

Scott, John Martin
Love letter
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John M. Scott, S. J.



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St. Meinrad

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DecidMed

WHAT are the three most exciting, thrilling, and satisfying words in the world?

The three little words that bring paradise to earth echo a divine refrain that returns like a haunting melody, "I love you."

At the sound of these magic words heaven opens its portals. Wonder-wide eyes sparkling like twin stars with love light from above become the gateway to Paradise. A single gaze sharp as a sword tip, or soft as candle flame sends heat lightning quivering through your pulse, thunder pounding in your veins. One glance sets your heart drumming like pony feet on the hard, dry earth of fall.

The man into whose soul beauty looks with calm, sweet eyes finds memory dancing like a compass needle. From the first flush of dawn to the crimson end of day's declining splendor, a name rings in his heart, making him tremble with joy.

He reads the eyes and studies the gestures of his beloved for guarantees of his exciting assurances. He devours her face and image, fixing it in his mind, that he may possess it forever.

His heart ticks off each moment, awaiting her return, and fills each minute with rhapsody and joy. The memory of his loved one is a golden thread woven into the tapestry of his life. Her personality a glowing fire against the blackness of time. Her voice a light bell stroking melody through the long emptiness. He remembers how her hand in his sent armies with banners charging through his veins. He remembers that first, breathless moment when beauty stirred a tumult in his soul that would never die.

"Down the days and down the night, and down the labyrinthine ways" of his own mind she walks, silent and serene. There is the sound of her voice, the movement of her hand, the peace in her eyes, and more than these, a strange ecstatic wonder he can never forget. Mystery, and tenderness, strength, and rapture, all these, and a strange, rare essence that reminds him of heaven. Like an invisible companion of childhood, she becomes more real than creatures of flesh and blood who surround him.

When love flows like a mighty river into our soul, it bathes the world in the glow of its radiance. Love, strong and powerful as an ocean tide sustains us in dark hours of hesitation and through dreary days dull with monotony and irksome with questioning doubts. Love makes each

moment a precious memory, each hour a lifetime, each day a glittering treasure.

Love, the psychologist tells us, is not a luxury, it is a necessity. Even a baby needs personal affection more than anything else. He must be mothered by a mother who is all his own. The need for love begins in infancy, and continues through life. With its first faint beating the human heart begins its deathless cry for love and friendship.

"It is doubtful," remarks the eminent theologian, "if anyone can entirely divest himself of the fundamental craving for love and attention. Some people do this exteriorly; but usually they suffer much interiorly over it, or the repression does some damage to their personality."¹

Our heart is made for love. Love, indeed, is the life of our heart. Francis W. Bourdillon sums up the truth with artistic skill:

*The night has a thousand eyes, and the
day but one,*

*Yet the light of the bright world dies with
the dying sun.*

*The mind has a thousand eyes, and the
heart but one;*

*Yet the light of a whole life dies, when
love is done.*

Our faculty of love is like a noble morning-glory, which rises from earth with the impulse to seek some object about which it can cling. If it gains support upon some giant oak, it will rise high in the air, put forth flowers that make music out of color, and so identify itself with its support that winter winds and summer storms only bind it firmer to the towering oak to which it clings.

Love you must. It is one of the greatest needs of your being. At first your love weaves itself into the lives of mother and father, of uncle and aunt. It clings to a teddy bear or a raggedy doll, a sail boat or a drawing set. Playmates and acquaintances expand the rim of affection, and then one day beauty walks into your life, and your heart skips a beat at the wonder of it all.

With masterly skill G. K. Chesterton sketches the cycle of love:—

*"I blessed the child; and hoped the blessing
would go with him;
And never leave him;
And turn first into a toy, and then into
a game,
And then into a friend,
And as he grew up, into friends,
And then into a woman."*

Human love is a great and precious treasure. It is the most intense human gratification here on earth. More than anything else our hearts crave love, and love more than anything else gives delight to the heart of man. An ever popular song puts this truth to music.

