



# Going Deep and Wide

July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013



SHALEM  
INSTITUTE FOR SPIRITUAL FORMATION



# Deep Listening to the Spirit

Leah Rampy

*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.*  
—Romans 15:13

In wonderfully spacious moments of listening, I am sometimes gifted to sense that all is woven together, that all hearts beat together in the One. Surely all is well and all will be well. I trust the Spirit, and I abound in hope. From that deep place, I look around and see breathtaking beauty in our world and incredible acts of love. We are blessed to witness to the glow of sunrise, the reds and golds of autumn, fresh mountain streams, acts of kindness and the touch of a loved one.

Yet it's not always so easy. We also see tragedy, horrific violence, and heartbreak. Species are vanishing, our oceans are dying, economic disparity grows, justice is not equal, and our

leaders seem ineffective. How can I continue to hold the sense that all is well, that all is one?

Thich Nhat Hanh says that the contemplative stance is “looking deeply at life as it is in the very here and now.” That’s easier to do when I like what I see, when I’m looking at beauty and love and right action. But sometimes it’s very difficult to look deeply at “the very here and now”; I am overwhelmed, and I look away.

Of course looking away can be an appropriate response to an overwhelming amount of news reported on a single tragic story, for example. Looking away is an appropriate response when we need to pause to pray for the situation or discern what is invited next. But I sometimes look away because I simply don’t want to look deeply at life as it is. It’s too painful. I don’t know how to

fix it. If I really looked, I’d need to do something.

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing...” *IN* believing. It is only as I believe, that I have the capacity to hold the pain without the ability to fix it. It is as I trust the Spirit that I can be guided to what is mine to do. As I believe in the power of the Spirit, I can look at life as it is in the here and now with my spiritual heart open wide enough to see and hold both the beauty and the brokenness, the joy and the pain.

In a recent Huffington Post article, Joshua DuBois wrote about previously unreported details of President Obama’s visit to the families of Sandy Hook victims. For hours, two families at a time, the President went from group to group, hugging parents, inviting them, “Tell me about your son.... Tell



me about your daughter....” Over and over, writes DuBois, the President listened, looked directly into the eyes of the shattered parents and offered support and prayer. I know little of the President’s spiritual practices or deeply held beliefs. But his willingness to look gently and fully into the faces of pain models what is possible for us.

Of course my rational mind immediately asks, “Why would I want to look at pain? Why would I open to suffering?” Richard Rohr answers that pain is our teacher, the only thing strong enough to “grab our attention and defeat the ego’s dominance.” Our egos are always trying to arrange the world the way we want it to be. Of Jesus and Buddha, Rohr writes, “Pain is the foundational teacher of transformation for both of them, which led to compassion in Buddhist language and love in Christian language.”

Opening our spiritual hearts deeper and wider to hold the pain we witness daily frees us for the love and compassion that is invited in each moment, enables us to let go our mental quick fixes, and invites us to surrender to what is ours to do in God’s unfolding dream. When the God of hope fills us with the joy and peace in believing, we look deeply at life as it really is; there is no need to turn away.

When our spiritual hearts are wide open, we can get take a stand day after day for causes that seem beyond our capacity, and we can work for results that will not come to bear fruit in our lifetime. And by the power of the Holy Spirit—not by our intellect, determination or promise of results—we abound in hope.

Leah is Shalem’s executive director.

## A Prayer for Cupped Hands

This is my singing bowl.  
This is my begging bowl.  
This is my drinking cup.  
This is the font  
in which rests God’s blessing.  
This is the chalice  
in which rests God’s healing.  
This is the crucible  
in which rests God’s refining.  
This  
and all of this  
is gift  
and only gift.  
This is my singing bowl.

—Nigel Weaver

Nigel is a participant in Shalem’s Going Deeper: Clergy Spiritual Life and Leadership Program.





# The Gift of Congruence

Tim Hamlin

Parked on a little beach beside a lake tucked into the corner of the Western Hemisphere is a small sailboat. It's a fairly humble craft, sporting the nicks and insults of three decades of use and boasting but a single, well-worn sail which the sun has faded from navy to baby blue. But for all her modesty, this beloved vessel takes me to one place very few other conveyances in my life can carry me: into the Presence.

It's not easy. Nor is it automatic. My nautical journey toward Presence often entails some initial entanglements. A sailboat can be a booby trap of ropes and wires that will trip and trap and pinch and occasionally evoke a string of words rarely found in contemplative literature. Then there are those moments of frustration when it becomes painfully apparent that the wind is not at my beck and call—that it never was and never will be. And, of course, there's that stage of antsy jostling for comfortable position that so often precedes settling into the stillness. But, in time, all these things pass. The sail is trimmed, the lines are

disciplined and the pilot has relaxed...at which point the dance begins.

I say "dance" because there is always an interplay of me and beyond-me. There are my actions of guiding, adjusting, and leaning. There are also dynamics that are so far beyond me: the wind, the sun, and the waves. I often aim for a point across the lake, setting my tiller and my mind upon this far-away goal. That is my intention, and perhaps even a great hope. But it's not all about me, and nothing is guaranteed. Winds shift, waves buffet, and courses sometimes change. I may make it there. Then again, I may find myself heading toward a new destination that is perhaps just as interesting...so long as I'm able to release myself to it.

Anyone who has ever dared to make the switch from power-boating to sailing knows that this paradigm shift is about more than saving gas. There is a necessary spiritual change. Power-boats are unabashedly willful. That is their strength. The sheer act of bisecting

waves with brash indifference is utterly foreign to a sailing craft. The option doesn't exist. Sailing is about accommodation, attentiveness, and patience. Without these qualities, a sailor gets wet...or nowhere...or both!

Of course, what sailors miss in speed and distance, they make up for in what I call the gift of "congruence." Many endeavors speak of finding "the groove." Artists, athletes, writers, and musicians know of it. Elusive and delicious, there is a moment when the "dance" becomes effortless. In sailing terms, the wind is steady, the heel is right, the sun is gentle, and the waves seem to be perpetually sloping in one's favor. All thoughts of pinched fingers and recalcitrant squalls evaporate in the presence of an encompassing right-ness and rhythm. This is the succulent fruit of all the prepping, the hoisting, and the trimming.

