



Buen Camino

Newsletter of Fr. Michael Fish, OSB. CAM

Looking for God in disguise

God loves disguises. In both the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, God has come to us in the disguise of fire, angels, wind, clouds, water, and gentle breeze, to mention just a few. However, the greatest disguise God ever used was to come to us as a human being, Jesus of Nazareth, God in human form.

What other disguises has/does God use? How about friendship, love, joy, kindness, gentleness, compassion, silence, patience, faithfulness, peace, bread or wine. The Gospels and New Testament are full of examples.

So, when you suddenly have a kind idea, a forgiving thought, or are overcome with unexplained joy, that is God coming to you, working in you. If you acknowledge the stirring and act on it then, suddenly, you become God disguised as you, you become a disguise of God.

The month of December incorporates both Advent, a time of anticipation and preparation, and Christmas, the feast of God becoming human. As our spiritual practice for Advent how about daily looking for God in disguise?

I was walking in downtown Santa Cruz recently on an extremely cold day. I passed what appeared to be a homeless person in a wheelchair, both legs amputated. A little inner voice said, "Give him something." "No," I responded, money isn't the answer, it enables." "OK," said the inner voice, "Just a thought." I took three steps and then went back and greeted the guy, who turned out to be an ex-policeman, articulate, a beautiful face and deep eyes shining out of shabbiness. I offered him money for a coffee and a meal which he gratefully accepted and then he wheeled himself along, next to me, chatting about life and the world. I eventually took my leave, shook his hand, wished him well and went my way. The little voice said, "Thanks." God possessing me for a moment but, even much more, God disguised as that

man, a double or even triple epiphany.

Christmas cards or a Christmas letter, an invitation to Christmas lunch or simple Christmas gifts for loved ones and strangers, as Mary Oliver, in her poem "Prayer," says, "Just pay attention," and you'll discover a humorous side of God who loves to appear disguised and transform us into Divine manifestations.

After encountering the wheel-chaired God my day was transformed, my step was light, I had Christmas early.

Blessings,

Michael

Via Negativa

Why no! I never thought other than
That God is that great absence
In our lives, the empty silence
Within, the place where we go
Seeking, not in hope to
Arrive or find. He keeps the interstices
In our knowledge, the darkness
Between stars. His are the echoes
We follow, the footprints he has just
Left. We put our hands in
His side hoping to find
It warm. We look at people
And places as though he had looked
At them, too; but miss the reflection.

R.S. THOMAS

Later Poems 1972-1982

Thanks for your support

Michael is grateful to everyone for your continued prayers, good wishes and support. Donations to Hermit Fish, Michael's 501(c)(3) nonprofit, are fully tax deductible. Gifts of any size are greatly appreciated. FID: 82-2489475
Visit: <https://www.hermitfish.com/donate>

Creative and logistical support for Michael, his *Buen Camino* newsletter and HermitFish.com website are provided by Enigma | LA, enigmala.com

Michael News

During recent meetings at the Hermitage with the Prior General, Cyprian, our Prior, announced he would not be standing for re-election in 2024. The community will begin a time of deliberation and discernment.

Michael wishes you all a blessed and joyous Christmas. He will remember you especially at Midnight Mass.

Levanté on YouTube

We've posted a full-length video on YouTube, from what will be *Levanté 4. Persevering on the Journey* is Michael at his very best. It's free to view, please feel free to share the link. Visit:

<https://tinyurl.com/2p3dwmnk>

Levanté is the perfect gift

The *Levanté* retreats make great Christmas gifts, a terrific way of sharing these treasures. Visit:

<https://hermitfish.com/retreat-brochure>

Audio retreats available

Michael's entire library of audio retreats is available by way of an affordable, online subscription – 13 retreats, 65 talks, over 70 hours of pure Michael wisdom and inspiration. Visit:

<https://hermitfish.com/about-the-audio-library>

Levanté 1 Video Retreats

DEC 12-18 | Home Retreat • Online Only
Sponsored by New Camaldoli Hermitage

Levanté 1 information:
<https://hermitfish.com/levante-1-retreat-houses>

Levanté 2 Video Retreats

JAN 5-11 | Home Retreat • Online

JAN 26-FEB 1 | Home Retreat • Online

**JAN 27-29 | Mary & Joseph Retreat Ctr
On-Site • Rancho Palos Verde, CA**

Levanté 2 information:
<https://hermitfish.com/levante-2-schedule>

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