"Ah, sweet mystery of life, at last I've found thee.

Ah, I know at last the secret of it all.

All the longing, seeking, striving, waiting, yearning,

The burning hope, the joys, the bitter tears that fall.

For 'tis love and love alone the world is seeking,

For 'tis love and love alone that can repay.

'Tis the answer, 'tis the end of all our living.

For it is love alone that rules for aye."

Yet, despite the fascination and enchantment that is human love, a strange thing happens. The reach and extent of the human soul is so vast, so deep, so mysterious, that no other human soul can measure it fully. There are secret depths of the heart into which no human hand can reach. There are secret places of the mind into which no other human mind can completely look. Given

the strongest ties between husband and wife, mother and child, friend and friend, there remain longings and aspirations that escape formulation in words. "There are thoughts in my heart today that are not for human speech, but I hear them in the driving storm, and the roar upon the beach."

There is a certain loneliness in the lives of each of us. Yet all the while there is the craving to be known and understood, and loved just as we are, through and through, with no reservations, no concealments.

What then shall we do? To whom shall we go?

St. Augustine has the answer. "Our hearts were made for Thee, O God, and they are restless until they rest in Thee."

God it is Who looks into the round tower of my heart and reads aright those vague longings, those nameless tuggings that puzzle, even frighten me. Then despite it all, or maybe because of it all, He loves me. He made my soul so vast and deep that only He can plumb its depths.

This is not a discountenance of human love and friendship. Love and friendship are life's greatest treasures. The love you experience is a spark caught from the heart of God.

"A faithful friend," says the Holy Spirit in the Book of Ecclesiasticus, "is a strong defense, and

he who has found him, has found a treasure. Nothing can be compared to a faithful friend, and no weight of gold and silver is able to outweigh the goodness of his fidelity. A faithful friend is the medicine of life and immortality.”² Thus the Holy Ghost Himself gives testimony to the value of friendship.

“Without friends,” says Aristotle, “no one would care to live, even though he had all the goods of earth.” And the poet adds, “To be in Paradise alone, would be misery untold.”

Bishop John M. Molloy, writing on the occasion of his jubilee said, “I have been favored with the warm friendship of priests and people. I have prized that friendship as a most precious treasure—second only to that of our great High Priest, Jesus Christ. They are all in my mind and heart, and, better still . . . in my prayers. Their friendship has filled my life with wonderful, golden years. I pray that I may be worthy of their esteem until the note of jubilee is sounded on the other shore. My heart is bursting with gratitude to all of you; in thanksgiving to God Who has lavished His blessings upon me.”³

The greatest love among mortals, is, in fact, a faint reflection of the love of God. To console a wife who had lost her husband, Bishop Sheen reminded her: “In true married love, it is not so

much that two hearts walk side by side through life. Rather two hearts become one heart. That is why death is not a separation of two hearts, but rather the tearing apart of one heart."

"But be consoled," continues Bishop Sheen, "your love in the beginning came from God. As fire mounts upward, so part of your flesh is already at the Source of Love. The love you enjoyed was but a spark of which God Himself is the Flame. Thank God for the trusteeship of such love during a long companionship."⁴

"God," says St. John, "is love."

In the rhapsody of poetry Lonfellow exclaims:

*"Love is the root of all creation; God's
essence;*

*Worlds without number lie in His
bosom like children;*

*He made them for this purpose only,
Only to love and to be loved again.*

*He breathed forth His spirit into the slum-
bering dust,*

*And upright standing, it laid its hand on
its heart, and*

*Felt it was warm with a flame out of
heaven."*

"Love God" is the first and greatest command-

ment. It is the root of all creation. It is the purpose of life.

Remember that leading question in the Baltimore Catechism: "Why was man made?"

"Man was made to know God, to love Him, to serve Him in this world, and to be happy with Him forever in the next."