What I tend to forget, however, is that the Presence is in *all* of it. It's not just the "groove." It is also the sundry steps and missteps that lead up to it and follow it.



Could the Presence even be in the string of salty language that follows an unwelcome encounter with the boom?!

I need to remember the all-inclusive nature of the journey so that I don't disparage the more mundane and messy parts. Brother Lawrence elevated the pots and pans to holiness. Can I do the same with the wires and ropes, no matter how confounding they can become? Can I do this long after the boat is pulled back up on the beach, when the necessary "wires" and "ropes" of ordinary living vex me to no end? To realize where I end and the Other begins is awareness forever unfurling for me. Perhaps the gift embedded in sailing is how quickly the lesson is given, if not learned.

Probably every sailor can relate a drenching tale of the encounter between hubris and holiness—that moment when "pride goeth before the fall," often a fall into the "drink!" Ego meets the Elements, and we know who wins. The

stories can be hilarious, while also carrying deep truth about our pretense of power and self-sufficiency.

Once, visiting a Mexican resort and fancying myself a reasonably adept sailor, my family and I set out with me at the helm of a small catamaran. It became clear to me within a very few minutes that the winds were stronger than most I had encountered in upstate New York. Going with the wind was no problem. But tacking back upwind toward our place of origin was another matter altogether. The family's initial implicit trust in me began to waver as they saw the look of consternation on my face. In time, someone asked how "we" were doing—God bless them. I admitted that my prowess was being sorely taxed. In other words, I wasn't sure how we were getting back. The happy conclusion of this story came when a vigilant resort employee popped over the surf astride a jet ski, sporting a ready tow-rope and a big smile. In no time, we were back

to safety, never again venturing out over our heads for the remainder of the vacation.

Contemplative insights certainly can arrive in a quiet chapel or on a bucolic afternoon walk. Mine tend to arrive wet and wild—deep gifts of humility, gratitude and awe delivered on the wings of a stout south breeze.

Tim, a graduate of Shalem's Personal Spiritual Deepening Program (PSDP), co-leads a PSDP group in upstate New York.





# Wonderings about Prayer

Liz Ward

**“God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him.”—1 John 4:16**

She was trying to discern what to do. She was torn between two loves—her love for her aging parents and her family who live hundreds of miles away and her love for her congregation that is thriving under her dedicated, contemplative leadership. Should she look for a parish closer to her parents even though she does not feel that her current ministry is complete? Is her regret about missing quality time with her family a sign that she should move closer to her parents as they face difficult transitions caused by declining health?

After reflecting on her love for her family and her love for her congregation, she said she was having trouble praying about what to do and felt uncomfortable for not being more prayerful. As we paused for a moment in silence, I sensed that all her love for her family and her congregation was a way of

being in prayer. I sensed that her prayer was just to love each in the moment, as she was doing, and this compassionate love was the way she was communing with God, living in God.

It seemed that words and formal, structured prayer, or even intentional stillness and silence, were not the invitation for this moment in her discernment. Couldn't just taking the time to more fully experience each of her conflicting loves be her prayer rather than just a preparation for prayer and discernment? Are there not many and various ways to be prayerfully alive to the oneness of Overflowing Love? Are there not, as Rumi says, “hundreds of ways to kneel and kiss the ground?”

This graced conversation has lived in my heart and refreshed my perspectives on prayer yet again. It has made me feel, once again, that sometimes my definitions of prayer are too small for the huge, mysterious vastness and deep loving Presence of The Holy One. It has

made me want to explore more fully how my images of prayer may sometimes blind me to the fullness of life in the Unitive Reality in which we all live and move and have our being.

With this perspective in mind, I am suspecting that experiencing compassionate love—love that is not clouded or trapped in a particular moment by ego attachments—is a way of being in prayer, a way of being in communion and union with God. I am suspecting that experiencing deep, spontaneous compassion is a way of participating in, living in God's ever-present, ever dynamic and loving prayer for creation.

If so, is it still prayer even when there is not a conscious intention to be in prayer or to remember that you are living in the Presence? Can just feeling compassionate love in the moment, being immersed in a spontaneous, egoless concern for another or others, be a prayerful way of living in the flow of Holy Life, of being immersed in the



loving heart of God? Do we always need the structure and intentionality we so often associate with prayer? This is not to say that intentionally sitting and quietly listening for clarity or just silently resting in the Presence is not a foundational, and many times, crucial way of being in prayer. Rather I am suspecting that God's transfiguring gift of communion and union is larger than words or silence, larger than motion and stillness, larger than conscious intent or spacious wordless, imageless resting in God. I am sensing that feelings that arise from our spiritual hearts, from our true self, especially feelings like compassionate love, can also be a way of being in prayer, a way of unself-consciously being in God.

If God is love, or "Love Loving," can't selfless love, the gifted love that is God alive in the fullness of creation, that comes from God and flows back to God, be a way of being in communion

and union, a way of being in prayer even if it is not overtly intentional? Can't compassionate love be a "thin place" where the reality of our deep union with Radiant Love becomes more alive?

Do feelings always have to be considered distractions that separate us from the deeper Unity in which "everything belongs?" Can't we learn to move like a "feather on the breath of God" when compassionate love is the way we are in prayer? Can't God grow our inner freedom for God in this way of praying just as God frees us in other ways of praying? Can't we, paradoxically, grow in detachment and inner freedom through compassionate love, through moments when we are dwelling in Love without egos clouding or blocking the way?

Some words from Father Zossima, the Russian starets in *The Brothers Karamazov*, come to mind as I consider these

wonderings. They remind me that growing in love is a way of gradually realizing our deep union with Abiding Love and even hopefully becoming a fuller participant in this Mysterious Love. Somehow this sounds like yet another of many beautiful ways to be in prayer.

