

Friends of Silence

Vol. XXXVI, No. 6

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June 2023

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

Dear Friends ~ We all know the importance of a Sabbath, a day set aside to pause and come back to ourselves and to the Holy One within. These times are healing and sacred; we don't just need a day apart. What if we could take mini-sabbaths—moments to pause throughout our days? An old friend of mine called them “speed bumps.” It's one of the best ways I know to turn the “wholly holey” into the “holy holy.” Our leaky ways of going through our daily motions often create a completely empty experience of life. Creating speed bumps throughout our day is one way of patching the leaky buckets of our own longing and building a nest in ourselves that can hold the new life coming to birth within us. ~ Bob



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Almost everything will work again if
you unplug it for a few minutes—
including you.

~ Anne Lamott from her Ted Talk

“12 Truths I Learned from Life and
Writing”

When I am among the trees,
especially the willows and the honey locust,
equally the beech, the oaks, and the pines,
they give off such hints of gladness...

I am so distant from the hope of myself,
in which I have goodness, and discernment,
and never hurry through the world
but walk slowly, and bow often.

Around me the trees stir in their leaves
and call out, “Stay awhile.”
The light flows from their branches.

And they call again, “It's simple,” they say,
“and you too have come
with light, and to shine.”

~ Mary Oliver from “When I am among the trees” in
DEVOTIONS: THE SELECTED POEMS OF MARY OLIVER

To stop is to go towards, to come closer to oneself, to awaken from the sleep of life. Only by stopping can one begin to see. The moment we stop, we begin to see the miraculous, the unknown, the uncharted.

~ Jeanne de Salzmann in *THE REALITY OF BEING*

Sabbath time is a time when we turn our attention to what is holy, to what is sacred, to what is important. It's a time when we allow the clamor of the world to fall away and we listen for the still, small voice of God. It's a time when we allow ourselves to be embraced by the love of God, to rest in that love, and to be renewed and refreshed by it.

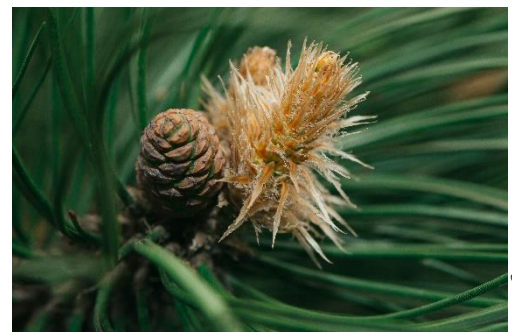
~ Macrina Weiderkehr in *A TREE FULL OF ANGELS*

To rest is to give up on the already exhausted will as the prime motivator of endeavor, with its endless outward need to reward itself with established goals. To rest is to give up on worrying and fretting and the sense that there is something wrong with the world unless we are there to put it right.

~ David Whyte in *CONSOLATIONS*

The Sabbath is not just a day of rest, but a day of reconnection. It is a time to reconnect with ourselves, with each other, and with the divine. By setting aside time to pause and reflect, we can recharge our spirits and renew our sense of purpose. We can remember what is truly important in life and let go of the distractions that pull us away from our true selves.

~ Mirabai Starr in *WILD MERCY*



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Stopping is not a passive act, but an active one. It requires us to consciously step out of our habitual patterns of thought and behavior, and to create a space for something new to emerge. It is in this space of stillness and openness that we can connect with our deepest selves and with the divine. We can receive guidance, inspiration, and healing, and we can begin to live from a place of greater authenticity and purpose.

~ Tami Simon in *BEING TRUE*

Be encouraged, and offer up your simple naked being to the joyful being of God, which is both in you and yet greater than you. Hold the soft, warm compress of these loving words against your bodily self. Bypass the mind and even the affections of the heart, and forego any analysis of what you are, or are not. Simply that you are. This will be enough to launch you into the sacrament of the present moment where God is always hiding in plain sight.

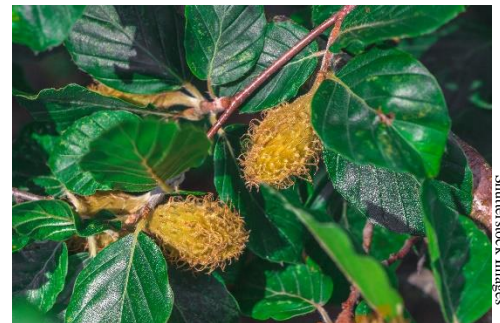
~ Richard Rohr in *THE NAKED NOW: LEARNING TO SEE AS THE MYSTICS SEE*

There comes a pause, for human strength will not endure to dance without cessation; and everyone must reach the point at length of absolute prostration.

~ William Wordsworth in "The Prelude" from *THE POETICAL WORKS OF WILLIAM WORDSWORTH*

The practice of stopping, of coming back to ourselves and the present moment, is a way of connecting with the divine within us and around us. It is a way of cultivating a deeper sense of presence, awareness, and gratitude for the gift of life... The simple act of pausing, of taking a conscious breath and a step back from our habitual reactivity, can be a powerful tool for awakening. In that moment of pause, we open a space for self-awareness and self-observation to arise. We become more conscious of our thoughts, emotions, and physical sensations, and we can choose how to respond, rather than simply reacting out of habit.

~ Cynthia Bourgeault in *THE WISDOM JESUS*



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The secret is to not allow the fact that you can't do everything keep you from doing something. Something, then rest. Something, then rest.

~ Glennon Doyle in *UNTAMED*

Come, Come, Whoever You Are
Wanderer, worshiper, lover of leaving.
It doesn't matter.
Ours is not a caravan of despair.
Come, even if you have broken your vows
a thousand times
Come, yet again, come, come.

~ Rumi in *THE INVITATION*

Now we will count to twelve
and we will all keep still
for once on the face of the earth,
let's not speak in any language;
let's stop for a second,
and not move our arms so much.

It would be an exotic moment
without rush, without engines;
we would all be together
in a sudden strangeness.

Fishermen in the cold sea
would not harm whales
and the man gathering salt
would not look at his hurt hands...

What I want should not be confused
with total inactivity.

Life is what it is about...

If we were not so single-minded
about keeping our lives moving,
and for once could do nothing,
perhaps a huge silence
might interrupt this sadness
of never understanding ourselves...

~ Pablo Neruda from "Keeping Quiet" in *EXTRAVAGARIA*



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Stopping is an essential part of the spiritual life. If we cannot stop, we cannot see our True Nature. When we stop, we begin to see clearly, and we can appreciate the wonders of life. We can see that there is no separation between ourselves and the world, and we can marvel at the oneness of all things. To be fully present in the moment, we need to stop letting our mind race ahead to the future or dwell in the past. We need to let go of our distractions, our worries, and our busyness.

~ Thich Nhat Hanh in *THE ART OF POWER*