Notice the order in the answer. Knowledge comes first, then love. You can't love anyone or anything unless you first know them. And once you love, you will serve.

Knowledge, then, is most important. To love God, therefore, we must first know Him.

But how can we know God? He is invisible. He is a spirit.

The way for us to know God is through creatures. And by the word creatures we mean anything God has created. Since we come to know God only through creatures, their importance is evident. "Nothing is in the intellect," says Aristotle, "unless it has first been in the senses." At birth our minds are absolute blanks, "tabula rasa" as the philosopher would say. Blackboards with nothing on them.

Our Western Union telegraph lines keeping us linked with the outside world are our five senses. If you cut the telegraph lines, you receive no messages, no knowledge. If you cut the nerves that

go from your eyes and ears to your brain, your mind would never receive any messages from the outside world of light and sound.

Only through our senses do we come to know God. Only through our senses do we come to know the creatures God has created. They are as so many mirrors giving us faint reflections of His beauty and love.

Our minds cannot reach out at present and grasp God in the fullness of His splendor. Only in the dazzling brilliance of the beatific vision will we see God face to face. Though God is not visible to us now, He tells us about Himself in love letters.

The love letter God sends us is printed in flaming stars high overhead so that all who see may read. It is inscribed in the fragile beauty of the orchid, emblazoned in the scarlet glory of sunset, and sculptured in granite upthrusts of mountains rising like an arrow to the sky.

The man who looks upon creation as a love letter from above finds God everywhere. In the words of Ralph W. Emerson:

"Go where he will, the wise man is at home—

His hearth, the earth; his hall, the azure dome.

*Where his clear spirit leads him, there
his road,
By God's own light illumined and fore-
shadowed."*

Quiet beaver ponds ringed round with solemn spruce, myriads of stars beating with hearts of fire, white and topaz and misty red, the wind whispering its secrets to the tree tops—all these are sacramental things to teach the souls of men.

Joseph Addison tells us:—

*"The spacious firmament on high,
With all the blue ethereal sky,
And spangled heavens, a shining frame,
Their great Original proclaim.
Th' unwearied sun, from day to day,
Does his Creator's power display,
And publishes to every land
The work of an Almighty hand.*

*"Soon as the evening shades prevail,
The moon takes up the wondrous tale,
And nightly to the listening earth
Repeats the story of her birth;
While all the stars that round her burn,
And all the planets in their turn,
Confirm the tidings as they roll,
And spread the truth from pole to pole.*

*"What though, in solemn silence, all
Move round the dark terrestrial ball?
What though nor real voice nor sound
Amid their radiant orbs be found?
In Reason's ear they all rejoice,
And utter forth a glorious voice,
Forever singing, as they shine,
'The hand that made us is divine.'"*

Father G. Ellard in his book, "Christian Life and Worship," remarks: "Under the hands of the Church, all nature becomes a 'Lift up your heart' (Sursum Corda) and a 'Bless ye the Lord' (Benedicite Domino). Everywhere she makes men see God, and she fills the whole world with His charm and radiance."⁵

"Thee, God, I come from, to Thee go." The world is all for me—that it may lead me to God. Therefore, fill the soul with all created beauty, so that the vastness of the sky, the limpid waters, the growing tree speak to us of God.

God rules the world. See Him in the beauty of creation; see the order in the world with its laws, the earth in its revolutions, the planets in their orbits. Review the vastness of creation, so that the soul may expand with God. The universe has a language, which, though silent, is eloquent.

Only through creatures do we come to know

and love God. Only through creatures can we serve God. Hence the need of creatures. I must use creatures in order to attain to God. It was for this purpose God made creatures and filled the earth with them.

