

FAROL

William of Saint-Thierry (c.1085-1148), first a Benedictine, then a Cistercian monk
Meditations, no.2 (©Cistercian Fathers series)

"Have pity on me, Lord, Son of David!"

Sometimes I feel you passing by, you do not stop for me but go straight on, leaving me crying after you like the Canaanite woman... Should I draw near again, when this occurs? Yes, surely, Lord. For the whelps that are chased with blows from their master's house return immediately and, hanging watchfully about the place, receive their daily bread. I come again when I am driven out; shut out, I howl; and beaten, I implore. A dog cannot live without a man's companionship, nor can my soul without the Lord her God.

Open to me, therefore, Lord, that I may come to you and be enlightened by you. You dwell in your heavens, but you have made darkness your secret place, even the dark waters amid the clouds of the air. And, as the Prophet says, "You have set a cloud before you, so that our prayer may not pass through," (Lam 3,44). But, as for me, I have rotted on earth, my heart thick and earthy... Your heavenly stars do not shine for me; the sun is darkened and the moon gives no light. In psalms and hymns and spiritual songs I hear your mighty acts proclaimed; out of your Gospels your words and deeds shine forth at me, and the example of your servants strikes unceasingly upon my eyes and ears. Your promises in Scripture, the promises your Truth has made, obtrude themselves without cease upon my sight and battering my deafness with their din... But long persistence in bad ways, along with very great insensibility of mind, has hardened me. I have learned to sleep with the sunshine full on my face, and have grown used to it. I have become accustomed to not seeing what takes place before my eyes...

How long, O Lord, how long? How long will you defer to rend the heavens and come down? (Ps 13[12],1; Is 64,1)... How long will you delay... so to shatter my dullness that I may be no longer what I am... and so be turned, at least at eventide, and hunger like a dog that runs about your city? - the city of which a portion sojourns still on earth but the greater part rejoices already in heaven - so that maybe I may find some who will receive my fainting soul into their habitation?