

SPIRITUALITY OF THE DESERT

A CONDITION OF COMPLETE SIMPLICITY

T.S.Eliot

**Whatever you find in your heart to do in following God,
that do, and remain within yourself in Him.**

Abba Anthony

I will allure her,
and bring her into the wilderness
and speak tenderly to her

Hosea 2:14

The desert is the place of personal integrity, without masks or pretensions. All effort – prayer, fasting, paying attention – is simply a means to an end, which is “to stand unprotected in the presence of God”.

The desert – in our tradition – is a special, privileged place of encounter. Yet for many, if not for all of us, we begin by getting in touch with those places of involuntary displacement, when things “happen” to us which we do not necessarily like. The desert comes to us uninvited, and raises in a sharp way, the issue of control. “We live the given life, not the planned” (Wendell Berry)

What does your “desert” do to the way you think and feel about yourself, and about God?

**In order to be true to God and to ourselves
we must break with the familiar, established and secure norms
and go off Into the unknown.**

‘Thomas Merton

“Judge things at their true value”.

The desert – without the familiar props – is painful, but is the place where we can truly begin to see things as they are.

*Sometime this week perhaps you can choose to clear a space and make a little desert in your life –
an act of voluntary displacement –*

a “deserted” place –

*where you can begin to recognize what your thoughts, behaviours and choices
might tell you about your motivations, values and attitudes towards life.*

*Becoming more aware of where your heart is, where your thoughts run to every day –
allows you to ask yourself how satisfied you really are.*

Do not give your heart to that which does not satisfy your heart.

Abba Poeman