

FEEDBACK

I would welcome your feedback this on this Lenten course. To do so, please email me at: louis.hughes@dominicans.ie. Your comments will be seen only by myself. Thank you. Fr. Louis

THE CLOUD OF UNKNOWING

Author unknown, internal evidence suggests a clerical author late 14th c East Midlands, England. Quotations from *The Cloud of Unknowing and Other Works*, (Penguin Classics, Harmondsworth 1961). *Italics mind LH*

UNKNOWING

“When you first begin, you find only darkness, and as it were a cloud of unknowing. You don't know what this means except that in your will you feel a simple steadfast intention reaching out towards God.” 61

“By ‘darkness’ I mean ‘a lack of knowing’ A cloud of unknowing between you and your God” 66

“Yes, let him think what he will; he will always find that a cloud of unknowing is between him and God.” 144

“Try to suppress all knowledge and feeling of anything less than God, and trample it down deep under the cloud of forgetting. You must understand that in this business you are to forget not only all other things than yourself ... but to forget also yourself, and even the things you have done for the sake of God.” 110

LOVE NOT KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

“*To the ... intellect, God ... is forever unknowable, but ... to love, he is completely knowable*” 63

“*He may well be loved, but not thought. By love he can be caught and held, by thinking never.*” 68

“*Love may reach up to God himself even in this life – but not knowledge.*” 73

“Even if a man is deeply versed in the understanding and knowledge of all spiritual things ever created, he can never by such understanding come to know an uncreated spiritual thing ... which is none else than God!” 145

“This I may say about those sounds and sweetnesses that come to us through the windows of our intellect, and which may be good or evil. Practise continually this blind, devout, eager outgoing of *love* that I speak about, and then I have no doubt it will be quite capable of telling you about them itself.” 118

PRAYER WORD

“A naked intention directed to God, and himself alone, is wholly sufficient. If you want this intention summed up in a word, to retain it more easily, *take a short word, preferably of one syllable*, to do so” 69

“We must therefore pray in the height, depth, length, and breadth of our spirits. Not in many words, but in *a little word of one syllable.*” 106

“Though your natural *mind can now find 'nothing' to feed on*, for it thinks you are doing no thing, *go on doing this no thing*, and do it for the love of God.” 142

TWO MODERN TEACHERS OF CONTEMPLATION

John Main OSB (1926 - 1982)

1. Silently, interiorly begin to say a *single word*.
2. We recommend the prayer-phrase '*maranatha*'. Recite it as four syllables of equal length. Listen to it as you say it. gently but continuously.
3. *Do not think or imagine* anything - spiritual or otherwise. If *thoughts and images* come, these are distractions at the time of meditation, so *keep returning* to simply saying the word.
4. Meditate each morning and evening for between twenty and thirty minutes

Thomas Keating OCSO (1923 – 2018)

“Once you have picked a suitable time and place and a chair or a posture that is relatively comfortable, and closed your eyes, choose a sacred word that expresses your intention of opening and surrendering to God and introduce it on the level of your imagination. Do not form it with your lips or vocal chords. Let it be a single word of one or two syllables with which you feel at ease. Gently place it in your awareness each time you recognize you are thinking about some other thought.” 36