The World Community for Christian Meditation

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Monday Holy Week

Today, as Lent begins to yield to what it has been preparing us for, we begin the Holy Week retreat on Bere Island. Meditators from many places are converging on this small Irish island drawn by an experience of silence that none of us can put into words but that makes words easier to speak with truth and conviction. Today we have also been lucky with the weather on a beautiful golden evening of a full paschal moon. Predictably, we speak of the meteorological patterns that act as metaphors for the changes of mood and consciousness that occur on the interior journey.

Life is a countless series of beginnings. And, more surprisingly than one might think, for every beginning there is an end. But in the new seed of anything we find a potential full of hope and promise that projects us beyond even the duality of birth and death. Beginnings and ends have different meanings, some easier to accept than others, but these two poles are both inseparable and illusory. Youth would not be young without age. We could easily dismiss this hopefulness of beginnings as romanticism, a compulsive illusion that recurs each time we start again. Or it could be an irrepressible innocence that reflects the true nature of the mind, the nature of God as the eternal now, and as a perennial freshness that cannot decrease with time.

Without faith, that keeps us capable of this hope, and that protects us from cynicism we would be less capable of experiencing grace. The combination of the two, faith and grace, is what changes us and the world in time. It might be a coincidence, a friend, a book or a web search that triggers the conviction that every positive new beginning needs to be welcomed. The unexpected and unpredictable have to be constantly accounted for. If we cannot welcome the new we are doomed to relive old patterns until the final horizon.

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