In psalm 103 we read: "The earth shall be filled with the fruit of Thy works; bringing forth grass for cattle, and herbs for the service of man; that Thou mayst bring bread out of the earth; and that wine may cheer the heart of man. He made the moon for seasons; the sun knows his going down. Thou has appointed darkness, and it is night; the sun rises, and man shall go forth to his work, and to his labor until the evening. How great are Thy works, O Lord? Thou hast made all things in wisdom; the earth is filled with Thy riches. So is the great sea which stretches wide its arms. There the ships shall go. All expect of Thee that Thou give them food in season. What Thou givest them, they shall gather up when Thou openest Thy hand. They shall all be filled with good."

Chief among the good things the Lord has given us, and foremost in contacting us with the universe around us are our eyes.

The eye is a super Kodak snapping pictures and relaying them to your brain faster than any telephoto news service ever dreamed of. No Speed

Graflex ever had so many built-in, foolproof attachments: automatic light meter to measure candle power; self-adjusting diaphragm, the iris; and a spontaneous focusing apparatus. To keep the lens bright and polished, automatic windshield wipers—your eyelids—take over the window-washing job. In one twentieth of a second a blink of the eyelids chases dirt down the drain and gives you a freshly washed outlook on life. Standing guard over the whole system are protective dust collectors — your eyebrows — never-sleeping sentinels keeping vigil on the brow of thought.

Every minute of your wide-awake hours your 20th Century Newsreel camera is taking motion pictures in flaming Technicolor. Free of charge, you have feature programs with latest attractions, glorious romance and starlit skies, faces of loved ones, and galaxies of splendor.

To get a picture of sunrise over New York or Yosemite's Half Dome or the Taos Horse Tail Dance in New Mexico, just open your eyes. You don't have to bother with chemical formulas, fine-grain developers, F-3 Sensitive Paper, or filter lights. Suddenly, mysteriously, and graciously, a picture of Yosemite is yours.

To make startlingly clear the tremendous value of your built-in camera, try this experiment. Close your eyes for five minutes and try to continue your

daily tasks. You find yourself in a world of baffling darkness and mysterious unrest. The faces of your loved ones vanish like river mist. Unseen stairways threaten your equilibrium. A footstool becomes a booby trap. Dark menace threatens your every footstep.

If you were born blind, deaf, and without the cooperation of your five senses, you would live in a world of deathly silence, stifling blackness, and utter void. Not a single idea would ever brighten the long night of your days. Then would those words of Aristotle come true in all their stark reality, "Nothing is in the intellect unless it has first been in the senses in some way or other."

"At the sound of your voice, heaven opens its portals to me—so goes a song set of heartbeats. If the song rings true, Bell Telephone is doing yeoman service for St. Peter, swinging open portals to happiness.

Those three most satisfying little words, "I love you," are the sweetest music to float from the magic strings of the violin in your throat, your vocal cords. No Hammond Organ packs such sweep of range in such economical space.

A savage shout of flaming anger rising like a war drum, the soft crooning of sleepy-time melodies, the staccato insistence of the tobacco auction-

cer—all these from vocal cords about half an inch in length. A trained singer can round out thirty-two distinctly different notes. Jascha Heifetz would require ten times that length of violin string to produce half that number of similar tones.

“How strange and wild to hear the clock suddenly take life and speak the hour.” Thus the poet refers to the tower clock. Stranger still that emotions quivering with desire, ideas dynamic as electric pulsations, thoughts subtle as cosmic rays and elusive as quicksilver can be caught and put into words. Ideas lofty as the sky take voice and thunder down the arches of the years.

Some folks may have ears that spring impertinently from their head like the handles of a soup tureen. Yet even these human antenna for grabbing sound waves have an intricacy of design and purpose that speak of God. Whittaker Chambers in his story of the Hiss Case tells us that his break with communism began with a simple gaze at the human ear. But listen to his own words.

