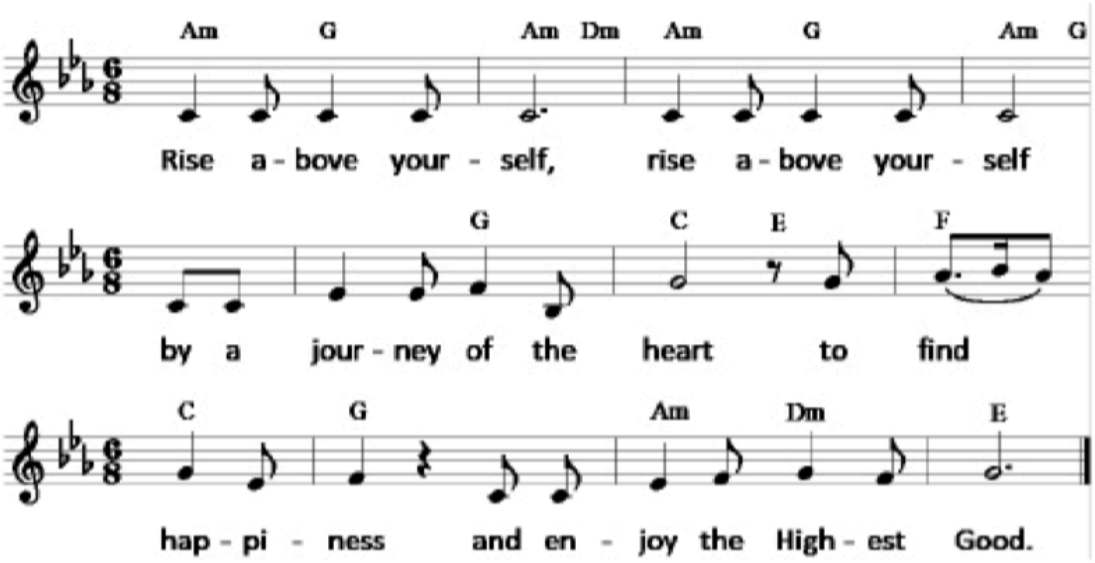

Creation

Now let us put the whole of the sensible world
before us as a mirror.
For in the greatness and beauty of created things,
their Creator can be seen and known.

The supreme power, wisdom, and goodness
of the Creator
shine forth in created things.

Therefore, anyone who is not illumined
by such great splendors in created things is blind.
Anyone who is not awakened by such great outcries is deaf.
Anyone who is not led from such effects
to give praise to God is mute.
Anyone who does not turn to the Source
as a result of such signs is a fool.
Therefore, open your eyes,
alert your spiritual ears,
unlock your lips,
and apply your heart
so that in all creation
you may see, hear,
praise, love and adore,
magnify and honor your God
lest the entire world rise up against you.

On the other hand, it will be a cause of glory for the wise
who can say in the words of the prophet:
You have given me delight, O Lord, in your deeds,
and I shall rejoice in the work of your hands.
How wonderful are your works, O Lord.
You have made all things in wisdom,
the earth is filled with your richness.
(Psalms 92 and 104)

In all Creation

Text: St. Bonaventure, *Journey into God*, Ch. 1

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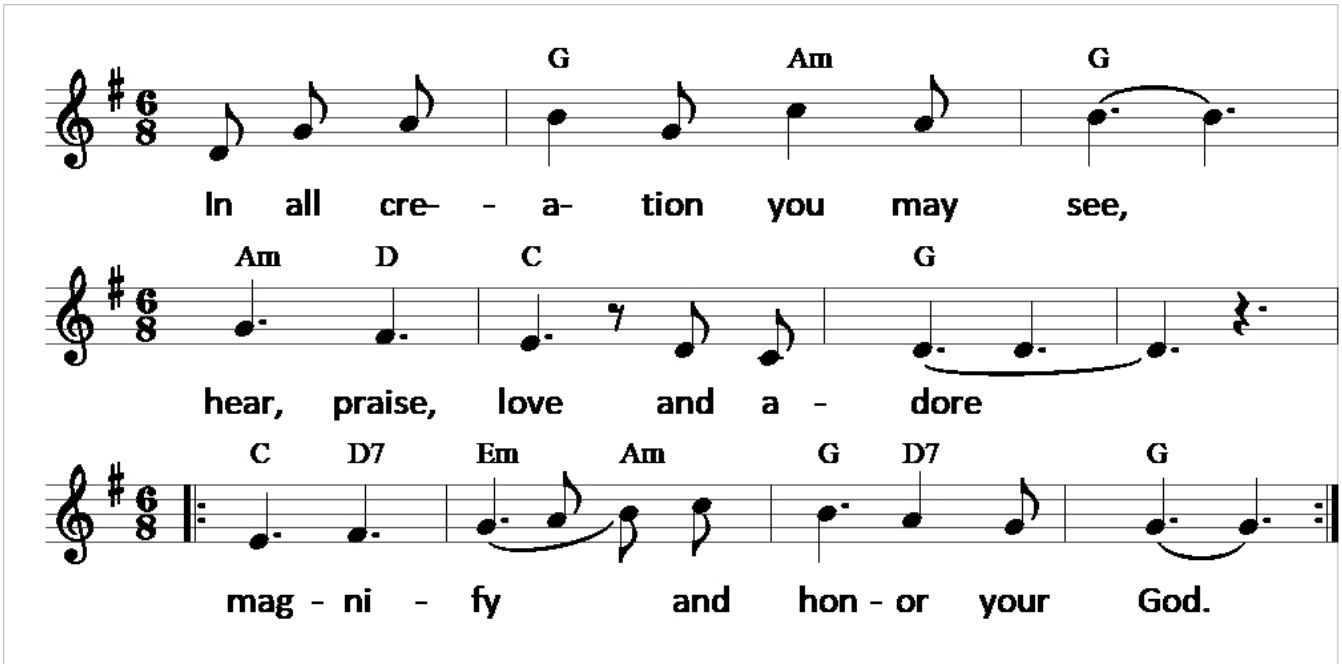

