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Lord God, I Am Dazzled at the Brightness of Your Light!

St. Anselm, Doctor of the Church

This moving excerpt from the St. Anselm's Proslogion (Cap. 14, 16, 26) addresses God as the Supreme Mystery who dwells in inaccessible light, source of all wisdom and goodness. It is used in the Roman Office of Readings for the liturgical memorial (feast) of St. Anselm of Canterbury on April 21.



My soul, have you found what you are looking for? You were looking for God, and you have discovered that he is the supreme being, and that you could not possibly imagine anything more perfect. You have discovered that this supreme being is life itself, light, wisdom, goodness, eternal blessedness and blessed eternity. He is everywhere, and he is timeless.

Lord my God, you gave me life and restored it when I lost it. Tell my soul that so longs for you what else you are besides what it has already understood, so that it may see you clearly. It stands on tiptoe to see more, but apart from what it has seen already, it sees nothing but darkness. Of course it does not really see darkness, because there is no darkness in you, but it sees that it can see no further because of the darkness in itself.

Surely, Lord, inaccessible light is your dwelling place, for no one apart from yourself can enter into it and fully comprehend you. If I fail to see this light it is simply because it is too bright for me. Still, it is by this light that I do see all that I can, even as weak eyes, unable to look straight at the sun, see all that they can by the sun's light.

The light in which you dwell, Lord, is beyond my understanding. It is so brilliant that I cannot bear it, I cannot turn my mind's eye toward it for any length of time. I am dazzled by its brightness, amazed by its grandeur, overwhelmed by its immensity, bewildered by its abundance.

O supreme and inaccessible light, O complete and blessed truth, how far you are

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from me, even though I am so near to you! How remote you are from my sight, even though I am present to yours! You are everywhere in your entirety, and yet I do not see you; in you I move and have my being, and yet I cannot approach you; you are within me and around me, and yet I do not perceive you.

O God, let me know you and love you so that I may find my joy in you; and if I cannot do so fully in this life, let me at least make some progress every day, until at last that knowledge, love and joy come to me in all their plenitude. While I am here on earth let me learn to know you better, so that in heaven I may know you fully; let my love for you grow deeper here, so that there I may love you fully. On earth then I shall have great joy in hope, and in heaven complete joy in the fulfilment of my hope.

O Lord, through your Son you command us, no, you counsel us to ask, and you promise that you will hear us so that our joy may be complete. Lord, I am making the request that you urge us to make through your Wonder-Counsellor. Give me then what you promise to give through your Truth. You, O God, are faithful; grant that I may receive my request, so that my joy may be complete.

Meanwhile, let this hope of mine be in my thoughts and on my tongue; let my heart be filled with it, my voice speak of it; let my soul hunger for it, my body thirst for it, my whole being yearn for it, until I enter into the joy of the Lord, who is Three in One, blessed for ever. Amen.

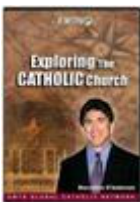
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