

Friends of Silence

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“Is there enough Silence for the Word to be heard?”

Summer Greetings, dear Friends of Silence! Here we are in the midst of summer already, along with all its sometimes frantic activities. School is out and the kids are glorying in swimming, amusement parks, picnics, and playing hard all day. Parents, meanwhile, may be wondering how to slow the pace down a bit! Times of solitude are as necessary as breathing during this busy, active season, but where do we find them? An early morning walk along a deserted beach or a mountain vista at twilight come to mind, but what about at home, in our everyday surroundings? Perhaps an early morning interlude in our own gardens, or a brief afternoon “time out” will help. The silent moments of solitude are there if we look for them and are attentive enough to recognize them, sink into them, and allow ourselves to be nurtured and renewed by them. Happy Summer, everyone — see you in September!



It is in the quiet times that we build our strengths and know we have something to rely on. Solitude is not withdrawal into a place where no one and no sound can penetrate. It is a sweet moment of peace with or without other people that lets us re-center and reset the rhythm of the mind, body and spirit. It is wisdom to stay close to the solitude of nature to keep us young and pliable.

~ from A CHEROKEE FEAST OF DAYS by Joyce Sequichie Hifler

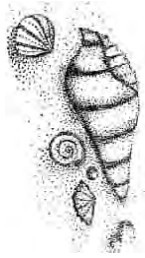


Solitude is full of God.

~ Serbian proverb

When from our better selves we have too long
Been parted by the hurrying world, and droop,
Sick of its business, of its pleasures tired,
How gracious, how benign, is Solitude.

~ William Wordsworth, The Prelude IV 354



The strong grows in solitude
where the weak withers away.

~ Khalil Gibran



Vocation to Solitude -- To deliver oneself up, to hand oneself over, entrust oneself completely to the silence of a wide landscape of woods and hills, or sea, or desert; to sit still while the sun comes up over that land and fills its silences with light. To pray and work in the morning and to labor and rest in the afternoon, and to sit still again in meditation in the evening when night falls upon that land and when the silence fills itself with darkness and with stars... to belong completely to such silence, to let it soak into the bones, to breathe nothing but silence, to feed on silence, and to turn the very substance of life into a living and vigilant silence.

~ from THOUGHTS IN SOLITUDE by Thomas Merton

Friends of Silence

FRIENDS OF SILENCE
120 Jubilee Lane
Harpers Ferry, WV 25425
www.friendsofsilence.net
304-724-1069

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I am here alone for the first time in weeks, to take up my 'real' life again at last. That is what is strange – that friends, even passionate love, are not my real life unless there is time alone in which to explore and to discover what is happening or has happened. Without the interruptions, nourishing and maddening, this life would become arid. Yet I taste it fully only when I am alone here ...

~ May Sarton

...a hermit must have a deep experience of communion with humanity.

Without this, you cannot be a hermit, because you would only be lonely.

You would not be really solitary. To be alone and cut off from others would make you very unhappy, but to be alone, and to be deeply united with others, in deep communion, that is a possibility for which many people long. That is what I call solitude—over and against loneliness.

~ Brother David Steindl-Rast

Solitude does not necessarily mean living apart from others; rather, it means never living apart from one's self. It is not about the absence of other people, it is about being fully present to ourselves, whether or not we are with others.

~ from A HIDDEN WHOLENESS by Parker Palmer

Solitude is the human condition, the universal vocation to be human. It is the willingness, with Love indwelling, to go to the heart of pain to find new life and share it with the world even though you may be separated from it physically. It is from this commitment to be focused through the narrow gate of solitude that self-emptying love is outpoured, and the heart of the community, the heart of its pain, is transformed into the heart of joy.

~ Maggie Ross



In deepest solitude
I found the narrow way:
a secret giving such release
that I was stunned and stammering
rising above all science.

~ from I CAME INTO THE
UNKNOWING
by St. John of the Cross

Most callings come in silence.

Not even a whisper.

Silence. . . .

Solitude can be the best place to find your answers. Some say that in silence and solitude you find who you really are because here there are no forces to confuse you or lead you astray. Some people seek solitude to hear the voices of their hearts and souls. Some seek solitude to hear the voice of God. Many go to solitude to seek one and wind up finding the other as well.

~ from CALLED BY NAME by Robert J. Furey



There is no effort that we can make to still ourselves. True stillness comes naturally from moments of solitude where we allow our minds to settle. Just as water seeks its own level, the mind will gravitate toward the holy. Muddy water will become clear if allowed to stand undisturbed, and so too will the mind become clear if it is allowed to be still.

~ from 365 TAO: DAILY MEDITATIONS by Deng Ming-Dao

Language... has created the word "loneliness"

to express the pain of being alone

And it has created the word "solitude"

to express the glory of being alone.

~ from THE ETERNAL NOW

by Paul Johannes Tillich, thanks to Liz Stewart

At the empty nest turning point of middle age, something arose in me, and my journal became full of entries about being alone. I discovered that two entries written 10 years apart were almost identical. I had not yet learned to dignify "alone" with the name of Solitude, but I knew what I wanted, what I needed—as if my life was depriving me of something as essential as the air I breathed.

~ from LET EVENING COME by Mary C. Morrison

Time spent in holy solitude can silence the noisy world ever at work in our minds.

~ from LUMEN CHRISTI...HOLY WISDOM by Nan Merrill