“I date my break from a very casual happening. I was sitting in our apartment on St. Paul Street in Baltimore. It was shortly before we moved to Alger Hiss’ apartment in Washington. My daughter was in her high chair. I was watching her eat. She was the most miraculous thing that had ever happened in my life. I liked to watch her

even when she smeared porridge on her face or dropped it meditatively on the floor. My eye came to rest on the delicate convolutions of her ear—those intricate, perfect ears. The thought passed through my mind: No, those ears were not created by any chance coming together of atoms in nature (the communist view). They could have been created only by immense design. The thought was involuntary and unwanted. I crowded it out of my mind. But I never wholly forgot it or the occasion. I had to crowd it out of my mind. If I had completed it, I should have had to say: 'Design presupposes God.' ”⁶

Wonderful, indeed, is the body God has given us. But more wonderful still are the powers of our mind.

If Cecil B. DeMille took a ten-thousand-foot technicolor motion picture of your past life, made a print of it, and stuck it under your hat, you would think that mighty spectacular.

The good Lord did this and more.

All a film can do is absorb through a glass lens the faces of the poor, the gestures of the proud, shadows in the jungles, and on the moon, glistening machines, marching armies, vast multitudes. The sound track captures the raucous shout of the gaucho, the rumble of a volcano, the lyric flight of song.

Here is where you excel a newsreel. Memory steps in and takes the sights and sounds relayed by your Western Union system of nerves, catalogues them, indexes them, makes cross references, files, and preserves them where rust does not consume nor moth devour.

*Into my heart's treasury
I slipped a coin
That time cannot take
Nor a thief purloin—
Oh, better than the minting
Of a gold-crowned king
Is the safe kept memory
Of a lovely thing.*

—Sara Teasdale

That vacation you enjoyed last summer is not a thing entirely of the past. It still lives, held glowing bright in the living flame of memory. When you come to the end of a perfect day, you have something to cherish forever. The snapshots and kodachrome slides and 16 mm motion pictures filed in memory.

You return from Montana where towns have names that ring like freshly minted silver dollars; Big Timber, Black Eagle, Lodge Grass, Silver Bow. The music of the names goes into your very blood

stream, and each pleasant scene grows fresh before you as the green of your own valley.

If citizen of the world you are, then memory will let you see again proud Istanbul, and London's lofty towers; Algiers, a million diamonds in the dark; the Congo throbbing with the beat of drums.

Into a quiet moment of your day the thunders of Beethoven's "Eroica" roll upon your soul in mighty crescendos, or softly as the morning twilight come the melodic strains of "Auf Wiederseh'n Sweetheart" or the exciting tempo of "Blue Tango." Or thoughts of home descend like a quiet benediction when day is done. No wonder the poet says:

*A thing of beauty is a joy for ever;
Its loveliness increases; it will never
Pass into nothingness; but still will keep
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet
breathing.*⁷

Memory is a March of Time featuring your "Lifetime in Review" and recalling the glory of the moment when you were king for a day, with all the glory of your dreams to make you great.

Memory recalls those pensive moments when solemn thoughts stood quietly as a brooding dove

as you listened to a river's voice grow soft and still until it slipped into the night to tell its secrets to the sea. A June morning dawns again, warm as the clasp of a little girl's hand. "A hushed pool holds a star to its heart." All these treasures are yours, to guard in the round-tower of your heart, to keep forever and a day.

"The real good of friendship," remarked Chesterton, "is the recollection of the past joys we have had with them." As a lightning flash in the night stops the sliding of a river, so memory stops the onward rush of time, and holds sacred the recollection of the minute. Those moments of charm we have enjoyed with our friends do not vanish with the tick of the clock. Memories of old like flowers unfold, and the warmth and the glow of them never grow cold. Like a fountain leaping up into the sunlight, they raise our courage skywards. Like a brilliant rainbow, happy recollections span the drab, grey days of monotony with bright colors.

To the memory everything is a perpetual now. The memory represents past joys as present. The happy days are not vanished. Their kernel is ever present in evergreen memory. With happy memories in your treasure house, you can take them from their hiding place, and turn them over in

your mind, drawing new joy from them. In that delightful book, "Seventeenth Summer," Maureen Daly says, "Having nice thoughts in your head, it is so pleasant to pull them out and think them all over again."

