



Thin Places

Open to the Unexpected . . .

by Mary Kaye Medinger

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An ecumenical sampler of events and resources for spiritual growth, with a particular interest in the contemplative spiritual journey, published by the Spiritual Growth Community of Westminster Presbyterian Church

Seasons, saints, holy days that carry us from one reality to another, from one stage of life to another, from beginnings to endings and back again—this season can be filled with gifts such as these. And its cold, quiet, dark mornings and evenings invite us to reflect on them. Offering the gift of a time for deepening, for being open to what this Season can bring.

What do the Celtic Feast of Samhain and the First Sunday of Advent have in common? Each marks a new beginning. The ancient Celtic New Year began on November 1, when it was believed that the veil between the living and the dead was very thin, this holy day later evolving into the Christian feast of All Saints Day. The First Sunday of Advent—this year falling on December 2—marks the beginning of the Christian liturgical year.

Times for new beginnings like these are all hopeful times, for they are times for understanding more deeply who we are, and who we might be.

And they seem to be most fruitful when they are a time of listening and of being attentive, rather than times of list making. A time of being open to the unexpected, rather than of being in control.

For me personally, December 12 has become a moving part of my journey during this season. For many Hispanic and indigenous people and for many other Christians in the western hemisphere—and for me—the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe celebrates a new beginning, a manifestation of divine love for humanity, an indigenous account of the real new beginnings of the Americas.

The story of Guadalupe is both simple and profound. As recorded in the Nican Mopohua, the story tells us that in 1531—just ten years after the Spanish conquest of Mexico—the one who came to be called Our Lady of Guadalupe appeared to an Indian whose Christian name was Juan Diego who—like Mary when she learned that she was to have a Child—was open to the unexpected. During the course of three apparitions spread over several days, she requested that a hermitage/home/temple be erected where she could give to her people her love, compassion, help and protection. “I am the mother of all the nations that live on this

“The fact remains that every street is Mystic Street. Every lane we walk and every turn around every bend is an invitation to spiritual discovery. We have only to remain open to the understanding that the divine blessings of love and grace are unlimited, are unconditional, and are everywhere.”

Mystic Street: Meditations on a Spiritual Path,
S. T. Georgiou



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612.332.3421
www.eWestminster.org

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Look for *Thin Places* at: www.thinplaces.us or www.eWestminster.org/thinplaces.asp

earth who would love me, who would speak with me, who would search for me and who would place their confidence in me.” She asked Juan Diego to go to the bishop and to ask him to build a hermitage/home/temple for her. The bishop doubted her reality and asked for a sign. On that day, December 12, the lady instructed Juan Diego to go to the top of the hill and bring to her the roses he would find growing there, which he did. She arranged the roses in his cloak and sent him to the bishop. As Juan Diego dropped the roses in front of the bishop, an image of the lady appeared on his cloak. Now, nearly 500 years later, the fabric made of cactus fiber and imprinted with the image hangs in the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City. Millions of people have prayed in the presence of the luminous, radiant image and have reflected on the questions the lady put to Juan Diego and to all who come: “Am I not here, your mother? Are you not under my shadow and my protection? Am I not your source of life? Are you not in the hollow of my mantle where I cross my arms? . . .”

The story is filled with poetic symbolism that made it understandable to Juan Diego’s people—the colors, the sounds, the time of day, the significance of flowers, the garments, the tenderness of the conversations between Juan Diego and the lady whom he encountered, the fact

that she spoke in his native language of Nahuatl and not in the language of the Spanish conquerors, the dark color of her skin.

I first heard this story as a child, fifty years ago, and have loved it ever since. It became a more intimate part of my own spiritual journey in 2006 when I had the privilege of visiting her hermitage/home/temple, at the hill of Tepevac, on the outskirts of Mexico City.

It was a new beginning and a deepening for me. I understood and felt more certainly how she comes with love and compassion for the native peoples and for “all the nations that live on this earth.” Her pregnant womb holds the promise of new life for all, in all seasons and stages of life. Just as her promises and her presence were a time of new beginnings in the worldview of a people who had been conquered and abused, even now her story is filled with meanings which nourish and encourage me, flowing through me each year as Advent unfolds.

