

Author of Life and Author of My Life,

As I begin the reading of this book,
give me a sensitivity to listen,
not just to the story told,
but to the responses of my own heart
to what I encounter in these pages.

What does it draw out of me?

What joy?

What longing?

What fears?

What temptation?

What hope?

What mirth?

What love of beauty?

What awe?

What wonder?

What doubt?

What faith?

What resolve?

What unfinished grief?

What untended wound?

Give me ears to hear, O Spirit of God,
what notes the reading of this story would strike
and what melody it would draw forth
from the tuned strings of my own soul.

Waste no moment in my brief years, O Lord.
Let all things, and this book as well,
be as tools in your hands,
to shape me and make me more truly your own,
more fitly a child of the hope
of the restoration of all things in Christ
whose fullness dwells within them.

So let the honest responses
of my heart to this reading
grant new insight into the story
your grace is already telling in my own life
that I might be a more willing co-laborer
in that process.

Amen.

A LITURGY BEFORE

Beginning a Book

FROM THE BOOK
EVERY MOMENT HOLY
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LET THE WISE HEAR
AND INCREASE IN
LEARNING, AND THE ONE
WHO UNDERSTANDS
OBTAIN GUIDANCE, TO
UNDERSTAND A PROVERB
AND A SAYING, THE
WORDS OF THE WISE
AND THEIR RIDDLES.
THE FEAR OF THE LORD
IS THE BEGINNING OF
KNOWLEDGE; FOOLS
DESPISE WISDOM AND
INSTRUCTION.
PROVERBS 1:5-7