



Reflections by the Lake Devotions for an Unordinary Time

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No Ordinary Day
Deborah Wright

These past few weeks have offered plenty of opportunity for cleaning out, sorting through, and rereading long forgotten keepsakes. I happened upon an inspirational booklet that Mama gave me for my high school graduation (which I can't believe was forty-three years ago). Titled *The Art of the Great Life* by Wilferd A Peterson, it included the reflection, "The Art of Taking Time to Live," which follows:

To get the most out of life, we must take time to live as well as to make a living. We must practice the art of filling our moments with enriching experiences that will give new meaning and depth to our lives.

We should take time for good books; time to absorb the thoughts of poets and philosophers, seers and prophets.

Time for friendships; time for talks by the fire and walks beneath the stars.

Time for travel; time for pilgrimage and festival, for shrine and exhibit, for rock bound coast and dessert, mountain and plain.

Time for nature; time for flower gardens, trees, birds and sunsets.

Time to love and be loved, for love is the greatest thing in the world.

Time for people; time for the interplay of personalities and the interchange of ideas.

Time for solitude; time to be quiet and alone and look within.

Time to give of ourselves, our talents, abilities, devotions, convictions, that we may contribute to the onward march of man.

Jody and I recently mused that in a few weeks it would be the period known as Ordinary Time in the liturgical calendar. And, while our days now can sometimes seem monotonous, they are definitely far from ordinary. We are living in strange and uncertain times. I was surprised, though, to realize how many of Peterson's recommendations for "filling our moments with enriching experiences" are still available to me during this present time. Travel for now is off-limits, but there is time and opportunity for reading and reflecting, visiting virtually with family and friends, enjoying nature, meditating, creating, giving and loving.

In January I revisited a list of questions found in John O'Donohue's book, *To Bless the Space Between Us*, as I reflected on the past year and envisioned the new year ahead. I've found it helpful to consider one question at the end of each day . . . even, and maybe especially, during these extraordinary days of a pandemic.

At the End of the Day: A Mirror of Questions

What dreams did I create last night?
Where did my eyes linger today?
Where was I blind?
Where was I hurt without anyone noticing?
What did I learn today?
What did I read?
What new thoughts visited me?
What differences did I notice in those closest to me?
Whom did I neglect?
Where did I neglect myself?
What did I begin today that might endure?
How were my conversations?
What did I do today for the poor and excluded?
Did I remember the dead today?
Where could I have exposed myself to the risk of something different?
Where did I allow myself to receive love?
With whom today did I feel most myself?
What reached me today? How deep did it imprint?
What visitations had I from the past and from the future?
What did I avoid today?
From the evidence...why was I given this day?

This is the day the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it. Psalm 118: 24

*"Yesterday I was clever, so I wanted to change the world.
Today I am wise, so I have begun to change myself." Rumi*