In *Bread for the Journey*, Henri Nouwen observes, “True listeners no longer have an inner need to make their own presence known. They are free to receive, to welcome, to accept . . . their listening becomes a form of spiritual hospitality.”

The **gift of Advent** is before us. Perhaps if we can make it a time of true listening—to a Saint’s story or a child’s tale, to familiar readings from Scripture or the words of favorite hymns, to the experience of music and prayer—it can become . . . a time of welcoming and spiritual discovery.

Mary Kay Medinger, M.A., is the founding director of Wisdom Ways Center for Spirituality, a ministry of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet. Her areas of particular interest include Mariology, Celtic spirituality, women mystics, scientist/mystic Teilhard de Chardin and the Dutch Jewish writer Etty Hillesum. She can be reached at mkmedinger@csjstpaul.org.

Thin Places Thank You’s

As many will remember, *Thin Places* takes its name from the Celtic Christian metaphor for those times or situations where the boundary between the sacred and the everyday feels “thin,” when our hearts are opened, and God’s presence is more strongly felt.

Thin Places gets its being from the talents and efforts of many. **Thanks be** to all who—over the last nine years—have contributed ideas and “Opportunities” and especially to those who have shared parts of their personal journeys through their lead meditations.

A Special Thanks to: *Kathy Fisher*, who manages the many and varied practical details that allow *Thin Places* to happen; *Kristin Kieft*, who takes texts and artwork and ideas and turns them into a final form; and *Maurine Wilson*, who sends it out to each of you.

And a final **Thank You** if you know someone who might like to receive *Thin Places* (it’s sent free to all who request it), or if you know of an up-coming “Opportunity” that might be of interest to others. If you do, please contact us at:
kfisher@wpc-mpls.org or 612.332.3421.

A Celtic Prayer for the first Sunday of Advent from the Holy Island of Lindesfarne

“Here I stand;

and I say a prayer.

‘Come, Lord, come down, come in, come among us.

Enter into our darkness with your light.

Come fill our emptiness with your presence.

Dispel the clouds and reveal your glory.

Come refresh, renew, restore us.

Come Lord, Come down, come in, come among us.”

“Our” Taizé Cross

On October 17 the Taizé Community in France reported the death at 82 of Brother Eric, who had “joined the Taizé Community in 1949 when it was still very small. Brother Eric was very gifted as an artist. Through his works—paintings, etchings, stained glass—he was one of the brothers who awakened sensitivity to beauty that is so linked to the vocation of Taizé. His numerous Stained Glass windows are to be found in countries around the world.” Among his books, *The Taizé Picture Bible* is perhaps the best known and most cherished.

Br. Eric did the paintings for this Bible in the late 1960s, when he was living in the very poor Hell’s Kitchen area of New York City with Br. John and Br. Pedro, the two Brothers who led the eleven-day Minnesota Pilgrimage in October 2001. During a planning visit to Taizé prior to the Minnesota Pilgrimage, it was learned that Br. Eric (who had painted the five-foot tall wooden Cross that is used in Taizé each Friday evening and which is shown on the cover of the small Taizé Songbook that many of us use) had painted a back-up duplicate Cross but that it had never been needed.

After some consideration, the Taizé Community sold **this second Cross** to the planning group from Minnesota, and it is the Cross that is now housed in the Office of the Bishop of the Minneapolis Synod of the ELCA at the Church Center on Franklin.

This is also the Cross which since then has been present at Taizé services in Episcopal and Methodist and Catholic and Presbyterian and many other churches throughout the area throughout the year and which—as it travels—gives witness to the ecumenical spirit so central to the ministry of Taizé.

“Our” Taizé Cross is available to all organized groups who would like to use it.

For information or scheduling, contact Dawn Wickner in Bishop Johnson’s Office at:

d.wickner@mpls-synod.org or 612.870.3610.

