

**The Tower ministry (2)**

# **More of life inside the towers**

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The first towers document explained the background to this ministry and what intercessors bring to it. This material looks even more deeply at the intercessory experience within the towers. Here are the areas to be thought about.

- \* **Introduction**
- \* **What are Towers intercessors?**
- \* **Towers intercession and the rhythm of the spiritual world.**
- \* **The pure heart.**
- \* **The anointing of stillness.**
- \* **Reflections.**
- \* **Read on.**

## Introduction

I was reading this story from the life of St Gemma recently -

**“Jesus held out one of his arms from the cross and beckoned Gemma to come to him. She levitated up to him. Jesus held her in his arms and she drank from the spring in his side.”**

At first glance, this Christian experience looks at best odd, and at worst almost heretical. It needs interpreting into 21<sup>st</sup> century culture and times. It could be interpreted in this way -

**“Gemma drew very close to the sufferings of Jesus, and totally identified with that suffering - even drawing strength from that suffering. From this intense position she was able to offer intercession in a deep and profound way for those situations which the Lord revealed to her.”**

Looked at in this way, Gemma's experience is a pointer for intercessors who enter the Towers. To pray with relevance and power, they need to draw closer to the sufferings of Jesus. As I have studied the lives and experiences of the great army of intercessory people, I have been learning how to interpret what they are saying for my life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and I have been moved on in my ability to intercede. The material that follows is my attempt to interpret more of their experiences, so that I, and others who want to, can get to the depths of intercession.

It is a confusing area – at least when first approached, so I encourage readers not to get side-tracked by the things they cannot understand, but push through to the end, believing that what can be understood is very precious.

## What are Towers intercessors?

**“Hardly do I open myself to pray than all at once I feel as if my heart were possessed by a flame of living love – unlike any flame of this poor world. It consumes but gives no pain. It is so sweet and delicious that the spirit finds great pleasure in it and remains satiated in it in such a way that it does not lose its desire of God. This is a thing of supreme wonder to me. Perhaps I will never come to understand it until I reach the heavenly country.”**

(Padre Pio)

These words are a useful summary of Intercessory prayer, and what is expected of those that intercede in the towers.

**Towers intercessors are pilgrims.** Like all pilgrims, he or she is on a journey of discovery, but for them it is a journey into the spiritual world. They do not use their intellect, which just gets in the way, but use emotions to “see” and experience spiritual things. For these pilgrims, spirit speaks to Spirit.

**Towers intercessors want experience.** The towers intercessors want to experience enlightenment in their spirit, so that they can experience the fullness of the divinity for themselves. From this position they see things in a different light - the light of the Spirit undiluted by the things of the world. From here they return, filled with joy, to encourage the church. They find it hard to put into words what they have experienced.

**Towers intercessors want more.** In the intercessory experience, there is always more, and those praying in this way are hungry for more. The desire for total absorption into the Lord is a very deep motivation. This fulfilment was once described as two live sparks seeking each other. When they finally touch there is an explosion of fulfilment. St. Paul described it in this way - “And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.” (2 Corinthians 3:18)

**Towers intercessors are not looking for a short cut.** Towers intercession is not a short cut to God. It is a growth towards God, as is all Christian experience. It is a little different, and has its own language and experiences, which have to be interpreted.

**Towers intercessors experience touches emotions.** Towers intercession is a state of feeling not intellect. Angela of Foligno, an Italian intercessor would often fall down screaming, much to the consternation of those around her. When asked about this, she said that she was so overcome with the presence of the love of God that she could not do anything else. Here are her own words, from her writings – her emotion is obvious.

“But after that He was gone I fell down upon a seat and began to cry with a loud voice, clamouring and calling without any shame and uttering these words, “Oh Love, heretofore have I never known Thee, why leavest Thou me in this manner?”

And more than this I could not Say, for my voice was so suffocated with crying that scarce could I pronounce even this, wherefore was it not heard by the persons around me." (The book of divine consolation of Blessed Angela of Foligno.)

**Towers intercessors are restless.** The intercessors in this ministry are pilgrims on an inner journey to the mountain top. They are a restless group, always believing that whatever experience they have is the prelude to another, until they reach fulfilment - whatever form that takes. St. Paul describes it well -

"Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 3: 12-14)

## **The towers intercession and the rhythm of the spiritual world**

To intercede in the towers Intercessors have to appreciate the rhythm of the spiritual world and move within it. They're not individuals dancing to their own tune but are caught up in the great flows of the spiritual world. What is this rhythm? It takes a number of forms.