Senses

We ought to be led to contemplate God
in all those creatures
that enter into our consciousness
through our bodily senses.
It should be noted that this world enters the human person
through the doorways of the five senses
by which we become
aware of,
delight in,
and react to
objects of sense experience.

Now pleasure follows from the awareness of an object,
for the senses delight in an object that is perceived.
This delight comes either
from its beauty, as in the case of vision,
or sweetness, as in the case of smell and hearing,
or from its healthful quality as in the case of taste and touch,
for all pleasure flows from proportion.

Awareness and delight are followed by an immediate reaction
through which one distinguishes
not only whether a thing is white or black,
and not only whether it is healthful or harmful,
but one determines why this object gives pleasure.
And in this act,
one asks about the cause of the enjoyment
which the senses derive from the object.
When we ask why an object is beautiful, sweet, or wholesome,
the cause for this is found
in a proportion of equality.

Now this is a vestige
in which we can see our God.

If, therefore, it is in the nature of all things
to generate a representation of themselves,
they clearly proclaim that in all things,
as in mirrors,
we can see the origin of the Son
eternally emanating from God, the Father.

Likewise, the impression that gives delight suggests
that there is a first beauty, sweetness, and wholesomeness.
In it is found
the highest proportionality and equality
in relation to the one who generates it.

According to St. Augustine,
"Delight is the union of two beings
that are proportionate to each other."
Therefore, it is only in God that one finds that
which is supremely beautiful, sweet and wholesome.
And this, with an intimacy and in a fullness,
transcends every need.
It can be seen clearly
that it is in God alone
that the true fountain of delight
is to be found.
So it is that from all other delights
we are led to seek this one delight.

We can conclude
that all creatures in this sensible world
lead the contemplative to the eternal God.
For creatures are shadows, echoes, and pictures
of that first, most powerful, most wise,
and most perfect Divine Being.
They are divinely given signs, copies or illustrations
of the invisible things of God.

Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord
who has lifted us out of the darkness
into His marvelous light.

Fountain of Delight

Text: St. Bonaventure, *Journey into God*, Ch. 2

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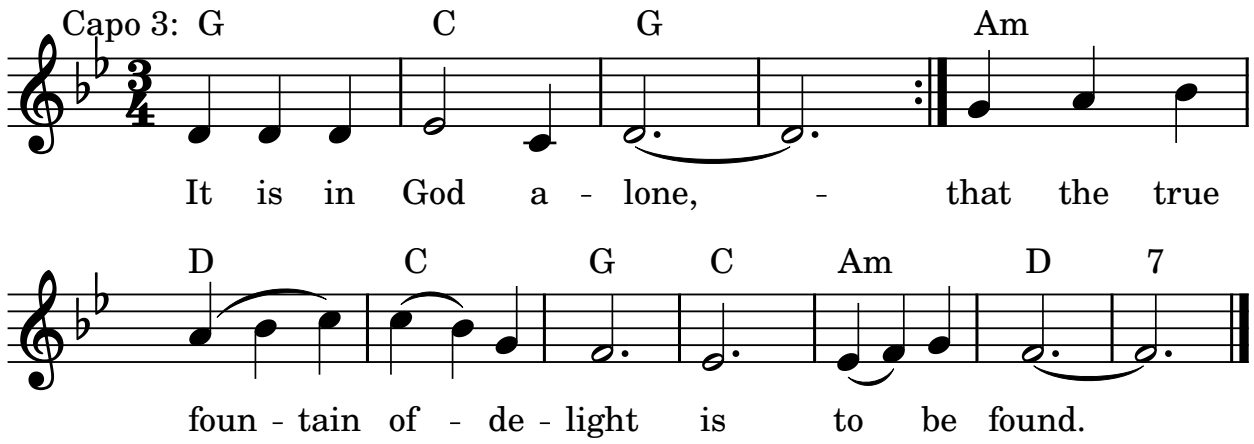

Psyche

The two preceding steps have brought us to a point
where we can enter again into ourselves,
that is, into the psyche itself
in which the divine image shines forth.