Sunday Contemplative Eucharist

Each month we worship together in a Eucharistic service that is focused on the Silent Presence of God. The worship includes word, silence, chant, prayer and sharing in the common bread and cup. All are welcome.

First Sunday of each month, 8:00-9:00 p.m.

The Episcopal House of Prayer in the City
425 Oak Grove Street, Minneapolis

For information: 320.363.3293 or houseprayer@csbsj.edu

Advent Evening Prayer—2007

Pause for an hour in this busy time. Look for Signs and Wonders: God Is with Us. Seasonal readings—silence—music with local musicians. All are welcome.

Mondays of Advent, December 3, 10, 17-7:00-8:00 p.m.

Sabbath House, 3228 Portland Ave. South, Minneapolis
For information: 612.822.8623

Centering Prayer and *Lectio Divina*

Time set aside in a special way for *lectio divina* and centering prayer enables us to discover in our daily lives an underlying spiritual rhythm. Within this rhythm we grow to accept the embrace that God is continuously extending to us.

During Advent this can be especially meaningful as we will be praying with scripture that enriches our anticipation of the coming of Christ again this Christmas. Even if you have never participated in these ancient prayer practices, we welcome you into our quiet circle of candle-light and prayer.

Every Thursday, 6:45-8:00 p.m.

Colonial Church of Edina, in the Center for Spiritual Formation

6200 Colonial Way, Edina

For more information: 952-893-0673 or
www.colonialchurch.org.

“to be so open . . .”

Last summer a Rabbi brought four young Israeli Jews to Taizé. One of them, Elana, wrote:

“It has been a unique experience on different levels, but most of all in being open. It is one thing to be open to people from your own religion, but it is a real challenge to be so open to a different religion. The fact that you have given me this opportunity does not run by me like a high-speed French train; it has left something in my body and my heart for life. I know, or at least hope, that it will go with me in my studies, work, family and any human relations. You set an example of a pure and beautiful way of living, talking, hosting, accepting and a special way of listening and being with others. Thank you too for exposing me to a world of beautiful vocal ability and music.”

Letter from Taize, October/November 2007

A Celtic Christmas Evening Prayer

Celtic Christians felt that God is present in every event of daily life, from the lighting of the morning fire to the coming of the night's stillness. For them as for us, December marked the coming of the shortest and darkest days but also the coming of the Christ Child. This evening's service will include traditional Celtic music on authentic Celtic instruments, Christmas readings from Scripture, time for silence and meditation, and for prayer. It will end with all of us encircling the Chapel with candlelight, a powerful way to see and experience the circle of the community of believers.

This service each year is normally the high point of the annual cycle of Celtic Evening Prayers (which take place on the **Second Thursday of each month**). You might want to come a little early. Then, please join us afterwards for Scottish scones and tea and good fellowship—in this season when we especially long for peace on earth and good will towards all.

Thursday, December 13, 7:00-8:30 p.m.

Westminster Presbyterian Church, in the Chapel
1200 Marquette Avenue, Minneapolis
For information: 612.866.8752

A New Hermitage, “a doorway into thanks, and a silence in which another voice may speak”

(adapted from Mary Oliver's *Praying*)

The SUBIACO HERMITAGE is now open and ready for retreatants. As an Hermitage, it is a place of solitude and prayer (its name coming from a little town in Italy, near where Saint Benedict lived a solitary life for three years as a young man, in a cave, on a beautiful, wild mountainside).

Located on the monastery grounds, overlooking fields and woods, the Hermitage is comfortable yet simple, with bed, desk, rocking chair, shower and toilet, kitchenette, and basic food supplies. A Welcome Basket of bread and cheese and fruit is provided upon arrival. You may bring your own food or eat in silence at the monastery. Guests are welcome to attend the Liturgy of the Hours, and spiritual direction is available.

“an active waiting” . . . as Advent begins

“How do we wait for God? We wait with patience. But patience does not mean passivity. Waiting patiently is not like waiting for the bus to come, the rain to stop, or the sun to rise. It is an active waiting in which we live the present moment to the full in order to find there the signs of the One we are waiting for.”

