

**THE HIDDEN GOD AND JUAN DE LA CRUZ
(1542-1591)**

At the very heart of Christianity lies the fact of the mystery of the paradox of divine revelation. « In His goodness and wisdom, God chose to reveal Himself and to make known to us the mystery of His will ». (*Dei Verbum*, 2). With these opening words of its Constitution on Revelation, the Fathers of Vatican II presented us with the vibrant element of our Christian Faith; that God has said Himself to us men. His love has overflowed and opened to us the gates of friendship and life with Him. And all of this has been accomplished through His letting us see Him in divine manifestations which are in fact incarnations of Himself in time through words and deeds. Yet, while the self manifestation of God to man is real and true, the Council Fathers constantly remind us of the eschatological tension that exists within such a reality itself. Jesus is the fulness of Revelation (*Dei Verbum*, 4). However, the role of the Spirit is to constantly bring man to an ever deeper penetration of the reality he is given to see. (*Dei Verbum*, 5). While man has been given the fulness which he receives in Faith, it is not yet totally possessed in a subjective awareness either individually or communally. « For there is a growth in the understanding of the realities and words which have been handed down ». (*Dei Verbum*, 8). The council, throughout the whole of the document on Revelation, implicitly reminds us that God can never be totally grasped by our finite capacities. While we know God and while He has revealed Himself to us, there is always something mysterious, something hidden about Him.

While it seems most plausible and most easily acceptable that God is somewhat hidden and mysterious, this particular reality is one which is most susceptible to a practical denial. In the midst of insecurities in the financial, political and social world of today, man seeks security in religion. Oftentimes, it manifests itself in the tremendous fascination that man displays in the presence of extraordinary phenomena (or at least the rumor of the extraordinary). God becomes tangible in the miracle healing. He becomes real only

in the visionary. He speaks only in the incomprehensible sounds of ecstatic movements. He becomes understood only in a pat catechetical method or definition. True understanding is reserved for the ethereal world of theological speculations. However, the Council tells us as does all of scripture and the whole Christian tradition that God is beyond all that we can say of Him or understand of Him.

It is not surprising then that the great Spanish mystic and poet of the sixteenth century, Fray Juan de la Cruz, should have touched this reality in his teaching. But even more than that, we must say along with Ruiz that « The whole panorama of his spiritual vision is dominated by one obsession: to search for the hidden, the Beloved One who is out of the way »¹. God is the one who is constantly the object of man's search and interest for Fray Juan². As man comes to find God more and more deeply, God seems to be that much further from the grasp of man. We need only be reminded of the basic pattern of Christian development as presented by Juan to see this. At the beginning of Christian growth, for example, the individual is clearly so enticed by God and the great feelings that are part of this « conversional » experience are so real that he can hardly believe that there is more to be done. From this initial sunset phase, the person must enter the dark purifying nights of the senses

¹ FEDERICO RUIZ SALVADOR: *Introducción a San Juan de la Cruz. El hombre, los escritos, el sistema*. Biblioteca de autores cristianos: Madrid, 1968, p. 361; « Todo el panorama de la visión espiritual queda dominado por una obsesión: buscar al Amado escondido, lejano ». Cf. also the following pages of the same work as well as Lucien-Marie: *L'expérience de Dieu. Actualité du message de saint Jean de la Croix*. (Cogitatio fidei, 36). Les éditions du Cerf: Paris, 1968, p. 103-128. Within this particular chapter which Lucien-Marie says is concerned with the transcendence of God, we find the centrality of God's transcendence in the Christian life being posited as a core element in the teaching of Juan de la Cruz. (Cf. particularly p. 109-111).

² Towards the end of his book called *La Noche Oscura*, Juan sums up the whole attitude of man before this God who transcends him and yet beckons him to life with Him by saying: « Por tanto, el que rehusare salir en la noche ya dicha a buscar al Amado y ser desnudado de su voluntad y ser mortificado, sino que en su lecho y acomodamiento le busca, como hacía la Esposa, no llegará a hallarle como esta alma dice de sí que lo halló, saliendo ya a escuras y con ansias de amor ». (*Noche II*, 24, 4) (BAC p. 615-KAV, p. 380). [« BAC » with the page number refers one to the Spanish edition: Crisógono de Jesús, Matías del Niño Jesús, Lucinio del SS. Sacramento: *Vida y Obras de San Juan de la Cruz*. Biblioteca de autores cristianos: Madrid, 1964; while the « KAV. » sign refers one to the english translation by Kieran Kavanaugh and Otilio Rodríguez: *The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross*. I.C.S. Publications: Washington, D.C. 1973].

If we look at *Cant-B III*, 2 (BAC p. 639-KAV, p. 428) we see too that Juan is certainly emphasizing the need to DO something, yet he is also saying this within the context that God is beyond the normal powers of man's comprehension. As we shall see, such a basic or fundamental idea forms the heart of his teaching on activity or passivity in growing into God.

and the soul. From seeming total possession of God, the individual senses himself thrust into darkness and anguish. Continuing through the sheer power of Faith, he is given the transformation of love which, rather than satisfying him totally, actually causes within him the « wounds of love » which are longings for fulfillment. Only death grants such total union as would fulfill the person. At every point, that which is the constant teaching of Juan de la Cruz is that God is always with man and yet one step ahead of him. So man's life is meant to be a constant growth and developmental process: from creature into creature of love.

In this study we would like to examine this theme of the hidden God as Juan lived it and expressed it in his works. While a purely thematic study would be helpful and interesting, we have chosen to approach it chronologically. We shall study it as presented in three of his major works which cover approximately the same period in his own lifetime: from shortly after his imprisonment (1577-78)³ to around 1586. We have chosen to study it within the *Subida del Monte Carmelo*, *La Noche Oscura* and *El Cántico Espiritual* for they express in essence his teaching on this hidden God. In all of his works we find that many of his ideas stem from a personal experience or insight into Christian life and growth. Thus, as he himself grows more deeply into God, so shall his expression tell us of that progress — even if it be in some indirect way at times. Consequently, we shall analyze the theme of the hiddenness of God in the basic order in which the works were written.

Theological Foundations: Subida del Monte Carmelo (1579-1585)

The hidden God of his faith was someone Juan de la Cruz had very poignantly experienced just a little more than a year before he began writing his *Subida del Monte Carmelo*. The nine months of imprisonment in the tiny closet cell of Toledo had brought him not only the darkness of a windowless room, but the anguishing absence of God overcame him as well⁴. There is no doubt that Juan de la

³ E. Alison Peers in his edition of the *Spiritual Cantic*, Doubleday Image Book: N. Y. 1961 p. 30 maintains the second redaction was completed by 1586. RUIZ: *Introducción...*, speaks in terms of having it finished in 1585.

