

The Third Consent

The Journey School

July 11, 2024



The Road Ahead...



- The Four Consents
- The Third Consent in Focus
- Contemplative Practices for Illness & Diminishment
- Wisdom Sharing: Vulnerability & the Third Consent

The Four Consents

1st Consent

In childhood, God asks us to consent to the basic goodness of our nature with all its parts....

2nd Consent

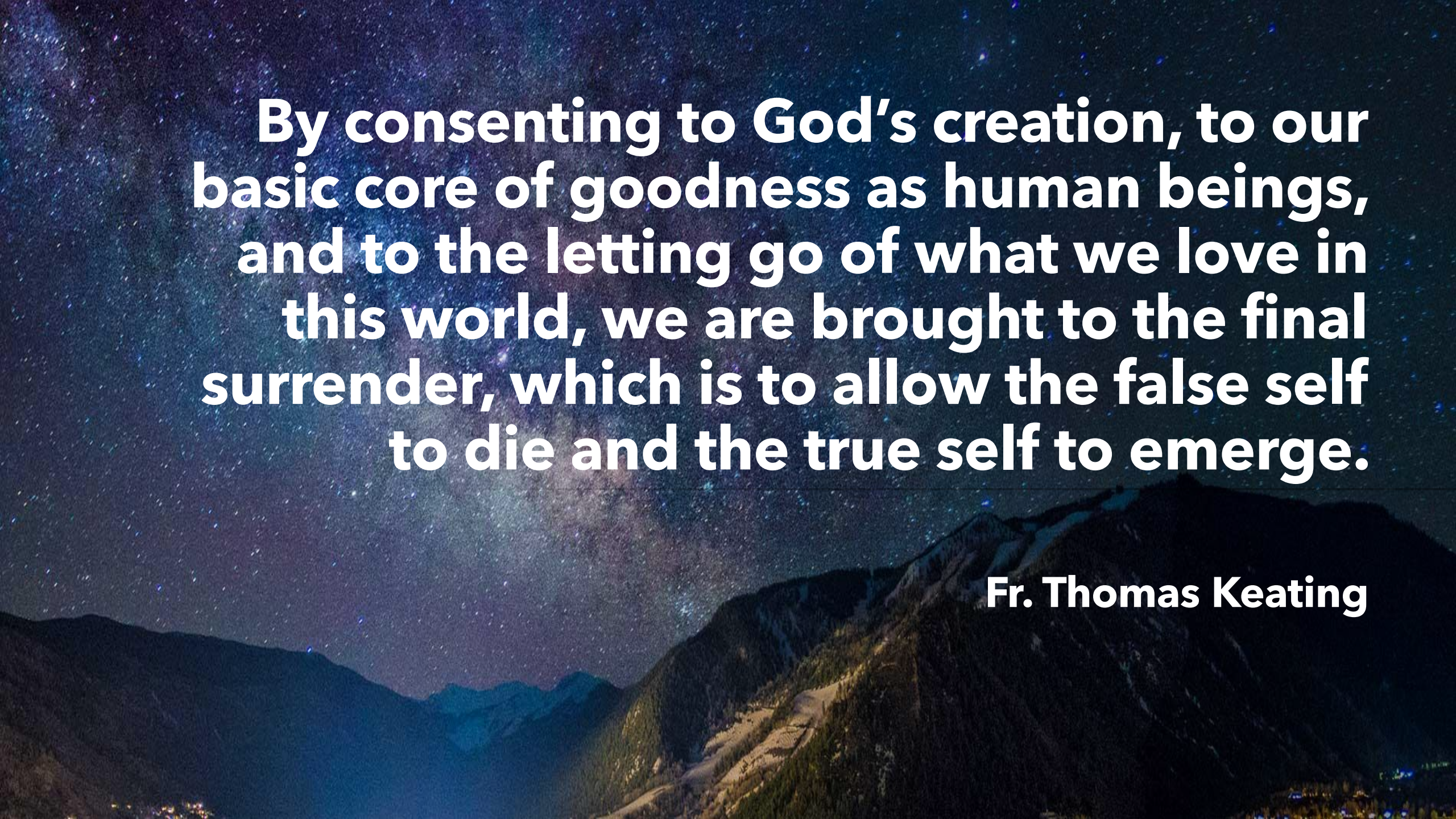
In early adolescence, God asks us to accept the full development of our being by activating our talents and creative energies...