Henri Nouwen

Welcome to this place of solitude.

Available to all, all year around

Saint Benedict's Monastery, St. Joseph, MN
For information or reservations: rbudig@csbsju.edu or 320.363.7115 or www.sbm.osb.org (click “Spirituality Center,” then “Hermitages”)

Spirit in the House

MannaFest—whose 23 shows explored ethical and spiritual matters through drama, story-telling and the performing arts during the Minnesota Fringe Festival time last summer—has renamed itself Spirit in the [Theatrical] House to more accurately reflect what it seeks to do.

Led by Dean J. Seal—who was for many years the Director of the Fringe Festival—**Spirit in the House** welcomes inquiries from Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist and non-denominational performers who might be interested in being a part of the May 2008 season. Dean also welcomes contact from others who might be interested in joining the steering committee or in helping in other ways with this creative, interfaith ministry.

For more information: Sealtotal@aol.com or 612.823.6005.

ONE-TIME OPPORTUNITIES

Film Premiere of “Julian”

Linda Loving's presentation of the one-woman play, *Julian*, has been filmed as it was produced on location in Norwich, England. Like her live performances, it is a moving and powerful presentation of an English mystic who—in the 13th century—“laid great stress on the motherly nature and love of God, and who developed a sane optimism about the universe and the relative unimportance of sin, compared to the good and grace which it allows.”

After the showing, a panel of area scholars will discuss mystics, mysticism and their relevance in the 21st century. All are invited.

Sunday, December 2, 3:00-5:00 p.m.

The Minnesota History Center Theater
345 Kellogg Blvd. West, St. Paul
For information or tickets: 651.641.0008 or
www.loyolaspirtualitycenter.org

“The Inner Meaning of Christmas: A Time for Meditation and Reflection.”

You are invited to join in our second annual Advent meditation. Our time together will include a Gathering Ritual and guided meditation/listening experiences. All will be welcomed.

Sunday, December 2, 2:30-5:00 p.m.

Presbyterian Church of the Apostles
701 East 130th Street, Burnsville
For information: 952.890.7877

Advent Retreat: "In the Waters of Rebirth"

Enter into the mystery of darkness, in preparation for new birth to come. Use poetry, scripture, visual arts, silence and Taizé chant to search your soul at the still turning of the new year. Led by members of the resident community at ARC (who have backgrounds in Quaker, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Catholic and Episcopal traditions).

**Friday evening, Dec. 7-Sunday afternoon, Dec. 9
New Year's Eve Retreat: Embracing Silence**

See the New Year in prayerfully, with meditative worship and spiritually minded others. Fellowship time includes dinner, late night hors d'oeuvres buffet, and New Year's brunch.

Monday, Dec. 31, at 5:00 p.m.-Tuesday, Jan. 1

Both retreats are at the ARC Ecumenical Retreat Community, near Cambridge, MN
For information or registration: 763.689.3540 or janwiersma@msn.com,
For more about ARC and its pine woods setting:
www.arcretreat.org.

**Advent Evening Prayer on the Labyrinth:
Echoes from the Chartres Cathedral**

Take time in the middle of the Advent season to ground yourself through quiet, reflection, beautiful images of the Chartres Cathedral and labyrinth prayer. Viewing images of the moving stained glass windows and sculpture of the cathedral, we will be invited into deeper spiritual preparation for Christmas as we enter the labyrinth.

The evening will be led by The Rev. Jill Geoffrion, author of seven books on the labyrinth and co-leader of the Wisdom Ways contemplative pilgrimage to Chartres Cathedral in April 2008.

Consider giving yourself and a friend a gift of time and space to support your sacred journeys during this holy season.

Tuesday, December 11, 6:30-9:00 p.m.

