



Looking for a daily gift

A family kindly gifted me with a wonderful Advent calendar. Each day has a little door which, upon opening, reveals a gift. I can already see ‘the daily door opening’ will be the priority in my December morning routine.

Each day, a little gift is true of the Advent calendar, but also for life. Each day, if we take care and time to look for it, holds or opens to a gift.

Helen Luke, whom I often reference during the retreats, suggests looking for the vowels among the constants of each day. The vowels being the letters that give meaning to what can often seem the *gibberishness* of life.

As I’ll only begin ‘the door opening’ on the first Sunday of Advent, 29 November, I thought I should test and see if the idea of ‘looking for a daily gift’ actually works. So, I began a trial in mid-November. At first I was sort of able to identify a gift for each day. Some days I confess, I had to look hard. However, soon I had a list of gifts at the end of each day. The more I looked the more I found.

This ‘looking for a daily gift,’ especially during Advent, prepares us for the great gift given at Christmas, the one who has come among us as healing, peace and direction. The gift of Child to humanity and history together with the gifts offered by the Magi are perhaps the roots of our own gift giving at this sacred time.

Giving and receiving gifts not only celebrates Christmas but makes the Giver and the Gift present among us.

There is a line in the original version of third Eucharist Prayer that always pauses me. Addressing God (as each Eucharistic Prayer does) it asks of Christ, “May he make us an everlasting gift to you.” So Jesus, the Gift, has come to make of us a gift to God.

Could it be God has great delight unwrapping us and discovering the gift of who we are? You are Christ’s gift to God, precious, unique and unbelievably beautiful.

Blessed Advent and a joyful Christmas,

Michael

If You Have Nothing

The gesture of a gift is adequate.
If you have nothing: laurel leaf or bay,
no flower, no seed, no apple gathered late,
do not in desperation lay
the beauty of your tears upon the clay.

No gift is proper to a Deity;
no fruit is worthy for such power to bless.
If you have nothing, gather back your sigh,
and with your hands held high,
your heart held high,
lift up your emptiness!

Jessica Powers

SELECTED POETRY OF JESSICA POWERS

Michael news

Last year at this time we were preparing for Michael’s leaving on sabbatical. After a stop to visit family in South Africa, he intended to walk the 1,600 km (1,000+ mi) Via Francigena from Canterbury to Rome. Covid-19 of course changed everything. Michael, like all of us, is still attempting to find his way through these uncertain circumstances. At this time, Michael is pursuing deep contemplation, a process without a timeframe. As such, we’re making no plans yet for 2021. We’ll keep you informed as things become clearer. Meanwhile, Michael extends his heartiest wishes to you for a blessed Advent and Christmas.

Retreat recordings make great “self-gifts”

Amidst all of your holiday shopping, don’t forget yourself. Michael’s retreat recordings are the perfect way to get exactly what you want this year. All 13 of Michael’s retreats are available as downloads. 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 grateful for support

Michael wishes to thank everyone for their kind support over this past year. Donations to Hermit Fish, his 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization are fully tax deductible. Gifts of any size are greatly appreciated. FID: 82-2489475
Visit: <https://www.hermitfish.com/donate>

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