Love all of God's creation. The whole and every grain of sand of it. Love every leaf, every ray of God's light. Love the animals, love the plants, love everything. If you love everything, you will perceive the divine mystery in things. Once you perceive it, you will begin to comprehend it better every day. And you will come at last to love the whole world with an all-embracing love.

Liz is the director of Shalem's Nurturing the Call: Spiritual Guidance Program.





# A Willingness to Try New Things...

Laurel Coote

I don't know exactly when I became someone who was willing to try on new things. Maybe it was when my younger brother died and I had to step into a new way of being me. Or maybe it was when we moved to Illinois and I arrived at school wanting desperately to belong. Years later I made one of the most significant choices of my life when I decided to move from Chicago to Southern California. Laid off, with two months left on my lease and no family nearby, the invitation felt right. Some called it fate. I believe it was divine.

My first Christmas in California by myself was one of the loneliest times in my life. Yet I made it through and began to discover who I was, what mattered to me, and what I desired. Most importantly, I learned what it meant to be with myself, alone. Often it was terrifying, and in desperation I became an expert at being busy and engaged. Feelings of being needed replaced those of the emp-

teness being alone often brought. Love, marriage and a baby-on-the-way moved my husband to start going to church again, and he took me with him. It had been a while for me, but when I stepped into that sanctuary, I felt at home. Over time a deep inner longing was less and less able to be ignored. I was spiritually hungry and desired knowledge, connection, and intimacy with both my God and my community. God led us to a new parish where I had the opportunity to partake in a program of theological study.

And then, something happened. Half way through the program, I felt God's tug on my sleeve. The recession hit and clients left. Yet in the midst of my world falling apart, God spoke to me. While in Wales, I wandered alone through the pouring rain to a hill with a cross, overlooking meadows of rock, sheep and trees. Sitting there, I asked God to be with me, help me and show me that I was not alone. And in the

midst of that rain, a beam of sunlight broke through the clouds as the rain stopped. I laughed and thanked God for being there. Within about 30 seconds, the beam descended into the clouds, the rain returned with the wind, and I was alone in the stillness of that mountain spot.

But for the first time in my life, I no longer felt alone. And perhaps also for the first time, stillness did not frighten me. It enveloped me as if a loving embrace, comforting me, keeping me safe. I returned home, not with answers, but with a peace and calm about me. All that lay ahead was the unknown, but now I found myself content and ready for a serious exploration into what and how God was calling me.

I began meeting with a spiritual director and began coursework to learn about listening, stillness, mysticism and the sacred. The more I learned and practiced being still with God, the more





I felt called to shepherd others on their journey. With awe I watched as God led people to me and how God, through me, touched their lives.

Still, I hungered for more stillness and a deeper practice, and that is when I discovered Shalem's Online School of Contemplative Prayer. It came at a time when I strongly desired to be close to and with God daily and felt that I needed the structure, encouragement and support that a community could give.

Before the course was to begin, I sat outside to pray in the warmth of the sun. Chimes rang intermittently; the fountain gurgled steadily in the background with the occasional chirp from the birds. I began with the mantra, "Thy will be done," and thought of Henry Nouwen's words about prayer—how hard it is for us to allow ourselves to be and acknowledge that we are God's beloved.

On this day I felt that it was time for me to stop praying in generalities. "Lord, what is thy will for my life?" I

asked. "What would you have me do?" As I sat in stillness, the word "deacon" came to me. It caught me off-guard and frightened me. My mind raced to doubt, worry, worthiness and skepticism. Then I heard, "Yes, you." I was stunned into stillness, though I wanted to run. Surely God had gotten the message wrong? Finally, I promised God that I would consider it. (I laugh as I remember bargaining with God!) By God's grace, and with the support and love of my family and community, being a deacon has now become a very real possibility.

When the Shalem online course began, I willingly jumped in and began sharing with others in the online community. Having just had the most profound prayer experience of my life, I was both excited and a little anxious about stepping into a daily practice of centering prayer. After all, what might God next reveal? Weekly lessons, journal prompts and guided meditations helped expand the experience. Reading others' comments about both their joys and their struggles with prayer helped

give me the space to be imperfectly me. I realized quickly that there was no one way or right way but that the act of coming to God in stillness itself was enough.

During the course I came to God where I felt most at home. Sometimes I would pray aloud and then just sit in stillness, unaware of all that surrounded me. Other times, I might sit and quietly observe everything with a keen eye. And at times, stillness and calm evaded me. I'm aware now of how God sits with us in both stillness and struggle.

God is found in everything and everywhere. I came away from the course with a stronger awareness of this—and that God only waits for us to join him every day—wherever and however we are if only we are willing

Laurel, a Certified Spiritual Director living in Southern CA, was a participant in Shalem's Online School of Contemplative Prayer and is presently discerning a call to the Episcopal diaconate.



# Learning to See & Hear

**Bill Stone**

Perspective, in art and in life, is important. Learning to see and hear things from more than one point-of-view is an essential part of understanding and communicating. We hear this often, and take it for granted, but over the last few years I've been re-learning this received wisdom.

Four years ago I moved to Scotland and was amazed to discover that despite the fact that both the Scots and I claimed to speak English, we had a difficult time understanding each other. At first the idiosyncrasies of Scottish English were a delight—I felt like I was becoming an insider as I learned to order “chips” instead of “french-fries” and throw away my “rubbish” in the “bin.” After a few months, however, my delight began to fade into frustration. It was not just a new set of words that I needed to learn and understand—it was a new culture, with quirks and nuances that I'm still discovering. I would often find myself misunderstanding things people said or struggling to find things on my shopping list because the ingredients I needed were called one thing in America and another thing in the UK.

Two years into this unexpected culture shock, I became a participant in Shalem's Young Adult Life and Leadership Initiative (YALLI). In this program I found resources and a supportive community that contributed to my personal spiritual deepening. Surprisingly, this deepening also helped me re-evaluate my outlook on living abroad.