### **Rhythm - the sun and the clouds - “The wind blows wherever it pleases.”** (John 3:8)

I was standing on top of the Sussex South Downs (U.K.) recently, watching the beautiful white clouds floating lazily along. I noticed that their shadows could be seen on the ground. As they drifted over the valleys, the land seemed alive with these shadows. Right across the valley this patchwork of light and shade was passing along, as it has done since the valleys and clouds came into being.

This is the rhythm of nature, and this is also the rhythm of the spiritual world. The Spirit moves around, and intercessors feel his presence - now here, now there, leading from one experience after another. He passes along, and the spiritual world is always changing in his light. This is the biblical description of such a spiritual walk:-

**“The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear the sound of it but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.”** (John 3:8)

The rhythm of the spiritual world is movement. Towers intercessors must be flexible to this movement. One moment worship, the next the Lord will be speaking, the next seeing or feeling, then praying. A rigid approach does not work. Intercessors might say - “Let me finish this first!” That kind of approach does not work. St Brendan set out in a journey by sea with some of his Monks. He had a “sun and clouds” approach, and he puts it like this:-

“They set themselves to the oars until their strength failed. Then Brendan began quickly to comfort and advise them, saying: “Brothers do not fear. God is our helper, sailor and helmsman, and he guides us. Ship all the oars and rudder. Just leave the sail spread and God will do as he wishes with his servants and their ship.” (St Brendan. The Navigator)

So towers intercessors will have to adapt. They must leave their frantic need for order and solutions behind, put up their sails and drift in the Spirit. Nothing else works!

### **Rhythm - Intensity of the presence**

**“Woe is me” I cried, “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty.”** (Isaiah.6:5)

**“When you pray, gather up your whole self and with your beloved enter into the chamber of your heart. Remain close with him there.”** (St. Bonaventure)

I had this experience –

Waking up in the night I knew it was time to pray, but there was a very unusual atmosphere in my room. Everything was utterly still. There was no movement. It was as if I've been frozen in time. Then the Lord lifted me into the heavenly places, and I felt the intensity of his presence like I had never felt before. The weight of this presence was so great that I had to draw on all my spiritual experience to be able to bear it. When it was over I was exhausted.

This intensity of the intercessory experience can be seen in the dedication of the first Temple:-

**When Solomon finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord filled the temple. The priests could not enter the temple of the Lord because the glory of the Lord filled it. When all the Israelites saw the fire coming down and the glory of the Lord above the temple, they knelt on the pavement with their faces to the ground and they worshipped and gave thanks to the Lord, saying, "He is good; his love endures forever."** (2 Chronicles 7:1-3)

The intensity of The Lord's presence is very challenging but there is no escape. The Psalmist had the same experience:-

**Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me," even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.** (Psalm.139: 7-12)

Towers intercessors have to accept this intense burden because this is the spiritual world which is inside the towers.

### **Rhythm - emotion not intellect**

**"But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him. He ran to his son, threw his arms round him, and kissed him."** (Luke 15:20)

**"The universes which are amenable to the intellect can never satisfy the instincts of the heart"** (Cloud of Unknowing.)

**"I snuggle into the heart of God like a child to its mother's breast."** (Maria Faustina)

I was speaking in a very large church in South America. It was a very hard word to the church, but the Pastor wanted me to share it. As I began to speak, I saw a young woman fall on her knees and began crying. "Lord," I said "I cannot go on. I am damaging your people." But as I looked to the Lord, I saw that he was crying. "If you do not carry on," he said, "you will hurt me." I was caught between two emotions - his and the woman crying. It was my introduction to how things worked in the spiritual realm. I carried on speaking, but after a

few more minutes, a young man fell to his knees crying and sobbing. Again I said the Lord, “I cannot go on. I am hurting your people.” But he continued to cry, and repeated, “If you do not, you will hurt me.” I was hurting more and more but carried on. Within a few minutes the whole church was on its knees, crying out to the Lord. My emotional stress was so great that afterwards I could not work for a week.

The heart of the rhythm of the spiritual world is the willingness to let the emotions speak. Towers intercessors are those who feel first, and think second. Approaching the tower in an intellectual way is impossible.