Enter into yourself and recognize
that your psyche loves itself most fervently.
But it cannot love itself if it does not know itself.
And it would not know itself unless it remembered itself,
for we do not grasp anything with our understanding
if it is not present to us in our memory.
From this you see that the psyche possesses a threefold power:
memory, intellect, and will.

Now consider the operation of these powers
and their relation to each other.
Here you can see God
through yourself
as through an image.

The function of memory is to retain and to represent things.
Memory holds
past things by recall,
present things by reception,
and future things by means of anticipation.
Through these operations of memory,
it becomes clear that the psyche itself is an image and sign of God
so present to itself,
and having God so present to it,
that it actually grasps God and
potentially "has the capacity for God
and the ability to participate in God." (St. Augustine)

The function of the intellect is seen
in its understanding of words,
sentences,
and conclusions.
The intellect understands the meaning of words

when it comprehends
what each thing is by means of a definition.
Our intellect grasps the meaning of a conclusion in the truest sense
when it sees that it follows necessarily from the reasoning process.
For example: “If a person is running, a person is moving.”

The function of the will is seen in
deliberation,
judgment,
and desire.
Deliberation consists in inquiring
whether this thing is better than that thing.
But a thing is said to be better
only because of its closeness to the best.

But closeness to the best is measured in terms of similarity.
No one can know, therefore,
whether one thing is better than another
without knowing that this thing has a greater resemblance to the best.
And no one knows whether something is more like another
without knowing that other.
Therefore, it is necessary that
the idea of the highest good
is engaged in deliberation.

Moreover, a sure judgment takes place through some law.
And no one judges with certitude by virtue of a law
without being certain that the law is right.
Therefore, in making its judgments,
our deliberative power is
in contact with the divine laws.

Finally, desire tends above all to that which moves it the most.
And that which moves it the most is
that which is loved the most.
And that which is loved the most
is happiness.
But happiness is attained only by reaching the best and ultimate goal.
Therefore, human desire is directed at
nothing but the supreme Good.
The power of the supreme Good is so great
that nothing else can be loved by a creature
except through a desire for the supreme Good.

Behold, therefore, how close the psyche is to God,
and how, through their functions,
memory leads to eternity,
intellect leads to truth,
and will leads to the highest Good.

Furthermore, if one considers the order, origin, and relation
of these powers to one another,
one is led to the most blessed Trinity itself.
For intellect emerges out of memory as its offspring,
because we come to understand only
when something which lies in the memory
emerges to the forefront of consciousness.
From memory and intellect,
love is breathed forth
as the bond that unites them.
These three are in the psyche as
memory, intellect, and will.
These are consubstantial, coequal, of the same age,
and mutually interpenetrating.

Therefore, when the mind reflects on itself
it rises to the consideration of the blessed Trinity
in such a way that whatever is in one is in the others,
but one is not the other,
and all three are one God.

Truth within Yourself

Text: St. Bonaventure, *Journey into God*, Ch. 3
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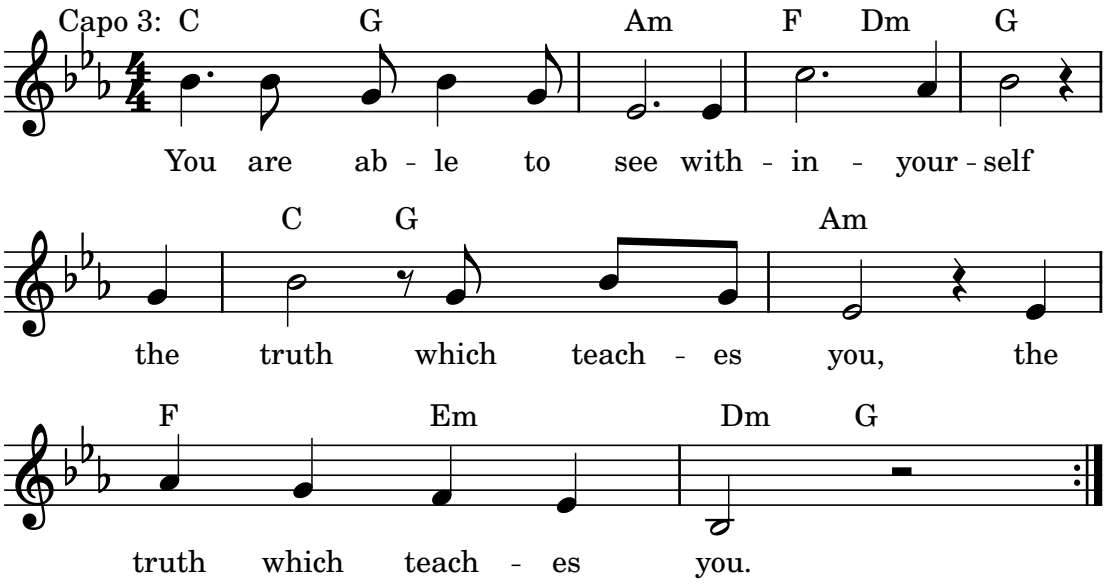

Grace

After it has been shown
that God is so close to our psyche,
it is surprising that there are so few people
who are concerned
with contemplating the Eternal Source
within themselves.
Totally immersed in deceptions,
the human person is unable
to reenter into itself
as the image of God.