*Big Fish* is one of my favorite films. It tells the story of a young man, named Will, who has grown up listening to his father tell far-fetched stories about his life—from how he used his wedding ring as bait to catch a giant fish on the day his son was born to the time he worked for a werewolf in a travelling circus. Will's annoyance at these stories eventually becomes a lack of trust in his father, and the film quickly finds Will and his wife travelling to visit a dying man to whom Will has not spoken in three years.

In the hospital Will begs his father to stop the stories—to tell him the truth about who he is and give a real recounting of his life. The father's response, however, is to re-tell the same

stories Will has already heard hundreds of times before.

Towards the end of the film, a conversation with one of his father's doctors helps Will begin to hear these stories in a new way. As he reflects on everything he's heard, Will begins to see a truth in these stories that runs beneath the narrative of big fish and werewolves. And then, in an incredibly moving scene, he becomes a storyteller himself, co-authoring with his father. In this co-creation he is able to bring his own identity and meaning into the stories his father has told. He is able to begin owning someone else's stories as his.

Our conversations about God and faith can sometimes feel like those Will had with his father. My teenage Sunday School class recently read the story of Jesus turning water into wine at a wedding in Galilee. After they had finished reading the story, they demanded to know “what really happened.” The curriculum we were using suggested talking about the difference between miracles and magic tricks, and this was, at the very least, unhelpful. Both





my teenagers and this curriculum were interested in getting to the bottom of things, which is good, but they were trying to do this from a particular perspective. They were interested in the empirical data—the who, what, when, and where of the story.

Just as Will went through much of his life unable to hear the truth spoken in his father's stories, we can often be so focused on one way of looking at things that we miss the greater truth. Our lack of understanding can then lead to a lack of trust, both in ourselves and in others. In my own experience of culture shock, I was focusing exclusively on differences and annoyances, missing many invitations to learn and discover more about myself, and others.

We are reminded by Ignatius of Loyola that God is in all things, and we are compelled by the contemplative tradition to receive God's presence everywhere as a *gift*. The *given-ness* of God's presence in all of the people we meet and in all of the stories we hear invites us to change our perspective—to look

beneath the surface and in the depths of our identities and stories to find the divine presence which binds us together. As we learn to be more aware of this shared *given-ness* in all of life, we are better able to cultivate a spirit of gratitude and embrace the many ways in which we contribute to one another's lives and stories.

There are times when this is easily done. I find gratitude and a sense of God's nearness are in ready supply during pilgrimages to the Isle of Iona—where the prayer-soaked medieval abbey, the sea, and the slow pace of island life combine to create a truly special place. There are other times, however, when God feels distant and gratitude is difficult to practice. And it is in these times that a supportive community and my daily prayer practices have proven essential.

Bill, a graduate of Shalem's Young Adult Life and Leadership Initiative, is a minister in the PC(USA) currently serving as a youth minister in Edinburgh, Scotland.

## Birches

Walking by a stand of birches  
bark tattered, torn,  
waving loosely in the warm, spring breeze  
layer upon layer  
peeled back,  
shedding the old  
exposing what is beneath —  
smooth, new bark  
unmarked and unmarred by  
Nature's elements  
and daily life.  
They ask of me,  
What are you to shed  
making way  
for something new  
to emerge?

—Shirley K. Weyrauch

Shirley is a graduate of Shalem's Transforming Community: Leading Contemplative Prayer Groups & Retreat Program.



# Gifts of Contemplative Grounding for our Later Years

Tilden Edwards

*Even though our outward nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. — 2 Cor. 4:16*

St. Paul's experience is that there is more to us than our "outward nature." As he proclaimed so strongly, the core of our being is a unique shaping of divine being, of the Radiant Love that is the ever-pulsing heart of reality. Paul sees us "in Christ," Christ who is the expression of God's transforming presence everywhere. We are part of a wondrous, relational wholeness that includes all of creation.

It's not a *static* wholeness. We're human expressions of a mysterious, cosmic process of ongoing birth, growth, death, and transformation into new life. Our human nature is part of that dynamism. Paul calls that dynamism "renewal." We could just as well call it the ever-deeper realization of our true nature in God. That realization evolves

in our spiritual heart, which is the place in us where we are most vulnerably and directly present to deep Reality, the place where we realize our mutual indwelling and deepest belonging.

As we more and more come to trust and taste our deeper self in God (deeper than the ego, sensate, and thinking levels of our identity), we find that our way of living into our physical aging is positively affected. Here are some examples.

*We still care for our "outer nature,"* seeing it as a gifted vessel of divine presence and creative loving purpose. We still enjoy what we're given to enjoy in the body and mind, probably even more so than before, because we live with less background dread of our physical demise. We live in the trust that there is more to us than our outer nature.

As we spend time in the contemplative practices that help us live more from our spiritual hearts, we *come to appreciate a different sense of time*. In the heart, we can be shown hints of eternal time, a sense of the vibrant eternal Now where everything happens and belongs together. Our mind's conditioned view of narrow, linear time is relativized by this qualitatively different sense of time; we find ourselves part of an inclusive, timeless awareness. Everything lives in an interrelated, radiant whole. We belong to that whole more than we belong to some separated sense of self.

We may be given a sense of true Home in that larger sense of time as we find it pervaded by intimate loving Light. This may be received only in a brief flash of awareness, but it's a transformative flash that is branded into our memories. Such awareness deepens our yearning to live from the deathless Love it reveals.





Rilke alludes to this longing in our mature years when he says, in God's voice: "Hasn't my longing ripened in you from the beginning as fruit ripens on a branch? I am the dream you are dreaming. When you want to awaken, I am that wanting...." Rilke expresses the mutually indwelling intimacy of contemplative awareness, a paradoxical intimacy because the longing speaks of an incompleteness in us, a being drawn forward, and yet the very longing is God's yearning presence in our yearning.

Whether or not we have any direct flashes of Home, our yearning for God is itself a sufficient experience of God's longing presence, God's home in us. That very yearning is a divine beacon that we can trust to guide us to the *fullness* of our home in Radiant Love.

