

Friends of Silence

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



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Dear Friends ~ Since people have such diverse personalities and ways of engaging, it is good that there are likewise many paths to contemplation, many doorways into silence. Two practices that may be nurturing to some are watercolor painting and *visio divina*. Watercolor painting may seem at first glance like an art project for the grandchildren or a medium only for the fine arts. However, painting as a mindfulness practice can stop the mind from racing, help focus attention on the present moment, and allow one to listen—it can become an exploration for the soul. Watercolors do not yield easily to control—rather they invite play and observation. One can perceive the hue and texture of the colors, but it is the water that gives them movement, light and life; a bit like seeing ourselves as the paint and the Spirit as water. When you allow the dynamic interaction between paint and water to flow without constraint, shapes and images can emerge in unexpected and illuminating ways. *Visio divina* is another reflective practice that invites a conversation with a work of art in a format similar to *lectio divina*. One spends time first really looking—what do you see? what draws you in and why? Then you begin to wonder what this piece of art has to say to you at this moment in your life. What does it touch in you, what does it illuminate for you? What might you want to ponder, for example, about light and darkness in Rembrandt’s “Philosopher in Meditation” or Georgia O’Keefe’s “From the Lake No. 1”? Both watercolor painting and *visio divina* are invitations to see with the heart and perhaps even to learn something new about oneself and the Divine.



To meditate is often to move through a land without paths. In the room where the philosopher is meditating there is less light, so you have to open your eyes wider. The same is true inside ourselves—There is less that is obvious or reassuring, so we must open our mind’s eye much wider.... Mindfulness ...means stopping to make contact with the ever-shifting experience that we are having at the time, and to observe the nature of our relationship to that experience, the nature of our presence at that moment.

~ from *LOOKING AT MINDFULNESS: 25 PAINTINGS TO CHANGE THE WAY YOU LIVE* by Christophe Andre



from “Philosopher in Meditation” by Rembrandt

A contemplative practice is any act, habitually entered into with your whole heart, as a way of awakening, deepening, and sustaining a contemplative experience of the inherent holiness of the present moment. The critical factor is not so much what the practice is in its externals as the extent to which the practice incarnates an utterly sincere stance of awakening and surrendering to the Godly nature of the present moment.

~ from *THE CONTEMPLATIVE HEART* by James Findlay

When imagination is allowed to move to deep places, the sacred is revealed. The more different kinds of thoughts we experience around a thing and the deeper our reflections go as we are arrested by its artfulness, the more fully its sacredness can emerge.

~ from *CARE OF THE SOUL* by Thomas Moore



“Philosopher in Meditation” by Rembrandt



Keith Jones Pomeroy © 2018

The recovery of faith in our creativity and in the artist within each of us and the artists among all of us is no small thing. It has to do with the rekindling of the spark of hope and vision, of adventure and blessing, that a tired civilization needs...If it is true, as Paul says, that “we are God’s work of art,” then everything we have said about art as meditation applies to the delight, wonder, admiration, surprise that God takes at our birth and continual unfolding.

~ Matthew Fox in *ORIGINAL BLESSING*

The new work of art does not consist of making a living or producing an objet d’art or in self-therapy, but in finding a new soul. The new era of spiritual creativity...and soul-making.

~ from *THE WISDOM OF THE HEART* by Henry Miller

In embracing creativity as a spiritual practice, we commend ourselves into the Creator’s hands, knowing that our goal is to disappear. And when we do, we become one with all creation. The divine spirit dances us, it plays its music through us. We become the instrument through which the divine flows like a river. When your Creative Self calls, go with it. It is God speaking. Listen to your Creative Conscience, the voice of the divine guiding you each day. It resides in your heart: your true temple.

~ Lucia Capacchione in *THE SOUL OF CREATIVITY*, ed. by Tona P. Myers

The Great Creator lives within each of us. All of us contain a divine, expressive spark, a creative candle intended to light our path and that of others. We are shiny, not tarnished; large, not small; beautiful, not damaged— although we may be ignorant of our grace, power, and dignity. The human being, by definition, is a creative being. Practicing our creativity is healing. The more we ground it and regularly access it, the better off we are. The “healthier” we are. Creative change begins in the heart. When we start within ourselves and move outward, expressing what we love and what we value, life gets better, we feel better, and the world gets healthier too.

~ from *WALKING IN THE WORLD* by Julia Cameron

Art enables us to find ourselves and lose ourselves at the same time. The mind that responds to the intellectual and spiritual values that lie hidden in a poem, a painting, or a piece of music, discovers a spiritual vitality that lifts it above itself, takes it out of itself, and makes it present to itself on a level of being that it did not know it could ever achieve.

~ Thomas Merton in *A THOMAS MERTON READER* ed. by Thomas P. McDonnell

Any work of art is ultimately an entry-point into the transcendent, revelatory of not only subtle, but celestial beauty and power; and if the given work is not so, it cannot properly be called art at all...All works of art, in other words, are religious, sacred, or nothing.

~ from *THE EGYPTIAN MYSTERIES*
by Arthur Versluis

A work of art opens a void, a moment of silence, a question without an answer, provokes a breach without reconciliation where the world is forced to question itself.

~ Michel Foucault, as quoted in *ART AS A WAY OF LIFE* ed. by Roderick MacIver



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God’s Moment

The desire
of your heart
awaits

The quiet
moment of
creative love.

With courage
step into
silence.

~ Mary Ellen Robertson