

Will you pray with me and for me, trusting that this time of meditation and message will touch and open the Way, the Truth and the Life that wants to be expressed in each of us?

Meditation

It Felt Love ~Hafiz

How did the rose
ever open its heart

and give to this world
All its Beauty?

It felt the encouragement of light
against its Being,

Otherwise,
we all remain
too frightened.

Center on breath, physical sensation of being supported, rooted,

Picture yourself as the rose in this little gem of wisdom by Hafiz, as an unopened rosebud... picture the color of your petals, visible above the green of your leaves and stem.. You are planted in an open area of a garden... feel your roots deep in the soil

Imagine it is very early morning... light is just beginning to show in the east... the night's chill lingers, yet the light brings a subtle eagerness into your flower self... you know, with a deep inner knowing, that this day you will open in bloom...

Imagine the sun's rays falling upon you, warming your petals... imagine the gentle opening of your outer petals and then the slow unwrapping of the layers of inner petals... your blossom face turned toward the sun's light...

no one has taught you how to open, how to smell so sweet... it is simply your divine nature, revealed and unfolding... feel your roots taking in nourishment and your beautiful openness giving out oxygen....

(PAUSE in the quiet...)

Message

No one teaches the rose how to bloom. No human gardener gives it clear cut, step by step instructions how to grow thorns or petals, or how to share its beauty of color and heady scent. Its innate wisdom is already within its very being. Yes, it is affected by outside influences of too much or too little water or light, by hard ground or rich soil, or biting frost that kills. Yet its way of being knows the way to bloom.

Antonio Machado says, "*Wanderer, there is no road; the road is made by walking.*"

Have you ever taken a walk with a toddler or a dog and let them lead the way, the path unfolding from the energy of their curiosity? Or have you just set out for a walk, even in a city, with no clear destination in mind, and allowed yourself to simply meander?

[Lyndsey Scott, wrote a simple mantra-like chant](#) that was our daily sung prayer on Iona; "You don't have to know the way; the Way knows the way. You don't have to plan the way. Trust the Way. Feel your way... The Way knows the way."

Wandering over *The Road* (there is only ONE road that runs north to south) over the hillocks and heather and beaches of that beautiful island, made it easy to see that *the path is made by walking*.

This week the path didn't seem so beautiful! It was listening to my body's wisdom as it heals from a good old fashioned cold, and having to make choices about what activities I could or couldn't do. It was a week spent taking my mom to 3 doctor's appointments before her knee surgery next Monday, and feeling the threshold of life changes with my parents is just around the corner.

And it was a week when reading the news from around the world, and from our own nation caused a range of reactions— from steam coming out my ears, to rage and frustration, to broken-hearted sorrow.

The Way Knows the Way came back to me as a mantra, and I had to "let go of the shore and let the water carry" me. I also LOVE how my own messages come back to push me! Last week I invited us to consider how givingness is our divine nature, a stance toward life that recognizes and learns from fear and anger, but doesn't stay locked within those storms.

The story arc of the Pilgrim's journey echoes within the story arc of the seasons, and of the church liturgical year. For the pilgrim, there is a setting out, a dark walk into the labyrinth of grief, a recognition of the gift you carried all along but didn't recognize, and then a return home.

In Protestant Christian churches all over the world, today is celebrated as the feast of the Transfiguration, which comes as the sixth and last Sunday of the season of Epiphany, just before Lent begins this week. Diana Butler Bass describes the journey from Advent to now like this: "the spiritual flow of these winter seasons are awaiting light in the darkness (Advent); light overcoming the darkness (Christmas); and following the light to its glorious source (Epiphany)."

The wisdom of the seasons leads us in a similar way: from the darkening days that lead up to the winter solstice, that day we transition from days growing shorter to the additional minutes of sunlight each day. Imbolc/Candlemas marked the quarter turn and we soon are headed into the spring equinox.

The way of all creation knows the way. The story arc of Jesus, the Wayshower knows the way. There is power in the birthing of light. There is power in the darkness. There is the way of walking the road that leads us to the Way of Truth and Life. "Wanderer, there is no road, the road is made by walking."

On our inner pilgrim journey of life, Christine Valters Painter reminds us,

"We each have a particular way, and we are responsible for the choices we make which shape the direction of our lives unfolding. At the same time, we are also invited to yield our desire to control that unfolding. The spiritual journey calls us out into the wild places where God is not tamed and domesticated. We are asked to release our agendas and discover the holy direction for our lives.... God does not call us to one particular path that we scrutinize and discover. ***God calls us to the fullness of living which can be manifested in a multitude of ways.*** We have to listen closely for what is truly life-giving and there lies the struggle. We resist trusting ourselves. We tell ourselves stories about why we should stay stuck..."

...What if when life started falling apart, we opened our hearts to welcome in the grief and fear that arrived? What if we considered them as holy guides and windows into the immensity of God? What if all the painful feelings of loss and disorientation were invited in for tea? What if everything that turned our preconceived ideas inside out was precisely where we found God?

My fears about our country. My anguish over war and violence, poverty, and the destruction of our earth. My worries about my family and loved ones. My joy and delight in walks with toddlers. The gift of traveling to discover new places. The pleasure of a simple walk through my own neighborhood, letting my feet and spirit roam at will on a sunny February day. The story arcs of pilgrimage and the seasons and the Wayshower Jesus. What if *all of it* is where God is calling me? Is calling you? Can we, like last week's tonglen meditation, and like the rose that breathes out the oxygen we need, take in ALL of it, and use it for food for our spirits, for our lives, for the world?

Here is another way to look at the image of a rose, reminding us of these deeper truths. **The Risk to Bloom**, from *The Book of Awakening* by Mark Nepo

And then the day came when the risk to remain tight in a bud was more painful than the risk to bloom. ~ Anais Nin

We all face this turning point repeatedly: when resisting the flow of inner events suddenly feels more hurtful than leaping forward toward the unknown. Yet no one can tell us when to leap. There is no authority to bless our need to enter life but the God within.

How often we thwart ourselves by holding tenaciously to what is familiar. It is instructive, if chilling, that in floral shops the roses that won't open are called bullets. They are discarded because they will never bloom. They have turned in on themselves so tightly that they can never release their fragrance.

Yet as spirits in bodily form, we have the chance to tighten and bloom more than once. But even spirits, if turned in on themselves enough, may grow accustomed to being closed...

It has always amazed and humbled me how the risk to bloom can seem so insurmountable beforehand and so inevitably freeing once the threshold... is crossed...We can flower in an instant once the pain of not flowering and not loving becomes greater than our fear.

We find our way by walking. Walking with God and walking with each other. We find our way by listening to what our joys and our fears, our heartaches are teaching us. We find our way by trusting that time in solitude and silence, time in deep conversation and presence, all will help us to listen to the voice of God-within. Will help us discern, to answer the call, to answer the questions: *what is mine to do?* Where are my holy heartbreak and holy imagination leading me, not only into creating the life of my dreams, but into transfiguring the world that calls out to us in these days where chaos rules so many areas of our shared culture. We are the just right people for this moment, because here we are! The way knows the way. You don't have to know the way. Trust the way. Find your way. The way knows the way.

And so it is. Amen!