

Deepening Circle

Sensing the Sacred

Lent, 2023



Where Does the Temple Begin, Where Does It End

There are things you can't reach. But
you can reach out to them, and all day long.

The wind, the bird flying away. The idea of God.

And it can keep you as busy as anything else, and happier.

The snake slides away; the fish jumps, like a little lily,
out of the water and back in; the goldfinches sing
from the unreachable top of the tree.

I look; morning to night I am never done with looking.

Looking I mean not just standing around, but standing around
as though with your arms open.

And thinking: maybe something will come, some
shining coil of wind,
or a few leaves from any old tree—
they are all in this too.

And now I will tell you the truth.
Everything in the world
comes.

At least, closer. *Sensing the Sacred*

And, cordially.

Like the nibbling, tinsel-eyed fish; the unlooping snake.
Like goldfinches, little dolls of gold
fluttering around the corner of the sky

of God, the blue air. —Mary Oliver

During this spring time of Lent,
may we choose to *sense the Sacred*
that is always present,
always awaiting our

Attending sorrow with care

Breathing into the heart and tapping the grief point
encourages a surrender into compassion.

Entering silence ... Sensing the Sacred

The work of silence restores
the free exchange and mutual interdependence
between self-conscious mind and deep mind.

Silence recenters the source
from which we draw energy.

The person realizes
that the center is everywhere
and its boundaries are nowhere.

—Maggie Ross

There is a space
that exists with us and around us

where angels sing on rays of light
and love flares forth

from the heart of the universe.
— Heart of the Universe, ©Peter Kater

Sensing the Sacred

God can pop in front of our face at any time, like a falling star suddenly searing quicksilver across a night sky. In moments that James Joyce called 'epiphanies,' the God who lurks under the surface of everything can suddenly hum through the skins of things and transfigure them, grip us in awe, undeniably present: in a mountain peak at sunset, a giggling infant, a heart stopping phrase in a book, a painting so 'right' that we are hypnotically frozen before it.

These are the numinous privileged moments—the "Oh, my God" moments. And "Oh, my God" is precisely the appropriate response—because that is just whom we have encountered.

—William J. O'Malley, SJ, *Daily Prayers for Busy People*