

# Connecting New

June, 2019

This month I share some poems about going away on retreat as well as a poem about participating in a retreat in everyday life.

## Anticipation of Retreat

Take nothing to read,  
No journal or pen,  
Slow

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To the point of no motion,  
The absolute zero of the soul

Attentive

Patient

Prolonged

Listening

And welcome whatever happens,  
even if whatever feels like nothing.

And forget what you thought  
you knew - all of it.

And welcome God,  
as God wishes to be  
with you.

## Approaching

Traveling to my retreat,  
Jesus carried my suitcase.  
Pulling into the property,  
Jesus welcomed me at the gate.  
Turning down my bedspread,  
Jesus had left a chocolate on my pillow.  
With my retreat approaching,  
I wondered, "Who is looking forward to it more?"  
And so I pray for openness,  
knowing that I am,  
knowing that I am not,  
trusting God again.

## Retreat Woods

Pines of every age fill the air  
flourishing ferns border  
needed paths enticing  
to go deeper  
to lose myself  
and find myself  
in you

## Bloody

On the way home from retreat  
overjoyed  
overwhelmed  
aching to hug loved ones  
gratefully weepy  
and part of me is clinging  
so tightly to what I fear  
may be left behind  
my fingernails are bloody.

## On Retreat in Everyday Life

I asked God for a hug,  
and I got arms.  
I asked God for a kiss,  
and I got the ability to see.  
I asked God for a sense of peace,  
and I got the responsibility of caring  
for a husband, three kids, a dog,  
and an aging parent.  
I asked God for clarity,  
and I got silence.  
I asked God for a sense of consolation,  
and I got a splinter in my finger,  
and then it got infected.  
I asked God for some insight,  
and I got a headache.  
I asked for awareness of God's presence,  
and I got freedom.

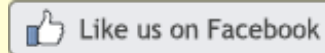
Oh Loving God, why must you love me so much  
that you keep reminding me that I am not God?  
Why won't you love me just enough  
to answer my prayers in the ways I wish?  
Why must you remain hidden  
in ambiguity and absurdity?  
Or at least then, why won't you let me  
be happy without you?

So again I closed my eyes  
and took some deep breaths,  
and I asked God to help me pray,  
and my child got the flu.

I asked to spend time with God on the beach,  
and got led into the desert.  
I asked God for guidance,  
and I got you as my director.

This month, whether or not we go "on retreat," may we experience God's loving presence in a fresh and deeper way.

Peace and Blessings,  
Clarence



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