



Raven's Bread

Food for Those in Solitude

Online Edition

August 2022

Thoughts on Solitude

Solitude is the one place where we take the time and space to go down into the depths, to confront ourselves about the way we're living, to notice what's missing for us, to think through what we've been avoiding...

Solitude is not deprivation. Solitude is time set aside for us to discover the hidden kernels of the soul and give them light to grow in...The work of solitude has been seeded in our psyches...

Solitude is not an escape from life; it is the kind of immersion in quiet that enables us to look beyond the daily density of our lives. In solitude we begin to see things we hadn't really noticed before...

The American merry-go-round can take over and life can become a revolving door of doing without thinking and thinking without doing. Which is exactly when we need solitude enough to catch up, to think newly, to pray over, to concentrate on, to contemplate what it will take to do things differently – to get off the merry-go-round...

Separation from others, solitude, gives us the distance, the concentration, and the insight we need to live well in a world teeming with talk, sound, noise, the pressures of the daily schedule, and the deadlines facing us tomorrow...without solitude, the healthy life is impossible. Solitude rinses the soul of noise and clutter, frees the heart to sing, and gives life another level of worth.

Space and time spent in solitude are a kind of independence training. They free you from the pressures and expectations of the people around you...Only in solitude can you really hear yourself think the big thoughts

that plot your way ahead in life...To grow up you have to separate yourself from the group or you will forever define yourself by the group and be determined only by its values and goals. Solitude saves you from that by growing you to the point where you really know who you are, what your aspirations are, what your choices are. Through the practice of solitude, you come to know – eventually undoubtedly – that you can survive without the group; you can define yourself; you can be all right alone; you can become what you want to be whether anybody else sees that path for you or not.

It is a great moment in life, this freeing of the self. But all of it must be dug out of the cement of your own soul. Once you take the risk of being alone with it, in the presence of God with it – your life wakes up inside yourself. You know now the power of solitude to sustain you and, most of all, confirm that the spiritual embryo in you has become a new kind of spiritual solidity. William Wordsworth put the whole essence of solitude in one poem when he wrote "*I Wandered Lonely as A Cloud.*"
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*"For everything there is
a season, and a time
for every matter"and
Now is the time for
DONATING to
Raven's Bread
Ministries*

Excerpts taken from *The Monastic Heart*
by Sr. Joan Chittister, OSB



With this Summer issue, **Raven's Bread Ministries** begins its 27th year in the effort to serve, support and encourage lovers of silence, solitude, simplicity and prayer around the world. It has been a truly wondrous and remarkable journey for us all. We have been so blessed with the growing network of readers who have shared so intimately their journeys of faith, their spiritual growth, and their discoveries of "The Presence" in our midst. We are in awe of the amazing fruits of the Spirit manifest in the experiences of so many "companions on way." It has truly been our privilege to accompany so many of you through all these years, some of you from the beginning—a quarter of a century!!

We are most grateful for your continuous support and participation in this interactive forum of folks of similar mind, heart and focus. And while your financial contributions have been absolutely vital to our endeavors, your written contributions of experiences, insights, achievements, setbacks, and questions have been every bit as essential in keeping Raven's Bread focused, informative, and nourishing to contemplatives and solitaires everywhere.

Over the years, your generosity has enabled Raven's Bread to grow beyond this 8 page newsletter into a ministry that offers a **Lending Library** of eremitically-oriented books (over 100 volumes), a valuable collection of nearly 50 hard to find **Resources**, several books: **Where God Begins to Be, A Women's Journey into Solitude, Where God is Ever Found**, and in large part due to your participation in the 2001 Survey, **Consider The Ravens, a Handbook for Hermits**. We have also been able to produce a number of video series available on YouTube: **The Hermit Journal, Consider The Raven's, Clare: Her Light and Her Song**, and recently a series of videos entitled "**A Word from Still Wood**" to encourage viewers who were grappling with quarantines and a sense of isolation and loneliness during the Covid Pandemic.

And now we are so pleased to report that since Pete Reinl has joined us and begun offering a monthly email reflection, "**A Raven's Offering**", in those months when Raven's Bread is not published, nearly one hundred readers have signed up to receive it. We are grateful to Peter and find this response quite astounding, realizing that it is answering a true need.

