



Raven's Bread

Food for Those in Solitude

Online Edition

May 2020

Thoughts In Solitude

God made us for Himself alone so that no one or nothing finite can complete or fulfill us other than our Infinite God. Our union with Him is the Love relationship that Meister Eckhart called the “grund” (ground) of our being. It is our finite being “Divinized” and “Oned” with his Divine Being. Christ through His Incarnation woke us up to who we really are: identified with him, participating in His own Divine Nature (2 Peter: 4) Thomas Merton calls the experience of this union “Being alone with the Alone”. It is why hermits can say they are never less alone then when alone”

When we are living in our rational, psychologized consciousness, our loneliness” is radically different from the Spiritual Aloneness that is brimming with God’s unceasing Presence from what Thomas Merton called our “Pure Consciousness.”.

On this level of consciousness, we experience God intuitively and directly (contemplatively) beyond our thoughts and words “about Him”).

Since God defined Himself to Moses in the burning bush as “I am who am”, Being itself and all other beings exist in Him. If God would cease giving himself and His love away to each of us in the present moment, there would be nothing but a pile of clothes on this chair. This is our substantial union as God’s Image that will never never cease to be.

We are also created in God’s Likeness. Merton speaks of this union as our Oneness with the Love that God is. Love is our true identity because “Whatever is in God is really identical with Him for His infinite simplicity admits no division and no distinction. Our true self is the unique manifestation of our infinite God (beyond anything right with us or anything wrong with us.)

The Divine Being or Pure Consciousness that Thomas Merton speaks of is the indwelling presence of Christ in every baby before they begin thinking.

The French philosopher Rene Descartes tried to prove we exist through the experience of our mind reflecting on itself — “I think, therefore I am.” He should have said “I am, therefore I think.” Our pure consciousness is the source of our relational consciousness.

Christ on several occasions referred to himself as “I am”, identifying himself with Yahweh, “I am Who Am”.

Through our Pure Consciousness, we wake up to God’s intimate Presence intuitively beyond our mind as our own true self where His Spirit and our spirit are one. Hanging out together is what our love relationship is all about.



Excerpted from:

A Letter to the Raven's Bread Community
By Anonymous Hermit

A Word From Still Wood



We start our days with a brief “stay-at-home” physical workout to keep fit. One of the arm-stretching exercises is called “calming the waters.” It seems to us an apt image for our current calling.

While it’s true that we have read stories of the recurrent bubonic plagues of the Middle Ages, of the Black Death that killed within hours, decimating countries every twenty years, the idea of a pandemic in the 21st century is still mind boggling. Six months ago, we could hardly have imagined that the social life and institutions of nearly every country in the world would have shut down as if a planetary switch had been flipped. So, how to avoid panic mode: flee, freeze, fight?

The last time people in the U.S. saw quarantine signs was during the polio epidemic in the early 1950’s. And the only things that were shut down then were the swimming pools and public beaches. Everyone, parents in particular, were terrified by photos of paralyzed youngsters in ventilators dubbed “iron lungs.”

Even the first Great Pandemic was over a hundred years ago when the “Spanish Flu” circled the globe, killing more people than two world wars and subsequent wars thereafter. But now, for only the second time in recorded history, our planet has again become a single family, resisting an unseen but deadly threat. Wrapped in protective clothing, masks and gloves, we try to care for one another. Seeing pictures of people, mainly adults, on ventilators and respirators, forcing oxygen into infected lungs, we keenly remember those harrowing days, only three years ago, when Karen herself, spent five days on a ventilator recovering from double pneumonia.

As we write this, the lives of people everywhere are circumscribed by “Stay at Home” orders, “social distancing” guidelines, and closures. The life to which many have become accustomed and even taken for granted has simply evaporated due to something new, a virus that has mutated for yet unknown reasons, crossing the divide between human and non-human beings. And our modern culture, so self-confident so sure of its resources, securities, and economies has been brought to a stand-still by a microscopic entity that eludes both our understanding and our control.

For hermits and religious solitaires, social distancing and seclusion are a chosen way of life, directed to fostering solitude, silence and simplicity that can focus the mind, nourish the soul, enliven the spirit, to connect the One with the All. What then, can we hermits and solitaires offer our world in this time of crisis? We can use the energy which we communicate one to another in prayer; we can use the powers within us that touch every ion in our universe. If we speak at all, it must be to encourage those around us to “Be not afraid.” We must calm the waters. Our experience is that isolation can be the gateway to solitude, that fewer resources can stimulate creativity, and that less can in fact be more. Perhaps we can encourage others to rediscover intimacy and compassion. We are one family, sharing an event of epoch proportions, even as our beautiful earth continues to whirl through the cosmos. Let this time of being apart bring us all closer together.

