

Upward to God

By Pauline M. Long

When I close my eyes to pray, it is not easy to begin, for the world is very much with me. For a busy wife and mother there are always dishes to wash, beds to make, floors to sweep, shirts to iron, socks to mend, children to comfort, friends to console, letters to write, classes to teach, lessons to learn, church to attend, calls to make, school to visit.

This is my role in life, the one I chose freely and must not shirk, for no one else can play my special role for me. Yet, for a little while, I must lay aside my burdens, my cares, and talk to God—alone.

Consciously I try to push away the distractions of the world—the earsplitting sound of the motorcycle in the street, the barking of the neighbor’s dog, the music from the radio, the ticking of the clock... Within me, something begins to reach outward and upward—through the room, the housetop, beyond the birds and the tree, upward, upward through the sky to the ramparts of Heaven itself.

Then I see a figure kneeling, like Hannah of old as she knelt before the priest Eli, pouring out the yearnings of her heart to God. But it is not Hannah, it is myself in a gray and shapeless robe kneeling before a throne. There are shadows about, but I can see a great chair with the feet and hands of a figure there. The mists are deep and try as I might to see the form sitting there, my eyes cannot penetrate to see the loving face. But I know someone is there, He is there.

He will dry my tears, share my joys, understand my frustrations, my fears, my anxieties. He will comfort me and give me strength to take up my burden again for yet another day.

Slowly I bow my head. The world is behind me now. I am here in this place—alone—with God. He is waiting for me. Waiting—and listening.

I feel a tumult within me, a churning millpond of things I want to talk to God about. Then a gate opens and the rushing current carries its burden upward—outward. I open my lips to speak, for only now can I pray.

