



Buen Camino

Newsletter of Fr. Michael Fish, OSB. CAM

Letting go

Recently, I administered the Last Rites to an elderly man, Peter, who had been a Redemptorist before being happily married for over 40 years. He and his wife had been committed to Habitat for Humanity in South America, as well as many local projects of service and caring. I have known Peter for 25 years and although he was not conscious when I visited, I felt he was aware of my presence. I spoke to him of his wife who had died last year, as well as musing that, after all these years, the Redemptorist in him had never died. Peter (and I) had been profoundly influenced by St. Alphonsus de Liguori, the founder of the Redemptorists, who insisted the sole purpose of the Congregation was, through preaching, ministry and especially confession, to liberate people, to set them free.

This reminds me of a reflection written by the Benedictine, Fr. Demetrius Dunn, who suggests that the question asked of us at Final Judgement is, "Did you set my people free, or like Pharaoh, did you hold them bound?"

"Setting free" has many dimensions. On a walk, I met a couple who shared that their youngest had just passed his driver's test and, now that the family nest was beginning to empty, how hard it was to let go not only of their children but also of the identity that had been their life to this point. Or, another couple who discerned that their work and environment were no longer life-giving, so let both go for a new call and journey.

This "letting go" can apply to children, family, friends as well as ourselves, it often seems to involve struggle, pain and a dying in order to attain the freedom on the other side of letting go. As with life, a healthy spirituality needs to begin with ourselves, I don't think we can fully let people go until we have been let go ourselves.

To be personally liberated requires letting God go in us, letting God be free in us, perhaps a little scary as God, in Jesus, has the sole aim of setting us free so we can become who we were created to be. It is a journey, God never stops working in and on us until

we are free and have life in abundance.

Peter experienced that total freedom the next morning when he crossed the Jordan into eternity. I'm wondering if, for the month of October, we should all become Redemptorists and reflect on Demetrius' question, "Did you set my people free?"

Blessings,

Michael

Praying the Scriptures

It is the powerful influence of faith that enables us to take this positive attitude toward life. From this perspective, success means to have learned how to love and to become a positive and liberating influence in the lives of others. In fact, I am tempted to believe that the questions asked of us at the final judgment will be, "Did you let my people go? Or were you a Pharaoh who used freedom to dominate and to manipulate? Were you a gift in the lives of others, helping them to grow, to feel forgiven, to find consolation and to become a source of goodness and freedom for others?" This way of living may not lead to wealth and comfort, but it will be rewarded with a life whose wonderful dimensions we will never fathom.

FR. DEMETRIUS DUMM

Levanté 3 Video Retreats

OCTOBER 19-25 | Home Retreat • Online

NOV 14-20 & 20-27 | Home Retreats • Online

Levanté 3 information:

<https://hermitfish.com/levant3-schedule>

Levanté 2 Video Retreats

OCTOBER 12-18 | Home Retreat • Online

NOV 9-15 & 20-27 | Home Retreats • Online

Levanté 2 information:

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

Levanté 1 Video Retreats

OCTOBER 5-11 | Home Retreat • Online

NOV 2-8 & 20-27 | Home Retreats • Online

Levanté 1 information:

<https://hermitfish.com/levante-1-retreat-houses>

Michael News

Thanks to the encouraging generosity of friends, Michael decided to bite the bullet and continue his Via Francigena trek from last year. Returning to Rome, he hopes to walk to the heel of the boot of Italy, about 600 miles. The Via Francigena Confraternity informed him that the infrastructure is new and underdeveloped, so if it is too much of a challenge, especially with accommodation, he will return early. We hope to post updates of his journey if it all pans out well. Michael will remember you in his "walking-prayer."

'Levanté' for Thanksgiving

In addition to their regular schedules, all three *Levanté* video retreats are being offered over the Thanksgiving holidays (Nov 20-27, available separately). Many thanks to those who have participated so far. For all upcoming retreat dates visit:

<https://hermitfish.com/retreat-brochure>

Audio Subscriptions 'fixed'

The purchase function on the platform that hosts Michael's audio retreat library was down for some time, but is now fixed. Michael's entire audio retreat library is available online 24/7, via subscription — over 70 hours of inspiration. If you need assistance subscribing, managing your subscription, or accessing the recordings, please contact laura@hermitfish.com. Visit:

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

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>

Creative and logistical support for Michael, his *Buen Camino* newsletter and HermitFish.com website are provided by Enigma | LA, 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.