



beginning the journey of *transforming* **grace:** transforming consciousness

Reflection for the week of December 11, 2023

Theme: Difficult Hope

Opening Song
Christ, Circle Round Us by Dan Schutte

Opening Prayer
Advent God, you challenge us to prepare the way. Our hearts grieve heavily the polarities that divide our families, our communities, our governments. What can I do to bring unity as we prepare for the celebration of the Peace that you bring? Help me to open my heart to those with whom I have serious disagreements so that I may love them as you do. Amen

Scripture
A voice of one crying out: Prepare the way of the Lord in the wilderness; make a straight highway for our God in the desert. Isaiah 40:3

“A Poem of Difficult Hope”
by Wendell Berry

Much protest is naive; it expects quick, visible improvement and despairs and gives up when such improvement does not come. Protesters who hold out for longer have perhaps understood that success is not the proper goal. If protest depended on success, there would be little protest of any durability or significance. History simply affords too little evidence that anyone's individual protest is of any use. Protest that endures, I think, is moved by a hope far more modest than that of public success: namely, the hope of preserving qualities in one's own heart and spirit that would be destroyed by acquiescence.

Video:
Accepting Others as they are (292) [Mindful Relationships | Accepting Others As They Are | Mindfulness Relationships Meditation - YouTube](#)



Reflection Questions

During this Advent time of preparation and reconciliation, what if we applied Wendell Berry's poem to our conversion of heart?

Instead of engaging those whom we perceive as different, so as to change them, what if our intention was to understand them? What would be required to accept them as they are? What rises within you as you are present with this?

Practice

Preparation for encounters with people who seemingly have so little in common with us, who trigger anger and discomfort in us is essential. Think about a person or group that triggers this response for you and take at least 10 minutes each day this week to surround that person or group who is so different than you with love. Perhaps this is the way we can make straight the highway in our desert of love.

Closing Prayer

Still in me the fear, O God of open hearts.
Invite me to the courage to remain in the discomfort.
Teach me your ways, that I may be an instrument of the peace I long to be.