So it is that, no matter how enlightened one might be
one cannot enter into oneself
to delight in the Lord
except by means of the mediation of Christ.
But we do not draw near to this door unless we
believe in Christ,
hope in Christ,
and love Christ.

Therefore, our psyche must be clothed
with the three God-virtues
by which we are
purified,
illumined,
and unified.

When in faith
we believe in Christ
we recover our spiritual senses of hearing and of sight.
When in hope
we yearn to receive the inspired Word,
because of this desire and affection,
we recover our spiritual sense of smell.
When in love
we embrace the incarnate Word,
receiving delight from Him and passing over to Him in ecstatic love,
we recover our spiritual senses of taste and touch.

With our spiritual senses restored,
we now see, hear, smell, taste, and embrace our Spouse.
We can now sing like the spouse in the Canticle of Canticles.
And this level no one knows
except one who receives it,
for it consists more in the experience of affections
than in rational considerations.
It is at this level where the interior senses have been restored.

We are disposed for spiritual ecstasies through
devotion,
wonder,
and joy.
From the abundance of devotion
we become like a column of smoke
filled with the aroma of myrrh and frankincense.
From the overflowing sense of wonder
we become like the dawn, the moon, and the sun
that lift us up in wonder
as we contemplate the Spouse.
Through the superabundance of joy
we are brought to a fullness of delights
and rest totally upon the Beloved.

When our spirit has been brought into conformity
with the heavenly Jerusalem,
our spirit is sacredly ordered
so that it can ascend upward.
For no one enters into that city
unless that city has first descended into the person's heart
by means of grace.
Our spirit is sacredly ordered
by the restored image
and by the God-virtues,
the enjoyment of the spiritual senses,
and the ecstasy of bliss.
In this way our spirit is adorned with nine attributes
when within it the following are found in an appropriate order:
announcing, declaring, leading,
ordering, strengthening, commanding,
receiving, revealing, and anointing.
From all this, God is seen as
all in all

when we contemplate God in our psyche
where God dwells
through the gifts of the most generous love.

At this level of contemplation
the divinely given sacred Scriptures are particularly helpful.
All of sacred Scripture teaches
how to be purged, illumined, and unified,
and we return to our interior
where we see God in the splendor of the Saints.
In them, as in our bed, we sleep in peace
while the bridegroom pleads that we should not be awakened
until we are ready.

Flooded with all these lights,
we —like a house of God— are inhabited by divine Wisdom.
We are made to be
a daughter of God,
a spouse,
and a friend.
We are made to be
a member,
a sister,
and a coheir
of Christ, the Head.
We are made into the temple of the Holy Spirit.
And without this Spirit we cannot know the secret things of God.

Therefore, let us be rooted and grounded in love,
so that we might comprehend
with all the saints
what is the length of eternity,
the breadth of generosity,
the height of majesty,
and the depth of that discerning wisdom.

Rooted in Love

Text: St. Bonaventure, *Journey into God*, Ch. 4

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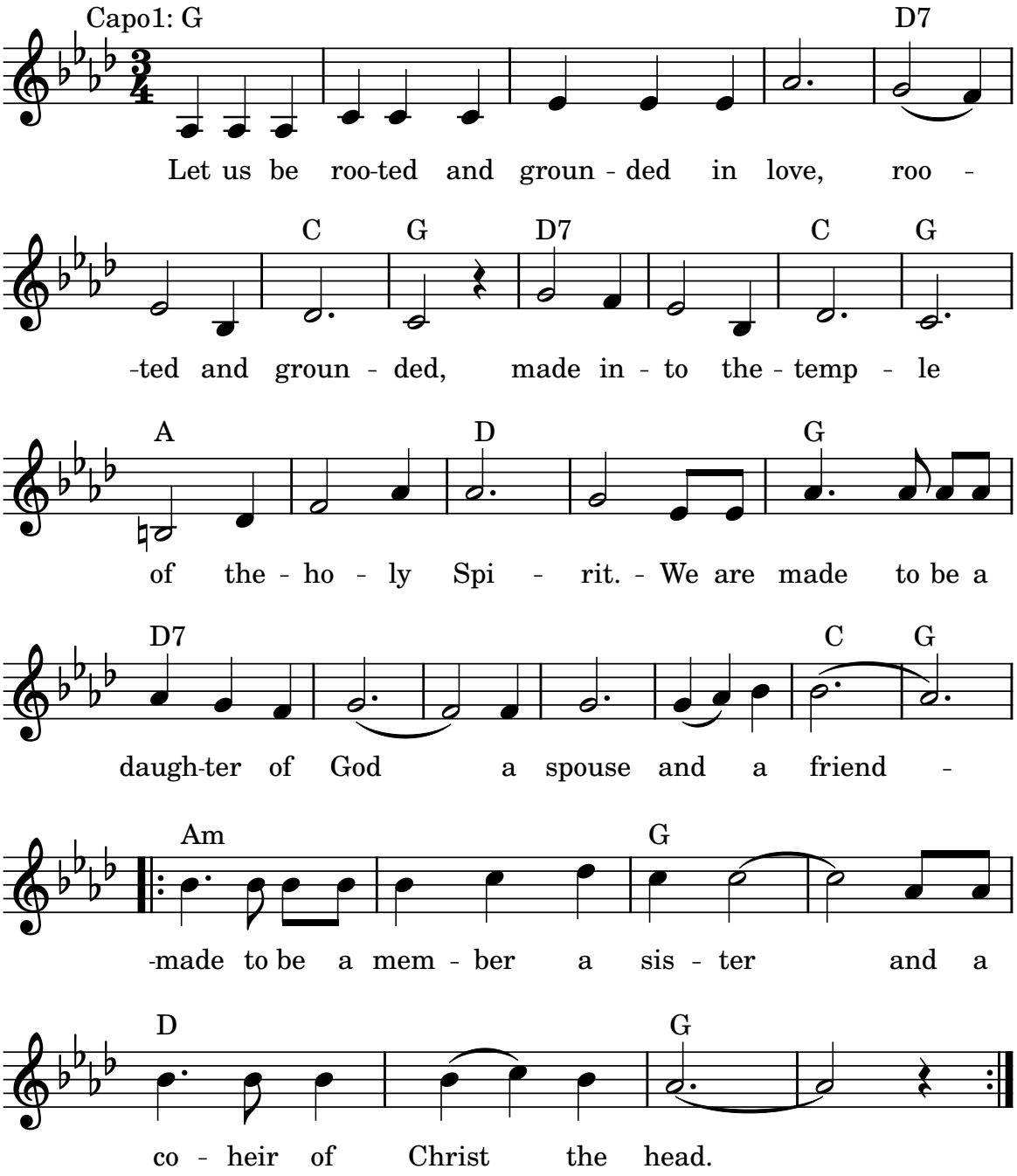