⁴ For one of the more documented descriptions of his prison experience, cf. CRISOGONO DE JESÚS: *Vida y Obras de San Juan de la Cruz...* p. 120-141. In the English translation of this work: KATHLEEN POND, translator: *The Life of St. John of the Cross* Harper Brothers: New York, 1958, p. 100-117; GERALD BRENNAN: *St. John of The Cross. His Life and Poetry*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1973, contains a very readable chapter on the same event p. 26-38. Brennan

Cruz wondered what had happened to him or to this God whom he had seemingly discovered so happily during the initial months of the reform at Duruelo (1568). He had been happy with his God. But now, more than ever before, He seems to have disappeared. Why? What was happening? These are but a few of the questions which Juan probably asked himself in prison and even later, as he recited his poetry to the nuns of the Discalced Carmelites. When they would question him as to the meaning of the poetry and other statements he would make, he would try to explain and re-explain for them. All the time, he himself was being forced to examine and re-think the growing process in which he being involved even then. This necessary speaking, explaining and finally writing down his commentaries was the most probable method he employed in writing his works. And now during the six year period during which he composed the *Subida*, God and the way to Him were becoming more and more important. Was God really hidden: why and how?

At the very beginning of this, one of his major works, Juan de la Cruz reminds his readers that to reach perfection, one must journey through purification. The process of which he speaks is called the Journey in the nights of the soul and the senses. So, he begins by reminding men that these times of purifications are those «...in which the soul journeys in darkness as through by night»⁵. Night becomes the basic image for this journey precisely because hiddenness and obscurity remains the basic characteristic of both «night» and the journey itself. Darkness is the essential experience of the believer who is ready to engage himself along this way to God. The purifications of the senses and the spirit leave one as if in the dark — for man had been so attached that when leaving them behind, man is as if in a new and dark world. It is now that the way to really approach God is seen: the way of Faith. And through Faith, man arrives at God by a light which paradoxically is darkness. If man is in the dark because he is removed from senses and because Faith itself is darkness, Juan gives another reason for calling the journey night:

The third reason pertains to the point of arrival, namely God. And God is also a dark night to man in this life⁶.

attempts to take the material collated by Crisógono to make the experience which Juan de la Cruz underwent a bit more involving for the reader.

⁵ «...en la una como en la otra camina como de noche, a oscuras». *Subida* I, 1, 1 (BAC, p. 367-KAV p. 73).

⁶ «La tercera, por parte del término adonde va, que es Dios, el cual ni más ni menos es noche oscura para el alma en esta vida». *Subida* I, 1, 1 (BAC p. 368-KAV p. 75).

It is in this way that Fray Juan first introduces us to his constant theme of the hidden God: one who hides in the darkness. God is darkness or night in relation to man's process of coming to know Him. Through Faith, which is already a lunging into the darkness of non-evidence, God makes Himself known to the person so intimately and deeply that the person is not always perfectly sure what he knows of God and what is happening within himself⁷. Thus, the image of night as hiddenness and obscurity describes very fully the experience of approaching the hidden God. We see that when he speaks of God as night, Juan is attempting to tell us that God's ways of approaching man and man's way of coming to Him are so different from the « normal » way of knowing (while not being totally separated or detached from those ways) that man experiences mainly obscurity and nothingness as he comes closer to God.

(a.) *Juan's philosophical and scriptural foundations:*

It is not surprising that Juan's superior intellectual training which he received in Salamanca (1564-1568) should find expression in the first major work which he composed. In his first struggle with the question of God, it is normal that he seek out proofs and « evidence » on which he may solidly establish his ideas. So it is that we find in the *Subida del Monte Carmelo* more of an attempt to do precisely this because his life situation is still so close to his intellectual formation.

It is at the very beginning of his literary output that Juan sets out the philosophical basis for most of his ideas which he will later develop and express in a much more poetic and symbolic fashion. One of the most interesting sections in this regard is to be found in the second book of the *Subida*. Here he begins by telling us that no creature or form of creaturely knowledge can be adequate to know God fully. And he begins by enunciating his basic philosophical principle:

Let it be recalled, then, that according to a philosophical axiom all means must be proportionate to their end. That is, they must manifest a certain accord with and likeness to the end — of such a degree that they would be sufficient for the attainment of the desired goal⁸.

⁷ « Dios, el cual mediante la segunda noche, que es fe, se va comunicando al alma tan secreta y íntimamente, que es otra noche para el alma ». *Subida* I, 2, 4 (BAC p. 368-KAV p. 75).

Having stated this principle, he then tries to show what he means by it. And this he accomplishes by using two examples as particular illustrations. In one, he notes that man must go by the road that leads to a city if he wishes to reach that city. The emphasis here being upon the necessity of proportion or identity of the way with the final destination. In the other example, he speaks more of the preparation as way when he notes that if the log is to become one with the fire, it must be prepared by having heat infiltrate its substance⁹. So, what is the proportion in man as he relates to God? First of all, if we consider the object, then «...God has no relation or essential likeness to them (creatures). Rather the difference which lies between His divine being and their being is infinite. Consequently, intellectual comprehension of God through heavenly or earthly creatures is impossible, since there is no proportion of likeness»¹⁰. What must be noted here is that Fray Juan is stating that *comprehension*, which is full and total knowledge of God, cannot be obtained through creatures for they are ontologically incapable of speaking infinity in perfection. They are «born of the earth and of the earth they speak». (Jn. 3: 31). The way of knowing in man and the way of speaking is through senses. If God is infinite and cannot thus be captured by the finite powers of intelligence alone, the fact that man's sole natural approach is sensual complicates the matter. For God is non-sensual. This is to say that we cannot know Him through the senses in any adequate way¹¹.

⁸ « Es, pues, de saber que, según regla de filosofía, todos los medios han de ser proporcionados al fin, es a saber: que han de tener alguna conveniencia y semejanza con el fin, tal que baste y sea suficiente para que por ello se pueda conseguir el fin que se pretende ». *Subida* II, 8, 2 (BAC p. 408-KAV, p. 126).

⁹ Both these examples are to be found in the same paragraph as the quotation which gave us the basic principle. It is interesting to note that the second example, that of the burning log, is the image which will his prime figure later on when he uses it to describe the purification process that takes place in the believer. This is to be seen especially in the *Llama-B* I, 19-23 (BAC p. 838-841-KAV, p. 586-588).

