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*In Mundo,
sed non est de hoc Mundo*

Be Still ... and Know that I Am God!

It is well to reflect upon the fact that it is not necessarily the lure of evil that calls us into lonely and desolate places. It was not Satan that led Jesus Christ, the Anointed Messiah into the wilderness, but the Holy Ghost!

We tend to think that the Spirit will lead us among others for mission and witness, that the gifts of the Spirit will become operative in the social milieu.

In fact we may well find it entirely disagreeable, even repugnant, this thought of stepping out into wasteland; we may be tempted to think the experience is a waste of time, that we would be far more effective witnesses for the Lord were we preaching, or pursuing all manner of other religious activities, attending numerous retreat days, workshops etc. etc.

Such things may well be within God's plan of things for our lives, but it is far more likely that we ourselves will first be led into a barren desert, there to struggle with both external evil and the evil within ourselves.

The human soul needs the silence of the desert if it is ever to face its own sin and its inescapable involvement in spiritual warfare. It is a needful part of our Christian growth to enter the desert, the desert where the Spirit leads us.

In this situation we will come to know ourselves, our motivations, our weaknesses and sin better than in any other circumstance.

If we feel prompted to draw aside, to be alone, to rest in a desert place, then it is the Holy Ghost who is leading us and we should follow His call. Alone in a desert situation we cannot escape ourselves; we are forced to face the truth of what and who we are, and it may not be a revelation that we find to our liking, but as God bids us to come to self-knowledge, through it we should grow in our understanding of God's immense love and mercy for us.

Our desert maybe to enter more deeply into the inner sanctuary of our souls, it may be a specific Church, some prayer space dear to us, it maybe upon a sea shore or in the depths of a wood, it

may be just a corner of a room – but it is that space, that place, where all things are laid aside in preference to choosing God and being available to Him.

This indeed is the time, now, at the beginning of the Lenten season to decide where our desert will be, and to enter it faithfully each day in the company of the Holy Ghost. This will call for self discipline. It is always so easy to begin, but oh, so much harder to persevere with good resolutions. We may experience an initial enthusiasm, and then, probably, a dwindling attraction to what we have chosen, to what God has called us, and even boredom – but that is the desert!

Persevere! If the time of prayer becomes barren and empty, persevere! Be faithful to those moments that you have promised to your God; your love will be shown by your willingness to sit upon the desert sand, in a sometimes withering heat and dryness, and wait.

Neither give into the temptation that prompts you to feel that you must always be saying something to God. He doesn't need your spiritual entertainments, He wants your heart, He wants your love, He wants the person you truly are ... not a mindless rambling of words that do not come from your heart! Listen to the voice of the Spirit deep with you, listen. And listen some more ...

Sometimes we really do not even allow God the time, the space to love us, just to love us ... we are far too busy chatting to God and telling him the things we think He wants to hear. Listen ... learn to listen! It is hard and requires discipline and perseverance. But it is also simplicity itself:

In silence say to God from your heart, "Oh! My God, I surrender to you, just love me ..."

"Desistite et agnoscite me Deum" – "Be still ... and know that I Am God." Stop talking and be!

God's great revelation of Himself was, "I Am" – a perpetually present and incessant act of Being.

As He is present to you, here, now, this hour, this day, always ... may you, too, be present to Him.

It is not what we have achieved that matters in this earthly existence, but what we are, our being able to give and to receive love. In this, our being coincides most with the Being of God Who is Love, Whose Being is inseparable from Love!

Sit quietly, and remind yourself that you are held in the arms of a great Lover that at that moment God is loving you, and at the next, and the next and the next ... unto the ending of all time and into eternity.

Allow Love to love. And love in turn.