

Veni Sancte Spiritus was written for the Gordon College Choir's European tour in the spring of 2006. C. Thomas Brooks, their director, wanted something sacred that could be sung successfully in large, echoing cathedral spaces. Ron Jeffers lovely translation of the text caught my ear first, but the original Latin is even better—austere, not a word too many, the sentiments perfectly caught in a highly controlled poetic form. It remained only to illuminate them with music.

How to pray when it seems impossible, when it's all we can do to utter the first word? "Veni..." This is the moment of turning, of supplication. "Veni...veni...come." Slowly our attention is focused; we enter into the single-minded moment of prayer, of meditation.

Veni, Sancte Spiritus,
Et emitte coelitus
Lucis tuae radium.
Veni, pater pauperum,
Veni, dator munerum,
Veni, lumen cordium.

Consolatur optime,
Dulcis hospes animae,
Dulce refrigerium.
In labore requies,
In aestu temperies,
In fletu solatium.

O lux beatissima,
Reple cordis intima
Tuorum fidelium.
Sine tuo numine,
Nihil est in homine,
Nihil est innoxium.

Lava quod est sordidum,
Riga quod est aridum,
Sana quod est saucium.
Flecta quod est rigidum,
Fove quod est frigidum,
Rege quod est devium.

Da tuis fidelibus,
In te confidentibus,
Sacrum septenarium.
Da virtutis meritum,
Da salutis exitum,
Da perenne gaudium.