¹⁰ « ...de Dios a ellas ningún respecto hay ni semejanza esencial, antes la distancia que hay entre su divino ser y el de ellas es infinita; y por eso es imposible que el entendimiento pueda dar en Dios por medio de las criaturas, ahora sean celestiales ahora terrenas, por cuanto no hay proporción de semejanza ». *Subida* II, 8, 3 (BAC p. 409-KAV p. 126). However, we should not take this as meaning that there is no role for creation to play in man's coming to know God. The contrary, according to Juan, is quite true: Cf. *Cant-B* VII, 6 (BAC p. 645-647-KAV p. 439); *Cant-B* VI, 6 (BAC p. 645-KAV p. 437). An illumination of this same perspective is done within the study of God's immanence by LUCIEN-MARIE: *L'Expérience...* p. 119-125.

¹¹ One should read the whole of Juan's development of this point in the *Subida* II, 8, 4 (BAC p. 409-410-KAV p. 127). Here he develops his argument that the proportion necessary to know God cannot be obtained through the sen-

This means that in order to enter into the knowledge of God more deeply and more fully, man must approach Him in a different way. Rather than come to Him in the light of his own intellect, he must come in darkness and unknowing. To substantiate such a view, Juan de la Cruz quotes Aristotle and Pseudo-Dionysius as well as St. Paul (Rom. 11: 33)¹². In all of these men the basic message is that God can only be truly and fully known in contemplation.

Fray Juan's establishment of this approach to knowing God is not founded purely and simply upon a philosophical view. More than any theologian of his time, Juan was, primarily a man of scripture. It was from reading scripture that he discovered this way, which consequently, he shows is not only not contradictory to reason, but is in fact in full accord with it and with the whole of the Christian tradition. He refers us mainly to three texts:

- « No man shall see me and remain alive ». (Ex. 33: 20)¹³.
 « No man has ever seen God nor anything like Him ». (Jn. 1: 18)¹⁴.
 « O height of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how incomprehensible are His judgements and unsearchable His ways ». (Rom. 11: 33)¹⁵.

ses. Cf. also *Subida* II, 24, 9 (BAC p. 460-KAV p. 192); *Subida* III, 24, 4 (BAC p. 509-KAV p. 255). And what is especially interesting and most practical for our own times is that statement which he makes in *Subida* III, 12, 1 (BAC p. 489-KAV p. 229-230) where he warns his readers that to submit God entirely to the images, concepts and the like that man forms is to lower God and thus to go contrary to the reality that God has revealed to man: namely that He is incomprehensible and infinite. In other words, it is a question here of trying to make God into gods which is, in fact, establishing other gods which are more to man's liking because they are under his control. Juan expresses this in another way in the *Cant-B* XIX (BAC p. 681-682-KAV p. 485-487) where the person asks God to communicate Himself substantially to him: in his great desire to know Him the person no longer wants to limit Him through the senses.

¹² Cf. the *Subida* II, 8, 6 (BAC p. 410-KAV p. 128). The note in the Spanish critical edition tells us that Andrés de la Encarnación «...remite (Ms. 3652, previo 5º) a Aristoteles, II *Metaph.* C. I; S. Thom., *ibid.*, lect. I; Super libr. *De causis* lect. I *De mente* q. 10, a. 11 ad 13; *IV Sent.* d. 40 q. 2 a. 6 ad 3»; The reference to Pseudo-Dionysius is to the *De Mystica theologia* c. 1, 1 (P. G. 3, 999), which is also found in *Noche* II, 5, 3 (BAC p. 572-KAV, p. 336); *Cant.-B* XIV-XV, 16 (BAC p. 668-KAV p. 469); *Llama-B* III, 49 (BAC p. 897-KAV p. 629). It is interesting to note how Juan incorporates all the authorities: scripture, tradition and philosophy.

¹³ *Subida* II, 8, 4 (BAC p. 409-KAV, p. 127); *Subida* II, 24, 2 (BAC p. 458-KAV p. 230); *Cant-B* XI, 5 (BAC p. 654-KAV p. 450).

¹⁴ *Subida* II, 8, 4 (BAC p. 409-KAV p. 127); *Subida* III, 12, 1 (BAC p. 489-KAV p. 230); *Cant-B* I, 3 (BAC p. 630-KAV p. 417).

¹⁵ *Subida* II, 8, 6 (BAC p. 410-KAV p. 128); *Cant-B* XXXVI, 10 (BAC p. 726-KAV p. 548).

Let us briefly examine what Juan is attempting to say through the reference he makes to these three scriptural passages.

In the famous Exodus text, we find Moses asking to see God and being refused with the words that Juan quotes directly from the text of Exodus. The text itself is indicative of the exaltedness of God in comparison to man. Yahweh is almighty and infinite while man is powerless and finite. Only a special favor or gift enables man to see and yet remain alive¹⁶. The question of seeing God or not in this life was one which had been asked by some of the greatest Christian witnesses in earlier times¹⁷. Juan's own conclusion becomes part of a long standing Christian tradition: God cannot be seen by the natural faculties because He is beyond finiteness in His very Being which is holiness itself and infinite¹⁸. The vision of the totality of God is to be seen as naturally reserved for the vision after death¹⁹. The invisibility of God is found in another text which Juan de la Cruz utilizes.

Within the Johannine prologue, the statement of the revealing work of the Son is prefaced by the phrase that «...no one has ever seen God». It is thus that Juan enters into the mainstream of the Old Testament tradition which maintained the impossibility of a direct vision of God through man's natural powers²⁰. It is only through the revelation of the one who has seen Him, the Son, that man can come to some knowledge of this God who is hidden to man in the height and depth of His infinite greatness.

It is the mystery of this depth of God that is exalted in the paulinian hymn which we find expressed in Rom. 11: 33 and which Fray Juan uses in the context of his hidden God theme. With this

¹⁶ Cf. note «i» in the Bible of Jerusalem in the text Ex. 33: 20. In this note we find how Moses, Elijah and Paul are considered as the preeminent mystics. Juan quotes texts involving Moses and Elijah and then directly quotes from St. Paul's own most mystical pronouncements in I Cor. 2: 9 and Rom. 11: 33 in *Subida* II, 8, 4 (BAC p. 409-KAV p. 127).

¹⁷ Cf. AUGUSTINE: *Epistula CXLVII ad Paulinam* (P. L. 33, 596-597); R. P. HARDY: *Actualité de la révélation divine. Une étude des «Tractatus in Iohannis Euangelium» de saint Augustin*. (Théologie historique, 28) Beauchesne: Paris, 1974, p. 65-82; for another aspect of the discussion cf. G. PICARD: «*La saisie immédiate de Dieu dans les états mystiques*», in *Revue d'Ascétique et de mystique*, 4 (1923) p. 37-63 and p. 156-181.

¹⁸ *Subida* II, 8, 4 (BAC p. 409-KAV p. 127); *Subida* III, 12, 1 (BAC p. 489-KAV p. 230).

¹⁹ *Subida* II, 24, 2 (BAC p. 458-KAV p. 189); *Cant-B* XI, 5 (BAC p. 654-KAV p. 450).

