

# Making Space for God

## Elemental Spirituality—Touch

### Opening Prayer

O Lord you know what is the better way; let everything be done as you please. Give me what you will, how much you will, and when you will. Deal with me as you know, how best pleases you and is the most for your honor. Set me where you will and deal with me in everything as you will. I am in your hands; turn me round and turn me back again, even as a wheel. I am your servant, Lord, prepared for all things, for I desire not to live for myself, but for you. And Oh that I may do that worthily and perfectly.



Thomas a Kempis (1380-1471)

### Arrival

Take five minutes to settle yourself by breathing deeply. Inhale for the count of five through your nose and as you do so pray silently, “I belong to Jesus.” Exhale through your mouth for the count of ten and as you do so pray silently “Body and Soul, in this life and the next.” Once you feel relaxed invite the Lord to guide and direct your thoughts for the day. Think back over where you have been in the last eight weeks. What burdens, emotions, and concerns do you carry? What are you thankful for? Offer these to the Lord.

### Scripture—Read Slowly and Reflect

Throughout the Bible, touch described as an important element for humans as they relate to one another and to God. The following verses from the Book of Daniel are but one example of this:

<sup>7</sup> I, Daniel, was the only one who saw the vision; those who were with me did not see it, but such terror overwhelmed them that they fled and hid themselves. <sup>8</sup> So I was left alone, gazing at this great vision; I had no strength left, my face turned deathly pale and I was helpless. <sup>9</sup> Then I heard him speaking, and as I listened to him, I fell into a deep sleep, my face to the ground. <sup>10</sup> A hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. <sup>11</sup> He said, “Daniel, you who are highly esteemed, consider carefully the words I am about to speak to you, and stand up, for I have now been sent to you.” And when he said this to me, I stood up trembling.

<sup>12</sup> Then he continued, “Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them...” <sup>15</sup> While he was saying this to me, I bowed with my face toward the ground and was speechless. <sup>16</sup> Then one who looked like a man<sup>[b]</sup> touched my lips, and I opened my mouth and began to speak. I said to the one standing before me, “I am overcome with anguish because of the vision, my lord, and I feel very weak. <sup>17</sup> How can I, your servant, talk with you, my lord? My strength is gone and I can

hardly breathe.”<sup>18</sup> Again the one who looked like a man touched me and gave me strength.<sup>19</sup> “Do not be afraid, you who are highly esteemed,” he said. “Peace! Be strong now; be strong.”

*Daniel 10:7-12, 15-18*

## Reading for Reflection

I must learn to pay attention to the movements of my heart and mind, to reflect on them wisely and carefully with the help of others, especially my spiritual director, and to test them over time. In this process I must learn two equally difficult and seemingly incompatible attitudes: to trust myself and my reactions and to recognize how easily I can delude myself. Discernment requires that I believe that God’s desire will show itself in my experience and that I yet be wary of mindless credulity toward that same experience.

*William Barry in Spiritual Direction and the Encounter with God, page 82*

“This collision between one’s image of oneself and what one actually is is always very painful and there are two things you can do about it, you can meet the collision head-on and try and become what you really are or you can retreat and try to remain what you thought you were, which is a fantasy, in which you will certainly perish.”

*James Baldwin*

God never dynamites his (or her) way into our world as an overpowering superstar who takes your life by storm. God still enters the world in the same way as Christ did, as the result of a special gestation process that produces a baby that must then be picked up, nurtured, and coaxed into adulthood. Hence the birth and presence of God in our world depends, at least within the dynamics of the incarnation, upon a certain human consent and cooperation.

*Ronald Rolheiser, Against an Infinite Horizon, page 189*

## Poem—Touch

Is it hot or cold, rough or smooth?

Is it real or a ghostly apparition

That slips though your fingers like the morning mist?

Touch and see, touch and see.

Will it help blind eyes explore and know?

Will a tender bond be made

Between yourself and those you love?

Touch and see, touch and see.

If you touch the hem of his garment,

Will you be healed?

Or will your unholy heart turn to stony disappointment?

Touch and see, touch and see.

And look for invisible prints

Left behind on the surface of your soul

By rogue, rascal, sage or saint.

Learn and know, see and grow.<sup>2</sup>

## Benediction

The woman with the hemorrhage reached through the crowd to touch the hem of your coat believing that if she did so she would be made well. Give us that faith Lord Jesus. As we reach out to touch you, touch our hearts in return. Mold and shape us to be your people. Give us courage like Daniel and a humble heart like Moses. Amen

<sup>1</sup> **New International Version (NIV)** Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV® Copyright ©1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by [Biblica, Inc.](#)® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

<sup>2</sup> Poem and Painting by Steven Stuckey 2018