



Buen Camino

Newsletter of Fr. Michael Fish, OSB, CAM

A call to generosity and gratitude

I have just returned from Southern California, after giving a weekend retreat on Thomas Merton. We closed with Eucharist and anointing of the Sacrament of the Sick. One of those who came forward for anointing was young woman who was about to donate part of her liver to a teenage boy, after having previously donated a kidney to a young mother.

After the anointing and Mass, I thanked her for her unusual courage and generosity and asked what prompted her to make such an offering. She responded very simply that she felt called to give life and share her body.

For those who had eyes to see and ears to hear, this was the real conference of the retreat, not the five talks I had offered on Merton over the weekend. Here too was Eucharist. The young woman used exactly the same words to describe her motivation that I used at the Consecration, "This is my body given for you."

A little later, the woman's mother came to thank me for anointing her daughter and shared how the procedure is potentially as high-risk for the donor as it is for the recipient. She also explained that recipients and donors remain anonymous, so this was a pure gift, a pure offering from the young woman. The encounter of daughter and mother remains with me, nourishing and challenging. On the flight home the words of Thomas Merton, reflecting on his experience at the corner of Fourth and Walnut in Louisville (*Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*), which I had used during one of the conferences, revisited me:

"It is a glorious destiny to be a member of the human race, though it is a race dedicated to many absurdities and one which makes many terrible mistakes: yet, with all that, God Himself gloried it in becoming a member of the human race. To think that such a commonplace realization should suddenly seem like news that one holds the winning ticket in a cosmic sweep-stake... There is no way of telling people that they are all walking around shining like the sun... There are no strangers!... If only we could see each other (as we really are) all the time. There would be no more war, no more hatred, no more cruelty, no more greed... I suppose the big problem would be that we would fall down and worship each other... The gate of heaven is everywhere."

I can still see that young woman's eyes clear, calm and open and hear her matter-of-fact response, "I feel called to give life and share my body." Remember her and the young teenage recipient, may they prompt us to generosity and gratitude.

Blessings,

Michael

Special November Days

11/1: All Saints Day	11/11: Remembrance & Veterans Day
11/2: All Souls Day	11/28: Thanksgiving

Don't miss Michael's last event before 2021

NOVEMBER 8th & 9th

Friday, Nov 8 (6:30-9:00pm) and Saturday, Nov 9 (2:00-4:30pm)

Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish Mission

Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, 1441 West Balboa Boulevard, Newport Beach, California 92661 • \$75/person

For info to pay by credit or debit card, email: laura@hipkes.com

To pay by check, make payable to Fr. Michael Fish and mail to:

Fr. Michael Fish, c/o Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, 1441 W Balboa Blvd, Newport Beach, CA 92661

(Please include the names of all attending, your address and email.)

Michael in 2020

Michael is about to embark on a yearlong journey of discovery and reflection. From walking his first Camino a decade ago, it is during these times that God directs him. In 2020, besides visiting family in South Africa, Michael intends to walk the Via Francigena from Canterbury, UK to Rome – over 1,600 km (1,000+ mi), likely taking about three and a half months. We hope to post photos and reports from Michael on the website as his journey unfolds, and will continue this newsletter throughout his absence. Please keep Michael in your prayers.

Retreat recordings online

All 13 of Michael's retreats are available as downloads, and some still on CD (while supplies last). Each is a full retreat, consisting of 5 talks, totaling over 5 hours. Visit: <https://store.cdbaby.com/Artist/MichaelFish>

2021-22 retreat scheduling

If you are an organization, group or retreat center interested in booking Michael for 2021-2022, please contact Laura Hipke, (818) 248-4747 or laura@hipkes.com.

Michael is self-supporting

Many are not aware that Michael is entirely self-supporting and receives 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>

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