²⁰ *Subida* II, 8, 4 (BAC p. 409-KAV p. 127); *Subida* III, 12, 1 (BAC p. 489-KAV p. 230). Juan also uses this same text from John to emphasize not only the fact that no man has ever seen God, but also that God is hidden in the bosom of the essence of the Father.: *Cant-B*, I, 3 (BAC p. 630-KAV. p. 417).

hymn of exaltation and praise, St. Paul expresses the incomprehensibility of God who cares for all men. Juan de la Cruz couples this text with a reference to Aristotle saying: «...that the loftier and clearer things of God are in themselves, the more unknown and obscure they are to us...»²¹. Within this whole paragraph of the *Subida*, Juan attempts to show the reasonableness, as it were, of this Christian teaching of the «mysterion» who is God.

Thus, Juan's approach to the hidden God is one founded upon rational philosophical principles which were common in his time, as well as upon scriptural foundations. His early years of writing were very much devoted to laying the foundations both intellectually and volitionally for the theology of the heart which he would experience and express later in life in such admirable stanzas of poetry in the Spanish language.

(b.) *Knowledge of God is in darkness only:*

Within this, his earliest work, we find that Juan de la Cruz has not only established the philosophical and scriptural basis for his «Dios escondido», but he specifies this even more. He accomplishes this when he informs his reader how to come to be united with Him. «As a result the soul must also be pure and simple, unlimited and unattached to any particular knowledge, and unmodified by the boundaries of form, species, and image. Since God is unincorporated in any image, form or particular knowledge, the soul in order to be united with Him should not be limited by any particular form or knowledge»²². By saying this he is attempting to make us realise that God cannot be captured by any created communicative form. His infinity necessitates a certain mystery, a certain quality of hiddenness if He is to remain who He is: God. Yet, if man is to approach Him, if he is to become one with Him how can it be possible? We have just noted that for Juan any *usual* way we have

²¹ «...que cuanto las cosas de Dios son en sí más altas y más claras son para nosotros más ignotas y oscuras...» *Subida* II, 8, 6 (BAC p. 410-KAV p. 128). This same aristotelian principle is re-iterated in *Noche* II, 5, 3 (BAC p. 572-KAV p. 335) while another use of Rom. 11: 33 is found in *Cant-B* XXXVI, 10 (BAC p. 726-KAV p. 548) where Juan presents us with a very poetic praise of the depth of the mystery of God.

²² «...de aquí es que también el alma ha de estar pura y sencilla, no limitada ni atenida a alguna inteligencia particular, ni modificada con algún límite de forma, especie y imagen; que, pues Dios no cabe debajo de imagen ni forma, ni cabe debajo de inteligencia particular, tampoco el alma, para caer en Dios ha de caer debajo de forma y inteligencia distinta». *Subida* II, 16, 7 (BAC p. 428-KAV p. 151-152).

of becoming fully and humanly one with another is eliminated from the possibilities. Yet this does not mean that the way will be inhuman. Rather it will be another, a different way which nonetheless perfect the whole of human nature's approach and thus makes it proportionate to the end who is God. This is how he speaks of it in the *Subida*:

In order to draw nearer the divine ray, the intellect must advance by unknowing rather than by the desire to know and by blinding itself and remaining in darkness rather than by opening its eyes²³.

This might be misconstrued to mean that man should never inquire into the things of God; that he should leave his mind and reason out of religion. However, this is not what Juan wishes man to do at all. Rather he is urging man to not let the senses and hence the intellect blind him to the mystery of God. God cannot be seen except in a unique way which will be different from pure sensation and the consequent comprehension thus obtained. Nor is Juan advocating a functioning in a pure void or utter emptiness.

What he is asking is that man NOT limit himself to his usual way of knowing. In the quote we have given, he is asking man rather to open himself to new ways of seeing which *seem* to him to be unknowing, blindness and darkness — if not purely irrational. These new ways SEEM to be that way precisely because man is not used to « visualising » in this fashion. God is the hidden one: the one who hides within that which appears to be but darkness and emptiness.

There is an element that Juan adds which makes the darkness a positive seeing and the emptiness other than a void. « Only by means of faith, in divine light exceeding all understanding does God manifest Himself to the soul »²⁴. Faith is the means because it is spirit

²³ « ...para llegar a El antes ha de ir no entendiendo que queriendo entender, y antes cegándose y poniéndose en tiniebla que abriendo los ojos para llegar más al divino rayo ». *Subida* II, 8, 5 (BAC p. 410-KAV p. 128).

²⁴ « ...y así, por este solo medio, se manifiesta Dios al alma en divina luz, que excede todo entendimiento ». *Subida* II, 9, 1 (BAC p. 411-KAV p. 129); *Subida* II, 16, 15 (BAC p. 430-431-KAV p. 155). In the whole of chapter 9 of Book II of the *Subida* Juan is telling the reader how in this life it is only in the obscurity and darkness of Faith that man can come to see and know God; it is indeed a knowing which is unknowing (if we consider what we call knowing and its normal process). The scriptural images he uses are also interesting and could easily be the subject of another study: Ps. 17: 10-12 in *Subida* II, 9, 1 (BAC p. 411-KAV p. 129); Jb. 38: 1 and 40: 1 in *Subida* II, 9, 3 (BAC p. 411-KAV p. 130); and Judges 7: 16-20 in *Subida* II, 9, 3-4 (BAC p. 411-412-KAV p. 130).

and opens man to the infinite horizons of the Godhead. What man is unable to comprehend, Faith makes present and real to the individual, as well as to the community of believers. It is the power to enter the eternal and infinite; and there to become one not with some created image or vision, but with the « pure and naked essence of God »²⁵. Despite this fact, we should not conceive of this occurring in some invisible and purely dis-incarnate fashion.

