



Buen Camino

Newsletter of Fr. Michael Fish, OSB. CAM

What is your deer path?

Once or twice a day a procession of deer make their way past my hermitage and chapel. If I am dead still they pay no attention to me. They always seem to walk the same way. Then a few days ago, I had occasion to venture down the steep incline on which my hermitage is built and there, sure enough, was a distinct “deer path.”

If the deer are suddenly frightened, by a neighborhood dog or a jumping squirrel, they scatter but usually in the general direction of the path, only to reassemble further along the trail.

Have you a deer path, a spiritual path you tread each day, or a few times a day? Have you a routine which, even if you are scattered, frightened or overwhelmed, keeps you in the right direction and enables you to gather yourself again?

Jesus’ deer path seems to have been the Psalms, which he prayed by heart in the garden and from the cross, as well as in his habit of slipping away to a lonely place. I know people whose deer path is the rosary or early-morning weekday Mass, or quiet meditation. My centering habit tends to be walking or repeating, mantra-like, the four points I gleaned from Brother Lawrence’s *The Practice of the Presence of God*:

1. Do everything in love or for Jesus,
2. Keep an interior, loving conversation going with God,
3. Accept what is and talk to God about it,
4. Trust God completely.

What is your deer path, your default, your “go to,” which keeps you on the straight and narrow? This is definitely one of our non-negotiables.

It reminds me of that lovely saying from Thomas Merton, “The Beloved is like a skittish deer who only comes out when we are dead still.”

Blessings, ·

Michael

The quieter we are, the more patient and open we are in our sadnesses, the more deeply and unerringly a new revelation can enter us, and the more we can make it our own. Later on when it “happens” – when it manifests in our response to another person – we will feel it as belonging to our innermost being.

Rainer Maria Rilke
Letters to a Young Poet

Thoughts on the concept of a “self-supporting” monk

[Ed note: A BC reader shares her thoughts on being “self-supporting.”]

“I searched online to explain to myself and others about the idea of a ‘self-supporting’ monk. It can be a confusing term to us in America, since most of us think of ourselves as being ‘self-supporting.’ I like this explanation that I ran across:”

‘Monastic life is hard work and they don’t just do it for themselves, they

do it for all of us. It is a good trade. It should also be noted that at least in western Theravada monastics are not automatically supported by the culture, and they do not solicit. The monastics sink or swim by their virtue. The fact that they are being supported speaks to that virtue.’

“Thank you for always connecting mind to body to virtue!”

CD supplies dwindling

With production of CDs having ceased, supplies of some retreats are being depleted. However all 13 of Michael’s retreats are available as downloads, including his latest, *Cave of the Heart III*. Each is a full retreat, consisting of 5 talks, totaling over 5 hours. Visit:

<https://store.cdbaby.com/Artist/MichaelFish>

2021-22 retreat scheduling

Michael will be away the entire of 2020, reflecting, researching and writing. If you are an organization, group or retreat center interested in booking Michael for an event in 2021-22, 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>

Michael's Upcoming Events

OCTOBER

17 | **A Journey into Contemplation**, Mary & Joseph Retreat Center, Rancho Palos Verdes, CA, Info: (310) 377-4867 x234

18-20 | **Merton's Mirror**, Mary & Joseph Retreat Center, Rancho Palos Verdes, CA, Info: Marlene (310) 377-4867 x234

26 | **All About the Heart**, Contemplative Outreach, Shepherd of the Hills, Phoenix, AZ, Info: Sr. Rachel, rtorrez@cox.net (602) 944-2728

NOVEMBER

8-9 | **Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish Mission**, Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Newport Beach, CA, Info: (949) 673-3775

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