

Daily Disciplines

Devotion:

Advent is the time of rousing. We are shaken to the very depths, so that we may wake up to the truth of ourselves. The primary condition for a fruitful and rewarding Advent is renunciation, surrender. We must let go of all our mistaken dreams, our conceited poses and arrogant gestures, all the pretenses with which we hope to deceive ourselves and others. If we fail to do this, stark reality may take hold of us and rouse us forcibly in a way that will entail both anxiety and suffering.

Journal Prompt:

Oil, passing along the banks of Lake Maracaibo, has taken away the colors. In this Venezuelan garbage dump of sordid streets, dirty air and oily waters, Rafael Vargas lives and paints.

Grass does not grow in Cabimas, dead city, emptied land, nor do fish remain in its waters, nor birds in its air, nor roosters in its dawns; but in Vargas's paintings the world is in fiesta, the earth breathes at the top of its lungs, the greenest of trees burst with fruit and flowers, and prodigious fish, birds, and roosters jostle one another like people.

Vargas hardly knows how to read or to write. He does know how to earn a living as a carpenter, and how as a painter to earn the clean light of his days: His is the revenge, the prophecy of one who paints not reality he knows but the reality he needs.

--Eduardo Galeano

What speaks to you when you read this story? What does it mean to know the "reality you need"?

Prayer Prompt:

O eternal God, the beginning and the end, you who sustain all things, understand all things, who existed before all things, and who are without end, be with us, remain among us; strengthen our intentions, sanctify our souls and eradicate in us all that is evil. Enable us to make a good sacrifice and pour out your abundant blessings, and so enable us to enter into the holy of holies wherein dwells your presence.

--Ethiopian liturgy

Lectio Divina:

Practice lectio divina using:

Our brokenness is the wound through which
the full power of God
can penetrate our being
and transfigure us in God.

Loneliness is not something from which we must flee
but the place from where we can cry out to God,
where God will find us and we can find God.

Yes, through our wounds
the power of God can penetrate us
and become like rivers of living water
to irrigate the arid earth within us.
Thus we may irrigate the arid earth of others,
so that hope and love are reborn.

--Jean Vanier