For those who might find Juan de la Cruz too « other worldly » or too disembodied, they need only read chapter twenty-two of book two of the *Subida* to realise how false an impression that is. Here we find Fray Juan expressing how Christ is the fulness of divine manifestation. Revelation is not something which takes place in the ethereal realms of some ecstatic visionary world. Rather, the manifestation of God is to be found in the incarnate God himself: Jesus Christ. Practically the whole chapter is a beautiful dialogue between God and the soul who would like the miracles and visions of old in order to help his faith a bit. And in the words of Juan, God tells the soul that if he is to find Him, he must look in no other place and in no other way than in Jesus Christ. For there « ...you will discern in Him the most secret mysteries and wisdom and wonders of God... »²⁶. Once more, but in a very positive way this time, Juan is speaking to us of his theme of the « Dios escondido ». Not only is He hidden in his bosom, but in the very fulness of revelation He remains the God of mystery. This is so not because the manifestation is incomplete, but because man is unable to grasp the totality of His Being. God is the unknown who reveals Himself only in the heart of the one who believes in Him. It is in knowing the unknown in an unknown (i. e. non-usual) manner that the process of unknowing becomes knowing and darkness becomes light. This is the paradox of Juan's teaching. Yet it is reasonable. For all of this is so because man's knowledge cannot reach Him who is not creature. Our knowledge based upon imagery and sensuality as

²⁵ «...no se comunica Dios al alma mediante algún disfraz de visión imaginar[ia] o semejanza o figura ni la ha de haber; sino que boca a boca, esto es, esencia pura y desnuda de Dios — que es la boca de Dios en amor — con esencia pura y desnuda del alma, que es la boca del alma en amor de Dios ». *Subida* II, 16, 9 (BAC p. 429-KAV p. 152). Juan develops this imagery of real lovers in his *Cántico*, but more than that, we find him speaking of the same reality of spirit communicating with spirit especially in *Cánt-B* XIX (BAC p. 681-682-KAV p. 485-487).

²⁶ «...y hallarás ocultísimos misterios y sabiduría y maravillas de Dios... ». *Subida* II, 22, 6 (BAC p. 451-KAV p. 181); cf. ALAIN DELAYE: « *La foi selon Jean de la Croix* » in *Carmel XXI-XXII* (1975) p. 13-24 for a presentation of revelation in Jesus Christ as found in the writings of Juan de la Cruz.

it is cannot touch the one who is beyond that very sensuality so necessary to our nature. Yet, there is the way of unknowing, of darkness which is Faith. When Faith is coupled with the coming of the Incarnate God, Jesus Christ, man is enabled to begin to explore the riches and wonder of God: in Him. This is the root of Juan de la Cruz' teaching on the hidden God and which he will develop in his later works.

God forever unknown: La Noche Oscura (1582-1585)

Shortly after his escape from prison²⁷, Fray Juan wrote his famous poem: *La Noche Oscura*. This marked the beginning of one of the most influential works of Christian mystical writing that has so far been seen. The poem and its commentary, which was completed by 1585 are reflective observations upon the human experience of entering the Godhead more deeply than is the norm for man in general. His insistence upon « nada » and the emptiness which such a process obtains are far from being pure voids for him. These elements which he accents often make the casual reader react negatively to the approach of Fray Juan. However, we must point out once more that to be empty of things in the sanjuanist idea is to be open and sensitive to God, to people and to the world which surround man and in which he lives. Things have caused man to numb his sensitivities and erect false values. Only solitude and silence in the perspective of Fray Juan can enable man to the positive extending of his open hands to be grasped and thus led by God to fulfillment²⁸. And this God is one who nonetheless is strangely hidden from the sight of man.

God is hidden in the darkness or the infinity of His own being, as well as in the unique approach that man must make to come to Him²⁹. As one enters into the oblique way which is the only real approach to God according to Fray Juan, one is unable to see much

²⁷ RUIZ: *Introducción...* p. 184 maintains that the poem *La Noche Oscura* was written during his stay at El Calvario and Beas de Segura (i. e. November 1578 to June 1579). Others are not as definite, though the same basic time period is held by all. (Cf. CRISÓGONO DE JESÚS, MATÍAS DEL NIÑO JESÚS, LUCINIO DEL SACRAMENTO: *Vida y Obras...* p. 358). The commentary was certainly completed by 1585: CRISÓGONO et alibi: *Vida y Obras...* p. 358; K. KAVANAUGH: *The Collected Works...* p. 33; RUIZ: *Introducción...* p. 188 says that the commentary was completed around 1584.

²⁸ R. P. HARDY: « *Solitude: A Sanjuanist Perspective* » in *Englise et théologie*, 6 (1975) p. 5-23.

²⁹ *Subida* I, 2, 1 (BAC p. 368-KAV p. 74-75).

more than himself. It is thus that he experiences darkness and evil in his consciousness. Actually, God is hidden within this very experience of one's own limitations and sinfulness. However, the hiddenness is not due to any failure on the part of God to illuminate man. Nor is it due to the fact that God is absent. Rather the hiddenness is seeming darkness precisely because God IS illuminating man and IS present in him. The inner eyes of the person are not yet accustomed to seeing in this way and so, man experiences these deep and obscure difficulties concerning his own consciousness of God. It is in this manner that the purification pattern according to Juan de la Cruz fits into and forms an intimate part of the hidden God theme for him. By purification man is brought to see the true quality of God as mystery and wonder³⁰.

Yet, if God is hidden, why does He remain in this state for man? It is within *La Noche Oscura* that Juan attempts to answer this question as he discusses how it is that a person walks in security despite the darkness and obscurity of the way upon which he has embarked. What he says here is basically a further explication of what we have already found in the *Subida del Monte Carmelo*³¹. God seems to be kept in this state of hiddenness to man because otherwise man would lower Him to the level of creation if He could be *comprehended* by the finite capacities of the believer. Within this state of purification, the person is unable to use his faculties in the usual way to know God and so, he outs himself off from that normal way of knowing. In this sense God becomes hidden to him for he cannot know Him with his natural powers. Let us listen to how he expresses it in the *Noche*:

Since these natural faculties do not have the purity, strength, or capacity to receive and taste supernatural things in a supernatural or divine mode, but only according to their own mode which is human and lowly, as we said, these faculties must also be darkened regarding the divine so that weaned, purged, and annihilated in their natural way they might lose that lowly and

³⁰ This whole process is very aptly described by Juan in the *Noche* II, 13 (BAC p. 590-593-KAV p. 357-361). Once we have examined this whole section we see the underlying influence of Augustinian thought here. For Augustine, God's presence is at first blinding and darkness to man until he learns to see with his new eyes of Faith. For comparison say, cf. R. P. HARDY: *Actualité...* p. 93-105 and this chapter of the *Noche* mentioned above.

³¹ *Subida* III, 12, 1 (BAC p. 489-KAV p. 229-230); *Subida* III, 24, 4 (BAC p. 509-KAV p. 255). Because this third book of the *Subida* and the second book of the *Noche* were probably written about the same time, we cannot speak of a real development of thought so much as a fuller or different expression of this basic principle which he enunciates therein.

human mode of receiving and working. Thus all these faculties and appetites of the soul are tempered and prepared for the sublime reception, experience, and savor of the divine and supernatural, which is unreceivable until the old man dies³².

Within this statement we see that for Fray Juan the purification process is not purely and simply a negative reality. It is positive in that it allows the hidden God to be known more fully. It is the expanding of man's cognitive powers, bringing him to perfect the whole of who he is and thus being able to center all that power now upon the transcendent God. Thus God is able to be known by the believer not as some creation of man's imagination or intellectual faculties, but as He is. God remains hidden so that man may be cured of his illness and thus, see Him fully. To be who He is, God must remain hidden for Fray Juan de la Cruz.

