



Buen Camino

Newsletter of Fr. Michael Fish, OSB. CAM

A time for compassion

Have you had the feeling we are in the midst of a perfect storm? First, it was the Covid-19 pandemic, with all of its conflicting information and the differing attitudes to social distancing, masks and the seriousness of the situation. (I have just learnt of a community I knew in South Africa, where four sisters died of Coronavirus, in the same house in two days).

Then, the terrible death of George Floyd, followed by the intense pain and anger evidenced in the widespread unrest – peaceful demonstrations – but also riots, looting and destruction, resulting in even more tragic death, injury and loss.

Unfortunately, common in most of these events is today's apparent lack of compassion, understanding and tolerance, here and all over the world. It is almost too much to take in and process. I find myself vacillating between paralysis and anxious guilt at not knowing what to do.

Floundering, I have revisited my notes from the *Inner Rest* conference I gave during the *Contemplative Ways of Being 2* retreat. Two images from the conference have helped me. Firstly, Jesus asleep curled up on a cushion, in the boat in the midst of the storm (Mark 4:35-41). He is the still-point, the “eye of the storm,” to which we need to return over and over and find there our own centering and quiet. And secondly, the image of Jesus coming to the disciples in the midst of a storm on the lake, walking on water, and saying, “Courage, it is I, do not be afraid,” (Matthew 14:22-33). During the retreat we examined how Jesus comes not only in the storm, but *as* the storm.

Perhaps this perfect storm we are presently enduring is an opportunity and

invitation to wake up, to evaluate our pre-pandemic life, faith and values. Could this storm be challenging us to face our ingrained fears, complacency and complicity? And could it be asking us to prayerfully discern the path we should take into the future?

Is the Beloved coming *in* and *as* storm and saying to each of us, “Courage, why are you afraid, come to me?”

Blessings,

Michael

God is there in these moments of rest and can give us in a single instant exactly what we need. Then the rest of the day can take its course, under the same effort and strain, perhaps, but in peace. And when night comes, and you look back over the day and see how fragmentary everything has been, and how much you planned that has gone undone, and all the reasons you have to be embarrassed and ashamed, just take everything exactly as it is, put it in God's hands and leave it with God. Then you will be able to rest in God – really rest – and start the next day as a new life.

St. Theresa Benedicta of the Cross
(ST. EDITH STEIN)

Important feasts celebrated during July

11 July – Feast of St. Benedict

22 July – St. Mary Magdalene

25 July – “Santiago” (St. James)

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

News from Michael

Michael continues in “hermit mode,” appropriate for these shelter-in-place times. He is, however, currently on a wilderness hike for 2 to 3 weeks – not quite the *Camino*, but near enough. Unfortunately, there is no Wi-Fi available en route, so he is unable to send us his customary daily reports.

Michael mentioned that the preparation and training for this trek has given him a new lease on life and sends his love to you all.

Hermitage is now open

The New Camaldoli Hermitage in Big Sur, CA, has finally reopened, receiving a limited number of guests. The community is thrilled to be offering hospitality again. Visit: <https://contemplation.com/>

Help with downloading retreat recordings online

All 13 of Michael's retreats are available as downloads on HermitFish.com. Each is a full retreat, consisting of 5 talks, totaling over 5 hours. If you run into difficulty and need assistance with your download, please email laura@hipkes.com. To view all the available retreats, visit:

<https://hermitfish.com/audio-retreats>

Support needed for Michael

Michael is entirely self-supporting, receiving no outside financial assistance apart from his own ministry. Your tax-deductible donation to Hermit Fish, his 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, helps to sustain Michael's ministry. Gifts of any size are greatly appreciated. FID: 82-2489475

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