Gifts are tokens of love. The gift of memory is an ambassador telling us of God's love and concern for us. And since God loves us with an endless love, it is natural to find this great gift equalled by still another. The gift of imagination.

Memory calls up the delights of the past. Imagination paints dreams for the future. Memory catalogues the past. Imagination draws blueprints for the future. Imagination digs raw iron ore from the earth and creates a Buick Roadmaster. Imagination dips into a puddle of paint and gives the world a Madonna. Imagination forges great, swinging words for dreams to live by. The crashing cymbals, droning bassoons, and glittering cadenza of Tchaikovsky's "Nutcracker Suite" were first faint whisperings and muted echoes in the soul of the composer.

It is always the ideal, the dream that comes first. Man dreamed of a mighty skyscraper that would pierce the clouds and rise majestic in the light of the morning sun. Man took that dream and gave it a backbone of stone and sinews of

steel. The Empire State Building rose like a giant from the sidewalks of New York to dispute the passage of the clouds.

Man dared to dream of sailing through the air like the eagle that circles high over the mountain-top. Man put wings to that dream and powered it with a motor. Today giant Douglas Stratoliners and Clipper Ships cruise the skyways—man-made eagles of commerce and transportation.

Imagination is inherent in our nature; that is why children live in such a world of wonder. If we recapture these powers we shall find the truth uttered by Sara Teasdale:

*Life has loveliness to sell—
All beautiful and splendid things,
Blue waves whitened on a cliff,
Climbing fire that sways and sings,
And children's faces looking up
Holding wonder like a cup.*

*Life has loveliness to sell—
Music like a curve of gold,
Scent of pine trees in the rain,
Eyes that love you, arms that hold,
And for your spirit's still delight,
Holy thoughts that star the night.*

"If at any time we cease to wonder," remarks a well known spiritual writer, Dom Ascar Vonier, "the fault must be our own. The world in which God has placed man is an eternal wonder; admiration is the only thing which establishes a kind of equality and proportion between man and the vast world in which man lives. We do not understand the marvels of the universe. We see very little of the universe; we live, each one of us, in a very small corner of it; the universe is not ours, but it becomes ours through admiration."

From the majestic Teton mountains of Wyoming to the smiling pansy in your flower box, there is wonder and mystery. Every moment of our life we dwell in God's wonder world. If we see not the magic, the fault must be our own. "To me," said Walt Whitman, "every hour of light and dark is a miracle. Every cubic inch of space a miracle."

Contemplating the vast scintillating depths of the midnight sky arched over and around him, Abraham Lincoln said, "I can see how it might be possible for a man to look down upon the earth and be an atheist, but I cannot conceive how he could look up into the heavens and say there is no God."

St. Bernard of Clairvaux found God in the

leaves of the beech trees, and Joyce Kilmer reminds us that only God can make a tree.

St. Therese, the Little Flower, loved lightning and thunder. After a thunderbolt crashed in a near-by field, she wrote, "Far from feeling the least bit afraid, I was delighted; it seemed God was so near."

Joseph M. Plunkett reminds us:

*I see His blood upon the rose
And in the stars the glory of His eyes,
His body gleams amid eternal snows,
His tears fall from the skies.*

*I see His face in every flower;
The thunder and the singing of the birds
Are but His voice—and carven by His
power
Rocks are His written words.*

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was made nothing that was made. In the beginning God contemplated His own essence, and saw all the possibilities of imitating it in creatures. God is the exemplar and model of all created loveliness. He, Himself, is the source of all beauty in the universe.

The bulk of far-flung continents, the pressure-heavy depths of the ocean, the everlasting harmony of the twinkling stars the great winds waltzing down from the regions of Chaos and Immensity; the pounding roar of the surf on granite boulders as the great sea smacks his foaming lips; all these tell us of Him Who holds the ocean in the palm of His hand, Who made the stars and calls them all by name.