Being

It is possible to contemplate God
not only outside ourselves and inside ourselves
but also beyond ourselves.

We understand two modes of contemplating
the qualities of God.
The first concerns the essential attributes of God
and fixes our attention on Being Itself,
saying that *The One Who Is*
is the first name of God,
recognizing that being itself is so thoroughly certain
that it cannot be thought not to be.
For the most pure being occurs only in full flight from non-being
just as nothing is in full flight from being.
Therefore, as total nothingness possesses nothing of being,
so, on the contrary,
being itself possesses nothing of non-being.

How remarkable, then, is the blindness of the intellect
which does not take note of that which it sees first
and without which it can know nothing.
Just as the eye, when it focuses on colors,
does not see the light through which it sees other things,
or if it sees it, pays no attention to it.
And it does not understand that this darkness itself
is the highest illumination of our mind,
just as when the eye sees pure light
it seems to it that it sees nothing.

Therefore, think of the most pure being,
and you will see that it cannot be thought of
as something received from another.
For this reason it is thought of as first in every sense
since it does not come into being from nothing,
nor does it come from some other being.
Also you will understand this pure being
to be totally lacking in non-being,

and hence as having neither a beginning nor an ending,
but as eternal.
Also it appears to you to possess nothing else
but being itself.
Hence it is in no sense composed, but is most simple.
It appears also to have nothing of potentiality
since whatever is potential in some way
possesses something of non-being.
Hence this being is supremely actual in the highest degree.
It appears also to have no defect and, therefore, as most perfect.
Finally it appears to have no diversity and,
therefore, it is supremely one.
That being, therefore,
which is pure being, simple being, and absolute being
is the first, the eternal, the most simple,
the most actual, the most perfect,
and the supremely one being.

These things are so certain
that their opposites cannot be conceived of by anyone
who understands what is meant by being itself.

Here you have something to lift you up in wonder.
For being itself is both first and last,
eternal and most present,
most simple and greatest,
most actual and unchangeable,
most perfect and immense,
supremely one yet all-embracing.

Thus the first being is of necessity the final end,
the beginning and the consummation,
the Alpha and the Omega.

Therefore, because it is eternal, it is also most present.
Because it is eternal, it does not come from another,
and of itself it does not cease to exist,
nor does it move from one state to another.
Therefore, it has neither past nor future,
but its being is only in the present.

It is the greatest because it is most simple.
Since it is most simple in essence, it is greatest in power.
Because it is most actual it is most unchangeable.

Because it is most actual, it is pure act.
And whatever is pure act can neither acquire something new
nor lose something which it already possesses.
Therefore, it cannot be changed.

Because it is most perfect, it is immense.
And because it is most perfect,
nothing can be thought of beyond it
that would be better, more noble, or of greater dignity.
Hence nothing is greater than it.

Finally, because it is supremely one, it is all-embracing.
By reason of this,
it is the universal efficient, exemplary, and final cause of all things.