It is at this point that Juan brings in a new perspective which was not present in the *Subida*. If God is hidden and if man is to come to know Him, man too must become hidden with God.

Here is what he says:

The soul, then, is well hidden and protected in this dark water — close to God. Since the dark water serves God Himself as a tabernacle and dwelling place, it will also serve the soul in this way, as a perfect safeguard and security, even though it causes darkness to it. In this darkness the soul is hidden and protected from itself and the harm of creatures³³.

The dark water to which he refers is a reference to Ps. 17: 12 and which Juan calls « dark contemplation »³⁴. If man enters the darkness of contemplation, it is there that he too will be hiding with his hidden treasure who is God. This idea of man being hidden

³² « De donde, porque estas naturales potencias no tienen pureza, ni fuerza, ni caudal para poder recibir y gustar las cosas sobrenaturales al modo dellas, que es divino, sino sólo al suyo, que es humano y bajo, como habemos dicho, conviene que sean escurecidas también acerca de esto divino, porque, destetadas y purgadas y aniquiladas en aquello primero, pierdan aquel bajo y humano modo de recibir y obrar, y así vengan a quedar dispuestas y templadas todas estas potencias y apetitos del alma para poder recibir, sentir y gustar lo divino y sobrenatural alta y subidamente. Lo cual no puede ser si primero no muere el hombre viejo ». *Noche II*, 16, 4 (BAC p. 596-KAV, p. 364).

³³ « Bien está, pues, el alma aquí 'escondida' y amparada, aquí, en esta 'agua tenebrosa', que está cerca de Dios, porque, así como al mismo Dios sirve de tabernáculo y morada, le servirá ni más ni menos al alma de otro tanto, y de amparo perfecto y seguridad (aunque a ella en tinieblas) en que está escondida y amparada de sí misma y de todos los daños de criaturas... ». *Noche II*, 16, 13 (BAC p. 598-KAV p. 367).

³⁴ *Noche II*, 16, 11 (BAC p. 597-KAV p. 366).

with God is something which Juan develops later in the *Cántico Espiritual*³⁵. This hiding with God indicates a being freed from those things which distract one from God as the central reality to any truly human existence. To be hidden with God is to walk securely on the path to Him without fear of being side-tracked, as it were. This is to say that one must go and be hidden deep within the self, beyond even one's own faculties and senses. It is hiding inside which is OUTSIDE the normal functioning of the powers of man: faculties, appetites and senses³⁶. By the unique illumination of God which is contemplation, the person is able to go into hiding where no creature can find him. Only God and those who live in God can find such a person. One hides from self and from others in order to be found by God and by those who live in God. However, once again, it must be emphasized that when one speaks here of hiding from others, it is not isolation or total withdrawal from society, as might be suspected because of our contemporary language usage. Rather it is the letting go of possessing others, of possessing unreal or unimportant things and thus does one establish a proper hierarchy of values. The hiding is only from that which destroys a relationship of love with God and with others. And the hiding creates positively a true relationship of love in man.

Yet, there is a warning to be heard. Even if God will communicate Himself in this contemplation to man, Juan tells us that man will never truly comprehend God:

Nevertheless, until that day, however high it may ascend, something will still be hidden in proportion to its lack of total assimilation to the divine essence³⁷.

This comes to remind man lest he forget that the great things which he experiences in this dark contemplation are but the foretaste of what is to come: God Himself. He has just described the last five steps of love in the journey to God and our quotation comes at the end. The description of what happens is quite ecstatic and involving. So much is this the case that the reader might think that

³⁵ *Cant-B I*, 9 (BAC p. 632-KAV p. 419).

³⁶ *Noche II*, 14, 1 (BAC p. 593-594-KAV p. 361-362).

³⁷ «...aunque el alma más alta vaya, le queda algo encubierto, y tanto cuanto le falta para la asimilación total con la divina Sabiduría». *Noche II*, 20, 6 (BAC p. 607-KAV p. 378). In the critical edition the editor notes that some manuscripts have «divina esencia» rather than «divina Sabiduría», but the editor himself prefers the «Sabiduría» option because of the context. The same theme is found in *Cant-B I*, 3 (BAC p. 630-K3V p. 417); *Cant-B I*, 11 (BAC p. 633-KAV p. 420).

at this point the person really grasps the fullness of God because God has communicated Himself so intimately to the individual. However, only the total union which death brings about will allow a full knowledge of God, as much as is possible to any creature. This part of the *Noche* expresses clearly what was implied in the *Subida* concerning the hiddenness of God in His essence.

So, we see that in the *Noche* the new element which Juan brings to light is the fact that man must become hidden in God by contemplation in Faith if he is to find God Himself. Then gradually will the assimilation take place through and within the purification process. This means that God will always be hidden because He is who He is: the Infinite and Loving God.

Search for the Hidden God: Cántico Espiritual (1578-1586)

From the dark and oppressive cell of Toledo comes one of the most beautiful poems concerning Christian life. While he suffered the almost unbearable physical and spiritual anguishes of isolation and seeming hopelessness, Fray Juan wrote the first thirty stanzas of the *Cántico Espiritual*³⁸. He sets the stage by saying:

Where have You hidden, beloved, and left me moaning? You fled like the stag after wounding me; I went out calling You, and You were gone³⁹.

Could these be the words of one who has not experienced personally the hidden God? It is hardly possible, especially when one considers how devastating his prison experience must have been. Within the first stanzas, Juan sings of the hidden God. These stanzas express the search, the desire to find Him again. Underlying all of the lines are questions: what had he found before? Was it really God? Where does one actually find Him? In creation? In the « messengers » who speak more of themselves than the creator? As he mulled these questions and his own experiences over in his

³⁸ K. KAVANAUGH: *The Collected Works...* p. 33; E. ALLISON PEERS: *Spiritual Canticle...* p. 13-14; CRISOGONO DE JESÚS, *Vida y Obras...* p. 619.

³⁹ « ¿ Adónde te escondiste,
Amado, y me dejaste con gemido?
Como el ciervo huiste,
habiéndome herido;
salí tras ti clamando, y eras ido ».
Cant. I (BAC p. 627-KAV p. 410)

mind, many answers, many possibilities must have presented themselves. Yet, among all of them, he chose the image of human love to describe the whole journey to God. Basing himself upon the *Song of Songs* Juan is finally able to burst forth into image and word the basic experience of his heart.