The more perfect and beautiful the organization of living creatures, the more they show forth the love and skill of their Creator. The more they imitate His uncreated perfection.

A giant redwood rising like a monarch on a mountain side spreads its huge branches to contest the passage of the clouds. It wrestles with Herculean winds in storm locked nights. It rests in the mellow glow of moonlight on a midsummer's night. It is a letter in red and green to tell us: "Only God can make a tree."

Like the old master painter in the far away hills who pours out his heart in a symphony of color to tell his love and devotion, The Master Painter and Artist Supreme etches the story of His love for us in every flower and blossom.

When the forests are a mist of green-gold leaves, and the meadows embroidered with daisies,

like bright stars fallen from the sky, we love to walk in the deep, moist woods and through the open places radiant with clusters of flowers. So intricate in design, and lovely in pattern are they, they seem to belong to the scented blossom banks of heaven.

We rejoice in the unspoiled beauty of flowers. They are symbols of beauty, and innocence, honor and glory. They make music out of color, and sign to us of the beauty and loveliness of God. If there are sermons in stones, and books in babbling brooks, there are odes and elegies in flowers.

Flowers are the thoughts of God. It is God Who shaped the fragile beauty of the orchid, the open faced loveliness of the pansy, the enduring simplicity of the geranium.

When God created flowers He made them as so many mirrors to reflect His beauty and loveliness. Each lilac, each tulip, each gardenia is a cheerful messenger of color and form to speak of God's beauty, and kindness. No wonder Father John B. Tabb wrote:

*"I see Thee in the distant blue;
But in the violet's dell of dew,
Behold, I breathe and touch Thee too."*

When spring comes skipping over the hills on

tulip-sandaled feet, beauty takes you by the hand, and leads you through cool dells where violets blossom like stars, and daffodils are sparkling suns. Around you the magical hue and shape of distant mountains rise upward like an arrow. And as you stand in the valley which throbs with wave upon wave of color, and light, and fragrance, you slip in close to God, having come to Him by the old, swift avenue of beauty.

Our God is a God of joy, of happiness, and love. You catch the tinkle of His voice in the laughter of the stream. You hear His footsteps in the measured cadence of the Bolero. You hear the echo of His laughter in the light hearted music of Mendelssohn. You sense His grandeur in the climatic thunders of Beethoven. You experience His loveliness in the waltzes of Strauss. You thrill to His majesty in the epic symphonies of Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms.

God, our Lover, writes us love letters and hides them in every tree and brook. His love is so delicate He inscribes it in the fragile beauty of the orchid. His love is so vast He emblazones it in the flaming stars far over our head so all may read.

Our task here on earth is to find God, and love Him in all things. If we have a love of God in

our heart, the difficulties of life will not vanish, but they will become stepping stones leading us to the great, white throne of God. Therefore fill the soul with all created beauty so that flaming rose, the purple mountain majesties, the lacy handiwork of the waterfall all speak to us of God.

"Thee, God, I come from. To Thee, go." The world is all yours that it may lead you to Love Itself. Therefore review the vastness of creation so that your soul may expand with God. Let your mind be a mansion for all lovely forms, that heaven may flow upon your soul in many dreams of high desire.

As the great world spins forever down the ringing grooves of change, its unceasing thunder and eternal waves speak to you of Him Who lights the stars in the heavens, and opens the blossom of the hawthorn. "Long fields of barley and of rye that clothe the world and meet the sky," tell you of Him Who listens to our prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread."

All nature has a language, which, though mute, speaks of God.

"According to St. Paul," states Bishop Holzner, "the whole creation of the world, and all human history, are nothing but a movement of love from the heart of God, and back again to God's heart."⁸

St. Augustine in his Confessions asks: "But what is it that I love when I love You, my God? Not the beauty of any bodily thing, nor the order of the seasons, nor the brightness of the light that rejoices the eye, nor the sweet melodies of all songs, nor the sweet fragrance of flowers and ointments and spices; nor bread nor honey. None of these things do I love in loving my God. Yet, in a sense, I do love light, and melody, and fragrance and food and embrace when I love my God.

