

[Opinion](#)
[Spirituality](#)
[Soul Seeing](#)



(Unsplash/Green Chameleon)

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June 8, 2020

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Day 0: On the cusp of shelter-in-place order

Last face-to-face: visit with Capuchin directee leaving novitiate on way to catch last plane out

Online: arduous airline cancellations

Day Planner: Criss-cross pages with cancellations — travel, haircut, opera, lectures, dinner

party, monthly spirituality class with Franciscan novices ...

Email: scan and send prepared handouts for OFM novitiate for them to do on their own.

Include Gestalt Continuum "Noticing Experience:"

... "Follow the spontaneous flow of your awareness: What are you aware of in terms of +bodily sensations +feelings +perceptions +mental activities..."

Day 1: Shelter-in-Place

Print news/internet news/radio news/TV news: Coverage of the pandemic exacerbates

all my pent-up grief that roils to the surface: children ripped away from parents seeking asylum at the border; 100 Americans killed daily by guns; ban on Muslim immigrants; attacks on synagogues; massacres at black houses of worship; ICE agents raiding homes; U.S. withdrawal from U.N. Human Rights Council, human trafficking, desperate refugees crisscrossing the globe ...

Having trouble bearing the accumulated heart hurt

Facetime: visit with my spiritual director. What is wrong with me? Just walk, she advises. Don't think.

Day 4:

Walk: first white egret of the season visible across the mesa

Joy

Day 5:

Masked and gloved delivery boy brings grocery order for N., our 86-year-old retired school-teacher tenant whom I check on daily. He from 6 feet: "Well if you have to be quarantined, this is a great place for it. Big garden, privacy, short walk to remote mesa!"

Experience some "privileged" shame

Not really helpful

Walk: from More Mesa cliffs overlooking the Pacific Santa Cruz Island stunningly clear as though telescoped into view

Delight

Day 8:

Mask and glove: pick up Nikka Ramen to support local restaurant

Podcast: Gratitude guru asked about being grateful in the present circumstances:

"Be grateful you can breathe"

YES Thank you

Day 12:

Walk: shoulder my way through damp corridor of wild mustard and radish stalks towering above me

Savor rustle of the stalks, chill dew on bare arms

YouTube: Bearded 79-year-old sage, author of *Spiritual Unfoldment*,

interviewed by U.K. Conscious TV. He serene, looks only to the present, reminds that we all have to die sometime

Anger flares

Tell that to my late father who lost his mother to

the 1918 epidemic at age 6. Tell that to my 36-year-old daughter (the one with the hard luck history) quarantined in her postage stamp sized apartment who just completed an arduous doctoral program only to watch job interviews vanish with dwindling university enrollments

Day 15:

Garden sit: Chalk white day lilies pop out ... bloom, bloom, bloom

Sweet scent

Marian Prayer Starter Card Quote: "All my fears vanish under your motherly gaze. Which teaches me to weep and to rejoice," Thérèse of Lisieux

Yes Both weep and rejoice

As hard as that is

Day 17:

Garden stroll: The roses my late mother planted decades ago appear amid more recent plantings

Sense of her presence comforts

Day 19:

Facetime: Chaotic dinnertime "visit" with son, daughter-in-law, 4-year-old, and twin toddlers in New Jersey. Son, director of neighborhood

revitalization program that has transformed area, concerned for his many vulnerable undocumented residents: no health care, hourly wages lost or working in unprotected contexts, no rent relief, fear.

Injustice angers

Helplessness in the face of so much suffering

Zoom: My graduate students appear in a tiled gallery of apertures. Discussion of devotional Catholicism. One, from South Africa, dismisses this type of prayer as "magical," not transformative, *real* prayer.

