



# Buen Camino

Newsletter of Fr. Michael Fish, OSB. CAM

## Flowering in the recesses of self

Recently, my landlady stopped by as I was watering my young tomato plants. “Michael, if you keep watering them like that they’ll never flower. You have to stress them, water only once a week.” Sure enough, my tall, pampered plants suddenly became a mass of flowers, future tomatoes, I hope.

Nature is amazing. Most plants, when stressed or threatened, produce flowers so as to perpetuate themselves before possibly dying. I wonder if we could say the same thing about ourselves. Under stress do we produce blooms? Certainly there is evidence of this looking at Church history. Whenever she is at her lowest, along comes a St. Francis or Clare, a Dominic, Ignatius, Marie Magdalen Postel during the French Revolution, or an Edith Stein in Nazi-occupied Holland.

This present COVID-19 situation is stressful on so many levels. People are reporting disturbed sleep, anxious dreams, fuzzy thinking, lethargy, low grade depression. But are we producing flowers? Blooming sounds romantic, poetic, but could also be a matter of survival. So what would flowering look like in this stressed time?

Spending far more time confined, I find myself no longer multitasking, rather making lists of what needs to be accomplished – even ordinary chores – tackling them one at a time, carefully, gently and mindfully. I’m sitting more – stopping, simply sitting and looking at trees, the light, birds, clouds, the sky. My prayer has become more intercessory remembering those in ICU, prison, suffering humanity, the world. I’m aware of an underlying gratitude for everything and a quiet serenity in the midst of so much confusion and anxiety.

I’m finding more time for reading Scripture, poetry, literature. I’m journaling, remembering, reaching out to people whose names seem to surface from nowhere. I watch my tomatoes, care for the basil and red pepper seedlings, cook old favorites and attempt new recipes.

I wonder if this is not flowering in some deep, hidden recesses of myself. Could this stressful time be working something in each of us, almost a new reading of the Beatitudes. Are we secretly bearing “fruit that will last”? The more I observe the tomato plants, the more confident I am.

Blessings,

*Michael*

## Loveliest Blossom

When you are eager in the tiny portion that is your garden, when you are tying strings to give the stalks of the sweet peas their balance so flowers may alight on them like wings of pastel butterflies; when you appraise with glowing face the lilies and carnations (scent is to charm and color to amaze), I think: she has not found the loveliest blossom. There is a flower full of mystery between this wall and that, amid this green. I found it but to bear it back to secret. It is a flower God and I have seen, and I not till I looked at it with Him. Hidden and unpredictable and shy, it was not given to be shared, not even with you, little lover of fragrance. (Oh, with you least of all!) Plucked from the soft soil of your unawareness, uprooted from my silence, it would die. I keep it then, God’s individual favor, the private bloom I scent my storerooms by.

(1954)

Jessica Powers

THE SELECTED POETRY OF JESSICA POWERS

## Michael news

Michael is healthy and safe after his recent spectacular, yet challenging wilderness trek. As with most of us, his plans for 2020 have been upset. However, Michael remains on sabbatical, albeit a much different one than he expected. As such, he is hoping to “dive deep” and explore his spiritual core. Meanwhile, Michael wishes you to know that he remembers you daily in his prayers and intentions, and sends his love.

## Retreat recordings help focus on well-being

As the effects of the pandemic continue to unfold, Michael’s retreat recordings are a terrific way to focus on your own well-being. 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. To view all the available retreats, visit:

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

## Michael appreciates your generous support

Michael thanks those who so kindly continue to support him during his sabbatical and the Covid-19 crisis – so much appreciated. Donations to Hermit Fish, Michael’s 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization are fully tax deductible. Gifts of any size are greatly appreciated.

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Creative and logistical support for Michael, his *Buen Camino* newsletter and HermitFish.com website are provided by Enigma | LA, [enigmala.com](http://enigmala.com)

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