However, it is only in the eight years following his escape from prison, that he is able to explain his ideas in more detail. Thus, during the period from 1578 to 1586, he wrote two basic commentaries on the *Cántico Espiritual*. We shall concern ourselves with the second redaction, which as Peers says: «...is in no sense a new work [though] it is greatly changed in appearance throughout... [However]... all these modifications bespeak the careful teacher: they are improvements in method not changes in substances⁴⁰.

The style of this work is quite different. Its poetry and symbolism open one to the other side of Fray Juan de la Cruz. While the *Subida* and the *Noche* did contain some poetical elements, their main characteristic was the philosophical-theological character. In the *Cántico*, Juan the poet comes through as strongly as the philosopher — if not more so.

As the opening stanza suggested, Fray Juan will be developing a theme of which he has already spoken in his two other works. In order to provide the proper atmosphere for what he desires to say, he states in the very beginning of his commentary:

In her petition she seeks the manifestation of His divine essence, because the hiding place of the Word of God is, as St. John asserts (Jn. 1: 18) the bosom of the Father, that is the divine essence, which is alien to every mortal eye and hidden from every human intellect⁴¹.

«Where have you hidden...». Our quotation here is concerned with this first line of the poem. In his sentence he reminds us of two things: 1) the hiding place of the Word of God is in the Divine Essence and 2) it is hidden from the human power of knowing. The latter statement is but a re-iteration of the principle which he had established in the *Subida del Monte Carmelo*; namely, God is beyond all created imagery, power of comprehension and verbalization.

⁴⁰ E. A. PEERS: *Spiritual Canticle...* p. 25.

⁴¹ «Y es como si dijera: Verbo, Esposo mío, muéstrame el lugar donde estás escondido; en lo cual le pide la manifestación de su divina esencia, porque el lugar donde está escondido el Hijo de Dios es, como dice san Juan 'el seno del Padre' (Jn. 1: 18) que es la esencia divina, la cual es ajena de todo ojo mortal y escondida de todo humano entendimiento». *Cant-B I, 3* (BAC p. 630-KAV p. 417).

Furthermore, it would seem that because of this fact and the affirmation that the Word hides in the Unknowable, man is refused any possible entry into the Divine light of knowledge. Yet, such a conclusion would be wrong.

The main purpose of Juan's work and life was to actually come to know God more fully and so, to deny its possibility would be illogical. It is when he tries to express this a bit further on in the commentary, that we discover more explicitly what is the way to this knowledge:

It should be known that the Word, the Son of God, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, is hidden by His essence and His presence in the innermost being of the soul. A person who wants to find Him should leave all things through affection and will, enter within himself in deepest recollection, and regard things as though they were non-existent⁴².

Within these few words we find a favorite idea of Juan de la Cruz. It is the indwelling of the whole Trinity. The three persons — Father, Son and Spirit — hide deep within the person. God is not something «out there», but lives within each man. Such a presence is a never failing one. To know this fact of presence already gives man the first step in advancing towards Him; for when one knows where God is hiding, then it is merely a matter of finding the proportionate means to arrive there⁴³. Yet what is that way or means for arriving at the inner dwelling place of God? Juan speaks of leaving all things through affection and will. And this is the way for him. To have all through affection and will is to possess and to be possessed by them. It is to have values inverted. It is to be totally distracted from the only real value who is God in whom all take on their positive importance and meaning. The sanjuanist idea is that to find God, one must go by the way of solitude and silence⁴⁴, as we have already seen. It is when the person and God

⁴² « Para lo cual es de notar que el Verbo Hijo de Dios, juntamente con el Padre y el Espíritu Sancto, esencial y presencialmente está escondido en el íntimo ser del alma; por tanto, el alma que le ha de hallar conviene salir de todas las cosas según la afección y voluntad y entrarse en sumo recogimiento dentro de sí misma, siéndole todas las cosas como si no fuesen ». *Cant-B I*, 6 (BAC p. 631-KAV p. 418); *Cant-B XIX*, 6 (BAC p. 682-KAV p. 487).

⁴³ *Cant-B I*, 8 (BAC p. 632-KAV, p. 419).

⁴⁴ Once on this way, one begins a transformation of life with God in love. Cf. *Cant-B XII*, 8 (BAC p. 658-659-KAV p. 455-456). This transformation process is actually one of equalisation. The three level movement (purgative, illuminative and unitive) have been leading up to this point. In the *Cant-B* we find

have truly become one in union via solitude and silence that He reveals Himself as much as is possible⁴⁵.

Such a manifestation, once again, is accomplished beyond the usual. (But not in the sense of extraordinary or miraculous). Divesting oneself of all things in order to be filled with God, the individual is struck by such a deep insight into Him that it is a joy which surpasses joy and a language which surpasses language⁴⁶. What occurs in such a self manifestation of God is that the person so becomes one with God that he experiences in depth (though not comprehensively) the « whatness » of God in God through love⁴⁷. It is for this reason that the whole experience becomes inexpressible: for God is infinite and, in such a knowledge of which we speak here, man is enabled to enter that infinite reality. All finite words then become incapable of total and full expression of the Transcendent God who has been thus known.

This experience of God, combined with its characteristic inexpressibility leads one into a certain restlessness. Here is what Fray Juan says about it:

It is noteworthy that any soul with authentic love cannot be satisfied until it really possesses God. Everything else not only fails to satisfy it, but, as we have said, increases the hunger and appetite to see Him as He is⁴⁸.

With this Juan enters the whole augustinian tradition: « ...our heart is restless until it rests in you... »⁴⁹. This is set within the

God spoken of in terms of the hidden treasure and the believer must hide, and become the treasure too. (I, 8 & 9 BAC p. 632-KAV p. 418-419). In this way do the two become one, under the image of an inanimate reality: the treasure. However, it is in the final stage — the unitive way — where equalisation reaches its climax: « ...se llama esposa del Hijo de Dios, lo cual significa igualdad con él... » (*Cant-B XXVIII*, 1 BAC p. 707-KAV p. 520).

⁴⁵ « ...así quedando escondida con El, entonces le sentirás en escondido y le amarás y gozarás en escondido y te deleitarás en escondido con El, es a saber, sobre todo lo que alcanza la lengua y sentido ». *Cant-B I*, 9 (BAC p. 632-KAV p. 419).

⁴⁷ Cf. R. P. HARDY: « *Christian Mysticism as Harmonization* », in *Eglise et théologie* 6 (1975) p. 249-250.

⁴⁸ « Donde es de notar que cualquier alma que ama de veras no puede querer satisfacerse ni contentarse hasta poseer de veras a Dios, porque todas las demás cosas no solamente no la satisfacen, mas antes, como habemos dicho, le hacen crecer el hambre y apetito de verle a El como es... » *Cant-B VI*, 4 (BAC p. 644-645-KAV p. 436); *Cant-B I*, 13 (BAC p. 633-634-KAV p. 421); *Cant-B I*, 19 (BAC p. 635-KAV p. 423); *Cant-B IX*, 6 (BAC p. 650-KAV p. 444); *Cant-B XXV*, 3 (BAC p. 696-KAV p. 506).