3rd Consent

In early adulthood, God invites us to make a third consent: to accept the fact of our nonbeing and the diminutions of self that occur through illness, old age, and death...

4th Consent

The fourth consent is the consent to be transformed. The transforming union requires consent to the death of the false self, and the false self is the only self we know.

A night sky with the Milky Way galaxy visible over a mountain range. The text is overlaid on the sky.

By consenting to God's creation, to our basic core of goodness as human beings, and to the letting go of what we love in this world, we are brought to the final surrender, which is to allow the false self to die and the true self to emerge.

Fr. Thomas Keating

The Third Consent



“There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens: a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot”

Ecclesiastes 3:1-2

Image: Jean-François Millet, *The Angelus* (1859)

The Paradox of Death



“The confrontation with transience and mortality gives rise to an intrapsychic conflict with the ego, both sides of which may be conscious. On one side it is felt that life derives meaning and value from the fact that it is destined to end ... On the other side, the inevitability of death may engender a feeling that life is meaningless. “

Corinne Masur in *Flirting With Death* (p. 17)

Image: Adriaen van Utrecht, *Vanitas – Still Life with Bouquet and Skull*

The Mystery of Suffering

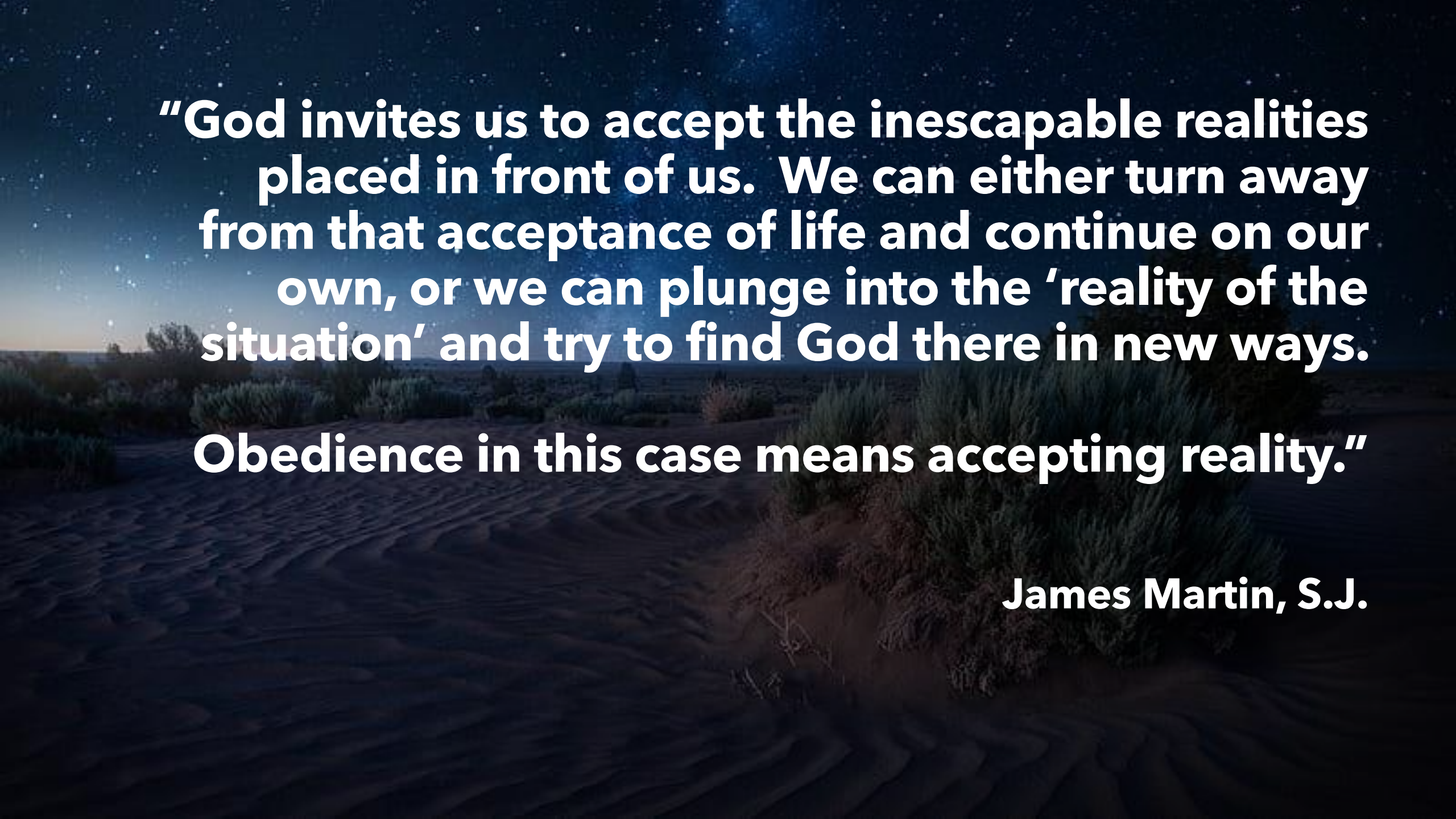


“In vulnerability, in poverty of spirit, in brokenness, we are often able to meet God in new ways – perhaps because our guard is down and we are more open to God’s presence.

