



# Buen Camino

Newsletter of Fr. Michael Fish, OSB. CAM

## Biting into the essentials

The first dog in our family was an English Bulldog called Bruno. Beautiful in his ugliness with his folds and creased, jowly flat face, he had a pleasant, friendly disposition with only one intense dislike and that was the garbage collectors who came once a week to empty the dustbins.

Bruno could hear them miles away. As soon as we became aware of the approaching collectors who had a distinctive whistle – communicating with the cart driver, so he would move further up the road, (I know this dates me but, at that time in Johannesburg, the cart was horse-drawn) – we would rush out to ensure that the courtyard door was closed, keeping an irate Bruno from his *bête noire*.

On one particular day, we're not sure how it happened, Bruno got out. Squat and chubby, as bulldog's are, they can move at an alarming speed. The poor collector dropped the bin and sprinted for the safety of the cart, with Bruno in close pursuit. Once up next to the driver and out of harm's way, Bruno's attention was immediately diverted to the horses which were already in panic. Pandemonium broke out.

Long story short, it took my mom and neighbors ages to make a water-soaked Bruno loosen his grip on the horse's leg. (Bulldogs were originally bred for the cruel sport of "bull baiting." Once their jaws clamp shut it is very difficult to make them release.)

I don't think it's just me returning from my walk, but life seems so challenging, fragmented, and confusing right now. Almost everyone I speak to is struggling with a low grade depression, grief, despair or alienation, anger, whether on the roads or in the checkout line, it's almost palpable. We are in a dark, unfamiliar time. This is where Bruno comes in. I believe we require "bulldog faith" to bite into the essentials and not let go. We have to hang on for dear life.

Essentials you may ask? For me they are the presence of a loving Mystery, that is incarnate in Jesus of the Gospel, their indwelling in each of us through the Spirit and our capacity to commune with this Presence in silence as prayer, plus the nourishment of Eucharist and community and a call to compassion kindness.

Every week Bruno, startled out of complacency and lethargy, dug deep into his genes and become ferocious. Could our trigger be life as it is now, waking us to dig deep and find "ferocious faith?"

*Blessings,*

*Michael*

## Primary Wonder

Days pass when I forget the mystery.  
Problems insoluble and problems offering  
their own ignored solutions  
jostle for my attention, they crowd its antechamber  
along with a host of diversions, my courtiers, wearing  
their colored clothes; cap and bells.

And then  
once more the quiet mystery  
is present in me, the throng's clamor  
recedes: the mystery  
that there is anything, anything at all,  
let alone cosmos, joy, memory, everything,  
rather than void: and that, O Lord,  
Creator, Hallowed One, You still,  
hour by hour sustain it.

DENISE LEVERTOV  
*The Sands of the Well*

## Grateful for your support

Michael wishes to thank everyone for your continued prayers, good wishes and support. Donations to Hermit Fish, Michael's 501(c)(3) nonprofit, are fully tax deductible. Gifts of any size are greatly appreciated. FID: 82-2489475  
Visit: <https://www.hermitfish.com/donate>

## From Michael

November traditionally is the month of the dead. Beginning with All Souls, on the second day of the month, Masses are offered throughout the month for our deceased family and friends.

Not sure about you, but I seem to have lost so many dear ones over the past two to three years it's almost a blur. This November I'll offer Eucharist once a week, beginning on All Souls, for your family and friends who have crossed the Jordan. I suggest you make a list and either keep it at your sacred place, or send it via the website contact page

<https://hermitfish.com/contact-1> or by mail, Hermit Fish, PO Box 748, Soquel, CA 95073.

Either way, I'll celebrate Mass each week for all on your list.

## Audio retreats subscription

Michael's entire library of audio retreats is now available by way of an affordable, online subscription. Visit:

<https://hermitfish.com/about-the-audio-library>

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JAN 27-29 | Mary & Joseph Retreat Ctr  
On-Site • Rancho Palos Verde, CA

**Levante 2 information:**

<https://hermitfish.com/levante-2-schedule>

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