

## **A Sabbatical for Our Species in a Time of a Pandemic**

- extract from essay by Jim Roberts (*pastor USA, author, musician, poet*)

*There is a new being, COVID 19 coronavirus, who is challenging us as a species... who is dividing– driving us into Sabbatical!*

*As a species we have a tendency to go off the rails. We forget how we got here: our elements were from the stars, our ancestors were single-celled beings a billion years ago, and all earth beings are kin. We are inter-connected with every being on earth and the Mystery holds it all together, even a virus.*

*But we have had a way of “othering” everything, everyone, even ourselves. We have divided ourselves far beyond what any virus could do! We are being grimly forced now into separation, 6 feet please, if you must be here at all.*

*OR, we could embrace this as the greatest opportunity we’ve had as humans....To CHOOSE to enter Sabbatical, discover the depths of our own presence, the heart within, the spiritual longing hidden, the place and the grace of our calling and ALL the “others”...*

*Are you up for a Sabbatical? What if we let our GRIEF open us to a new pathway as a species, a new calling as humans?*

*Listen deeply to the soul... and begin, even at a distance outside, to greet those “others”, make a friend at 10 feet, feel the common drama of the unknown ahead, and let the FEAR become compassion and longing for belonging.*

*And don’t forget to thank the birds for coming home, the Earth and the Sun that hold us, the trees that stand beautifully by us, and the new buds everywhere. How about some new buds on our humanity!*

*I may have had to give up the church for Lent, but I won’t give up a soaring prayer that through this virus all the “others” can finally see, accept, respect, even learn to love each other. If we need a virus to enter the “Great Turning”, the “Beloved Community”, then let it be. We will find our way together.”*

### **Questions for Contemplation**

- Be with a specific section of this meditation, a phrase or a sentence. Let it speak deeply to you, wash over you.
- Do you too offer a “soaring prayer” at this time? What does that look like for you?

## Wisdom in a Time of Involuntary Withdrawal

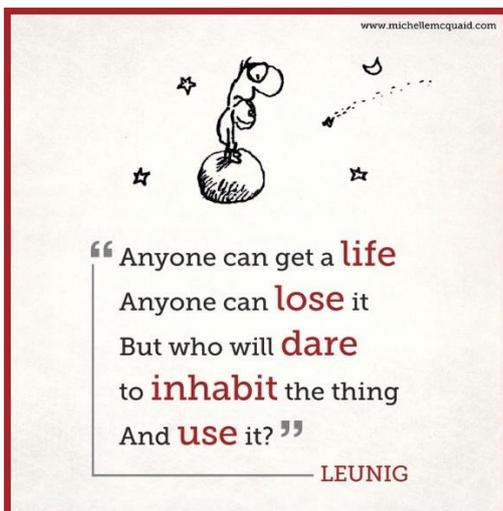
- Ernesto Cardenal (Central American Mystic, Poet and Activist)

*Only by dying to ourselves do we encounter our true identity, because our true identity is not in our ego but in the All. We are centred in God as are all other things and beings.*

*Our ego is a solitary place, and he who rejects suffering and defies death and refuses to give himself, but wants to retain his self, shuts himself out of that Unity of all things which is God (“If the grain of wheat does not die, it remains alone...”).*

### Questions for Contemplation

- Is the withdrawal that the coronavirus emergency is foisting on you teaching you lessons of “dying daily”?
- What are some of those lessons you are learning?



Love one another and you will be happy.  
It's as simple and difficult as that.  
There is no other way.

**With Nan Merrill (excerpt from Psalm 106, Psalms for Praying), let us pray:**

*May we become bearers of joy, we who are invited to share in the Cosmic Dance. May we walk in faith all the days of our life – confident in your Divine Presence, even in times of trouble, and with assurance for what is and all that is to be. May we have faith in the unfolding of our lives, and radical trust in the universe!*

Wishing God's blessings on each of you, your family and friends in these extraordinary times.

*Elaine*