

APPROACHING GOD

Engaging with Mystery

The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes

John 3:8

In our anguish we struggle

To elude Him, yet His love observes

His appalling promise; His predilection

As we wander and weep is with us to the end.

Minding our meanings, our least matter dear to Him.

W.H.Auden

I have found a hare's form on the hillside and I have been able to put my hand in it and feel it still warm, and this is my feeling of god- that we don't actually find him, but we find where he has been.

R,S,Thomas

How do we know there's a God? Because He keeps disappearing.

Anne Michaels

He is such a fast

God, always before us and

Leaving as we arrive.

R.S.Thomas

What's it like not "having" God?

What's God's absence like for you?

God, to be God, cannot be trapped in a form of words, caught even in an experience, confined in a book or a sermon or a poem. We meet the mystery of God when we engage with life at depth, responding to the universal aspiration towards transcendence which alone offers a sense of purpose or meaning or value. This mystery is not a problem waiting to be solved but a deep, inexhaustible truth which asks to be reverently explored and lived- all this within "the warmth and sweetness and dryness and terror of actual living".

Philip Carter is a retired Anglican Priest. He was the inaugural president of the Australian Ecumenical Council for Spiritual Direction (AECSD). He ran the Julian Centre in Adelaide, an independent and ecumenical centre for spirituality, from 1997-2009.

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The poet Mary Oliver says: "I don't know what a prayer is. But I do know how to pay attention".

So approaching God will mean, approaching life in all its fullness, with attentiveness, patience, openness.

So spend a bit of time sometime soon finding a quiet place, where you can be still and silent.

Notice the things you are carrying at present: and then, see if you can let them go,

not because they are unimportant,

but because they hinder you in paying attention to what surrounds you, looking, listening and waiting,

discovering that truly, the world has depth.

After a while you can move on, picking up those things you have let go for a while, and perhaps seeing them in a new way.

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