"And what is this God?" I asked the earth and it answered: "I am not He"; and all things that are in the earth made the same confession. I asked the sea and the deep and the creeping things, and they answered: "We are not your God; seek higher."

I asked the winds that blow, and the whole air with all that is in it answered: "I am not God." I asked the heavens, the sun, the moon, the stars, and they answered: "Neither are we God whom you seek."

And I said to all the things that throng about the gateways of the senses: "Tell me of my God, since you are not He. Tell me something of Him."

And they cried out in a great voice: "He made us."

My question was my gazing upon them, and their beauty.⁹

Every moment of our lives we breathe, stand, or move in the temple of God; for the whole universe is that temple. We see the imprint of His hand in all creation.

Ask of the bright worlds round us as they roll in the everlasting harmony of their circles; and they shall tell you of Him whose power launched them on their course. Ask of the mountains that lift their great peaks among and above the clouds; and the snow-capped summit of one shall seem to call aloud to the snow-clad top of another in proclaiming the fact that God laid their foundations from the dawn of creation.

Ask of the ocean's waters; and the roar of their boundless waves shall chant from shore to shore a hymn of benediction to God who said to them: "Hitherto shall ye come, and no further."

Ask of the rivers; and as they roll onward to the sea, they bear ceaseless tribute to the everlasting power of God who struck open their fountains and poured them down through the valleys.

Each day a bit of magic is waiting for you. A charming love letter from God tucked away in unsuspecting places. You will find love letters in the forest at dusk when the trees are all in shadow

and filled with mysterious colors that have no name. You will find them in the patient prairie that sweeps out beyond little towns and loses itself in the immensely distant horizons.

When darkness wraps her mantle of silence around the shoulders of the world, a wizard moon steps out of a mountain top to orchestrate a soft ballet of moonbeams on a silver lake. "Silently, one by one, in the infinite meadows of heaven, blossom the lovely stars, the forget-me-nots of the angels." As you look, you know you are honored to be witness of so much majesty, and you thrill to know that God is writing you a love letter.

Perhaps you will make your own the prayer of Father Patrick Peyton, "Dear Father in heaven, I love you. I am happy that I am your little child. I am grateful to You for letting me become so friendly with You. I love You and all the beautiful creatures of earth which You have made for us. The sun, and the moon, and the stars, the ocean, the flowers, and music; the innocent face of a child, or of a beautiful woman, or a noble man—these all are only little images telling me how surpassingly beautiful You are."¹⁰

Certainly it is right and just, proper and salutary to give thanks to the Lord always for sending us each hour of every day a love letter.

OUTLINE OF "LOVE LETTER" PAMPHLET

1. *Desire for love.*

a) But *Human* love is *not enough*.

b) *Only GOD can satisfy*. "Our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee."—St. Augustine.

aa) *This is not a discountenance of human love.*

bb) Rather *human love is a spark of the divine*. "The love you enjoyed was but a spark of which God Himself is the Flame."—Bishop Sheen.

2. *LOVE OF GOD—Purpose of Creation.*

But *to Love God* you must first—

3. *KNOW GOD*—"Nothing is loved unless it is first known."

How shall we know God?

4. *THROUGH CREATURES*—"Nothing is in the intellect, unless it is first in the sense." —Aristotle.

(Beatific Vision, direct vision of God, NOT ours here.)

a) *PERSONAL CREATURES* { —Five Senses
 { —Mind { Memory
 { Imagination

b) *WORLD AROUND US* — “Under the hands of the Church, all nature becomes a ‘Lift up your hearts’ (*Sursum Corda*).”
—Fr. Ellard.

5. Conclusion—Each hour a love letter awaits you, to tell you of God’s love.

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