



Raven's Bread

Food for Those in Solitude

Online Edition

November 2021

Thoughts on Solitude

Ilia Delio's quote from the August 2021 issue:

"If it is Love that moves the sun and the other stars, as Dante once wrote, then Love must move us as well if we are to be at home with one another in this cosmos." reminded me of the *Divine Milieu* and Teilhard de Chardin:

"Love is the very physical structure of the universe driving all things toward union, attraction and cosmic sympathy."

Christ (Love) was Teilhard's Omega Point where we are all oned in his Being. Not merely "a being" but "Being Itself" and all other beings have to exist in Him *"yet in fact He is not far from any of us since it is in Him that we live and move and have our being"* (Acts: 17:28).

God is continuing to create the universe, galaxy after galaxy, and more importantly sharing His very own Divine Image and Likeness with all the precious little babies He gives birth to daily. God dwelling intimately within us, as us, is our unceasing Hope and is much more than our optimism that everything will come out in the wash.

No one expressed True Hope better than our solitary friend, Julian of Norwich: *"This boundless Hope is less a future outcome than a yielding of the 'finite self' to its 'Infinite Ground' in the Present Moment. In trust I am*

invited to yield my hopes, desires, and aversions, and rest in God's ever Present all-inclusive well-making Now."

In his opening address to Vatican Council II, our good Pope St. John XXIII expressed the same Hope in Julian's heart that applies even now in the face of this tragic Pandemic when we are eye to eye with despair. *"The human family is on the threshold of a new era. We must recognize here the hand of God who as the years roll by, is ever directing humanity's efforts whether they realize it or not, towards the fulfillment of the inscrutable designs of His Providence wisely arranging everything, even adverse human fortune."*

How difficult it is for us to believe this when we think our psychological self is who we really are. We sincerely confuse our best and most virtuous ego self with our True Self which is Christ living intimately within us, as us.

Thomas Merton was a prophetic Truth Teller when he wrote: *"We are all shining brighter than the sun."*



***A Letter from
Anonymous Hermit
East Texas***



Recently we were invited to do a Zoom Presentation to a local group with an impressive name: AWE—Asheville Wisdom Exchange. We were delighted to do so and especially enjoyed the Q & A that followed. Let us share with you some of the reflections we offered the group.

“What we *see* is enhanced immensely by what we *hear* and we can only really hear when we ourselves are silent. Seeking and finding silence around us is simply a doorway, a pathway, a means to access *inner* silence. The discomforts of inner silence are essential preconditions we must endure until they gradually transform our consciousness

into an inviting, tranquil, and even serene sense of aloneness. Arriving at solitude takes time. We must first move through loneliness. Once this is accepted we are able to listen and hear what is going on in the outer world around us and the inner world within us. Silence is not easily attained. It requires focus. The discipline of living in the present moment can be what turns isolation into solitude.

We are here; here and now. Deeper than our distress, we find a silent waiting that holds our spirits in peace. It is amazing how pictures in our mind affect our feelings and thoughts. Using imagery to create quiet within us is an easy way of finding Silence. We cannot force our minds into a state of tranquility but, as Pierre Lacout wrote, “*There is no obstacle which, once recognized and understood, cannot become the starting point for a new leap forward.*”

One such obstacle which we find troubling and view with growing concern is how our society as a whole seems to be opting for *connection* at the expense of *communion*. Unless we start reminding one another that we must at times disconnect to experience silence and solitude, it will be less and less possible to recover and restore community. If we recognize this dynamic, it can be the springboard for a renewed awareness of how essential “communion” is for survival in our world.

As we approach the season of the year meant to be one of communion and celebration but which often leads to distress and exhaustion, we need to come to the quiet...daily: to focus, to relax. How? We challenge you to find a near-at-hand site where you can shut out the noise and endless claims on your time and attention. Maybe disappear into a closet; lock the bathroom door; hide under the cellar stairs if necessary and just BE — no smartphone allowed. Whatever your worries, even they can be set aside for awhile. Surely you can find fifteen minutes that will allow you to find Love and Joy. Let this practice be your “Christmas present” to yourself.

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 its 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).**

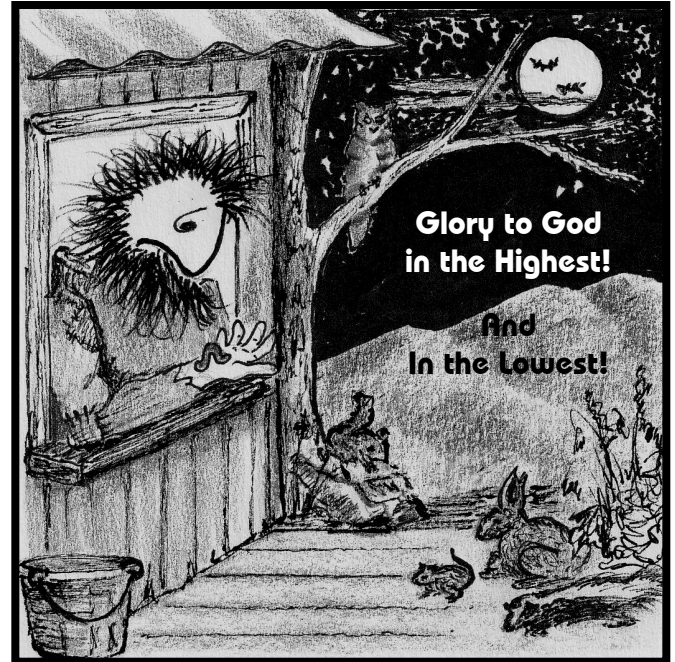
***Our website is: <http://www.ravensbreadministries.com>; our email: pkfredette@frontier.com and the Blog for Lovers of Solitude: www.ravensbreadministries.com/blog.**



BULLETIN BOARD



Wood B. Hermit



*May Joy and Wonder
Fulfill your Solitude!*

AWED TO HEAVEN, ROOTED IN EARTH
In our secret yearnings
We wait for your coming, and in our grinding despair
We doubt that you will...

