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The Prayer of the Presence of God

Dom Augustin Guillerand

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For nearly a thousand years, monks of the Carthusian Order have withdrawn from the world so they can place themselves in the presence of God.

Alone in their cells, they pray, work, and take their meals, freed from worldly distractions and the cacophony of thoughts that course through your mind and mine, when, at the end of the day, we kneel down to pray.

A thousand years' silence has enabled the Carthusians to perfect a way of praying suited for the cloister, but it's also right for those of us whose obligations force us to work and pray in the rush and hurry of the world.

In these pages, the monk Augustin Guillerand reveals the secret of the Carthusian's remarkable prayer of the presence of God. Obviously, this way of praying excludes quick Our Fathers and hasty Hail Marys, but it also requires that we do more than pause and say our prayers slowly.

In fact, the Carthusians know that the prayer of the presence of God isn't primarily a question of speed…or even of speech. Like love, it's not so much a deed as an attitude — a habit of tranquil listening that allows God to enter our souls by all paths and to establish His presence there.

Failure to listen poisons love in marriages, and failure to listen poisons love of God.That's why the prayer of the presence of God is essential not just for monks, but for each one of us, no matter who we are or what our circumstances may be.

Yet how can we listen in a way that allows God to enter our souls? How can we even hear Him in the noise of our days and ways?

A thousand years of Carthusian experience provide sure answers to these questions. Although this is no step-by-step manual (listening can't be reduced to steps), you'll learn in these pages where you must begin and how to proceed if you're finally to bring to maturity in your own soul the habit of tranquil listening that's essential for all those who would know God and love Him as they ought.

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