

"Breathe...."



Breathe...breathe...

Breathe...deep replenishing breaths...
of cleansed air...

Breathe...deep, into the spaciousness
of this withdrawal time ...

Breathe...and feel a sense of

Hopkins' *"...dearest, freshest, deep-down things..."*ⁱ

Breathe...and know the truth of Emerson's words that:

"in the darkest, meanest things..."

...in the mud and scum of things..."

*...there... there... always, always, something sings..."*ⁱⁱ

Breathe...the innate awareness of Emerson's words, that shelters beneath the confronting realities of pandemic restrictions, the threat of contagion and death. It is time for hearts to awaken to that which "sings" at the core of this crisis time, and calls us "home".

The one word given to me for this reflection, in this time of the greatest threat we have known, was quite simply **"Breathe"**. In the face of an unprecedented global epidemic that has taken thousands of lives, closed down businesses, schools, universities, sports and entertainment industries, huge shopping complexes and even Churches at the holiest time in the Christian year, the simple word came – **"Breathe"**. For me, it felt like being drawn down, deep into the very essence of the life being described in news bulletins and incidental conversations with others. It is an invitation not just to me, but to us all, as we sit in our sacred CEN time each day, and sense the drastic nature of what is happening around us. We sit in contemplation, holding a fast-changing, unfamiliar world of fear and uncertainty, while at the same time, touching the bedrock of that "deep-down" "something"...that "sings", at the heart of it all.



This place of utter simplicity and larger communion-consciousness has been the focus for many CEN members in six 4-5pm Friday Zoom Healing Meditation sessions for all affected by the COVID19 Virus. During these meditations we have been guided into deeper places, and have responded to the call to: **"Breathe"**, to breathe deeply and, in that deeper breath, to **see more** – to **see beneath**, and to **see within** what is happening around us. For, through the eye of contemplation, we can look beyond *"the mud and scum..."* of all the havoc wreaked by this virus and the freedoms that have been taken from us because of it. And there...even there...find *'the dearest freshest deep-down things'*. Once this has been glimpsed with the eyes of **seeing more** than meets the outer eye, a different consciousness arises - one that brings our hearts into a new vibrational field that always *"sings"*, no matter what!



This vibrational field, this "different consciousness" is that of mystics and poets, who see at a depth that which is foreign to most of us, but which is becoming more accessible to many in these our times. Perhaps it is the critical nature of what is happening that is opening a 'portal' to that which lies beyond what we know in our everyday life, and allowing many to enter deeper levels of consciousness. This was the consciousness of Etty Hillesum, mentioned in the January reflection. She, as with other mystics, was able to see, even in the darkness and suffering of the 'world soul' of her time, the utterly

simple presence of God and was able to lean into that presence no matter what. This new 'seeing' was the *"larger vision and new kind of consciousness arising from a sense of the whole"* mentioned by Corrie in the February reflection, as she wrote in the midst of the devastating bushfires in Australia and invited us to look with a larger view at what was happening. It was what Tess called the *"energy force of Love"* in her March reflection, describing it as a force that draws us deeply - in darkness as well as in light. And in April, Kevin invited us to reflect on the deep *"I AM"* ground on which we stand, and to recognize that in this deepest of all grounds, the consciousness of our essential *"interconnectedness and interrelatedness"* can be found. It is the bedrock of our souls and, it is from this bedrock or ground that a new consciousness of the whole is arising in those who are open to allow this movement to happen.

These earlier reflections point to a journey of unfolding consciousness. That journey seems closer at this time of large scale withdrawal from outer activities and drawing inwards to depth, to "home". At the same time, we are being catapulted outwards, to connect with others far beyond the local, via technology. This drawing inwards and expanding outwards is in itself like 'breathing'. In this breathing, we draw inwards to recover contemplative depth in this "pause time" in our lives. The breathing movement then draws us outward - wider than we have 'breathed' before, as we reach out to the larger world far beyond us. Yes, it seems as if, for many at this time, consciousness is growing into depth and out to a breadth that encircles not only the globe but reaches out into the noosphereⁱⁱⁱ itself.

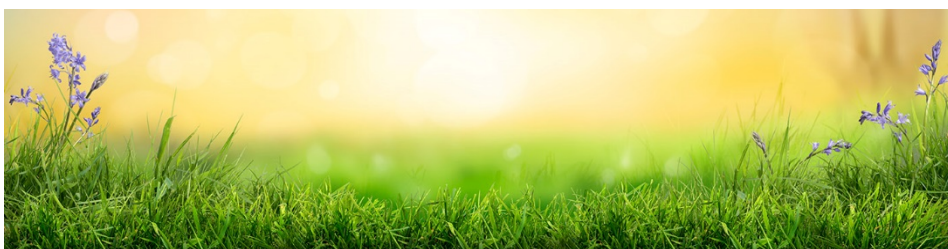
It is timely that our May reflection comes when the Christian Churches celebrate the holiest time of the year – Easter! In the southern hemisphere, it coincides with the season of autumn. In the northern part of the globe, it aligns with spring. Both seasons are symbolic of what is being celebrated liturgically – one the dying and letting go into emptiness and disillusionment, the other, awakening to new and unimagined life and hope. Both seasons are 'in-between' seasons – seasons of preparation for either the intense cold or oppressive heat to come. Both are pointers to what lies beyond themselves, and both are necessary preludes to a 'birth'.

So this 'pause time' in which we find ourselves when normal activities are curtailed, and new connectivity far beyond the places of our confinement is growing, may well be seen as a 'pregnant pause' time. There is a sense for some that even in the midst of potential contagion and death, something is gestating in the world womb. Just as 'breathing' is critical in giving birth, so too for us now. If we are to give birth fully to a new, larger, deeper consciousness – a consciousness of communion with others and with all that is, we must:

Breathe...deep...and breathe wide...

breathing as one with the lungs of the earth and all that dwells upon it,
breathing as one with airways, oceans...rivers, water-ways, and the precious creatures within them,
breathing with a deep consciousness of our communion with all life...
and so giving birth to a new sense of a greater whole – a larger 'body' emerging from within.

When we can breathe in this way,
we breathe new life, new seeing
and new hope into the "*darkest,
meanest things...*" into ... "*the
mud and scum of things...*" We
can know the place where we find



that which "*alway, alway, sings*" – the deep divinity that we share and which rises in each of us individually,
as the 'one-ing' that emerges from within the whole.

Yes, "*There is a season for everything...*

and a time for every purpose under heaven..."^{iv}

and we have been given this time to pause... to **Breathe**...

and help bring to birth a new whole-consciousness...

that holds difference as a gift to the whole,

that sees darkness as part of light,

and that knows death is the entrance into new seeing and new life for all.

And there...there... we can always 'sing'.

Madeline Duckett rsm

ⁱ Gerard Manly Hopkins, *Poems and Prose - God's Grandeur*, Penguin Classics, 1985

ⁱⁱ Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Fragments on Nature and Life, Music*.

ⁱⁱⁱ Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man*, N.Y. Harperperennial, 2008 p. 185. The thinking layer of the earth, beyond the biosphere.

^{iv} Ecc 3: 1-10