

February 26, 2017
8th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Can a mother forget her infant, be without tenderness for the child of her womb? Even should she forget, I will never forget you.

What helps me keep me trusting in God like a baby does its mother?

I received an email from a friend this past week in which he said he is finding the atmosphere in our country so toxic. So much anger and fear. He says he needs something to tend to his soul. What do we say to him, to ourselves, to our country which is facing such hostility now? Probably not more words. We have had enough of them.

The Center of Action and Contemplation in Albuquerque, New Mexico, sent out this quote:

“Religious teachers, including Jesus, the Buddha, as well as many Hindu sages, are always alive, awake, attentive, or aware – and not be blown over by the challenges that face us.”

Sounds good, but what does “*Being Awake*” mean? How does that help us? How do we do it? “*Being Awake*” means dropping down into the inner part of ourselves that is deeper than what is passing in front of us. It means becoming a calm observer of the drama happening before us; it means we see ourselves at a distance watching what is happening here; it means dis-identifying from our emotional noise reminding us that we are more than what we feel. We’re always becoming more awake.

Let us Practice Becoming Awake

“Close your eyes, come into rest...”

1. Let yourself drop deeper inside of you
2. Notice a calmness slowly settling into your heart
3. See how you are becoming more distant from the scene in front of you
4. Begin to sense how you are larger than what you see and feel
5. Find yourself coming into rest, thinking less and less about nothing and everything

“*Becoming Awake*” feeds our hungry souls. We’re very attentive to feeding our bodies; we look forward to it. But we don’t think about feeding our souls so that much. When the soul is hungry, it starts to shrivel and shrink and become brittle. But when we feed our spirits, we become larger, more whole, more connected with others and all life. It puts us at harmony with the world. It is inner silence that feeds the soul. “*Be still and know that I am God.*” In that silence, we become aware of a larger presence in our lives who strengthens us beyond what is upsetting us.

Aids to this Inner Quiet

There are steps we can take which can serve as a buffer to what seeks to weaken us:

1. Turn off watching the news too much and to the hate that comes along with it. I have seen people watch the same news story over and over, along with its vitriol. We become what we see; we become what we hear. Of course, it is good to check in with the news from time to time, but it is also good to know when to turn it off.
2. Find a place that lends itself to inner quiet, like watching the sunset on the ocean. These places become a sanctuary to which we can go to re-center.
3. Recall how God is not only with us, but is also drawing us into our inner self where we become more forgiving of ourselves and each other.
4. These “centering moments” need not be long. In fact, it is usually better if they’re not, perhaps even a minute or two at the beginning. We’re more likely to stay with it by doing so. Later, as we become more at home with connecting with our inner selves, we may find ourselves spending more time there.

Going to that inner space and quiet helps keep us from feeling overwhelmed at the toxic goings-on in the world around us. As this practice becomes more natural to us, we find ourselves experiencing God as a mother who will not forget us, or be without tenderness for us who come from her womb.

This is good news, isn't! And it always works