Carondelet Center, Wisdom Ways Center for Spirituality
1890 Randolph Avenue, St. Paul
For information or registration: 651.696.2788 or
www.wisdomwayscenter.org

**"Stand at the crossroads, and look,
and ask for the ancient paths,
where the good way lies; and walk in it,
and find rest for your souls."**

Jer. 6:16

Christmas Quiet

This is our (fourteenth) annual time of reflection, silence and song to give us time to ponder the coming of the Christ. Refreshments following.

Tuesday, December 11, 7:00-9:00 p.m.

Christos Center for Spiritual Formation
1212 Holly Drive, Lino Lakes
For information: 651.653.8207 or www.christoscenter.org

Crossing the Threshold

Again this year we invite people to gather to welcome the New Year with a time of prayer, reflection, conversation and silence. As Mary Oliver writes, "What will I do with the one and only precious life I have?"

**Monday, December 31 at 1:00 p.m. through
Tuesday, January 1 at 10:00 a.m.**

The Benedictine Center
2675 Larpenteur Ave. East, St. Paul
For information or registration: 651.777.7251
www.stpaulmonastery.org

**A Pilgrimage of the House of Prayer:
"Into the Depths: A Scuba Retreat"**

Scuba Diving is an experience that provides a rich metaphor for the spiritual life.

Diving into the warm salt water of the blue ocean, you will see a world that stimulates wonder, awe and awakens your spirit. The experience of diving will help open your inner life to depths of God within creation as known in your soul. Gazing into the sea provides a pathway for you to gaze into your inner self, giving new eyes to see, spiritual ears to hear, and the awakening of the

"Let your clay be moist . . ."

**"It is not you who shapes God,
it is God who shapes you.
If then you are the work of God,
await the hand of the artist
Who does all things in due season.
Offer God your heart,
soft and tractable,
And keep the form
in which the artist has fashioned you.
Let your clay be moist,
Lest you grow hard
and lose the imprint of God's fingers."**

Irenaeus, Second Century Bishop
with thanks to Bill Dietrich, Executive Director
Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation

Spirit who is the source of wisdom and insight.

Our daily schedule will be paced to meet the needs of the contemplative adventurer. Morning Prayer will open our senses and introduce a daily theme. There will be three dives a day into the calm beautiful reefs of Roatan. There will be free time and Solitude available. Meditative exercise will be offered to awaken the soul and the senses. There will be group reflection and spiritual conversation. In the evenings there will be social time and community gatherings and enjoyment.

The pilgrimage is for experienced scuba divers, for people who love to snorkel and would like to learn to scuba dive, and for snorkelers to just love the ocean and enjoy viewing the reef from the surface.

Saturday, January 26-Saturday, February 2

The pilgrimage, sponsored by the House of Prayer, will be at The Inn of Last Resort, in Roatan, Honduras
For information or registration: 320.363.3293 or houseprayer@csbsj.edu
To learn more about where we are going:
www.innoflastresort

Meaning in Life Retreat:

Nouwen's Return of the Prodigal Son

This is a part of an ongoing series of overnight retreats that help participants to define what Mary Oliver has called the "one, beautiful and singular life." To grow spiritually we must be purposeful about where we find meaning—in what we do and in what we want to be. These retreats invite participants to address these issues.

Friday, Jan. 18 at 7:00 p.m. through

Saturday, Jan. 19 at 1:00 p.m.

The Benedictine Center, 2675 East Larpenteur, St. Paul
For information or registration: 651.777.7251 or benedictinecenter@stpaulsmonastery.org

"the slow work of God . . ."

**"Above all, trust in the slow work of God.
We are quite naturally impatient in everything
to reach the end without delay.
We would like to skip the intermediate stages.
We are impatient of being on the way
to something unknown, something new...
Only God could say what this new spirit
gradually forming within you will be.
Give our Lord the benefit of believing
that his hand is leading you . . ."**

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

The Spirit and the Page: A Writing Workshop

The Sacred is a living presence in our lives that deepens, informs and sustains us. Creative writing opens the spirit and creates a space where the impossible becomes possible, where we can think the unthinkable and say the unsayable.