This is not the ‘why’ of suffering, but it can sometimes be part of the overall experience.”

James Martin, *The Jesuit Guide to Almost Everything*

Image: Jorge Cocco, *Thy Will Be Done*

A desert landscape at night with a starry sky and a path leading through sand dunes. The sky is dark blue with many small white stars. The foreground shows sand dunes with some sparse, dry vegetation. A path leads from the bottom center towards the horizon.

“God invites us to accept the inescapable realities placed in front of us. We can either turn away from that acceptance of life and continue on our own, or we can plunge into the ‘reality of the situation’ and try to find God there in new ways.

Obedience in this case means accepting reality.”

James Martin, S.J.

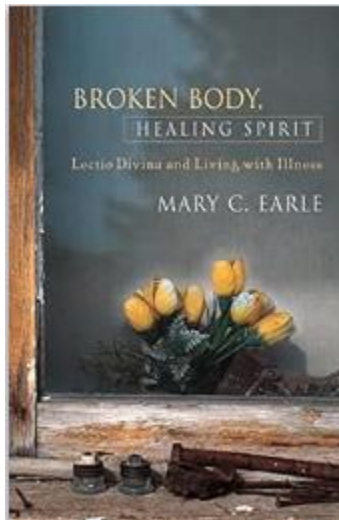
Mary Earle



“Each person, each illness, is a particular story—a story told through a particular person in his own context, in her own time and place. Each story is full of sacred meaning. Discerning the meaning, listening for intimations of divine presence in the midst of confusion, disorientation, and pain requires what the Benedictine tradition calls ‘listening with the ear of the heart.’”

Mary Earle's Books on Living with Illness

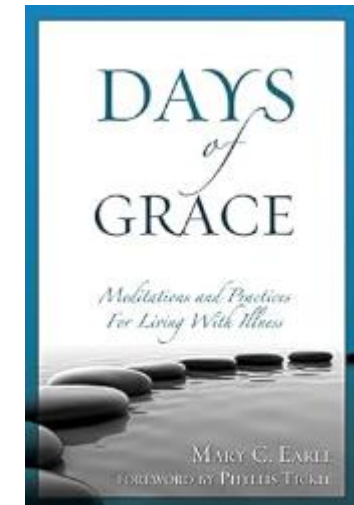
Broken Body, Healing Spirit: Lectio Divina and Living with Illness



Beginning Again: Benedictine Wisdom for Living with Illness



Days of Grace: Meditations and Practices for Living with Illness



A Rule of Life Reimagined

Three Benedictine Vows:

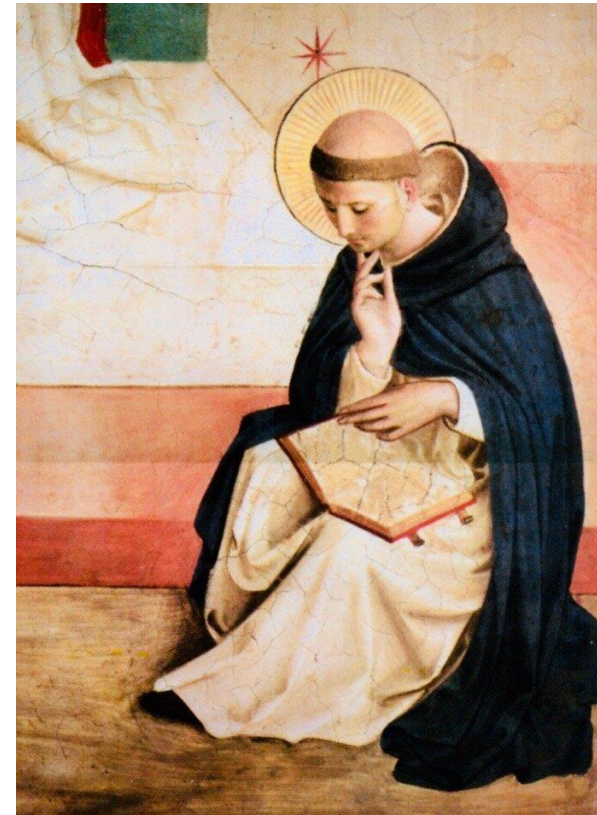
- Stability
- Obedience
- Conversatio Morum



