

Contemplative walking

Trusting, allowing and delighting in awareness of God in nature



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Art credits: Vincent van Gogh



The shape of things

God is in the world, as poetry is in the poem, Les Murray, poet

Winter, especially when it snows, draws attention to both the detailed route of each single branch, each single channel on its skin and each single finger that ends with a stretching tip. Shape is extenuated, emphasising nuance of journey, twists and turns, reach and exploration. So it is with the human soul and life.

We are to walk. We are not here to acquire or get, but to receive. To note what is and is given. What is offered in any given walk? What grace? It may be in the solidity of a tree, the beckoning sound of birdsong, the welcoming lushness of grass. We walk between, on one hand, the appeal 'why can't we just let a mountain be a mountain' where we force meaning out of everything and on the other hand being hungrily and humbly attentive to any resonance between our senses and our internal life. As we read the Spirit infused creation, through sight and sound, what are we offered about ourselves and about God?

Where is there an image for my soul? What is the shape of my life?



Walking attentively

With eyes and heart wide open

Engaging with a walk, non sequentially!

"The simple image may give us an encapsulated summary of the issues central to our lives at any moment." David Whyte, poet.

Stop.

Notice your internal pace. Cease the hurry, the chase. Sit back. Wait. What is the tree's pace? The river's flow? Is there an object (gate, arc of trees), a prayer or line of poetry to help mark this change of pace, this threshold?

Notice.

What have I noticed, been offered? What image wordlessly and helpfully reflects back to me my inner state or conveys the nature of God and so offers a new, now way of being for me, today, where I am at?

Turn.

Turn towards and in to what you have noticed. What are the inner resonances? What am I invited to receive and to let go of? What am I saying hello to and goodbye to? What am I entering and what am I leaving?'



What may be noticed, offered?

In nature

"Consider the lilies". Jesus

About myself, my life

"I turned my face for a moment and it became my life" David Whyte'

Of God

"His eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made."

"In The heart aroused



Noticing: Cycling through the senses

"Earth is crammed with heaven, and every bush is aflame with the glory of God. But only those who see take off their shoes" Elizabeth Browning

- What do you see? Shapes, angles, textures, postures, colours.
- What do you need to touch? The rough bark of a tree, the dew on the grass, the veins of a leaf?
- What do you smell? What memories do they evoke? What longings do they stir?
- What do you hear? Follow the sounds. Listen for their tone and volume and note their impact, the sensation: crunching leaves underfoot, birdsong.
- What do you feel? The The wind sweeping across your face, the sun lightly touching your arms, the rain dripping down your back.

However small or slight, treat what lightly catches your attention, evokes an emotion, as manna or mustard seed, holding more than meets the eye. Then turn towards it, turn into it.