Sometimes true, I think

Not always

*Sometimes, sometimes the pain of the world,
the "mourning and weeping in this valley of tears" overwhelms.*

*Needs to be held by some presence greater than self
or one's own fashioned words or longing.*

*Sometimes the thickly packed words that have ripened over the centuries,
held the desires and hopes, born the sorrow of so many,
are the only ones that can carry such weight.*

Begin novena to Our Lady of the Way

Day 20:

Mask and glove: 6 a.m. surreal weekly "senior time" grocery shopping at local supermarket alongside passing masked and gloved wraiths

Facebook messenger: 8-year-old granddaughter sends singing *Giffes* in place of

being together

Delight and sadness mingle

Day 21:

Neck aches Back aches

Too much online everything

Mail: send much of recent stimulus check to food bank, rent relief programs

Day 21:

Livestream Vatican: *Urbi et Orbi* prayer. Frail pontiff, white robed, hobbles painfully across a deserted St. Peter's Square, soft rain falls. Gray, eerie stillness. Bearing the suffering world. Offering that weight to the ancient effigy of the cross hung man.

Moving True

Days 24-29: Holy Week

Online: truncated virtual liturgies. Scenes of empty present/former parish sanctuaries

Spiritual communion

*(in solidarity with the
global faith community)*

Day 30: Easter

No walk: Low dark clouds, too chill

Zoom: all four family households in tiled squares: Nebraska, Pennsylvania, New Jersey,

California. Chaotic scenes. Chocolate eggs smeared on little lips. Twin 6-year-old boys wrestling in background. Plans to be with them canceled.

Sadness

Garden sit: Western fence lizard darts across path, pauses in thin streak of sun, pushups,

scuttles away

Grateful for spouse, children, grandchildren, garden, breath

Day 32:

Text: Council on Foreign Relations reports spike in apprehensions of migrant children crossing the U.S. southern border alone. U.S. response exacerbates humanitarian crisis in Central America, breaks U.S. law, violates international human rights norms. Sign petition.

Heart Hurts

"Mother of Mercy"

YouTube: Omaha's "Zoo from Home" educator P., goofy young sweat-shirted Mr.

Rogers-like animal educator demonstrates emu eating posture for young viewers

This really IS a happy space

Day 35:

Garden sit: Meyer lemon tree heavy with fragrant fruit

Gratitude, a bit of privileged discomfort

Zoom: weird virtual teleconference with primary care physician for annual wellness

"exam"

Day 37:

Walk: two band-tailed pigeons

Attend closely to their cooing

Zoom: tedious meeting with instructional technology mentor ironing out glitches in online summer grad class

"... our life our sweetness, our hope"

Day 40: Earth Day

Facebook newsfeed: Fifty-year anniversary. Virtual this year. Day launched in response

to 1969 Santa Barbara oil spill. Three million gallons, 800-mile ocean oil slick, 10,000 sea animals/birds destroyed, environmental and economic impact unparalleled

Online: Since 2016: U.S. withdrawal from Paris Climate Covenant, rollback of 95 environmental protection legislations — drilling extraction, toxic substances, water pollutants, methane emissions, carbon emissions, greenhouse gases ...

Heart aches

"Oh clement, oh loving, oh sweet..."

Day 43:

Walk: Magenta Bougainvillea riotous, spilling confetti-like over the lip of the garden shed onto the patio bricks

admiration

New York Times/Los Angeles Times/CNN/ MNBC/BBC etc:

Statistics, charts on pandemic. Nearly a million cases reported in U.S.

"Turn then most gracious advocate, your eyes of mercy ..."

Day 48: Onward ...

Fragments/fragmented?

Is poet Levertov prescient?

Am I "inattentive Adam," a fragmented self, impassioned by multiplicity?

Or is Whitman my guide on this strange journey?

"Do I contradict? Very well, I contain multitudes."

Or perhaps Roman Terence gives insight:

"In being human, nothing human is alien to me."

Walk:

Breathe

"... show unto us the blessed fruit of your womb..."

[Wendy M. Wright is professor emerita of theology at Creighton University, an author and spiritual director. She and her husband are parents of three adult children, grandparents of six, and currently live in Santa Barbara, California.]

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A version of this story appeared in the **June 12-25, 2020** print issue.