

Peace in the Morning

Images and Meditations to Begin Your Day



Photographs by Daniel B. Ford Jr.

Meditations by Father Hal Helms



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Peace in the Morning: Images and Meditations to Begin Your Day

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INTRODUCTION

Beauty brings with it peace and joy. And beauty, I have discovered, is all around us.

On the most difficult of days, I am usually able to walk outside and see something beautiful. Over the years, I've learned to capture these moments with my camera. It is these images of beauty that I offer you here, in the hope that you'll use them to find your own beautiful places and spaces in this world.

There is a world to come that will be beautiful beyond all our imagining. I believe that with all my being. But I also believe this world—where we are right now—is full of what should fill us with the wonder of God, who is Beauty itself.

When I was a child I would crop scenes in my mind by selecting a beautiful area to observe and then imaginatively removing from the scene whatever it was I thought distracted from its essential beauty.

As I became older, I was introduced to my first camera. This was many decades ago when we only had black and white film. Then I realized that I'd been doing photography before I even knew to call it that.

My interest in photography developed, early on, into what photographers would call *contrast*: the visual ratio among different tones of white, black, and gray, and the ways they contrast with each other in a visual field. I was mostly unaware of color in those early days of taking pictures. I even resisted color film, for a time, because I was so drawn to contrast. I thought then that stunning tonal contrasts, combined with my ideas of composition, were all there was to seeing and appreciating beauty.

I mention this because much later in life—in my late sixties—I was urged to take painting lessons. Why? I wondered at first. And then I responded, *No way, I like photographs. I don't care about colors. I probably couldn't even name the primary colors. Why would I want to paint?*

Now, more than ten years later, I'm having the time of my life painting with oils: copying—exactly copying—some of my enlarged photographs. Admittedly, that's something a talented monkey could probably manage. But, as I see it, there is no way to improve on the beauty of an excellent scene created by God. Realism is fine with me, no matter the medium.

So, with this explanation of my approach to photography, you have a context for “entering into” the images that I offer in this little book.

Over a lifetime I have gone from black and white photography to oil paintings to color photography, all without deviating from finding peace and joy in capturing the Beauty of God. This is something available to all of us, if we just look for it. May your looking for it in these pages lead you to look for it all around you, wherever you are.

But I didn't want to simply offer you colorful images. I wanted to pair my images with passages of spiritual teaching from an old friend

and mentor of mine, Father Hal Helms, who wrote a powerful book many years ago, also published by Paraclete Press, called *Echoes of Eternity*. I have chosen quotes from this work to pair with each of my photographs. Hal Helms was a pastor I loved and admired, a truly remarkable man who died at a relatively young age. His book has impacted the lives of tens of thousands of people; may these passages from Father Hal's writings lead you to discover more from him, as well.

I wish you peace in the morning.





A scenic landscape photograph showing a marshy area with a body of water. In the foreground, there is a sandy bank with many footprints and some dry reeds. The water is calm and reflects the sky. In the background, there are several houses and trees. The word "CONSIDER" is written in large, white, sans-serif capital letters across the bottom of the image.

CONSIDER



Interruptions are also of Me.

Do not forget the parable of the priest and the Levite. Never let your predetermined agenda keep you from seeing My hand in the interruption. It is there, whether you recognize it or not.