Buckfast Abbey in Devon, England

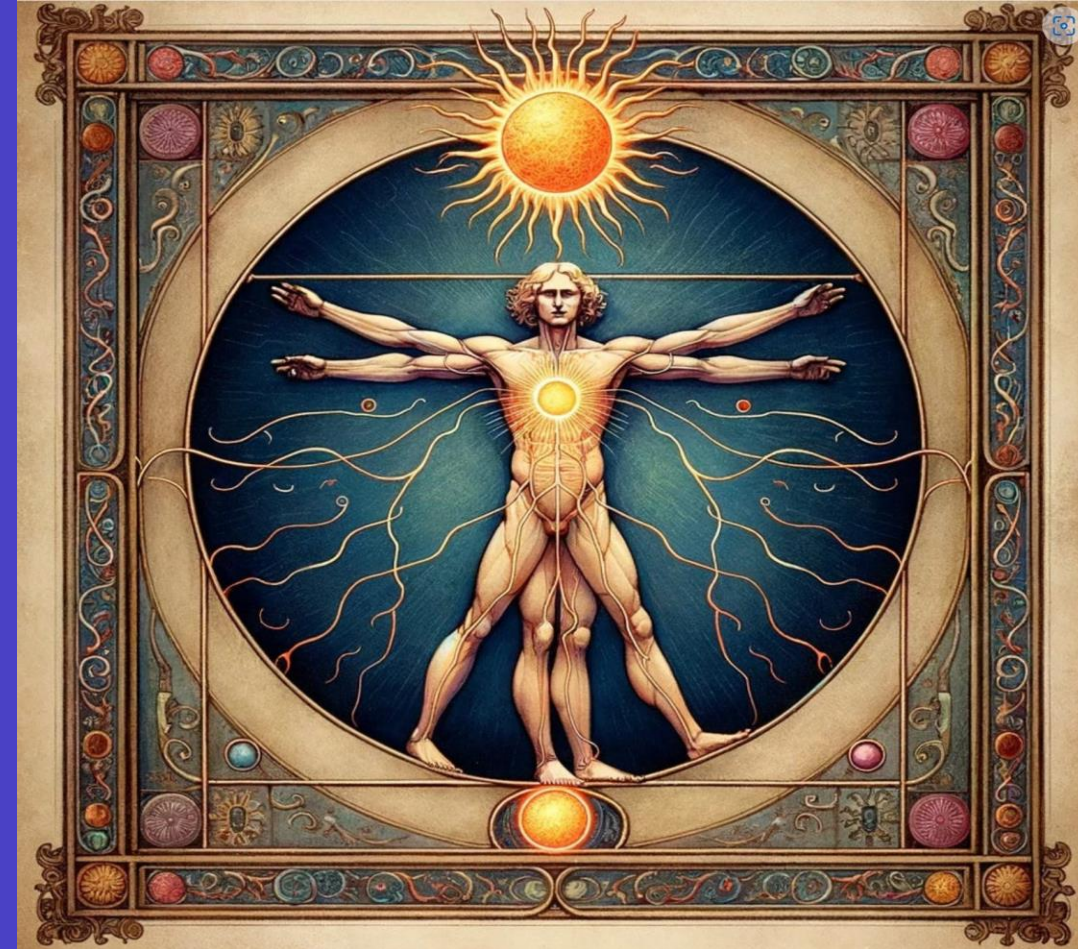
Lectio Divina with Our Bodies

- **Silencio** (ready)
- **Lectio** (read)
- **Meditatio** (reflect)
- **Oratio** (respond)
- **Contemplatio** (rest)



Lectio Divina

Our Lives & Bodies as a Sacred Text





**Wisdom
Sharing**



**Vulnerability &
The Third Consent**