⁴⁹ « ...inquietum est cor nostrum, donec requiescat in te ». Conf. I, 1, 1 (P. L. 32, 661).

commentary of stanza VI which is devoted entirely to showing how man, once he begins the way, becomes caught in the grace of God's manifestation. Every element of beauty and goodness with which he comes into contact is like something that wounds him and yet draws him on more deeply into the object of his pursuit⁵⁰. Each element is wounding because it is insufficient in itself to say the totality of Who lies beyond it. Hence it is painful since one is to keep at this point only with a partial view. For the same reason, however, it draws man ever deeper into God. Having tasted God, satiation is not the immediate result. Man is desirous of finding Him fully. Thus, does he become restless with all that takes him away from focussing the whole of his being (body and soul) upon Him. Yet, his restlessness is also a positive élan toward God. For through one initial taste man begins a whole lifetime of searching, finding and searching again. Only in the beatific vision will he be satisfied with the fullness of God who gives Himself to the one whom He has made equal as son.

The fact that He is *always* hidden is another characteristic of this sanjuanist theme. There is a certain mystery of God which Juan constantly emphasizes. In the very first stanza of the *Cántico*, he speaks to the one who would find God in this way:

You do very well, O soul, to seek Him ever as one hidden, for you exalt God immensely and approach very near Him when you consider Him higher and deeper than anything you can reach.. Never stop with loving and delighting in your understanding and experience of God, but love and delight in what is neither understandable nor perceptible of him⁵¹.

Once more we find the sanjuanist fear being expressed: making God a creature by thinking we can know Him perfectly and fully. As he no doubt had seen personally some of the religious enthusiasts of his time reduce God to a « vision » or a power of healing or a « feeling », Juan is most careful in his own approach. Here he

⁵⁰ *Cant-B*, VI, 2 (BAC p. 644 — KAV p. 436).

⁵¹ « Muy bien haces, ¡ oh alma!, en buscarle siempre escondido, porque mucho ensalzas a Dios y mucho te llegas a El teniéndole por más alto y profundo que todo cuanto puedes alcanzar; ...nunca pares en amar[le] y deleitarte en eso que entendieres o sintieres de Dios, sino ama y deléitate en lo que no puedes entender y sentir de El... » *Cant-B* I, 12 (BAC p. 633-KAV p. 420); *Cant-B* I, 3 (BAC p. 630-KAV p. 417); *Cant-B* I, 11 (BAC p. 633-KAV p. 420); *Cant-B* VI, 5 (BAC p. 645-KAV p. 436); *Noche* II, 20, 6 (BAC p. 607-KAV p. 378); *Subida* II, 12, 1 (BAC p. 489-KAV p. 229-230); *Subida* II, 8, 4 (BAC p. 409-410-KAV p. 127).

praises the one who does not try to make God into someone or something that one can grasp and control. Whatever one knows of God is to be constantly surpassed, according to Fray Juan, and then one need not be concerned about worshipping a false god. Even when there is a real manifestation of the « naked substance » of God, one must not think that it is perfect. That it is as perfect as it will be in eternal vision is not possible now⁵². What one sees now is God, but not as He will be seen. In speaking of the characteristics of contemplation in which man comes to know God in this unique way, Juan notes that the knowledge involved is not one which deals with any particular considerations⁵³. This is to say that everything is there. Everything is known, but it is fathomless. There is never an end of knowing this infinite God. So it is that Fray Juan reminds us that « Only to Himself is He neither strange nor new »⁵⁴. This is so not only while one lives here, but the mystery of God remains even in Eternal Vision⁵⁵.

We see, therefore, that God is constantly the appealing « muste-
rion » for Fray Juan de la Cruz. As He lives, hidden in essence within the soul, He appeals to the person to enter within himself and find Him — in silence and solitude. Yet, once he begins on this journey inward, man becomes restless and rather than being satisfied, he is drawn ever more deeply into the life search in Faith. He searches a lifetime then for God, the transcendent and Infinite love who remains forever mystery and yet who is known in that very fact.

Conclusion:

At the very heart of the sanjuanist approach to God lies the *mystery* element of God. It is the hidden God who loves and cares for man. It is the hidden God who brings him to Himself. It is the hidden God who is searched for by man. Because of this

⁵² « Y no se ha de entender que esto que el alma entiende, porque sea sustancia desnuda (como habemos dicho), sea la perfecta y clara fruición como en el cielo, porque aunque es desnuda de accidentes, no es por eso clara, sino oscura, porque es contemplación la cual en esta vida, como dice san Dionisio, es ' rayo de tiniebla '... » *Cant-B XIV-XV*, 16 (BAC p. 668-KAV p. 469); *Cant-B XIV-XV*, 8 (BAC p. 665-KAV p. 465).

⁵³ *Cant-B XIV-XV*, 24 (BAC p. 670-472).

⁵⁴ « Sólo para sí no es extraño ni tampoco para sí es nuevo ». *Cant-B XIV-XV*, 8 (BAC p. 665-KAV p. 465).

⁵⁵ *Cant-B XIV-XV*, 8 (BAC p. 665-KAV p. 465); *Cant-B XIV-XV*, 16 (BAC p. 668-KAV p. 469).

quality, man who is given to see Him, comes to enter a whole life devoted to seeking out the God who hides.

God hides from being captured by the created prison of human concept and words. While Juan would be the last to deny the validity and importance of theological pursuits, he would vehemently reject a theology which forgets analogy and practically creates a god of words, of concepts. His theme of the God who remains hidden is one which theologians of today would do well to reflect upon and thus keep as the basic pre-supposition to all their reflective presentations. Furthermore, on an ecclesial or even personal level, God as pure mystery is someone we tend to forget in today's world. Religion, science and technology can degenerate into a magical god who controls all, but who is controlled by us. When God is viewed as He is, (that is, known beyond knowledge and experience, beyond language and feeling), then can religion' science and technology develop freely and fully. For then will they be seen in the right perspective.

Juan's motivating force in presenting the hidden God is as ageless as God Himself. The sanjuanist approach is the biblical one which calls man to an ever deepening knowledge of the living God: « Out of his infinite glory, may he give you the power through his Spirit for your hidden self to grow strong, so that Christ may live in your hearts through faith, and then, planted in love and built on love, you will with all the saints have strength to grasp the breadth and the length, the height and the depth, until knowing the love of Christ, which is beyond all knowledge, you are filled with the utter fulness of God ». (Eph. 3: 16-19).

DR. RICHARD P. HARDY
St. Paul University
Ottawa, Canada