Awareness of that inner kin-dom of heaven can draw us to **a sense of vision and calling** for the extension of its loving communion in the world, the *outer* kin-dom of heaven. However limited our actions may be in the face of the world's fears and self-centeredness, nonetheless we know we have a particular place in recognizing and watering the seeds of hope for *shalom* in the world. In our physically declining years, we can participate in that

watering even if no human capacity is left in us but that of lovingly smiling God's smile to someone in our view.

In this outer kin-dom participation growing from our inner-kin-dom awareness, we share something of Jesus' consciousness and invitation seen in scripture. We share the overflow of his awareness of eternal intimacy with God into a vision of the beloved community on earth. Younger adults usually participate in that vision through their years of work, community service and often marriage and child-raising responsibilities. In Hindu tradition this is referred to as the "householder" stage of life. In that tradition, the last stage of life, when "householder" responsibilities are lessened or ended, provides special opportunities to participate in personal spiritual deepening. In the context of Christian and the other two Abrahamic traditions, we would add that in our later years there is also more opportunity to participate in the earthly kin-dom vision in ways we are given and gifted, grounded in the compassion, freedom and wisdom of growing inner kin-dom awareness.

Also, with a deepening trust in our inner nature, our true self in God, we can find ourselves more often **able to gracefully accept the many physical and mental diminishments of aging**, and the even harder diminishments of lost relationships. I remember a widow once telling me that in the midst of her long grieving over her husband's death, she became aware that Love had not died with him. Love is; to faith it is the indestructible *heart* of what is, beneath and through all the travails of the world. As we are able

to embrace that trust, all our "letting go's" in the later years happen within that Love. Each letting go leaves room for something else made of that Love. As Quakers say, once a door is closed, then another can open.

Overall, our contemplative grounding in our later years can help us **live more fully from the awareness of our spiritual hearts**, freer to live in the ever-fresh present moment—in the living Now of God. We can trust more fully that the Now isn't just a stale prison of the past but a pregnant Spirit delivery room of life and hope, where one moment isn't just a repeat of the last, where tomorrow isn't just another today.

Death of the body, our outer nature, also can be seen as a delivery room. As Mary Oliver says, "(I'm) expecting to be told to pack nothing, except the prayers which, with this thirst, I am slowly learning." We enter the beyond with no possessions, yet our moments of living from the spiritual heart can leave us trusting that we are eternally possessed by the larger Love of which we are made. Whatever shone with that Love in us during this earthly life, I trust will be shaped into a transformed being, living in more intimate holy communion, hopefully able to enjoy and be a vessel of the divine vision for life in a new way.

Tilden is Shalem's founder and senior fellow. For more on the heart in relation to our egos and minds, see his most recent book, *Embracing Spiritual Depth*.



# Gratitude & Compassion

Patience Robbins

*Humanity as a whole needs a breakthrough into the contemplative dimension of life. This is the Life at the heart of the world. There the human family is already one. If one goes to one's own heart, one will find oneself in the heart of everyone else, and all in the heart of the Ultimate Mystery.*

—Thomas Keating

About a year and a half ago, I was traveling to central Pennsylvania to visit my mom. While riding in the car, I was listening to a podcast entitled, “Harnessing the Power of the Heart,” given by people from Heart Math Institute in California. I was utterly riveted to every word and amazed at how this resonated with my experience. The scientific research of the heart they were sharing validated all that I have been learning, practicing and living in the contemplative path.

This talk inspired me to engage an online course with Heart Math. I would like to share two qualities from my yearlong study that have new depth

and meaning for me: gratitude and compassion.

Appreciation or gratitude is one of the easiest qualities of the heart for most of us to feel. People of any age can identify at least one thing for which we feel grateful, like a person or pet, or beautiful place or something that we enjoy. Scientific research shows that as one feels gratitude, sinks into the heart and genuinely feels (not thinks) gratitude, one becomes coherent, or aligned; body, heart, mind and spirit all are in a flow. How often our founder, Tilden Edwards, invited us to sink into the spiritual heart and be receptive to that flow, that divine presence within. A way to increase and continue that coherence is to radiate gratitude to everyone around me, all of creation, the whole planet. Especially when feeling stuck or distressed or anxious and wanting to return to a life-giving centered flow, I can return to gratitude as a way of being in the flow of life. Although I had been cultivating gratitude for

many years, this gave me new access to its incredible power to join the divine energy within me that is always present and available.

Another aspect of this quality of gratitude is to appreciate myself. This has been such fun and even surprising as I practice this. As I sink into the heart, let my breath move through the heart, and feel appreciation for qualities within me—like generosity, courage, kindness, compassion, joy, calm, enthusiasm—I feel a deep sense of my unique belovedness. It really nurtures the feeling, the sense of my being in the image of God, embodying these attributes. This wellspring of care and love for myself then overflows to everyone around me. I honor myself for who and all that I am contributing by being me.

The other quality that has new meaning is compassion. Even though I have been cultivating compassion over many years, I saw how powerful it is to feel it often throughout the day in the midst





of a variety of life situations, especially the messy or confusing ones. I found that compassion is a quality that can hold a great range of experiences without having to judge, fix or change anything. It allows all to be, even what seem to be opposites, with great tenderness and care. Because there is no need to label or judge or understand; I can hold all in wholeness or connectedness and feel that tender warmth and care.

When I do this, I often experience change or a shift *in me*. I see things in a new way or I feel more accepting of myself and others, or I can just let life be as it is. I love to practice this around a world situation or something I really care about and want to change. As I sit with something that feels really disturbing and unfair and even wrong, I can feel compassion for myself and

others, which can move me into alignment and then awareness of what is true and how to proceed in peace. This self-compassion then can overflow to others as I hold with tenderness and care the suffering, loss or conflict with others or situations in the world.

