

## The Mystic and the Activist - Living in the Tension

Micah 6:8 - "love mercy, do justice and walk humbly with God."

### **How do you see them weaving together?**

"The Forgotten Desert Mothers" Laura Swan depicts desert mothers as "passionate and single-hearted in their desert journey. They spoke frankly, openly and boldly to disciples and pilgrims, to church and secular leaders. They listened to and proclaimed the signs of their times. They were gifted and committed to their call. Generous, self-giving and liberated, the desert mothers were determined and intentional about their journey toward God. They were courageous, purposeful, prayerful, single minded, discerning and responsive to the needs of those around them. They live the gospel call, seeking to incarnate God's presence in their midst."

### **What's a mystic activist? What does that mean to you?**

Curtiss Paul DeYoung describes a mystic activist as someone "deeply rooted in their faith and in the mystery of the divine. This inward-outward faith is lived intensely, through commitments to spiritual disciplines such as prayer, meditation, and fasting and an unwavering determination to work for justice."

### **In your own life how do you live out Micah 6:8? How do you see your faith informing your action?**

*3 minutes*

In *Inviting the Mystic , Supporting the Prophet*, Katherin Dyckman and Patrick Carroll put words to the tension:

"The balanced Christian enters into the very real world of which we are a part, seeing the pain and anguish there, and not denying it, but struggling to alleviate it. Yet at the same time and in the same place, we celebrate the life that is there too, see the beauty, accept the love and constantly hope for the fulfillment of the promise that is present."

Our task is to hold the tension together, denying neither side of it...to rejoice in the constant, mystical (or contemplative) presence of God in people, in events, in myself, in the whole of the world; yet at the same time, we speak, in some fashion, a prophetic word to that world where it is not yet fully redeemed."

Colossians 1:19-20

Richard Rohr has said "Contemplation is the connection to the Source of Love that allows grounded activists to stay engaged for the long haul without burning out."

**Are there places in your life or community where you see both the beauty and injustice?  
How do you hold both of those together?**

*3 minutes*

Sister Joan Chittister says “ when our work does not succeed externally, it is time for the internal work of the Spirit to become more important than ever...In these periods, like the monastics of the desert centuries before us, we go into the cave of the self and fill it with God alone. Only then shall we have the new energy and the necessary spiritual nourishment we need to face the long days alone in the noonday sun. Only then, rested and refreshed, can we begin the work again.”

“God alone then becomes the lifeline that holds us up in the face of such resistance. The Word of God becomes the fuel of our faith, the ground upon which our hope relies.”

So as we see the oppressed and vulnerable around us we must give ourselves time and space with God for a vision of something new. Sister Joan Chittister says “ For those who realize the need for change in society if justice, peace and the will of God for the world are ever to be achieved, the new vision that must be molded requires immersion in the mind of Jesus and time, time, time.”

**What do you notice within yourself when you are faced with injustice or the oppressor?**

**How is your faith sustained, or the actions that come from Love, on the long journey of justice?**

Do you know what I want? I want justice—oceans of it. I want fairness—rivers of it. That’s what I want. That’s all I want. - Amos 5:24 MSG

Other questions for discussion or reflection

Are there people, a place or space the Spirit has drawn you in to listen, amplify another’s voice and called you to action?

Have you experienced/are you experiencing the long journey of justice? Have you experienced weariness on the journey? How is that you were able to continue on? Or what do you sense can sustain you along the journey?

Music: [Open Up by The Brilliance](#)

Music: [Brother by The Brilliance](#)

“Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours. Yours are the eyes through which he looks compassion on this world. Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good. Yours are the hands through which he blesses all the world. Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, yours are the eyes, you are his body. Christ has no body now on earth but yours.”

— Teresa of Avila