



Jamie Perry

ATTENTION IS THE RAREST AND PUREST FORM OF GENEROSITY

Simone Weil
Gravity and Grace

CONTEMPLATION

Contemplation can be described as a 'long, loving look at the real.' It is slowing down sufficiently to be in touch with one's illusions, biases, assumptions, worldviews. It is being in touch with reality - the world's and our own.

Nancy Sylvester IHM

LIVING WITH A PANDEMIC IN THE SEASON OF CREATION

There is now little doubt that the ecological crisis predicted now for over thirty years is a reality. When Pope Francis wrote *Laudato Si'* in 2015 he offered the world ways to address the ecological crisis which include both prayer and action. Pope Francis writes that all Christians need an ecological conversion where;

the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ becomes evident in their relationship with the world around them It is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience.

Laudato Si' 217

The Season of Creation is a time for prayer with creation.

PRAYING

It doesn't have to be the blue iris, it could be weeds in a vacant lot, or a few small stones; just pay attention, then patch

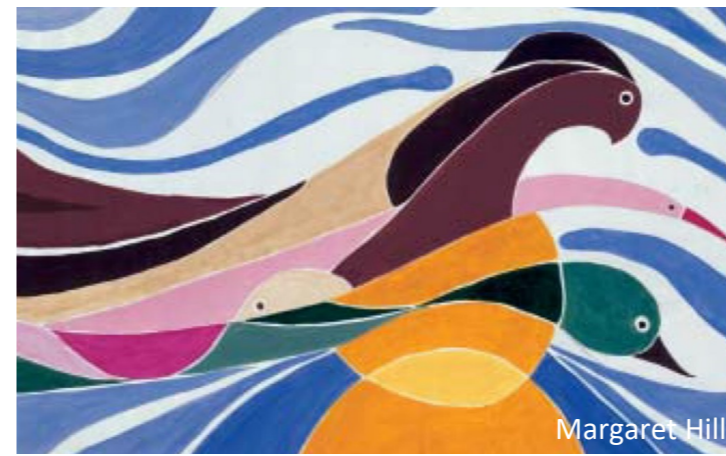
a few words together and don't try to make them elaborate, this isn't a contest but the doorway

into thanks, and a silence in which another voice may speak.

Mary Oliver in *Thirst*

THE LOCKDOWN WALK

Many of us now engage in a regular walk during lockdown, this can be an opportunity for taking a 'long, loving look' at what is around us and a simple yet profound way of praying with creation by paying attention as Mary Oliver suggests. If you're blessed with a garden, quietly paying attention can also become a source of prayer.



Margaret Hill

But ask the animals, and they will teach you;
the birds of the air, and they will tell you;
ask the plants of the earth, and they will teach you;
and the fish of the sea will declare to you.
Who among all these does not know that the hand
of the Lord has done this?

Job 12:7-10

WALKING CONTEMPLATIVELY

This does not necessarily mean walking slowly, although it is not a rushed activity. It is walking to be immersed in an encounter with whatever is calling to us in the moment.

- ◆ **SEE:** Notice colours, shapes and textures, the effect of light. Look closely, is there something you haven't noticed before? Notice birds and insects.
- ◆ **LISTEN:** Take note of the sounds around you. Snatches of conversation, your own breathing. Perhaps more distant sounds, birdsong, traffic. Are there sounds you haven't noticed before?
- ◆ **SMELL:** Breathe deeply and gently and notice the smells. Can you name the perfume of trees, plants or flowers? Are there traffic fumes, the smell of cooking?
- ◆ **TOUCH:** Pay attention to the sensation of sun, wind or rain on your skin. Be aware of warmth or coolness, the contact with the ground.

After your walk, take some time to reflect on what you have experienced. If you keep a prayer journal make a note of what you are feeling. Conclude with a simple prayer or pray one of the Psalms.

So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation; everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself ...

2 Cor 5: 17 - 19a

AN ECOLOGICAL EXAMEN

The Ignatian examen is a way of cultivating greater mindfulness of God's presence in our lives. The practice is grounded in the belief that we experience God's movements in our feelings, moods, actions and desires - in our lived experience. In this we recognise God's ceaseless invitation to come closer, to be one with God.

The Examen can be used to cultivate ecological sensitivity and a heightened awareness of God's presence in all of creation.

How is God inviting us personally to see creation, and how are we responding?

GRATITUDE

Begin with thanksgiving and gratitude for the reflection of God's beauty and blessing in all of creation. Ask: Where was I most aware of this gift today?

AWARENESS

Ask the Holy Spirit to open your eyes see creation as God does. Do I see the see the beauty of creation and hear the cries of the earth and of the poor? Ask the Holy Spirit how we might protect and care for the earth and the poor.

UNDERSTANDING

What challenges and joys do I experience as I recall my care for creation? How can I turn away from a throwaway culture and stand in solidarity with creation and with the poor?

CONVERSION

Ask for the grace of conversion towards ecological justice and reconciliation. Where have I failed to respond to God in the needs of creation?

RECONCILIATION

Ask for the grace to see the incarnate Christ in the dynamic interconnections of all creation.

PRAYER

Choose a prayer to conclude, this might be the Glory be to the Father, or a simple prayer in your own words. Or pray with this prayer of Jesus:

The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

John 17:22-23

Adapted from Joseph Carver SJ
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