The connection that has been so profound for me with gratitude and compassion and the contemplative life is that the practice/feeling of these two qualities can bring me back into my heart and allow me to be aligned with my deepest desire for God and for *being* love in and for the world at any time. Although I often revert to figuring out or resisting or wanting to understand my reality, this way of being in the heart leads to authenticity and joy and often a whole new way of looking at life.

I feel grateful even as I share all of this with you, and I feel the flow of life and goodness. I am reminded of Anthony de Mello's words: "There is no sweeter prayer than a grateful heart."

Patience is the director of Shalem's Young Adult Life and Leadership Initiative and a long-time group and workshop leader.

"When we are in touch with love, appreciation, and positive intention, we have the power to change the world."

— Dennis, Sheila & Matthew Linn,  
*Healing the Future*



# Batter My Heart

Carole Crumley

*"Batter my heart, three person'd God; for, you  
as yet but knocke, breathe, shine, and seeke to mend;  
that I may rise, and stand, o'erthrow mee, 'and bend  
your force, to breake, blowe, burn and make me new."  
—John Donne, "Holy Sonnets"*

I recently stumbled upon a cable television art auction and was totally transfixed as the auctioneer placed item after item on the block. He first told interesting historic data about the artist and the art piece, along with a rough estimate of its value. Then the on-air bidding began and within minutes the item was sold.

Evidently bidding was very slow that particular evening. Then an extremely rare piece came up. The auctioneer, trying to energize his audience, began to hammer loudly with his gavel calling out, "Wakey, Wakey. Come out from wherever you are and bid on this piece. Bid on it, Bid on it. Bid on it! This is extremely rare!!! Wakey, wakey. This is important." Blam, blam, blam went his gavel, hammering for our attention.

I don't know anything about art or auctions, but I really responded to the insistent demand to wake up and pay attention. In a way, it reminded me of the emails I get daily, each trying urgently to get my attention about very important matters I should (and mostly do) care about. They want me to send money, sign this petition, or support a worthy cause in some other way. However, these requests come so regularly that they actually dull my attention.

John Kirvan in *God Hunger* talks about how hard it is to get anyone's attention.

*The knock comes, but we don't hear it.  
We're in a back room and the sound  
doesn't carry.*

*We're talking with someone else.  
We've deliberately shut ourselves off to  
get on with life, to stay on schedule...."*

And finally, we hope that if we just "wait a while. Maybe it will go away."

Yet, the hammering doesn't go away.

Recently it has been the news about gun violence that is hammering my heart with its incessant call to *WAKE UP, PAY ATTENTION!* In play grounds, parks, movie theaters, elementary schools, shopping malls, at the Navy Yard, in churches, in Nairobi, in D.C., in Afghanistan, in Chicago, Newtown, Aurora. It's an ongoing plague of killings, intergenerational, non-discriminate murder. My fear is that this is happening so often it will begin to dull my senses and become the new normal rather than the obscene abnormal.

Let's face it. Waking up is work. Staying awake is work. Every morning I begin my day by reading the newspaper. Lately, I've noticed that my immediate response to reading the news is an unaccustomed sleepiness. The news is overwhelming, and I want to go



back to sleep. My husband has started calling this my early morning nap. I'm realizing that **not** going back to sleep is also work.

Staying awake to the all-ness of life, the complexity, the challenges, the griefs, the hopes, the fears, the beauty, the yearnings is the contemplative practice that stretches my heart. Holding everything in the spiritual heart is a work, a prayerful intention and a daily morning stretch. It is as much a body prayer as the stretches I do before sitting meditation.

I admit that, sometimes, I feel like the hammer myself, trying to get people's attention to the need for contemplative prayer and a contemplative stance in the world. "Wake up! Wake up!" I keep saying. "This is important! This

is important!" Other contemplative voices are sounding the same loud call. Richard Rohr says that our mystical gaze is close to being realized because, he thinks "we are on the very edge of history—and about to be edged over—by the depth of the need and from the depths of our own desire." Rowan Williams, the former Archbishop of Canterbury, is another voice of urgency. He recently wrote: "To put it boldly, contemplation is the only ultimate answer to the unreal and insane world that our financial systems and our advertising culture and our chaotic and unexamined emotions encourage us to inhabit. To learn contemplative practice is to learn what we need so as to live truthfully and honestly and lovingly. It is a deeply revolutionary matter."

I've come to realize that the constant battering to "wake up!" has a purpose. It invites my deepening trust that, in the midst of it all, God's spirit is working in ways that I cannot begin to imagine. As I wake up to this reality, somehow I am being opened, mended and made anew, as John Donne's poem reminds me. From that stance, my prayer becomes, "Batter my heart three person'd God'. Wake me up. Help me to stay awake. Please."

*This article was inspired by Ann Kulp.*

Carole is Shalem's senior program director.



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## Given by . . . . . In Memory of

Michael Ahern . . . . .	Mrs. Nora M. Ahern
Devon Allen . . . . .	Gerald May
Sanford & Lois Alwine . . . . .	Jerry May
Anonymous . . . . .	Chet O'Neal
Kathleen Blank Riether . . . . .	Richard Riether
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Maria Garcia-Larrieu . . . . .	Joaquin Garcia-Larrieu
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Clair Ullmann . . . . .	Gerald May

## GRANTS

The Trust for the Meditation Process  
The Bogert Fund

## STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION AND ACTIVITIES

The Condensed Financial Statements shown below were derived from the audited financial statements of the Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation, Inc. These condensed statements do not include all disclosures normally included in financial statements prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. The complete financial statements, including statements of cash flows, footnote disclosures and the report of our independent accountants, Aronson LLC, are available for review upon request.

