



Buen Camino

Newsletter of Fr. Michael Fish, OSB, CAM

Spring in Winter

One Camino, I was walking later than usual in November. The days were short, the countryside fast losing its blazing autumnal colors, the fields quiet, plowed, resting, winter in the air and land. Then, all of a sudden, I encountered field after field of brilliant, Spring-green shoots piercing the dark earth, “winter wheat.” At first it felt incongruous, Spring in Winter, new green sprouting in bleakness. Yet, as I walked, reflecting on the fields around me, the realization dawned, “This is nature’s Christmas.”

The Church chose the Winter Solstice – the shortest day and longest night, the middle of Winter – to celebrate the coming of Light and Life, powerfully saying, in our darkest dark there is light and hope. It reminds me of those comforting words from Brother Roger of Taizé, “In our darkest night, God kindles a fire that will never die away.”

In the middle of Winter, God stooped down and lit a fire on the earth, or sowed winter wheat which sprang up verdant green.

What is Christmas but Spring in Winter, hope in despair, light in darkness, warmth in cold, bread in bleakness. So, as we step into the month of December, synonymous for us with Advent, perhaps we could be on the lookout for the kindled fire or the green flames of winter wheat breaking the surface of our awareness.

There is a hymn by John Macleod Campbell Crum, very popular in South Africa, which seemed to capture my experience so aptly and poetically, which I hummed as I walked along:

*Now the green blade riseth,
from the buried grain,
Wheat that in dark earth
many days has lain;
Love lives again, that with the
dead has been:*

*Love is come again like wheat
that springeth green.
When our hearts are wintry,
grieving, or in pain,
Jesus’ touch can call us back
to life again,
Fields of our hearts that dead
and bare have been:
Love is come again like wheat
that springeth green.*

The shepherds saw it as angels, the Magi as a star, Mary and Joseph as a baby, the Child, perhaps, saw us with our amazing ability to be reborn. May you discover your Bethlehem not only on 25 December, but all through these coming Advent/ winter days.

Blessings,

Michael

The Hidden Christ

I went into the Christmas cave;
there was no Child upon the straw.
The ox and ass were all I saw.

I sought His stable where He gave
His goodness in the guise of bread.
Emptiness came to me instead.

Filled with my Father’s words, I cried
“Where have You hid Yourself?” and all
the living answered to my call.

I found Him (and the world is wide)
dear in His warm ubiquity.
Where heart beat, there was Christ for me.

I went back to the Christmas cave,
glad with the gain of everywhere.
And lo! the blessed Child was there.

Then at His feasting board He gave
embrace. He multiplied His good
and fed in me the multitude.

Jessica Powers

The Selected Poetry of Jessica Powers

Michael news

Michael has been away walking for the past few weeks. He shared how the backpack and walking sticks revived the pilgrim in him – which has been both centering and healing. He has returned, eager to continue work on the *Levante* retreat series, videoing new talks, as we move ever closer to its launch. More on that to come.

Free shipping

In celebration of the Christmas season we are offering free shipping on all journals and CDs through December.

Retreat journals are in ever shorter supply. Remaining titles include *Camino III*, *Cave of the Heart 2* and *3* and *Contemplative Ways of Being 2* and *3*. Visit:

<https://hermitfish.com/retreat-journals>

CD sets of some of Michael’s retreats are still available. Visit:

<https://hermitfish.com/retreats-cd-sets>

If you’re gift shopping and are unsure what to give, may we suggest our new digital **Gift Cards**? They’re available in several denominations and can be redeemed for any of Michael’s journals, CDs or audio downloads.

Check them out at:

<https://hermitfish.com/gift-cards/digital-gift-card>

Downloads of all 13 of Michael’s retreats (5 talks each) are available. Visit:

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

Your gift is tax deductible

The year-end is almost upon us. If you’re looking for a tax deduction, donations to Hermit Fish, Michael’s 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>

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