



Blessed Be

December 2024

Welcome to this edition of Blessed Be. If you have anything you wish to contribute to Blessed Be, or any suggestions you'd like to make, please contact me at helenmacauley@gmail.com

We begin this edition with a seasonal contribution from Sheila Hawthorn:

Medieval German Christmas Carol

Maria walks amid the thorn,
Kyrieleison,
Maria walks amid the thorn,
Which sev'n long years no leaf has born, Jesus and Maria

What 'neath her heart doth Mary bear,
Kyrieleison,
A little child doth Mary bear,
Beneath her heart he nestles there, Jesus and Maria.

And as the two were passing near,
Kyrieleison,
Lo, roses on the thorn appear,
Lo, roses on the thorn appear,
Jesus and Maria

*And now a 7th century **Visigoth prayer** also from Sheila Hawthorn:*

Listen, daughter, and behold:

You have become a daughter of your Son, handmaiden of your Child, mother of your Creator, bearer of the most high Redeemer. The King has fallen in love with the splendour of your beauty and has deigned to prepare for himself a most pure dwelling in his world. Obtain for us, therefore, from him who, taken by longing for you, made you his mother, to pour into us the wondrous sweetness of desire for him, so that we remain dedicated to his service in this life, and our journey o'er, without chaos, we arrive with him who was born of you.

From the Orthodox liturgy, compliments of Sheila Hawthorn

The Creator, the Wisdom of God, draws near,
The mist of the prophet's promise is dispersed,
Joy clears the skies,
Truth is resplendent, the dark shadows are dispelled,
The gates of Eden are opened,
Adam dances in exultation:
Our Creator and God will fashion us anew.

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*In this season of "Bah humbug" some words of wisdom from the man who immortalized Scrooge, Charles Dickens:*

~Have a heart that never hardens, and a temper that never tires and a touch that never hurts.

~No one is useless in this world who lightens the burdens of another.

~Reflect on your present blessings – of which every man has many – not on your past misfortunes, of which all men have some.

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From the Quran, the surah of light (24:35) a key passage to many Sufis and Muslim philosophers:

Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. His light is like a niche in which there is a lamp, the lamp is in a crystal, the crystal is like a shining star, lit from the oil of a blessed olive tree, located neither to the east nor the west, whose oil would almost glow, even without being touched by fire. Light upon light! Allah guides whoever He wills to His light. And Allah sets forth parables for humanity. For Allah has perfect knowledge of all things.

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*Jeanne-Marie Bouvier de la Motte Guyon was born in 1648 into a noble family. Although she wanted to enter a convent, her parents married her to Jacques Guyon, to whom she had five children, two of whom died young. Her husband died in 1676. She taught 'spiritual passivity', and was suspected of 'quietism' (devotional contemplation and abandonment of the will as a form of religious mysticism). It was condemned by the Catholic Church as heresy. She was imprisoned, first in 1688, and then 1695-1703, some of which time she spent in the Bastille. She died in 1717. She believed in interior silence and the total surrender of the self to the divine essence. Here are some of her words:*

~If knowing answers to life's questions is absolutely necessary to you, then forget the journey. You will never make it, for this is a journey of unknowables - of unanswered questions, enigmas, incomprehensibles, and, most of all, things unfair.

~I have never found any who prayed so well as those who had never been taught how. They who have no master in man, have one in the Holy Spirit.

~Prayer is the key of perfection and of sovereign happiness; it is the efficacious means of getting rid of all vices and of acquiring all virtues; for the way to become perfect is to live in the presence of God.

~In your occupations, try to possess your soul in peace. It is not a good plan to be in haste to perform any action that it may be sooner over. On the contrary, you should accustom yourself to do whatever you have to do with tranquillity, in order that you may retain the possession of yourself and of settled peace.

~Silence allows God the freedom to work in us and to imprint his will and his pure love in us. When God invites us into silence, let us not talk, but when he leaves us free to say some words to him, let us say what comes naturally to us without looking for other words.

~When Our Lord said we must pray without ceasing, he was not asking the impossible: it is not a question of vocal prayer, which we cannot do continually, nor of meditation, which cannot be perpetual. However, there is a form of prayer that can be made at all times, in all places, and that nothing can interrupt: this prayer is a continual turning of the heart towards God.

~As one sees a river pass into the ocean, lose itself in it, its water for a time distinguished from that of the sea, till it gradually becomes transformed into the same sea, and possesses all its qualities; so was my soul lost in God, who communicated to it His qualities, having drawn it out of all that it had of its own. Its life is an inconceivable innocence, not known or comprehended of those who are still shut up in themselves or only live for themselves.

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Take Time.

Take time to think - it is the source of power.

Take time to play - it is the secret of perpetual youth.

Take time to read - it is the fountain of wisdom.

Take time to pray - it is the greatest power on earth.

Take time to love and be loved - it is a God-given privilege.

Take time to laugh - it is the music of the soul.

Take time to be friendly – it is the road to happiness.

Take time to give - it is too short a day to be selfish.

Take time to work - it is the price of success.

Take time to do charity - it is the key to heaven.

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~We live in two worlds...the world into which we were born, and the otherworld that was born within us. Both may be a blessing or a curse. We choose. ***Druid homily***

*George Herbert, 1593-1633, was a poet, parliamentarian and an Anglican priest. He died of consumption at age 39.*

*Matins*

I cannot open mine eyes,  
But Thou art ready there to catch  
My morning soul and sacrifice;  
That we must needs for that day make a match.

My God, what is a heart?  
Silver, or gold, or precious stone,  
Or star, or rainbow, or a part  
Of all these things, or all of them in one?

My God, what is a heart,  
That Thou shouldest it so eye, and woo,  
Pouring upon it all Thy art,  
As if that Thou hadst nothing else to do?

Indeed, man's whole estate  
Amounts (and richly) to serve Thee;  
He did not heav'n and earth create,  
Yet studies them, not Him by whom they be.

Teach me Thy love to know;  
That this new light, which now I see,  
May both the work and the workman show;  
Then by a sunbeam will I climb to Thee.

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~I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen: not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else.

C. S. Lewis, 1898-1963

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~A soft and gentle and thoughtful answer turns away wrath, but harsh and painful and careless words stir up anger. *Proverbs 15 1-2*

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Have a peaceful and blessed Christmas, and remember:

We are all flowers in the same garden. **Bahai saying**

