The World Community for Christian Meditation

Published on *The World Community for Christian Meditation* (http://www.wccm.org)

Weekly Readings 10/2/2013

From John Main OSB, ?The Wholeness of God,? MOMENT OF CHRIST (New York: Continuum, 1998), pp. 83-85.

We have to learn, and it is absolutely necessary that we do learn it, that only one thing is necessary, because only one thing is.

All of us must therefore address our own lack of discipline. We must bring our restless wandering minds to stillness. It is one of the first great lessons in humility we learn, when we realize that we come to wisdom and stillness, and we pass beyond distraction, only through the gift of God. . . .[A]ll we have to do is to dispose ourselves, and this we do by becoming silent, to the infinity of God. We learn to be silent by being content to say our mantra in humble fidelity.

It is as though the mystery of God is a wonderful multi-faceted diamond. When we talk or think about God it is as though we are responding to one or another facet, but when we are silent?which is to say, in his presence?we respond to the mystery which we call God as a whole. . . The wonder of it is that it is the whole of us that responds to the entirety of the mystery of God. It is not just our intellect, not just our emotions, not just the ?religious? side of us or the ?secular? side of us.[. . . ..]

People often ask, ?What is the experience of prayer like?? By that they mean, ?What happens? What is it like?? It is like silence. And what happens? In the silence?peace. In the silence?presence. And deeper silence. The way into that silence requires great patience, great fidelity and it requires. . .that we learn to say our mantra. As John Cassian said, the mantra contains all the human mind can express and all the human heart can feel. That one little word conveys and leads us into the silence which is the silence of creative energy. How long this takes is of no concern to us. ?To the Lord a thousand years are as a day.? The only thing that matters is that we are on the way.

After meditation: ?Snow Fall,? by May Sarton, Collected Poems: 1930-1993 (Norton, 1992), noted in The Writer?s Almanac, 2.2.213.

Snow Fall

With no wind blowing
It sifts gently down,
Enclosing the world in
A cool white down,
A tenderness of snowing.

It falls and falls like sleep
Till wakeful eyes can close
On all the waste and loss
As peace comes in and flows,
Snow-dreaming what I keep.

Silence assumes the air
And the five senses all
Are wafted on the fall
To somewhere magical
Beyond hope and despair.

There is nothing to do
But drift now, more or less
On some great lovingness,
On something that does bless,
The silent, tender snow.

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Weekly Readings Newsletter

Source URL: http://www.wccm.org/content/weekly-readings-1022013