The Lord allowed his emotions to speak to him -

**Nain:** - Soon afterward, Jesus went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went along with him. As he approached the town gate, a dead person was being carried out—the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the town was with her. When the Lord saw her, his heart went out to her and he said, “Don’t cry.” (Luke 7: 11-13)

**Gethsemane:** - Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him. On reaching the place, he said to them, “Pray that you will not fall into temptation.” He withdrew about a stone’s throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, “Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.” An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground. (Luke 22: 39-44)

**Peter and Jesus:** - When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?” “Yes, Lord,” he said, “you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.” Again Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” He answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Take care of my sheep.” The third time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love me?” He said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Feed my sheep.” (John 21: 15-17)

## Rhythm - the invisible church

**“But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands on thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven.”** (Hebrews. 12:22-23)

**“The community setting bought home to me the need for prayer to be set within the corporate. We may be on our own when praying but we need to realise that we are praying as part of the Christian community.”** (The Jesus Prayer. Simon Barrington Ward.)

The invisible church fills the spiritual world. The entire church of the Firstborn - all who have gone before - are there and involved in prayer and praise. This praise is infectious, and it is impossible not to be moved by its rhythm.

This is how I have found it with the invisible church. When I feel their praise, I begin to dance. When I hear their prayer and intercession, I begin to pray. I am a member of this church - why would I not want to pray, to praise, to dance? Towers intercessors have to appreciate this – they are part of the whole church of God and intercede inside the wider family.

## The pure heart

**Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place? The one who has clean hands and a pure heart.** (Ps 24: 3-4)

**“Only those of the purest eyes can look upon his divinity, those who have risen up beyond lowly works and earthly thoughts and have gone off with him to the highest mountain of solitude.”** (John Cassian)

## Seeking purity

I was in the spirit, and I saw a column of glass, coming towards me. It was so pure that its purity frightened me. Closer and closer it came, until the purity of the column touched my spirit, and I felt so ashamed, so sinful, so unworthy. I cried out to the Lord “What is happening?” The Lord said - “Only as you become purer, as your heart becomes purer can you come closer and closer.”

Isaiah had the same experience.

**“Woe to me!” I cried. “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty.” Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. With it he touched my mouth and said, “See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.”** (Isaiah 6: 5-6)

There is a huge challenge in Towers intercession - challenge purity and quality of life. It is not possible to separate personal lives from our intercession. The Lord will examine at a very deep level. I have found this very uncomfortable. There is no escape. The Psalmist made that clear -

**Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.**  
(Psalm 139)

This challenge to purity is part of the pain and cost of deep intercession.

## Seeking humility

Having impurity revealed and desiring to be made purer by the Lord is only part of the truth. The other part is humility. By being humble, as Jesus was humble, towers intercessors will be able to access intimacy with the Lord at a deeper level. Charles de Foucauld was a humble servant of the Lord, and he writes this which is a good guide for our intercession in the towers -

“Let me be humble in thought, knowing myself and facing my own misery, past and present, the faults that I have, the virtues I do not have, the infirmities I have and the natural gifts I do not have. Let me be humble in my desires, without any ambition, or any wish for man’s esteem. I must be afraid of myself, afraid of my own judgments and integrity and courage. I must attribute to God only whatever good there may be in me and to myself alone the evil that I do. Let me be humble in speech: I must speak little, saying no good of myself, never revealing unless under great necessity all the graces God has given me; never saying anything which could give a good opinion of myself to others except though necessity. Let us be humble in actions. I must believe no work beneath me. I should look on any occupation as a great privilege. I must welcome with love and readiness any occasion for humility, any humiliation that emulates the humility of Jesus.”

## The Anointing of stillness

**“Be still and know that I am God.” (Ps 46:10)**

**“Faith puts us into a new atmosphere, in full sunshine, full daylight, in a serene and luminous place far above the region of clouds, winds and storms, beyond the realm of twilight and night.” (Charles de Foucauld.)**

In the presence of Jesus, there is a deep stillness. It is the stillness of eternity - of God who was and is and is to come. A God who is beyond “everlasting.” It was experiencing this stillness which enabled me to receive the tower's vision.

I first understood this when I had a vision of the post resurrection breakfast by the lake. In the spirit I found myself sitting by Jesus on the shore. I could smell the fish cooking, hear the crackling of the fire, the rhythm of the waves, the sound of the wind. There was such a profound quiet, that I knew I wanted to ask nothing, or do anything. In the presence of the eternal “yes”, what questions or requests could be needed?