### Condensed Statement of Financial Position as of June 30, 2013 and 2012

	2013	2012
<b>ASSETS</b>		
CURRENT ASSETS	\$ 197,945	\$ 226,208
INVESTMENTS	817,523	595,057
FIXED ASSETS	37,540	13,777
OTHER ASSETS	<u>43,474</u>	<u>13,835</u>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b><u>1,096,482</u></b>	<b><u>848,877</u></b>
<b>LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>		
CURRENT LIABILITIES	<u>140,494</u>	<u>81,457</u>
NET ASSETS		
Unrestricted	754,575	674,664
Temporarily restricted	<u>201,413</u>	<u>92,756</u>
TOTAL NET ASSETS	<u>955,988</u>	<u>767,420</u>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; NET ASSETS</b>	<b><u>\$ 1,096,482</u></b>	<b><u>\$ 848,877</u></b>

### Condensed Statement of Activities for Years Ended June 30, 2013 and 2012

	2013	2012
<b>REVENUE AND SUPPORT</b>		
Programs, contractual work and publications	\$ 578,257	\$ 530,960
Contributions	577,213	449,967
Investment income (losses)	<u>72,843</u>	<u>26,114</u>
<b>TOTAL REVENUE AND SUPPORT</b>	<b><u>1,228,313</u></b>	<b><u>1,007,041</u></b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Programs, including allocated staff compensation	754,753	639,652
Administration:		
Staff compensation & benefits	63,998	18,145
Rent and other	145,208	172,136
Fundraising expenses	<u>75,786</u>	<u>72,251</u>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b><u>1,039,745</u></b>	<b><u>902,184</u></b>
<b>Total Increase (Decrease) in Net Assets</b>	188,568	104,857
<b>NET ASSETS, Beginning of Year</b>	<u>767,420</u>	<u>662,563</u>
<b>NET ASSETS, End of Year</b>	<b><u>\$ 955,988</u></b>	<b><u>\$ 767,420</u></b>





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The Bellfry  
Elizabeth Campbell  
Joan Conway

Sue Czarnetzky  
Betty Dunlop  
Chad & Glory Entinger

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Suzanne Dale Wilcox  
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Sandra Wilson  
Martin Young





## SHALEM LONG-TIME DONORS

The following individuals have given to Shalem for ten years or more. We list them here with our heart-felt gratitude for their faithfulness to Shalem's ministry.

### 30 YEARS AND MORE

Jeannette & Stanley Bakke  
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Milo & Wendy Coerper  
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Anonymous  
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Ann Barry  
John & Anne Barton  
Bernice Bassing  
Robert & Tamala Bos  
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Robert & Sharon Brady  
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Alicia Conklin-Wood  
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If you are not on this list of names and feel you should be, please let us know.

## GERALD MAY MEMORIAL FUND DONORS

Raymond E. & Naomi C. Dungan Foundation





## SHALEM'S SHEKINAH SOCIETY

Many thanks to the following members of the **Shekinah Society** who have put Shalem in their wills—

N. Franklin Adkinson, Jr.  
Ann Barry  
Margaret Bullitt-Jonas  
Merrill Ware Carrington  
Jean Crawford  
John Denham  
Rosemary Dickerson  
Susan Dillon  
Tilden Edwards

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Lyta Seddig  
Betty Stoddard

Joan Stogis  
Jan Thurston  
Linda Toia  
Nan Weir  
Emily Wilmer  
Sandra Hay Wilson

Please let us know if you have included a bequest to Shalem in your estate plans. We'd like to say thank you and welcome you as a member of our Shekinah Society!

## MAKING A BEQUEST TO SHALEM

When making your estate plans, we hope you will consider a gift to Shalem. Over the past few years, we have been richly blessed by several bequests, some of them unexpected. Not only have they greatly assisted Shalem's mission and minis-

try, they are a very special way for the donor's care to extend into the future. Please contact Monica Maxon at the Shalem office, 301-897-7334 or [Monica@Shalem.org](mailto:Monica@Shalem.org), if you would like more information about making a legacy gift.

## SUSAN DILLON—GOD'S WILL AND MY WILL

Several years into my devotion to the Shalem Institute, it established the Shekinah Society, a way to recognize supporters who included Shalem in their wills, to ensure its financial stability in perpetuity. At that time, Shalem for me was a lifeline to courage and hope, a resource for just getting through the day, and the thought of its demise was a bit frightening. So, I went to see a lawyer to prepare my will, a sobering exercise. But, while I wondered about many things while writing my will, the primary placement of Shalem in the list of beneficiaries was never in doubt. There it has remained through several revisions of the will, just as it has remained a constant in my life over the last 35 years.

When I think back to when I first met Tilden Edwards, it's embarrassing to remember how I was then. But, despite my flaws and ignorance, God loved me then, and I began to sense that through what I encountered at Shalem. The staff, the programs, the silence, the various disciplines, the library, the jokes, the small groups and large retreats—



**Susan Dillon, senior manager of strategic development at Search for Common Ground, was one of the very first of the Shalem community to put Shalem in her will and thus also became a charter member of Shalem's Shekinah Society. Here she shares the story of her continuing commitment to Shalem's legacy.**

all these parts of Shalem became a language through which I learned of God's unconditional love for me. Even so, it was many years before I learned the necessity of supplementing that love with my own unconditional love for myself, and I experienced a lot of grief and sorrow in that interval. Shalem didn't protect me from the darkness of life; in fact, sometimes the relationships and experiences I had there seemed caught in that darkness. But I always had an underlying sense that Shalem could be trusted, that its human frailty would not thwart its unique competence in conveying and mediating God's love for each one of us.

As a long-term Board member, I participated in a number of envisioning processes, which totally baffled me. I was unable to picture Shalem without the people and programs that were so precious to me. Yet, I knew they and I would eventually leave or die, and Shalem had to be much bigger than I could envision. Putting Shalem in my will was a way of expressing confidence that this would prove true.