In these monthly workshops we will search for the profound connections and mystery that exist between the individual and the sacred. The writing process will prompt us in our search for the holy in everyday life, eliciting stories that only we can tell, that bear witness to the truth of our lives.

The workshop is part of the seminary's Spiritual Journey Program and is for writers of any level of experience.

Mondays, Feb. 4, March 3, April 7, May 5,

10:00 a.m.-noon

United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities
3000 5th Street NW, New Brighton
For information or registration: 651.255.6159 or www.unitedseminary.edu/ce/sjp.asp

**WomenSpirit presents: Krista Tippett,
"Speaking of Faith: Why Religion Matters
and How to Talk about It"**

Krista Tippett—host of public radio's "Speaking of Faith" and author of a book with the same title (which was noticed in *Thin Places* last summer)—will share some of what she has learned from the many and widely diverse people she has interviewed over these last six years, some of what she has come to feel about: What does it mean to be human? Why does religion matter so much in the 21st century? How can we begin to talk about it?

This talk, question and answer period, and reception is being sponsored by WomenSpirit—an ecumenical collaboration of women's religious groups—continuing the series which has brought many women thinkers, authors and theologians to the Twin Cities in recent years. Tickets are available through TicketWorks or at the door.

Sunday, February 17, 2:00-4:30 p.m.

Westminster Presbyterian Church
1200 Marquette Avenue, Minneapolis
For tickets [\$12]: 651.209.6689 or www.ticketworks.com.
For information: 612.202.1200 or www.womenspirit-twincities.org.

***Mystic Street: Meditations on the Spiritual Path,*
by S.T. Georgiou.**

Available in the Lowe Library or online [\$20].

S. T. Georgiou's just released *Mystic Street* is—in a very fundamental and satisfying way—peace-giving.

After several years of seeking to follow the contemplative path, one sometimes can come to feel, “I don't want to read one more book! . . . I just want to do it.” But *Mystic Street* seems to work gently against that feeling, perhaps because Georgiou seems to be just walking the walk and reporting in from time to time. He doesn't preach, doesn't teach, doesn't declare—just shares what it can be like when we walk with open minds and open hearts.

Mystic Street (its title comes from the name of a real street, “a simple though beautiful lane, lined with maple and ginkgo trees whose leaves turned red-gold in autumn”) probably does have a thesis (already noted on Page 1 above): “The fact remains that every street is *Mystic Street*. Every lane we walk and every turn around every bend is an invitation to spiritual discovery. We have only to remain open . . .”

But Georgiou is not an advocate. Instead, his short, journal-like chapters seem only to model what it is like to seek to be aware, to be open to the unexpected, to be present. One might say that *Mystic Street* often seems to be modeling what it might be like to live out *The Welcoming Prayer*, to pray *The Welcoming Prayer* unceasingly.

Georgiou's own description of his book is more modest than this, calling its spiritual reflections a collection of meditations “loosely arranged and presented in narrative and anecdotal form, [which] were generated through scenes observed, situations and encounters, signs, symbols, fortuitous events and dreams. Of varying length, the chapters range from ‘heavy’ to ‘light,’ some are deep, while others are quaint, even whimsical. . . .”

Here's one of them, called “Already There”:

At the West Oakland subway station, the train I was riding came to a stop, as had the car going in the opposite direction. After a minute or so, my train started to move again—or at least I thought it did. What actually happened is that the other train started to accelerate. My car was standing perfectly still, yet the illusion of its movement was profound.

This incident replayed itself in my mind throughout the day. Something about it intrigued me. I thought I was moving—at least for a few moments—but was not. Everything in me believed that I was travelling on to Berkeley, yet I was going nowhere. At times we journey through life in a similar way. We assume that we are the ones moving as we go about the day, when in reality we are quite stationary. We only think we move because a Power exceedingly greater than our temporary, finite forms is ever in dynamic flow, in both us and around us. Any perceived movement on our part is, in actually, divine Energy ceaselessly in motion, ecstatically coursing throughout the cosmos.” p. 150

In another entitled “Portals of Presence,” he describes an unexpected kindness and adds:

The true mysteries of life accomplish themselves so softly and quietly that they largely go unnoticed, especially because we live in a noisy, hurried world that is mesmerized by spectacle. But then it happens that a stranger gently and happily opens a door, and suddenly revelation is at hand.

