



# Buen Camino

Newsletter of Fr. Michael Fish, OSB. CAM

## Awakening our inner child

I confess I was reticent to compose a reflection for May. So much has been written on how to *do* these “shelter-in-place” days, that I feel “advised out” and saturated.

Personally, I feel rather flat, dry and empty. It could be as a result of renegotiating my sabbatical and expectations of the year. But I suspect it is also part of the psychological fallout of these days where life is reduced to ordinary, mundane, daily tasks. For all of us this is quite a transition, to say nothing of the underlying anxiety, fear and confusion.

In the midst of this, I found myself asking the question therapists love to ask, “When in the past do you remember feeling like this?” Immediately, to my surprise, the memory of one of the happiest times in my life surfaced, my ten years in a Zulu village. With no electricity or running water, our days were comprised of ordinary, simple tasks and chores, nothing really except basic living. Looking back, these were the happiest years of my life – a time which has been indelibly imprinted in soul and memory.

It would take a whole day to do the community laundry in large cast iron tubs, with washboards and water carried from the well. Watering the garden likewise took hours. Yet there was something pure and uncomplicated to those days, something of childhood about them. They were innocent and happy. I never felt more alive.

During those years I slowly came to discover there was “a *there* there,” in the ordinary, a presence which the child instinctively recognized. It was as if the mundane opened up to space, play and mystery.

Could these extraordinary “shelter-in-place” days be inviting us into something similar, enabling our inner child to awaken to the Kingdom, breaking through the ordinary, here and now?

*Continued Risen joy to you,*

*Michael*

## 6. (EXCERPT)

You are bearing your solitude more heavily than usual. But when you notice that it is vast, you should be happy; for what (you should ask yourself) would a solitude be that was not vast; there is only one solitude, and it is vast, heavy, difficult to bear, and almost everyone has hours when he would gladly exchange it for any kind of sociability, however trivial or cheap, for the tiniest outward agreement with the first person who comes along, the most unworthy. But perhaps these are the very hours during which solitude grows; for its growing is painful as the growing of boys and sad as the beginning of spring. But that must not confuse you. What is necessary, after all, is only this: solitude, vast inner solitude. To walk inside yourself and meet no one for hours — that is what you must be able to attain. To be solitary as you were when you were a child, when the grownups walked around involved with matters that seemed large and important because they looked so busy and because you didn’t understand a thing about what they were doing.

And when you realize that their activities are shabby, that their vocations are petrified and no longer connected with life, why not then continue to look upon it all as a child would, as if you were looking at something unfamiliar, out of the depths of your own world, from the vastness of your own solitude, which is itself work and status and vocation? Why should you want to give up a child’s wise not-understanding... since not-understanding is, after all, a way of being alone...

*Rainer Maria Rilke*

LETTERS TO A YOUNG POET

*[I highly recommend that you “Google” Rilke’s Letters to a Young Poet, #6, Rome, 23 December 1903, for his complete letter, excellent Lectio. – Michael]*

## Michael in silence

Michael is well, safely sheltered, and remembers you at Eucharist. While his plans are in flux (as are everyone’s), he remains on sabbatical, immersed in reflection and discovery. We have all been asked to respect his intent for solitude during this time. To view his Lenten and Easter Mass videos, please visit: <https://hermitfish.com>

## Michael’s retreat recordings now on HermitFish.com

With the closing of CDBaby’s store, downloads of all 13 of Michael’s retreats are now available on HermitFish.com. Each is a full retreat, consisting of 5 talks, totaling over 5 hours. Visit:

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

## Retreat scheduling on hold

If you wish to book Michael for a future event, please email Laura Hipke, [laura@hipkes.com](mailto:laura@hipkes.com). She will follow up with you after Michael returns.

## Support needed for Michael

Michael is entirely self-supporting, receiving no outside financial assistance apart from his own ministry. Your tax-deductible donation to Hermit Fish, his 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, helps to sustain Michael’s ministry. 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, [enigma.com](http://enigma.com)

To be added to Michael’s email distribution go to <https://www.hermitfish.com> and scroll to the bottom of the page to sign up.