

FEBRUARY 2017 SPIRITUAL DIRECTION CHECK-UP

At 5:08 p.m. I notice that I am still at my work desk, still reading e-mails which crop up like mushrooms after a western Oregon rain.

And I'm already into the second hour of the evening news loop.

Why am I still listening? What am I listening for? Why am I hooked on checking my e-mail?

So much is unfolding in the world, so fast.

Transfixed, I follow the drama as our nation careens, through the rearranging of systems of governance and social and ecological cohesion.

If you have not felt the precarity of our times, you are not paying attention.

I am speaking here of the urgency of paying *spiritual* attention to what is going on in the larger world, *and* remaining steadfast in peace.

I am speaking of the urgency of holy silence, the practiced discipline of intentional silence that keeps us connected to the inner wellspring.

For our own sanity, yes. But also for the sake of the world which spins in anxious confusion.

I am gripped by these words of the Apostle Paul: "Christ's peace must reign in your hearts, since as members of the one body you have been called to that peace" (Colossians 3:15).

Christ's peace *must* reign in your hearts, Paul writes. Must reign. In *your* hearts. Not singular but plural. We undergo this transition together.

While you and I engage in the holy conversation of spiritual direction, each of us is invited, in our own way, to shape the holy conversation and spiritual direction of the world we touch.

Prayer is important. Equally important is clear moral presence and engagement in the issues that most affect those with the least voice.

Both prayer and moral presence must draw their vitality from the wellspring of intentional silence.

Not anxious silence, but silence born of love, and yielding the fruit of honesty, justice, and compassionate acts. Silence which is free of news bites and strategic thinking and the illusion of control in shape-shifting times.

Action steps

- *Assess*: Do I actually practice a discipline of holy silence? Daily? sometimes? sort of? not really? could do better?
- *Commit*: The practice of intentional silence is a discipline precisely because it will interrupt the flow of your day. Set your discipline like a boulder in the stream of your daily activities.
- *Assess again*: Not only to see if you are committed to a practice of holy silence, but to discern the quality of your presence in these times that surely will stretch you.

I welcome your thoughts on the disciplines of holy silence in your life in our next holy conversation. And right now, may Christ's peace reign in *our* hearts. We owe the world this faithfulness to our calling.

Just published, and soon to be published ...

My seventh book, *Lord, Teach Us to Pray*, offers an intimate look into a maturing prayer life. Available now on the Store page at marysharonmoore.com.

St. Anthony Messenger has picked up two more articles, "Keeping Vigil," a journey through my 35 years of ungrieved grief; and "Five Questions that Deepen Prayer," encouragements for the inner work of midlife and beyond.

My blog, "Noticing Things," is available 24/7 at marysharonmoore.com.