



In the Stillness

There may be silence in the stillness, there may be noise.
 There may be sorrows, there may be joys.
 An inner space we all possess, a grace and gift where we can rest.

Many call this sacred space an inner sanctuary. A place where we are still ~ present to the moment as it is, accepting, surrendering, softening ~ open to receive what that moment has to offer.

We tread an inner path to descend into this depth. Most of us long for this deeper connection, this inner stillness where we come to *know* God in and through the intellect of our hearts. We can only know *about* God through the intellect of our minds. Much is wrought in this transforming stillness. At the heart of it is the willingness to move beyond preoccupation of the self to a deep vulnerability ~ to be open to the mystery of God and to allow oneself to be drawn into the inner pulse of transformation.

Mary was still, an inner stance of calm and peace, when she heard the angel's words. Although she was unsure of the *how* at first, she accepted, surrendered, softened as she openly received the gift of Jesus into her womb.

In the silent *knowing* of God, may you experience that still, graced space infused with Divine love and relationship, and the desire to manifest that love to others. ~ Barb Kollenkark

Advent

Tis the season of hope and promise.
 Tis the season of good will.
 Tis the season of joy and sharing.
 Tis the season when time stood still.

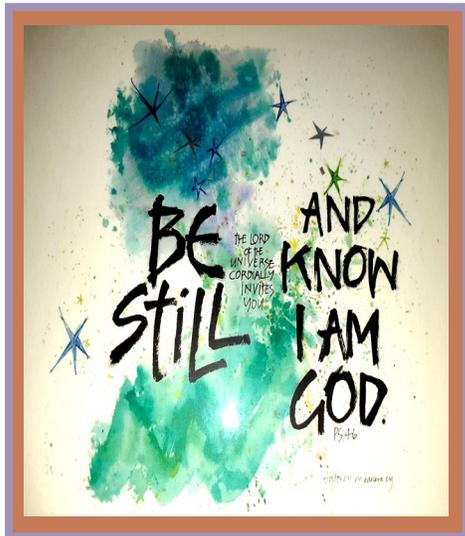
Do you wait for the one who is promised
 With anticipation hardly contained?
 For new life is stirring within us
 The Christ child already proclaimed.

Christ comes in the inner soul's darkness
 To radiate light from within.
 Do you feel His love and compassion
 Do you give yourself to Him?

Will you radiate Christ's light this season
 To a world in plenty of need?
 Will you greet the lonely stranger
 Those who hunger will you feed?

For the Christ child lives within us now
 Birthed year after year.
 May this be the season you share that light
 With all those far and near.

~ Barb Kollenkark



**During this season of grace,
 may God bless you with renewed hope,
 new possibility, expectation, and anticipation of
 more harmonious, peaceful, and holier times.**

Just One More Day

Just wish for one more day. Where to begin... Fierce landscapes ~ Sleeping Ute holds us from the SE, the Blues-Abajos grounds us to the NW. Distant Bears Ears hold silence.

The trees here speak of past ages, seemingly ancient junipers and cedars twisted, turned, solid.

It's a thirsty place here. And, yet-still-persistent, insistent, life abounds, continues, 'recreating' itself.

May these fierce landscapes, mountains and desert solid, meditations and sits, communing and sharing with open hearts and minds, help in the protection, the healing, the recreating, the Love.
~ Sharyn Butler, Durango, CO

Sponsorship Opportunities

Rosary Beads ~ Sponsor a rosary bead in honor of or in memory of loved ones for a \$100 donation.

Memorial Benches ~ Sponsor a stone bench with an engraved stainless steel plaque in honor of or in memory of loved ones.

~ Cliff edge or prayer grove benches are available for a \$500 donation.

~ Benches placed at the Stations of the Cross or Rosary Garden are available for a \$1000 donation.

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Finding intimacy with God in the most expansive space!

On a sunny Thursday in November, I found myself sitting outdoors on a stone bench at Peacewhisper. I had come from the confines of urban life of Los Angeles with its relentless rhythms, congestion, and restrictions. I expected a brief vacation from it all, not a permanent adjustment.

My perch that afternoon was the edge of a massive canyon. The shale and rocky edge at my feet dropped hundreds of feet and then expanded across the valley floor for hundreds of miles. Mountain ranges, like granite bookends, held the expanse in between. The sky stretched its 360 degree circumference calling me to follow the white cloud wisps vibrating against the blue.

I felt my breathing grow deeper and slower, as my eyes scanned that expansive terrain beyond the small plot of land I had brought with me that day. I wanted to escape the shrink-wrapping from self-imposed spiritual limits. A flattened space of mental and physical habits I had acquired over the course of a few years, who's authority, needed to be challenged. I knew I longed to be drawn outward to a more dimensional space that didn't reduce my spiritual vitality.

Here on the literal precipice, my spirit wrestled the confines of my protected and defensive faith. My theology was being stretched across those canyon textures and colors of autumn. Spiritual questions reached toward the mountains pressing into the sky. Nature's praxis was prodding me beyond my somewhat cautionary approach to living in intimacy with God.

God's voice echoed off his angled mountain walls, Holy Spirit rode currents of wind, gently sweeping across my face. Jesus sat on the bench beside me whispering, "Expand your contemplation! Expand your social action!" I could viscerally feel my soul extending its perspective in and through the Trinity.

My faith was not folding into the confines of fear, but engaging in the openness of joyful acceptance. The spirit of my ordinary small self, found God's invitation to be as majestic as the view in front of me. From that stone bench on that rim I could rejoice in extraordinary possibilities for Advent and beyond.

~ Anne Lee, Los Angeles, CA



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Peacewhisper Experience

I get a daily thought from *A Network for Grateful Living*, and this morning's was, "Our inner wisdom is persistent, but quiet. It will always whisper, but it will never stop knocking at your door.