For a moment everything stops; we smile, sensing that we are right where we should be. We feel something holy and beautiful, and wish to return the feeling. An ‘energy of openness’ irradiates the encounter—all at once we can live without walls. There is no tension left in us. We become [for the moment] transparent, aware at last that only love matters, liberating and uniting Agape, the eternal constant.” p. 66

And perhaps a thin place experience, in “Hummingbird”:

Waiting for the meeting to begin, “I walked out onto the deck and breathed in the fresh morning air. As I leaned over the railing and idly took in the campus view, something brushed by my right ear, and then whirred about my head at various points, like a shifting electric fan. Suddenly the source of the sound hovered directly in front of my face, a few inches from my eyes; it was a violet-green hummingbird.

As the Buddhists might say, it was a very Zen moment. In Zen, one learns how to wake up to the immediate present and feel life instantaneously, in the now.

Indeed, seconds later, after the bird darted away, I reflected on how all my powers of awareness had just peaked. Before the hummingbird appeared, I was certainly living, but in my momentary encounter with it, I truly became alive. Through its unexpected visitation, the iridescent creature had directly impressed upon me how everything is here, and now.

I registered no real sense of self in this sudden encounter. As Eastern philosophy might relate, ‘The bird and I became One.’ There was no need for ‘self’ to comprehend the ‘other’; having momentarily forgotten my self, I was able to see things without perceptions, without any hint of self-consciousness. Through the hummingbird I glimpsed the cosmos in its original purity, as if for the first time.

But as the seconds passed, and I returned to a more familiar subject-object way of looking at the world, existence became, once again, dichotomous. The immediate sense of unity was lost. . . . pp.170-71

Peace-filled moments, grace-filled moments.

Experiences we seem to recognize. These stories may resonate because they tell of things we at some deep level already know. One needs, Georgiou observes, “only to become patient (and quiet) enough to sense more keenly the gentle, loving Power that nurtures all things uniquely. . . . The fact remains that the searcher ultimately discovers what was already within his or her possession from the very beginning: the transformative love of God, and the unceasing life of renewal in the Almighty.” p. 32

Every street is *Mystic Street* . . . we have only to remain open . . .



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**Open to the unexpected . . .
every street is Mystic Street . . .**



AFTERWORDS: “Thanks you” and “Yes!”

Thomas Keating says that we only “hear” what we already know. *Lectio Divina* asks us to pay attention to the words or phrases that seem lifted up before us. These two are perhaps not quite the same, yet they seem somehow related. And, in reading over the last few weeks, some short passages have seemed to stand out. Perhaps something is being offered.

Dag Hammarskjöld’s journal entry for New Year’s Day 1953,
reprinted in *Markings*, reads:

**“For all that has been—Thanks!
To all that shall be—Yes!”**

Meister Eckhart writes, **“If the only prayer you ever say in your entire life is ‘thank you,’
it will be enough. . . .”**

The Welcoming Prayer begins: **“Welcome, welcome, welcome.
I welcome everything that comes to me in this moment . . .”**

Rumi begins a poem, **“This being human is a guest house
Every moment a new arrival . . .”**

Henri Nouwen says, **“True listeners no longer have an inner need to make their own presence
known. They are free to receive, to welcome, to accept . . .”**

S. T. Georgiou affirms, **“Every lane we walk and every turn around every bend
is an invitation to spiritual discovery. . . .”**

Ireneaus advises, **“Let your clay be moist,
Lest you grow hard
and lose the imprint of God’s fingers.”**

Perhaps these words, lifted up in recent weeks, aren’t all quite the same yet are somehow related. Perhaps they are suggesting something that we already—at some deep level—know.

Perhaps our call is just to do it, . . . being open to the present . . . saying “Thank You” and “Yes!”