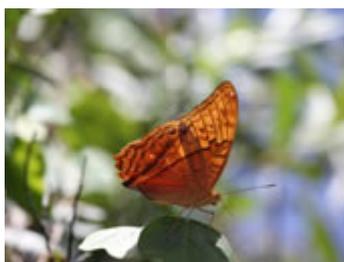


READINGS FOR 3/6/2012



An excerpt from Laurence Freeman OSB, *Letter Three*, WEB

OF SILENCE (London: Darton, Longman, Todd, 1996), pp. 28-29,31.

Meditation is the power of prayer that holds our attention at the still point of conversion, where we are shocked into reality by acceptance. By being rooted in this place of transformation which is not geographical but spiritual, our own inmost centre, we are changed from being an approximation, a mere imitation of ourselves, into the exact original of who we are.

I implore you by God's mercy to offer your very selves to him: a living sacrifice, dedicated and fit for his acceptance, the worship offered by mind and heart. Adapt yourselves no longer to the pattern of this present world, but let your minds be remade and your whole nature thus transformed? (Romans 12:1-2).

The life of the spirit in human nature is a continual repatterning. The step of faith we spend our lives perfecting is simply the one step by which we let our minds be remade and our whole being transfigured. For *this present world*? let us read "ego": the part that thinks it is the whole. It has come involuntarily to block and unconsciously to distort the mystery of life because of the patterns it had formed through pain and rejection; the perception of a world without love. [. . .]

Even if meditation were no more than a brief daily dip into the kingdom within us, it would merit our complete attention. But it is far more than a temporary escape from the prison of our patterns of fear and desire. Complex as these patterns are, making us fear the death and the true love that are necessary for our growth and survival, meditation simplifies them all. Day by day, meditation by meditation, this process of simplification proceeds. We become gradually more fearless until, in the joy of being released from the images and memories of desire, we taste total freedom from fear. And then---and even before then---we become of use to others, able to love without fear or desire. . .released to serve the Self which is the Christ within.

After meditation: from Mary Oliver, *Coming to God: First Days*, THIRST (Boston: Beacon, 2006), p. 23.

Lord, what shall I do that I
can't quiet myself?
Here is the bread, and
here is the cup, and
I can't quiet myself.

To enter the language of transformation!
To learn the importance of stillness,
 with one's hands folded!
When will my eyes of rejoicing turn peaceful?
When will my joyful feet grow still?
When will my heart stop its prancing
 as over the summer grass?

Lord, I would run for you, loving the miles for your sake.
I would climb the highest tree to
be that much closer.

Lord, I will learn also to kneel down
into the world of the invisible,
 the inscrutable and the everlasting.
Then I will move no more than the leaves of a tree
 on a day of no wind,
bathed in light,
like the wanderer who has come home at last
and kneels in peace, done with all unnecessary things;
every motion; even words.

Carla Cooper - cmcooper@gvtc.com

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