

Random Wisdom

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The Sound of Silence

Silence has a fascination for many people. In one of his earlier poems, Brendan Kennelly wrote, 'once I was the heartbeat of the world I am an outcast now'. Meister Eckhart told us that the 'nearest thing to God is silence'. We all think we know what silence is, but there are several different understandings of what it means.

For one person 'I was silent' may mean 'I was stunned', 'I didn't react', 'I didn't respond' or 'I held my peace'. Silence can evoke fear in some and awe in others. Many think of silence as the absence of sound. While it is true some sounds may take

away silence, it is also true other sounds such as the sea, water and birdsong enhance silence.

There is a difference between inner and outer silence. We can have outer silence and experience inner turmoil, and we can have inner silence in the midst of chaos. The more we enter our inner silence the more we realise that silence is not an absence but the presence of something. The interior dimension of

silence is silence of the heart and mind, which is presence rather than absence, which is fullness rather than emptiness, which is enriching rather than depriving.

When we listen to our inner silence we hear the sound of silence, the sound of stillness.

Spring

After the long dark days of waiting, a miracle has happened. Yet again, perseverance has been rewarded; what has been hidden is now visible; our earlier attention to the invisible is being paid back with colourful surprises, one day after the other. It's brighter and lighter in the garden these days, with brighter mornings, longer evenings, cherry blossoms, birds in the trees, life budding into being – and it's lighter too in our hearts.

For the gardener, practical work begins in earnest now. Shovels, rakes and hoes are taken out of storage. The soil needs to be broken, aired and turned, tested for texture and food content. Plants that appear partly out of the ground need to be firmed back into place, while seedlings need to be planted outdoors in the places where they are to bloom.

March and April bring the season of Easter, with its time of waiting between Calvary and resurrection, between death and new life. The gift to pray for at this time of year is hope. We hope – we know – that the dawn of the year will come, with brighter days, fresh growth and colour in the garden. And yet hope is beyond what we imagine, because although spring always comes, it is always different.

Gratitude

A grateful heart is a heart filled with joy ...

When we live with an open heart of gratitude each moment is unique; no loving thought, word or deed escapes its effect.

Giving thanks, we become less concerned with what is missing and more focused on what we have.

If you have the wisdom to be grateful, you will walk unafraid into the unknown future, knowing that you are blessed and loved.

With every gift
there comes opportunity:
the sun shining through the trees
the dew glistening on an open flower
the smile of a baby
the embrace of a friend.

When we take these opportunities,
enjoy them to the full,
we dwell in the gift of being alive.