

July 15, 1985

We are the aroma of Christ to God.

—2 Corinthians 2:15

I guess this is sort of like being a smell for God: the fragrance of our lives ascending to God. And not only an aroma: “You are a letter of Christ, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts” (2 Cor 3:3).

I pray for the grace to live each day as a message from Christ—to live as one sent into the world each day to be Christ.

To be one with the Father.

August 1, 1985

Though an army encamp against me,
my heart shall not fear;
though war rise up against me,
yet I will be confident.

One thing I asked of the LORD,
that will I seek after:
to live in the house of the LORD

all the days of my life,
to behold the beauty of the LORD,
and to inquire in his temple.

For he will hide me in his shelter
in the day of trouble;
he will conceal me under the cover of his tent;
he will set me high on a rock.

—Psalm 27:3–5

Psalm 27 has been such a consolation and source of joy for me. Every line speaks with such strength. It is all so full, so rich—a wealthy psalm. Truly this is the psalm of the single-hearted; so much trust in God is felt in this song. Perhaps that is one of the reasons why this psalm touches me so much. It is the prayer of the intent upon knowing God.

“Come,” my heart says, “seek his face!”

Your face, LORD, do I seek.

Do not hide your face from me.

—Psalm 27:8–9a

God, it is you that my heart speaks of all the day. Every glance of mine is to find you more deeply. All I see and hear are only reminders of your glory. There are times when it feels as though you are hiding your

face, and I beg you to stay visible. I need to see you, to feel your presence. I will try to stay single-hearted.

August 2, 1985

Now is the acceptable time; see, *now* is the day
of salvation!

—2 Corinthians 6:2 (emphasis added)

In return . . . open wide your hearts also.

—2 Corinthians 6:13

“Now” is a good word! If something is important, do it now, especially something as important as loving. As Paul says to the Corinthians, “Open wide your hearts.”

I’m trying to hear God saying this to me this morning as I sit here looking at my mountain. My time is almost up here at Malibu. I feel a little sad because I could have used it better. Yet I must go home to St. Scholastica, and it is there that I am called to open wide my heart and use my time well.

August 6, 1985

I am not able to carry all this people alone, for they are too heavy for me.

—Numbers 11:14

I smiled a deep smile at Moses's complaint for I have felt that so often myself. I think of the community that God has called me to love, to go home and love, and I echo the complaint of Moses, *God, I cannot carry this community by myself, for they are too heavy for me.* So I return rather to help you, God, carry them—and of course, it will be well to remember that they have to carry me along too.

Tonight is my last night in California—I'm at Jeannie Sullivan's house—and tomorrow, I fly to Tulsa.

Jeannie and I had a long beach walk this morning after Mass and then lunch on the pier. Now I'm having some quite time at Joseph and Mary Retreat while Jeannie works a few hours in her office, which is just a few blocks from here.

As I return home I think of so many ways that I could have used my time better, and I ache for I fear I am bringing back to Arkansas the same restless self that I left with. Yet something in me feels different. It

is too early to tell yet what it is; perhaps, by the grace of God, I have received one little grain of humility, for I truly have had new insight into my weakness and littleness and I am so aware of my desperate need for God's wings to be sheltering me.

I am ready to go home; wonderful things have happened to me: new vision, new love, friends—among those friends Bernie, Aaron, Jeannie, and Nadine stand out as special. God is the most special—she is forever becoming a friend.

August 7, 1985

For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation and brings no regret, but worldly grief produces death.

—2 Corinthians 7:10

It is morning! Pale bits of sunlight keep trying to break through the clouds, and they seem successful in holding it back. The clouds are like me. How often the light of God tries to break through to my life, the depth of God tries to rise to the surface, but like a cloud I hold it back.

In a few minutes Jeannie and I will go to Mass and then on to the airport. Oh God, put your wings

over this airplane's wings. Cover us all with your grace as we fly. I will fly to you, God, in Tulsa. Whenever I go it's to you.

And in my prayer this morning, Paul blesses me with this good news: "For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation and brings no regret, but worldly grief produces death" (2 Cor 7:10).

I rejoice because I trust you utterly (2 Cor 7:16), my God, and I am very happy knowing I can rely on you completely.