With our grateful love, Karen & Paul

Raven’s Bread is a quarterly newsletter (FEB-MAY-AUG-NOV) for hermits and those interested in solitary life published by Paul and Karen Fredette. It affirms and encourages people living in solitude. As a collaborative effort, it is written for and by hermits themselves, delivered by postal mail or email. Please send your written contributions, address changes, and subscription donations to: pkfredette@frontier.com or *Raven’s Bread Ministries*, 18065 NC 209 Hwy., Hot Springs, NC 28743 or via PayPal at our website.* Our phone number is: 828 622 3750.

An annual donation is appreciated, each giving according to their means. Please send payment in US dollars (PayPal converts foreign currency to US dollars). Anything extra goes into a fund to insure that all who want *Raven’s Bread* can receive it.

***Raven’s Bread* derives it’s name from the experience of the prophet Elijah in 1 Kings 17: 1-6, where a raven sent by God nourished him during his months of solitude at the Wadi Cherith (The Cutting Place).**

***Our website is: <http://www.ravensbreadministries.com>; our email: pkfredette@frontier.com and the Blog for Lovers of Solitude: www.ravensbreadministries.com/blog.**



BULLETIN BOARD



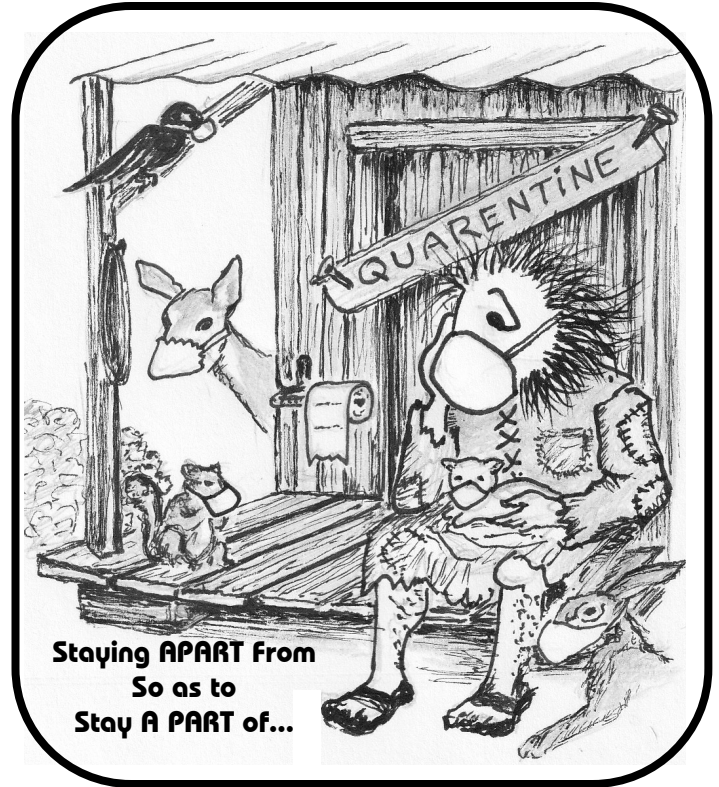
Wood B. Hermit

Here at Still Wood....Still Looking

We continue to look for an abled-bodied, hermit-minded someone who would be interested in a long-term stay at *Raven's Rest Hermitage* in exchange for assistance with cleaning, housekeeping, light maintenance and yard work.



Raven's Rest is a fully furnished two room apartment with a view of the Smokies; private entrance; bedroom, full bath, kitchenette and sitting room. Walk wooded trails over private property. Linens and bedding provided. Outdoor parking available; access to internet, library, and chapel.



Staying APART from
So as to
Stay A PART of...

*It may be that when we no longer know what to do,
we have come to our real work
and when we no longer know which way to go,
we have begun our real journey.
The mind that is not baffled is not employed.
The impeded stream is the one that sings.
Wendell Berry*

IN MIND AND HEART

Please be mindful in your prayer of Raven's Bread readers who are currently incarcerated in correctional facilities throughout the world, especially those who have chosen to make of their solitary confinement an intentional embrace of solitude and silence and prayer. We are aware of some who are already infected with Covid-19. More than ever, they need our support.

Paul & Karen

CHECK THIS OUT!

Christa Rose, a hermit living in the Sierra mountains, has published a website of her personal prayer-songs. She invites readers of *Raven's Bread* to listen to her heart's melodies at: hislovingkindness.com. These seventeen reflective melodies can calm our spirits and open us to new grace. She adds: I hope it blesses you as your website has blessed me—very much!