So, last February, we announced the changes in our email and contact information, and told you all of the changes we were making to ways of contributing financially, we indicated that in the future we would use the August issue of the newsletter (annually) to simply remind you to contribute financially whatever you can to this ministry. If you enjoy receiving the newsletter and have benefited from some of the other services we have cited above, we ask you express your appreciation with a financial donation that will support our efforts during these difficult times. And we are well aware that the times are difficult for most of us. Here at Still Wood, living, as are many, on fixed and limited incomes, we will continue for as long as we can to offer our prayerful support and encouragement and assistance to hermits and all those interested in the Solitary Life.

With our grateful love, Paul & Karen

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 donations to: ravenbread97@gmail.com or **Raven's Bread Ministries**, 18065 NC 209 Hwy., Hot Springs, NC 28743 or via PayPal at our website. Our website is: <http://www.ravenbreadministries.com>. Our phone number is: 828 622 3750. Our videos are posted on YouTube. An annual donation is appreciated, each giving according to their means.

Please send payment in US dollars (PayPal converts foreign currency to US dollars). All donations go into a fund to insure that anyone who wants **Raven's Bread Newsletter** 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).

A Few (more) Reminders

Thanks to all who are using our new RB email address. It is:
ravenbread97@gmail.com

Paypal Users: Only the "Donate" Button is available now.
No "subscription" button, so NO auto-renewal.

Raven's Bread Newsletter is sent to all who ask. A donation
is appreciated but not required.

Raven's Bread Ministries now offers by email (ONLY) a
monthly reflection of support, encouragement, and in-
spiration for those embracing the life of a hermit /
monk / solitary in the world entitled **A Raven's Offering**.

To receive this monthly reflection please send your
name and email address to: Peter.rein159@gmail.com

NOTE: This monthly reflection will not be published during
the months when **RAVEN'S BREAD** quarterly newsletter is
published. You will not automatically receive **A Raven's
Offering** if you subscribe to **Raven's Bread Newsletter**.

*I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host of daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.*

*[And] oft, when on my couch I lie,
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.*

William Wordsworth



BOOK NOTES AND REVIEWS



THE COMMON RULE: HABITS OF PURPOSE FOR AN AGE OF DISTRACTION

by Justin Whitmel Earley

The answer to our contemporary chaos is to practice a rule of life that aligns our habits to our beliefs. The Common Rule offers four daily and four weekly habits, designed to help us create new routines and transform frazzled days into lives of love for God and neighbor..

208 pp. \$13.29 pbk. IVP Books 2019

ISBN-10: 0830845607 ISBN-13 : 978-0830845606

BRAVING THE THIN PLACES: CELTIC WISDOM TO CREATE A SPACE FOR GRACE

by Julianne Stanz

A thin place is where God and humanity meet in a mysterious way. Something seems to break open inside us, and words are inadequate. Drawing on her Irish-Celtic heritage, the author helps us explore those times and holy places of transformation which are a point of departure on a sacred journey to who we are meant to be.

160 pp. \$14.39 pbk. Loyola Press 2022

ISBN-10:0829448863 ISBN-13:978-0829448863

SACRED RHYTHMS: ARRANGING OUR LIVES FOR SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION

by Ruth Haley Barton

Copying the monastic tradition of creating a "rule of life" that allows regular space for the practice of spiritual disciplines, the author takes us more deeply into seven key disciplines with practical ways for weaving them into our daily life.

192 pp. \$11.43 pbk. IVP Books 2022

ISBN-10:0830848754 ISBN-13:978-0830848751



Quotable Quotes
Contributed by Readers



We are already one.

But we imagine that we are not.

And what we have to recover is our original unity.

What we have to be is what we are.

Thomas Merton

*There is almost a sensual longing
for communion with others
who have a large vision.*

*The immense fulfillment
of the friendship between
those engaged in furthering
the evolution of consciousness
has a quality impossible to describe.*

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, paleontologist poet

The evolutionary task now is to raise the powers of love upward to the next stage of consciousness. Critical judgements are replaced by a desire for and vision of interconnectedness, a willingness to discriminate through dialogue and to allow room for other ways of perceiving and acting. This evolutionary advance widens the vision so that for the first time in history humanity gains the potential to appreciate and integrate all that has gone before. While this kind of transformation is an invitation for each of us individually, it will be facilitated by and have greater impact on us and on the world if we embrace the practice of contemplation as united groups.

Liz Sweeney, SSJ

Death is not the opposite of life. Life has no opposite.

Eckhart Tolle