Sorrow for God's sake leads to repentance. Repentance means that we are led to take a second look at our lives—to look again, perhaps to change what we see so that we can live with converted hearts.

August 11, 1985

We beg you . . . not to neglect the grace of God that you have received.

—2 Corinthians 6:1 (JB)

This passage is powerful: grace, pure and simple, is God's life. Paul is asking me to be faithful with God's grace—not to neglect it. In the *Scale of Perfection*,

Walter Hilton says that grace will be given if it is asked for. Grace will drive away the darkness. Asking for grace is asking for life, God's life.

It will be given if asked for. Today, once again, I will ask for this life of God—grace—and then I will try to be faithful to remembering it. I will try not to neglect it.

August 12, 1985

For he shelters me under his awning
in times of trouble;
he hides me deep in his tent,
sets me high on a rock.

—Psalm 27:5 (JB)

This psalm sank deep into my heart today, and I asked myself, *Do I really feel that tenderly protected by God, or are these just pretty words that I pray mechanically?*

I do believe that I am hidden deep in his tent; my problem is that I live so fragmented that I am not always present to this constant protection—this constant presence escapes my notice because I am “doing” other things. Then when I read about being

sheltered under this awning, the intimacy of it all comes back to me.

August 15, 1985

The one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. . . . And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance.

—2 Corinthians 9:6, 8a

Such wisdom here! I reflect on this “sowing” today as love. The more I am able to love, the more I will reap the benefits of loving—and the more I will notice the blessings that God sends.

August 17, 1985

High praise, Yahweh, I give you, for you have helped me up. . . .

His anger lasts a moment, his favor a lifetime;
in the evening, a spell of tears, in the morning,
shouts of joy.

—Psalm 30:1, 5 (JB)

What is high praise? I don’t think it necessarily means loud praise, but rather praise that has quality.

Praise in which you are *all there*, warm with gratitude for God's loving presence in your life.

At certain moments in my life I've felt this high praise—a lifting up of my heart to God in gladness—knowing, even as I lift up my heart, that it is Yahweh who is doing the lifting.

If there is anything that Christians need to relearn it is that God's anger lasts but a moment and his favor a lifetime. I say *relearn* because I believe the early Christians knew that, but somewhere along the way we lost that knowledge and started “overly” fearing God.

It is true that sometime “in the evening” there is a spell of tears as we realize who we could be, but with the morning our hearts rejoice over the new day and new chances to let our life be a blessing.

August 19, 1985

By your favor, O LORD,
you had established me as a strong mountain;
you hid your face;
I was dismayed.

—Psalm 30:7

It's true, God, I have felt your protection in so many ways; if you have wings, they've certainly been hovering over me.

I'm the one who goes weak over Psalm 27—that psalm of trust where I claim that I would not be afraid even if an army encamped against me. But then those other moments come, those moments when you seem to hide your face—they feel scary. I read Paul telling us to be “rooted and grounded in love” (Eph 3:17), and I realize that means at all times—good and bad—*to be rooted and grounded in love!* What would my life be like if it was truly rooted and grounded in love? It is sweet to imagine, but I would like all of this to go beyond imagination and be for a fact that way. Oh God, let it happen! I suppose I should be saying instead, “Macrina, let it happen.” I am the one who can refuse to allow my life to be rooted and grounded in love.

August 21, 1985

Only when we do not belong to ourselves do we become like Him who through love has reconciled us to himself.

—*The Philokalia*, p. 253

This little treasure from *The Philokalia* hit home today, reminding me of how I struggle with belonging too much to myself, how I (often unconsciously) fight being like God. I resist the call to live in God's image—I feel my resistance in all of the things and people I still turn to for comfort. Not that all comfort is wrong, but I do need to find my deep comfort in God—as Psalm 62 says.

Only in God is my soul at rest.

I believe this is more accurate than most of us will ever be able to admit, or maybe we can't admit it because we won't allow ourselves to experience it. How easy it is to allow oneself to be turned away from simple devotion to Christ (2 Cor 11:3).

Keep your heart alive to simple devotion to Christ.

August 30, 1985

Therefore let all who are faithful
offer prayer to you;
at a time of distress, the rush of mighty waters
shall not reach them.
You are a hiding place for me;
you preserve me from trouble;