I sat and he sat. Slowly I began to absorb his stillness, and I appreciated the order and calmness of the universe, and of creation. I understood that by being there, held by that stillness, I began to absorb it. It calmed my soul, and I knew all I needed to do was to be in that atmosphere.

We sat together and looked out over the sea. I did not need to intercede. Just being in that environment was my intercession. Being became my intercession. It was, as it were, that I became nothing so that I could absorb the I AM who was there with me. The Lord turned to me and said - “Is there anything you want to say to me?” “No,” I replied. Then I said to him, “Is there anything you want to say to me?” “No,” he replied. So we just sat, looking out over the sea, and I absorbed the stillness until I was stillness.

The deepest intercession in the towers will be achieved by entering into the stillness of the Lord. This is not easy to understand for the church, but it should be easy to understand for intercessors because they spend so much time with the Lord. The anointing of stillness is available within every tower. Do the towers intercessors have the courage to enter into it?

## Reflections

I have gathered here a few thoughts from great intercessors of the past. Reflecting on these might help some get a clearer understanding of what the towers ministry is asking.

**Catherine of Sienna:** "God who is infinite love demands from us only infinite desire."

**Father Michael:** "This is the engine which drives the heart of the mystic intercessor. We press on God with love. We reach for that fulfilment, for the electricity to jump the gap, for the ecstasy to come. When it does, like all true lovers, we want more. It is never enough, and we know it can never be enough. We know the ultimate fulfilment can only come beyond death."

We want only to die to experience fulfilment. We need not be afraid of this attitude. It is the way to ultimate intercession - to be within the heart of God, or "within the wounds Jesus". (St Gemma) From this place, intercession becomes transformed from words to emotion. Our love and longing become the carrier waves on which the intercession penetrates to the very heart of God."

**John Ruysbroeck:** "These two spirits, that is our own spirit and the spirit of God sparkle and shine one into the other, and each one shows the other its face. This makes each of the spirits yearn for the other in love. Each demands of the other all that it is. This makes the loves melt into each other. God's touch and his gifts, our loving craving and our giving back. These fulfil love. This flux and reflux causes the fountain of love to brim over. Thus the touch of God and our loving craving become one simple love." (John Ruysbroeck.)

**Methilde of Madgeberg:** "Here two natures meet - the hot fire of the Godhead and the flowing wax of the loving soul. If a pure wick of constant humility is there, a beautiful light shall burn by which one shall see far."

We long, we ache, we cry for that unity - the jumping of the spark the flowing of the wax. Day by day and hour by hour we feel the lack of it, and know that in the earthly it can never be. This unfulfillment is made worse by knowing that we can taste it, see it and almost reach it in our mystic intercession, but never quite achieve it.

Unfulfilled love - the agony of prayer, and also, in that strange kingdom way, the engine of it. For longing to drink from that well drives me again and again into the arms of the Lord. Once there, intercession begins to flow.

## Going further

There is a vast range of material on intercession. These are the books I have referred to in this material. Most are available on Kindle.

Author	Title
Jacob Boehme.	The signature of all things.
Broom of Devotion.	From Celtic Daily Prayer
John Cassion.	Conferences
Catherine of Sienna.	Dialogue
Catherine of Sienna.	Letters – to Sister Daniella
Dionysius the Aeropagite.	<i>Put him in your browser.</i>
Charles de Foucauld.	Essential Writings
Maria Faustina.	“Divine mercy in my soul.” Diary of Maria Faustina Kowalska.
William James.	The varieties of religious experience.
Julian of Norwich.	Revelations of divine love
Maria d’Agreda.	The Mystical city of joy
Mechthild of Magdeburg.	The flowing light of the Godhead
Henry Nouwen.	The return of the Prodigal Son
Padre Pio.	The true Story. <i>C. Bernard Ruffin</i>
Brother Roger of Taize.	Essential Writings. <i>Marcello Fidanzio.</i>
Marthe Robin.	The Foyers of Charity. <i>Martin Blake</i>
Richard Rolles.	Incendium Amoris
Edith Stein.	The science of the cross
Henry Suso.	The little book of eternal wisdom
St.Brendan.	The Navigation
St John of the Cross.	The dark night of the soul
St Veronica.	The stigmatists. <i>Bob and Penny Lord</i>
The Cloud of Unknowing.	Anonymous. <i>Available on Kindle</i>
Simon Barrington Ward.	The Jesus prayer
Evelyn Underhill.	Mysticism
Simone Weil.	Gravity and Grace

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