~ Vironika Tugaleva

How perfect! My thoughts immediately went to my recent retreat at Peacewhisper.

My morning experience was so memorable. I woke at 6 AM and wandered from my cozy casita over to the main lodge. As I walked in the door, the smell of coffee and a homemade breakfast cooking was what greeted me. I live alone and to have coffee made for me is so nurturing. I drank my coffee quietly and then would head on the roof to welcome the new day.

With first light, I turned in a complete circle to see the view in each direction. The mountain ranges begin to come into view, along with some lights from distant towns. And then the sun rises! And the beginning of Psalm 19 comes to mind, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmaments proclaim his handiwork." As the colors change each minute and become more brilliant, my hands open in a receptive posture and my thoughts become, "I am here. Please speak to me. Please direct me.



Please use me. Thank you for another day. Thank you for life." The Presence of the Divine fills me.

The group gathers for a homemade breakfast and minimal conversation until we gather in the Chapel. All are invited to bring a reading or reflection. Barb helps us understand Centering Prayer from Thomas Keating. And then we are invited to a time of quiet in Prayer or Meditation. Such peace fills the Chapel.

The remainder of the day we were invited to spend it in a manner most helpful to each individual. I chose to walk and explored the Labyrinth and Hermitage. And then back to the main lodge for a delicious and healthy lunch. In the afternoon, I walked to the Dome with some reading material and sat in warmth and read and daydreamed and looked out at all the beauty of nature in front of me. We gathered for a most nurturing dinner and spent several hours in conversation about whatever any of us wanted to bring up. And then, off to bed. The dark outside is truly dark, with no lights and the stars light up the sky.

When it was time to leave and head back to what life looks like for me in this chapter of my life, I was so aware of how rested and restored my soul felt. Psalm 34 starts with, "Taste and see the goodness of the Lord." That was my experience at Peacewhisper. I look forward to a return time next year.

~ Karen Wallace, Durango, CO

The Silence of Mary

Silence, serenity, stillness . . . qualities so elusive in our rushed and active society are possible when we quietly surrender our lives to God.

~ Ignacio Larranaga, O.F.M. Cap.

This is a beautiful and inspiring book to read during Advent.

The burden of aging is that you have to keep recreating yourself. Your task is to shape your life to your circumstances and to make those circumstances satisfy as well as be creative.

We have to GROW out of our self to find . . . ?

~ Marti Duprey, Glenwood Springs, CO

Try replacing the word "aging" with "the pandemic" or "life."

Gratitude

We sincerely thank all those who visited this year. Each and every one of you have blessed us and Peacewhisper in your own unique way. We look back over these past fourteen years with such gratitude and awe. What God has accomplished through all of us who have contributed time, energy, love, prayers, and donations still astounds us. We could not have done it without you, and we extend our deepest gratitude and prayers.

Lightning Strike

The high desert that is home to Peacewhisper is just that, a desert, and so any rain is welcome. It's just that for over 20 years we have been in a drought cycle. Even the juniper trees, or 'cedars,' are having trouble surviving and some that may be hundreds of years old are turning brown and will never be green again. That doesn't mean it never rains, just not very often. Sometimes you can see a thunderstorm in the distance, only to watch it pass by, so close you can smell it's cleansing freshness.

On this particular day, I was about to head for a load of water when I saw the potential for rain coming. If it rains here the red clay soil becomes so slippery that even walking is an effort, and pulling 5000 lbs. of trailer and water would be more than I could ask of our truck. I decided to wait and see how much, if any, rain would fall. Well, it was a lot. I sat in the truck and watched the ground get covered by so much water that it looked more like a pond ~ shiny. And then there's the lightning. We have put out at least a handful of lightning fires over the past 25 years. Most of them are single trees, but the largest was maybe 1/4 acre. This storm had some lightning. Barb had just texted me, worried that I'd be stranded in the rain, but I said I hadn't gone and was dry, sitting in the truck waiting for the rain to stop, when lightning struck nearby. I texted again saying, 'that was really close' and she responded that 'it hit that weather thing on the roof' and the power was out.

When I was able to get back to the retreat building, Barb told me that she watched as parts of our rooftop weather station fell to the ground past the window. I found some of the pieces from the station 75' away, lightning had blown it apart into dozens of pieces. The station itself is not connected to the house in any way, but somehow the lightning found it's way into our electrical system and back to the inverter for the solar system.

No matter what button I pushed, the inverter would not respond. The back-up generator wouldn't work because the inverter was, well, damaged. This of course meant no lights, no water for at least the next week, one of the few downsides to off-grid living.

It turned out that the lightning had damaged the control boards in both the inverter and the generator. Parts for a twenty-plus year-old inverter aren't easily found, so the solution was to replace it. The difficulty with the generator was not so much parts as finding a savvy service tech to diagnose and repair. When we did, it was back in service within the week. All was back to normal and I'm glad that, with this lightning, there was no fire to put out. ~ Rick Kollenkark

2022 Scheduled Retreats

Please check our website for scheduled retreats in 2022.

Newsletter

You may now choose to receive your newsletter via email or in paper form. Please call, email, or specify on the donation form how you would like to receive the newsletter in the future.

Year-End Giving

As you plan your year-end giving, please consider supporting the mission of Peacewhisper with a tax deductible contribution. We are so grateful for your continued support and prayers.

Mission Statement

The mission of Peacewhisper is to enhance spiritual growth and inner peace in an environment of simplicity and unique natural beauty through contemplative prayer and practice.

*May Advent give you hope and Christmas bring you joy.
You will be in our hearts and prayers during this holy season.*