## VOLUNTEERS & IN-KIND DONATIONS

We are very grateful to the following individuals who have given of their time or have donated travel and other expenses during the past program year. Many thanks to:

- **Lisa Richey** and **June Schulte** for their special, hand-made cards created for Shalem.
- **Patrick Harris** and **Mel Shapcott**, of **Cyberian Frontier**, our web site managers.
- **Frank Toia**, **June Schulte**, **Susan Etherton**, **Ana Rampy**, and **Leah Rampy**, whose photographs you see in these pages, on our web site and in our monthly eNews.
- **Ketu'rah Biggins**, Shalem's intern, whose invaluable help in the office has also brightened our days.
- **Sandra Kerka** for her work on the program, certificate and poster for Shalem's 2013 Contemplative Voices Award; **Ana Rampy** and **Susan Etherton** for their photos of that event; **Tilden Edwards** and **Rose Mary Dougherty** for offering prayers; and **Lynne Joseloff** for providing music.
- **Shalem's Board of Directors**, who donated their time and talent in so many ways and especially for their help and sponsorship of Shalem's 2013 Contemplative Voices Award and their assistance at the Gerald May Seminar and donor reception.
- Shalem's non-Board **Committee members**, who gave so much time over the year: **Mark Goodwin**, **Margot Eyring**, **Paul Lemon**, **Leslie Miller** and **Therese Taylor-Stinson**.
- **Anne Grizzle**, who offered her wonderful Bellfry retreat center for Shalem's group spiritual direction residential programs.
- **Jeremy Klass**, **Ed Wilson** and **Stephen Broadhead** for their legal advice.
- Individuals who made additional in-kind contributions: Kathy Adams, Patricia Amrhein, Kevin Bagley, Chris Bazemore, Nora Becker, Stephen Broadhead, Susan Catalano, Arlene Christian, Sue & John Clark, Robert Cooke, David Covarrubias, Ellen Cronin, Mary Dadone, Ann Dean, Richard DeBona, Brent DeVore, Susan Etherton, Wanda Finke, Gordon Forbes, Sharon Glass, Cornelia Groat, Larry Hastings, Joan & John Hatcher, Kevin Hendersen, Rick Hendricks, Colleen Hernandez, Ann Hisle, Rhagan Hyypio, Barbara Kane, Joe Kenna, Jeremy Klass, Ann Kulp, Darlene Little, Clark Lobenstine, Rita Lombardo, Erica Marcus, Margaret McBride, Leslie Miller, Tiffany Montavon, Mary Katherine Morn, Jennie Sue Murdock, Tamara Newell, Andrea Noel, Jean Noon, Sue Parks, Bruce Pickle, Andrew & David Rampy, Kathleen Blank Riether, Patience Robbins, Frank Sasinowski, Matt Sherman, Jane Spell, Jennifer Svetlik, Mary Tschudy, Art von Lehe, Liz Ward, and Ed Wilson.

## SPECIAL THANKS

We especially want to thank the **Trust for the Meditation Process** for their help with the Young Adult Life and Leadership Initiative and **Edna and Douglas Noiles** for

their continuing support of Shalem's Going Deeper: Clergy Spiritual Life and Leadership Program.



## 40 YEARS—TRUSTING THE SPIRIT

Shalem was born in the spring of 1973! During this 40th anniversary year, we give thanks for all that the Spirit has given, we rejoice in what is happening now, and we celebrate the unfolding future. Our year-long celebration began in February 2013 with the Contemplative Voices Award honoring Richard Rohr, OFM. In addition, we welcomed John Philip Newell as our 40th anniversary year Gerald May Seminar speaker in April and took 40 pilgrims to Iona in June.

Well before the end of the fiscal year, we reached our goal to raise \$500,000 for our special 40th Anniversary Deep and Wide Campaign to fund technology and leadership initiatives! That special funding enabled us to create and launch two new e-courses and our Young Adult Life and Leadership Initiative for young adults ages 25-40. Our anniversary celebration ends with the capstone 40-Hour Contemplative Prayer Vigil; more about that will be shared in an upcoming journal.

We give thanks for these 40 years of trusting the Spirit and recommit to what and where the Spirit is leading us now.





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CeCe Balboni	Susan Pullin
Kathleen Hope Brown	Erika Schleifman
O. Robert Brown	Jane Sharp
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Kendrick Curry	Phil Stone
Carol Eckerman	Elizabeth Tuckermanty
Mark Goodwin	Clair Ullmann
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Office Hours: Monday to  
Friday, 8 am-4 pm

[www.shalem.org](http://www.shalem.org)  
E-mail: [info@shalem.org](mailto:info@shalem.org)

## Shalem Staff 2012-2013

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Carole Crumley

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Patience Robbins  
Elizabeth Ward

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### Special Assistant/Program Administrator

Tanya Radford

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### Webmaster & Coordinator of Online Learning

Ruth Taylor

### Senior Fellow for Spiritual Guidance

Rose Mary Dougherty, SSND

### Founder & Senior Fellow

The Rev. Dr. Tilden Edwards, Jr.

*Edited by Monica Maxon*

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*Photography: Susan Etherton, Ana Rampy, Leah Rampy,  
June Schulte and Frank Toia.*





## SHALEM'S MISSION

To nurture contemplative living and leadership

## SHALEM'S CORE VALUES

- Awareness that God is intimately present within and among us
- Reverence for the mystery of God's presence
- Desire for spiritual discernment in all things
- Radical willingness to trust God
- Respect for the unique spiritual path of each individual
- Recognition that contemplative living and leadership require spiritual support
- Commitment to action in the world arising from a contemplative orientation toward life

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## CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE & LEADERSHIP

# Going Deeper, Nurturing Your Call, and Transforming Community

Shalem offers in-depth programs to support your God-guided career, personal life, and ministry with others.

*Staff:* Carole Crumley, Ann Dean, Rose Mary Dougherty, Tilden Edwards, Patience Robbins, Liz Ward and others

- **SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE**

For those in the ministry of one-to-one spiritual direction

- **LEADING CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER GROUPS & RETREATS**

For those leading prayer groups and retreats in churches and other settings

- **CLERGY SPIRITUAL LIFE AND LEADERSHIP**

For clergy in congregational settings seeking to nurture their spiritual heart and leadership

- **PERSONAL SPIRITUAL DEEPENING**

For those wanting support to live each day prayerfully and authentically

- **YOUNG ADULT LIFE AND LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE**

For young adults, ages 25-40, who seek a deeper spiritual foundation for their lives and leadership



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