

The Light Itself | WCCM

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11 June 2022

The purifying power . . . of faith is attention, pure attention. We are in fact giving and sustaining our attention to the good in ourselves, the natural goodness at the core of our being. This is not . . . becoming self-centered and self-obsessed with our spiritual success. The sign that it is not self-fixation is simply recognized: it awakens us to the essential goodness in other people, even those who have harmed us, and to the sheer good new at the heart of the world. Keeping our attention on the good, even in times when all we can feel is toxic and hopeless: this is the work of faith. Attention purifies. [. . .]

This realization may grow slowly, or at times hit us like a ton of bricks. Understanding it marks a transition from the purgative stage to the unfolding of the next, the beginning of the illuminative stage. The purgation goes on, of course, throughout life, but the emphasis shifts from the purgatorial fire in which the ego's desires and fears are consumed, to the transforming influence of the light of Christ.

After meditation: an excerpt from “The Mercy Supermarket” by Campbell McGrath in THE NEW YORKER, May 23, 2022, p. 35.

Dearest god, I thank you
for this blessing,
though I cannot believe in it, or you.
Nonetheless I honor your name
for allowing me tenancy on this, your firmament,
and I accept its provision as my lot.
If sorrow is the sentence
I will serve it.
If pain is your message I receive it.
Leaves are trembling
in an otherwise imperceptible breeze,
I watch their dance of accommodation and delight,
moved by invisible forces.
So, too, do I tremble, so am I moved.
Right now, I tell you
I am listening to something that says
let it go, fear not, rise
along with me
into a sky the color of amethyst and copper dust.
It is not a voice, it is not even a bird,
but I am listening.
I believe it may be the light
itself speaking to me,
because the sun has arrived, robed in gold,

as the sun is continuously arriving
at one horizon only to depart for another—
it is perpetual daybreak, do you see,
it is time's corolla,
time's counterweight
to the pendulum of our grief, it is
that all-consuming journey into radiance, into dawn.

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