Buen Camino

Newsletter of Fr. Michael Fish, OSB. CAM

Our creek walk

Recently, we have endured unremittingly hot days and nights in the hills of Santa Cruz, California. It's been too hot to walk, until I changed route to a trail along a creek with a gurgling stream – at least seven to ten degrees cooler. As I walk I can feel my skin and body breathe in the cool moisture.

Each time I begin the four-mile walk, I recall Psalm 23. I know the poor Psalm has been beaten to death, but it seems so appropriate, perfect for trail. The Lord is my Shepherd, walking with me, always my right hand as St. Teresa used to say. Fresh and green the redwood forest, the sparkling stream truly does refresh me and revive my drooping spirit exhausted by interrupted sleep and airless nights.

I leave my hermitage hot, frustrated and depleted, "valley of darkness." Yet despite the thoughts and fears that bombard me – the virus, elections, polarization politics, the state of the world – the Beloved lays a table and feeds me with the play of light on the redwoods, water dripping on verdant ferns, the quiet coolness. I am refreshed.

I return home realigned and centered. Each day I walk the creek, different of images from the Psalm present themselves, almost as a bouquet.

This creek is not merely in the Santa Cruz Mountains, but resides in each one of us. In us trickles the stream. For 20 minutes each day could you possibly go down on your creek trail and let the Psalm refresh you? Do this not only for yourself but for your families, friends and colleagues. When you return you'll be able to

hold the peace in the midst of chaos. This is our gift to others and our vocation.

Do you recall that quote I often shared on the retreats from St. Seraphim of Sarov? "One person finds peace and thousands around are blessed." Our world, our country desperately needs our creek walk.

Peace,

michael

Psalm 23

You are my shepherd, I am content
You lead me to rest in the sweet grasses
To lie down by the quiet waters
And I am refreshed

You lead me down the right path
The path that unwinds in the pattern of your
    name

And even if I walk through the valley of the
    shadow of death
I will not fear
For you are with me
Comforting me with your rod and staff
Showing me each step

You prepare a table for me
In the midst of my adversity
And moisten my head with oil

Surely my cup is overflowing
And goodness and kindness will follow me
All the days of my life
And in the long days beyond
I will always live within your house

Norman Fischer
OPENING TO YOU:
ZEN-INSPIRED TRANSLATIONS OF THE PSALMS

Michael news

We've gotten several inquiries about Michael's future. Presently, he remains in deep contemplation, and there are no plans pending regarding what his ministry might be or when it may commence.

Michael says he shares many of the same feelings we all do during these extraordinary times. "One week seems to disappear into the other. Most of the time I have no idea what day or month it is. My only reality check is the daily journal I have kept since returning from South Africa. I find myself clinging to the final words of one of Rilke's poems, 'Even if we don't desire it God is ripening.' I remember you on the creek trail."

Listen to *Contemplative Ways of Being 1* free online

In celebration of Thanksgiving, Michael is sharing his complete *"Be1"* retreat, which may be listened to online for free through November 30th. To listen to *Contemplative Ways of Being 1* visit:
https://hermitfish.com
All 13 of Michael's retreats are available as downloads. Each is a full retreat, consisting of 5 talks, totaling over 5 hours. Please visit:
https://hermitfish.com/audio-retreats

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