



# Buen Camino

Newsletter of Fr. Michael Fish, OSB, CAM

## The choice of peace

Recently I woke up early on a Sunday and drove to the beach to walk, before the Summer crowds arrived. I needed walking and nature to process the news that morning of the Dayton, Ohio shootings, hot on the heels of the tragedies at El Paso, Texas and Gilroy, California. I didn't know what to do with the anger, frustration, helplessness and sadness that I felt. The Camino has taught me to walk my questions and feelings, much as Rilke said to the young poet, "Love and live your questions perhaps into an answer."

There weren't many people on the beach that early in the morning, a few walkers and a group of surfers sitting like Buddhas on the calm sea. Even though the tide was out, the waves were crashing noisily on the beach. I was struck by the calm quiet of the surfers versus the aggressive surf. It was then that I became aware of how my angry thoughts were – like the breaking waves – not all that different from the violence of the shootings and the frustrating rhetoric in the country at present. The choice was mine. Was I going to add to this deposit, or bring something new to the situation?

There is something we can do. A ten year old in El Paso went viral suggesting that everyone perform 22 acts of kindness in honor of the 22 lives lost in the city. I find myself returning to the surfers floating patiently on their boards, watching, waiting, attentive, a perfect symbol of prayer in the midst of chaos. We are constantly called beyond ourselves by people and creation.

The choice is ours – quiet, gentleness, walking, surfing, acts of kindness, or aggressive thoughts and speech.

The words of St. Seraphim of Sarov come to mind – paraphrasing, "One person finds peace, thousands around find salvation."

Love,

*Michael*

## For the Sake of Strangers

*No matter what the grief, its weight,  
we are obliged to carry it.*

*We rise and gather momentum, the dull  
strength*

*that pushes us through crowds.*

*And then the young boy gives me directions  
so avidly. A woman holds the glass door  
open,*

*waits patiently for my empty body to pass  
through.*

*All day it continues, each kindness  
reaching toward another – a stranger  
singing to no one as I pass on the path,  
trees*

*offering their blossoms, a retarded child  
who lifts his almond eyes and smiles.*

*Somehow they always find me, seem even*

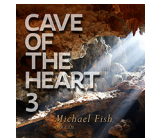
*to be waiting, determined to keep me  
from myself, from the thing that calls to me*

*as it must have once called to them –*

*this temptation to step off the edge  
and fall weightless, away from the world.*

Dorianne Laux  
*What We Carry*

## Cave III recording available



*Cave of the Heart III*, the final retreat in Michael's *Cave* trilogy, is now available as a download. It

joins his 12 other recordings. Each is a full retreat, consisting of 5 talks, totaling over 5 hours. Visit: <https://store.cdbaby.com/Artist/MichaelFish>

## BC mailing list tops 1,100

When Michael's *Buen Camino* launched in March of 2018 its distribution was roughly 125. Sometime in May of this year it hit 1,000 and now totals 1,136, with 1-2 added daily. Michael, and all of us who assist him behind the scenes, are gratified and humbled by your support. If you know someone who might be interested, please feel free to pass along this issue to them.

## 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](mailto: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](mailto: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