Looking over the way we have come,
let us say that the most pure and absolute being is first and last;
and, therefore, it is the origin and consummating end of all things.
Because it is eternal and most present,
it embraces and enters into all things that endure in time,
simultaneously existing as their center and circumference.
Because it is most simple and greatest,
it is within all things and outside all things,
and hence, from Alan of Lille
"it is an intelligible sphere
whose center is everywhere
and whose circumference is nowhere."
Because it is most actual and immutable,
therefore, as Boethius reminds us,
"remaining unmoved, it imparts movement to all things."
Because it is most perfect and immense,
therefore, it is within all things but is not contained by them;
it is outside all things but is not excluded;
it is above all things but not distant;
it is below all things but not prostrate.
Because it is supremely one and all-embracing, it is
all in all.

All in All

Text: St. Bonaventure, *Journey into God*, Ch. 5

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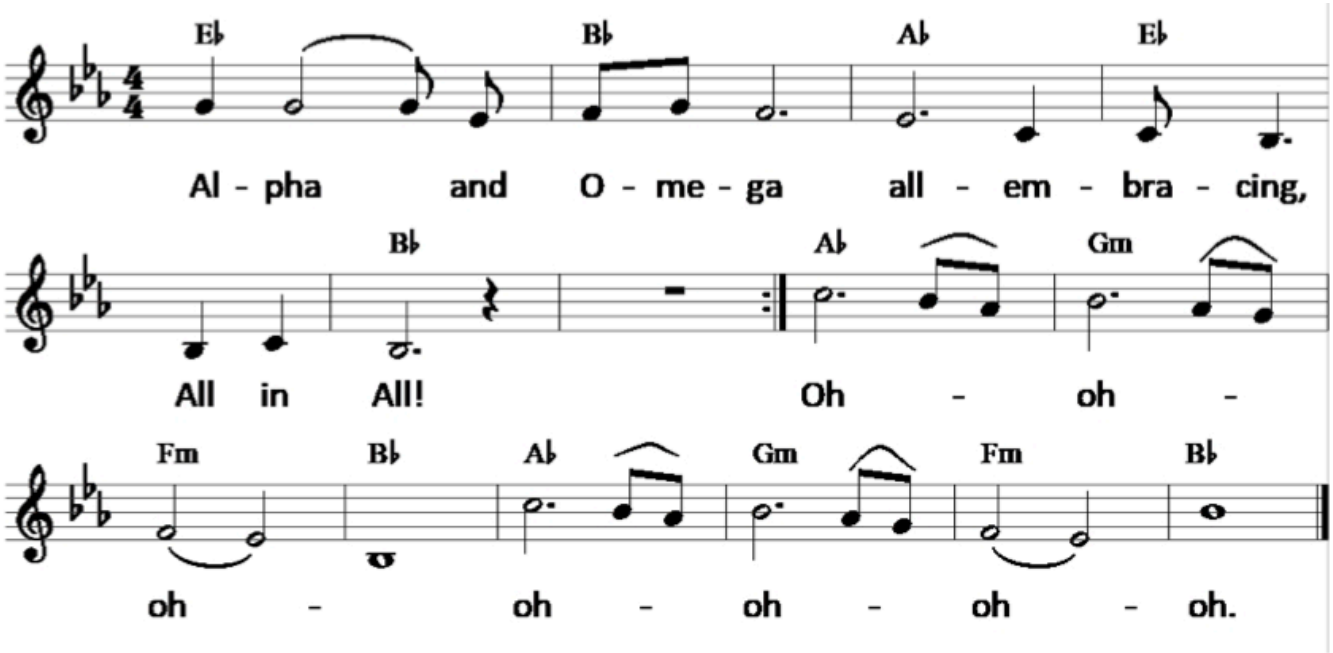

Goodness

See and take note
that the highest good
is that beyond which nothing better can be thought.
And this is of such a sort
that it cannot be thought of as not existing,
since it is absolutely better to exist than not to exist.

The supreme good is supremely self-diffusive.
But the highest diffusion does not exist unless it is
substantial and personal,
free and necessary,
lacking nothing and perfect.
That diffusion in time
which is seen in creation
is a mere point or a center
in comparison to the immensity of the eternal goodness.
Therefore, it is possible to think of another greater diffusion,
namely, that sort of diffusion
in which the one diffusing itself communicates
the whole of its substance and nature to the other.
Therefore, it would not be the highest good
if it lacked this communicative ability
either in reality or in thought.

Therefore, if you are able to see the purity of that goodness,
you will be able to see
that goodness is the pure act of a loving principle,
a love that is free and a love that is due,
and a love that is a combination of both.
The fullest diffusion is found
in the diffusion of the Word
in which all things are spoken
and the diffusion of the Gift
in which all goods are given.
The supreme communicability of the good demands necessarily
that there be a Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
And in these persons

it is necessary that there be supreme communicability.
And because of supreme communicability there must be consubstantiality;
and from supreme consubstantiality
there must be supreme conformability;
and from these there must be supreme coequality;
and because of this there must be supreme coeternity;
and from all of the above there must be supreme mutual intimacy
by which each is necessarily in the others
by reason of their supreme interpenetration.
And one acts with the others
in a total unity
of substance, power, and activity
within the most blessed Trinity itself.