Give us the grace and the impatience
to wait for your coming to the bottom of our toes,
to the edges of our fingertips.
We do not want our several worlds to end.
Come in your power
and come in your weakness
in any case
and make all things new.

Walter Brueggemann

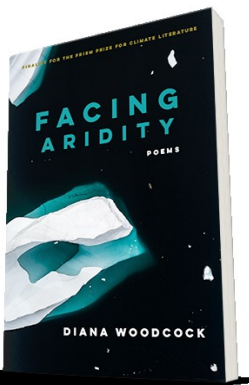
A NEW PUBLICATION

FROM A LONG-TIME RAVEN'S BREAD READER.

Wayfarer Books announces the publication of
FACING ARIDITY

Finalist for the 2020 Prism Prize
for Climate Literature by

VCUarts Qatar Associate Professor Diana Woodcock



Facing Aridity by Diana Woodcock features poems inspired by research expeditions and residencies in Alaska, the Arctic Circle, the Everglades, and southern Africa; and by fifteen years spent living in Arabia. Tinged with sorrow, they offer hope as they wring out lyrical beauty from the beleaguered yet resilient natural world. Rooted in truth, they zoom in closely on the negative effects of human activity before panning back out to

celebrate earth's grand design. The poet here, serving as witness to climate change while advocating for preservation and conservation, invites readers to open themselves to earth's suffering—to global sorrow—in order to transform and be transformed.

Facing Aridity is part of the tradition of poems as essays—stanzas that survey, testify, and persuade, even as they delight. I'm particularly struck by Woodcock's integration of technical diction and sound-play, as in "Arctic Summer, Sozled on Landscape": "scree slopes, unconsolidated deposits / fluvial and beach—moraines, talus / cones, block fields of frost-loosened stones...alpine peaks—sharp and steep— / of granites and gneisses." Every page brings fresh knowledge and an immediate, inhabited dialogue with nature ranging across several key climates, right down to Svalbard poppies, Everglade alligators, and *Hippocampus Kudas* gliding in the Arabian Gulf. This collection is an important contribution to the canon of environmental literature that includes timely commentaries on both the aftermath of the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic, and the ongoing disaster of fracking practices in the United States.

—Sandra Beasley, author of *Made to Explode*

A Raven's Offering

Monthly Reflections

Mr. Peter Reinl, a Wisconsin native and self-described "monk in the world" arrived at Still Wood in mid-August and has taken up residence in Raven's Rest Hermitage. Among other responsibilities, Peter will be assisting with Raven's Bread Ministries and contributing to the regular newsletter as well.

Beginning December 15th, 2021, Raven's Bread Ministries will offer by email (ONLY) a brief monthly reflection of support, encouragement, and inspiration for those embracing the life of a hermit / monk / solitary in the world.

"A RAVEN'S OFFERING" will offer perspectives regarding various topics and queries often experienced by those who choose to live a life of solitude, simplicity, prayer, contemplation, and service while journeying through daily life in the world.

To receive this monthly reflection please send your name and email address to:

Peter.reinl59@gmail.com

NOTE: Your name and email address will be kept in the strictest of confidence and will not be shared.

NOTE: This monthly reflection will not be published during the months when RAVEN'S BREAD quarterly newsletter is published. You will not automatically become a subscriber of A RAVEN'S OFFERING if you are a subscriber of Raven's Bread newsletter.



BOOK NOTES AND REVIEWS



A BOOK OF HOURS

by Thomas Merton, Edited by Kathleen Deignan

For the first time, much of Thomas Merton's most lyrical and prayerful writings have been arranged for daily prayer following the ancient monastic practice of "praying the hours." Arranged for Dawn, Day, Dusk and Dark, this book allows for a slice of monastic contemplation in our busy world.

223 pp. hbk.\$4.88 Sorin Books, 2007

ISBN-10:1933495057 ISBN-13: 978-1933495057

ORIENS: A PILGRIMAGE THROUGH ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

by Fr. Joel Sember

With Oriens as your guidebook, you will learn what God is revealing to you through Scripture and prayer - a life-changing pilgrimage beginning this Advent.

272 pp. \$18.95 pbk. Our Sunday Visitor, 2021

ISBN-10 : 1681927306 ISBN -13: 978-1681927305

EMPTY ROOMS; COMING ALIVE THROUGH SILENCE, SOLITUDE, AND THE SECRET PLACE

by Justin Rizzo & Rustie Dimitriadis

The fact is that many of us resent empty rooms, barren seasons, where nothing we do is making an impact. This book presents a much-needed paradigm shift. This timely book will awaken excitement in your heart for the secret places in your life where potential, purpose and Presence can be discovered.

160 pp. Pbk \$15.99 Independently Published 2021

ISBN-13 : 979-8538051922