

## ORATIO

WHEN IN *lectio* and *meditatio* we experience being authentically addressed by God, we will naturally enter into *oratio*, our address to God. *Oratio* is the pouring out of ourselves to God in response to God's address to us. It is far more than the sanitized response we usually label prayer. *Oratio* is the deep cry of our heart to God. It may be a cry of joy and exaltation. It may be a cry of pain. It may be penitent or petulant, releasing or resistant, responsive or rejecting.

*Oratio* may be a point of resolution. We may find ourselves awakening to some point of our brokenness to which we were blind. We may arrive at the point of surrender for some long-held disobedience to God. We may come to a new level of commitment of our life to God.

Whatever form it takes, *oratio* is characterized by integrity. It is the honest expression of our thought, feeling, and desire to God, the outpouring of deep speaking unto deep.

## CONTEMPLATIO

AFTER WE HAVE HEARD God's address to us in *lectio*, wrestled with it in *meditatio*, responded to it in *oratio*, we come to the point of *contemplatio*. Here we simply wait in stillness before God. Having wrestled with God's encounter and poured ourselves out to God in response, we now seek to become pliable in God's hands. We cannot change ourselves. God is at work in us, and we need to allow God to do that work. If the encounter with God is genuine and if our response is real, then all we can do is wait upon the Lord.

But *contemplatio* is an active passivity. It is an active yielding of ourselves to God, a holding of ourselves open, receptive, responsive to whatever God chooses to give us, to do in us, or to do with us. *Contemplatio* carries us beyond the specific time and place of our *lectio divina*. It continues into the ebb and flow of our daily lives, especially in those areas of our being where God has addressed us. In our daily activities and relationships, then, we should especially endeavor to be yielded to the transforming presence of God.