But as you contemplate these things,
do not think that you comprehend the incomprehensible.
For you still have something to consider
that will lead you to a state of dazzled admiration.
For here we find the highest communicability
together with the property of the persons,
highest consubstantiality together with the plurality of natures,
highest conformability together with distinct personalities,
highest coequality together with order,
highest coeternity together with one following the other,
the highest intimacy together with mission.
Who would not be rapt in wonder
at the thought of such marvels?
But we know most certainly that all these things
are involved in the most blessed Trinity
if we raise our eyes to that superexcellent goodness.

But when you think of them in relation to one another,
you have something that will raise you
to the highest sense of wonder.
Therefore, you must take all this into consideration
if you wish to ascend through admiration
to awesome contemplation.

We must come to admire
the essential and personal attributes of God
in the unity of the person of Christ.

Be amazed that in Christ
there is personal union together

with a trinity of substances and a duality of natures.
And total harmony exists together with plurality of wills.

Our perfect illumination is found
when we see humanity made in the image of God.
And we have reached something perfect
when, at the same time, we see in a single glance
the first and the last,
the highest and the lowest,
the circumference and the center,
the Alpha and the Omega,
the caused and the cause,
the creator and the creature.
Here we reach the high point of our illuminations
on the sixth step as on the sixth day.
Nothing further remains but the day of rest.

See the Good

Text: St. Bonaventure, *Journey into God*, Ch. 6
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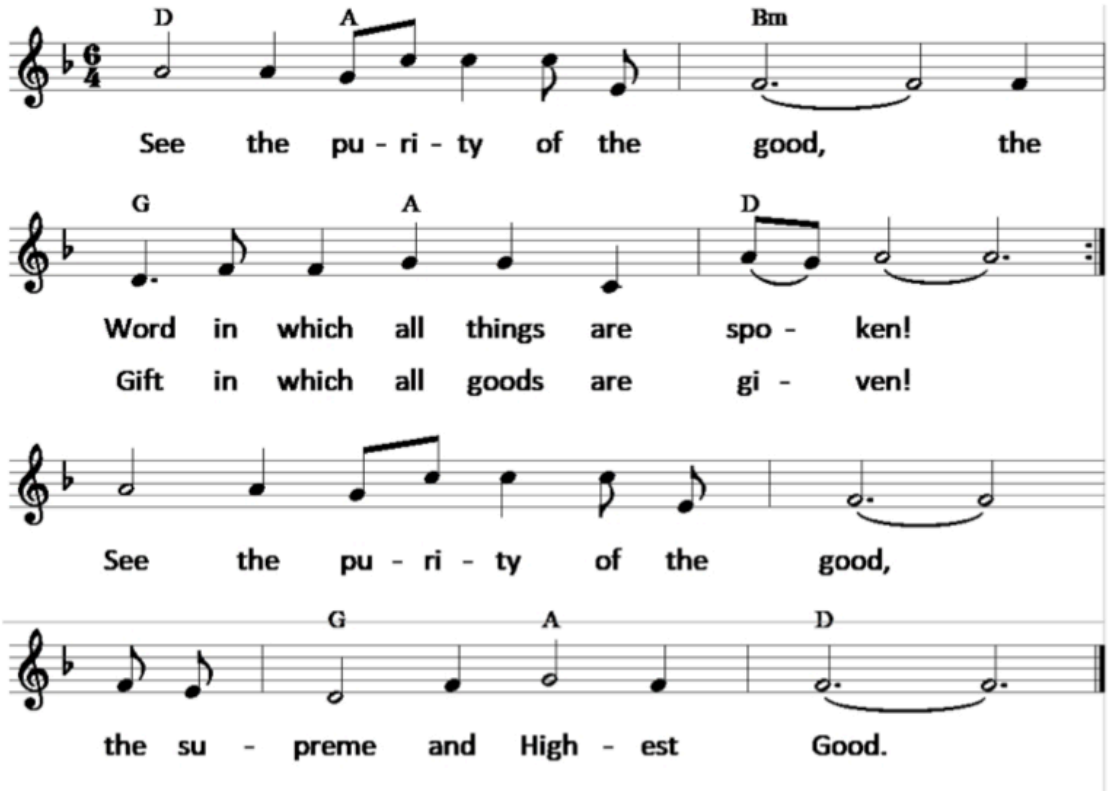


Mystical Experience

We have covered these six meditations
by which we arrive at peace.
It is here that the true person of peace
rests in the quiet within.
The six meditations are compared
to the six wings of the Seraph
by which the truly contemplative person
is filled with the light of heavenly wisdom
and can soar on high.
They are also like the first six days
during which one needs to be trained
so as to finally arrive at the Sabbath of rest.

When we have contemplated all these things,
it remains for us to pass over and thus to transcend
not only the sensible world
but even ourselves.
And in this passage,
Christ is the way and the door,
the ladder and the vehicle.

Anyone who turns fully to face this mystery
with faith, hope, and love,
devotion, wonder, joy,
appreciation, praise and rejoicing,
will behold Christ hanging on the Cross.
Such a person celebrates the Passover with Christ.
This person may then rest with Christ in the tomb,
as one dead to the outer world,
yet experiencing, in as far as possible in this pilgrim state,
what was said on the cross to the thief
who was hanging there with Christ:
This day you will be with me in Paradise.

