

August 14, 2016
Questions for Personal Reflection
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Opening to the Spirit

Geese appear high over us, pass, and the sky closes.
Abandon, as in love or sleep, holds them to their way,
clear, in the ancient faith: what we need is here.
And we pray, not for new earth or heaven,
but to be quiet in heart, and in eye clear.
What we need is here.

From *Wild Geese* by Wendell Berry

Reflection Questions

What does the word “abandon” mean to you in the context of this poem?
What do you really need? Do you have it?
With a quiet heart and clear eye, what do you hear and see?

Food For Thought

Just a Housewife
Cordelia Baker Pearce

I packed five cakes of bread and two small fishes,
Sent him off, my youngest lad,
To take his father’s dinner to the field.
Came back alone he did, all goggle-eyed.
My fresh baked bread that varmint gave away
To some young travelling preacher out of Galilee.
It fed five thousand people.
What a tale! It can’t be true ... but if it is ...
What kind of dough did these hands knead this morning?

Reflection Questions

What kind of dough do your hands knead this morning?
What kind of soul did your heart knead at this moment?
Have you ever been amazed at what others have done with your simple gifts?

Opening Prayer

Nan C. Merrill's poetic translation of Psalm 145:19-22

O, Heart of our hearts, envelop us!
 We know You are near to all who call upon You.
Bring to our recollection all that
 We have denied, that we might be accepting and free
To help rebuild the soul of the world
 with radical trust, love, and wonder!
When we speak, let it be of blessing and gratitude;
 let your glory within me shine out to the world!

Reflection Questions

Can you recall a time when you experienced the Indwelling Presence enveloping you?
What do we need to remember to heal the world with acceptance and freedom?

Scripture Reading: Matthew 14:13-21

When Jesus received the news of John the Baptist's death he withdrew by boat to a lonely place where they could be by themselves. But the people heard of this and, leaving the towns, went after Jesus on foot. So as he stepped ashore he saw a large crowd; and he took pity on them and healed their sick.

When evening came, the disciples went to Jesus and said, "This is a lonely place, and the time has slipped by; so send the people away and they can go to the village to buy themselves some food." Jesus replied, "There is no need for them to go: give them something to eat yourselves." But they answered, "All we have with us is five loaves and two fish..." "Bring them here to me," Jesus said.

Giving orders that the people were to sit down on the grass, Jesus took the five loaves and the two fish, raised his eyes to the heaven and said a blessing. And breaking the loaves he handed them to the disciples who gave them to the crowds. They all ate as much as they wanted, and they collected the scraps remaining, 12 baskets full. The number who ate were many more than five thousand.

I invite you to remember the verses from Wendell Berry's poem, *Abandon, as in love or sleep, holds them to their way, clear, in the ancient faith: what we need is here*, and then reflect on how Jesus moved a crowd of grieving people into a community of sharing people.

What did Jesus abandon himself to?

What do you make of the commandment to the anxious disciples when he said "give them something to eat yourselves"?

What is the role of the blessing of the bread in this story?

What kind of hands packed everyone's "lunch basket" that morning?