



**The Life You Save May Be Your Own:
Thoughts on Pipe Smoking &
the Contemplative Lifestyle**
Mark Irwin * Chicago Pipe Show 2024

MYSTAGOGY: “To lead through the mysteries. The advanced spiritual instruction which follows introductory guidance.”

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE: “Any act habitually entered into with our whole heart in which we assume the inner stance that offers the least resistance to be overtaken by the Graced event of what we are powerless by our own finite efforts to attain.” (James Finley, *Meister Eckhart’s Living Wisdom*, Sounds True audiobook, ch. 47).

CONTEMPLATIVE PRACTICE: “A contemplative practice is any act, habitually entered into with your whole heart, as a way of awakening, deepening, and sustaining a contemplative experience of the inherent holiness of the present moment. . . . Your practice might be simple, heartfelt prayer, slowing reading the scriptures, gardening, baking bread, writing or reading poetry, drawing or painting. . . . The critical factor is not so much what the practice is in its externals as the extent to which the practice incarnates an utterly sincere stance of awakening and surrendering to the Godly nature of the present moment.” (James Finley, *The Contemplative Heart*, 29).

MYSTICISM: “*Experiential* knowledge of spiritual things, in contrast to book knowledge, secondhand knowledge, or even church knowledge. (Richard Rohr, *Eager to Love: The Alternative Way of Francis of Assisi*, 4)

A CELTIC PIPE KINDLING.

I kindle my pipe this evening [morning; noon; night]
In presence of the holy angels of heaven,
In presence of Ariel of the loveliest form,
In presence of Uriel of the myriad charms,
Without malice, without jealousy, without envy,
Without fear, without terror of any one under the sun,
But the Holy Son of God to shield me.
 Without malice, without jealousy, without envy,
 Without fear, without terror of any one under the sun,
 But the Holy Son of God to shield me.

As I kindle my pipe, Christ kindle my heart
Censing love to my neighbor,
To my foe, to my friend, to my kindred all,
To the brave, to the knave, to the thrall,
O Son of the loveliest Mary,
From the lowliest thing that liveth
To the Name that is highest of all.
 O Son of the loveliest Mary,
 From the lowliest thing that liveth
 To the Name that is highest of all.

(Adapted from Alexander Carmichael, *Carmina Gaedelica*, 93)

A MATCH LIGHT PRAYER:

May my prayer
like the smoke of my pipe
rise like incense before you, O Lord.
(adapted from *Book of Common Prayer*, Episcopal Rite II, & Psa. 141:2)

A PIPE CLEANING PRAYER (as the ashes are emptied from a pipe):

Remember that you are but dust,
and to dust you shall return.
(*book of Common Prayer*, Episcopal Rite II)



A SOLEMN ORDER FOR THE BLESSING OF A NEW PIPE

Celebrant: O all ye works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord; praise him and magnify him for ever. O ye angels of the Lord, bless ye the Lord; praise him and magnify him forever.

Smoaker: A pillar of cloud went before them by day and a pillar of fire by night.

Celebrant and Smoaker: Thanks be to God.

Celebrant: A reading from the prophet Isaiah: In the year that king Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and his train filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim; each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet and with two he flew. And one called to another and said, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory." And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke (Isa. 6:1-4).

Smoaker: The word of the Lord; thanks be to God.

Celebrant: The Lord be with you.

Smoaker: And with thy spirit.

Celebrant: Let us pray: God of incense, burning coals, and of the pillar of fire, vouchsafe to bless this pipe, ✠ that it may become a source of enjoyment and a constant reminder of thy goodness, at whose right hand are pleasures forevermore; through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

All shall then retire for a smoake as the choir and organ break forth joyously in the Te Deum.

[✠ = Celebrant makes the sign of the Cross over the pipe]

(from Arthur Yunker, Toward a Theology of Pipe Smoking, 49).

Taken from *The X Pipe: Mystagogy*, Appendix 2, "Smoaker's Prayers & Collects," pp. 305-11.