All this was shown also to blessed Francis when,
in the bliss of contemplation on the top of the mountain
where I reflected on the things I have written here,

a six-winged Seraph fastened to a cross appeared to him.
This I myself and several others
have heard about from his companion
who was with him at that very place.
Here he was carried out of himself in contemplation
and passed over into God.
And he has been set forth as
the model of perfect contemplation.
Through Francis, God invites all truly spiritual persons
to this sort of passing over.
.
If this passing over is to be perfect,
all intellectual activities must be given up,
and our deepest and total affection
must be directed to God and transformed into God.
But this is mystical and very secret
which no one knows except one who receives it.
And no one receives it except one who desires it.
And no one desires it
but one who is set aflame in the very marrow
with the fire of the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, since nature and even personal effort
are helpless in this matter,
little attention should be given
to investigation and much to zeal;
little to speech but much to interior joy;
little to words or writing and all to the gift of God,
namely the Holy Spirit;
little or no attention should be given to the creature
but all to the creative essence,
the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

So with Dionysius we cry out to the Triune God:
"O Trinity, lead us to that which is supremely unknown,
to the light beyond lights,
and to the most sublime height of mystical knowledge.
There new mysteries lie hidden
in a superluminous darkness of a silence
that teaches secretly
in total obscurity
and a darkness
in which all things shine forth."
This was addressed to God.

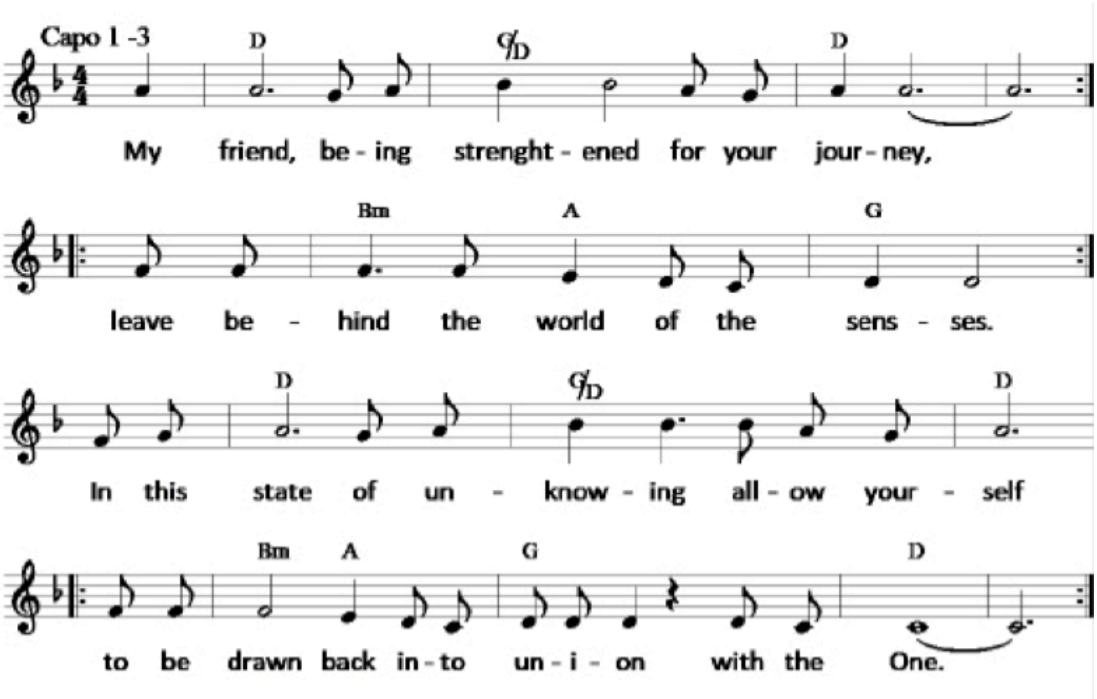
But to you we can say with Dionysius:
"My friend,
being strengthened for your journey,
leave behind the world of the senses and the intellect,
all visible and all invisible things,
and in this state of unknowing,
allow yourself to be drawn back into union with the One.
Thus, leaving all things
and freed from all things,
in a total and absolute ecstasy
of one who has been liberated,
transcending yourself and all things,
you shall rise up
to the superessential radiance
of divine darkness."

Now if you ask how all these things are to come about,
ask grace, not doctrine;
desire, not intellect;
the groaning of prayer and not studious reading;
the Spouse, not the teacher;
God, not a human being;
darkness, not clarity;
not light, but the fire that inflames totally
and carries one into God
through ecstatic fervor and blazing affections.
This fire is God,
and God's furnace is in Jerusalem.
And Christ enkindles it in the heat of his burning passion.
Only the one who loves this death can see God.

Let us die, then,
and enter into this darkness.
Let us silence
all our cares, our desires, and our perceptions.
Let us pass over with Christ crucified
from this world to the Father.
Blessed be the Lord forever,
and let all the people say:
let it be, let it be.
Amen.

Here ends the journey into God

Union with the One

Text: St. Bonaventure, *Journey into God*, Ch. 7

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