



# THE SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

Formation in the Christian Contemplative Life

## 25: Pause and Review



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*A new heart I will give you,  
and a new spirit I will put within you;  
and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone  
and give you a heart of flesh.*

- Ezekiel 36:26

*Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened,  
and I will give you rest.*

*Take my yoke upon you and learn from me,  
for I am meek and humble of heart;  
and you will find rest for yourselves.*

*For my yoke is easy, and my burden light.*

- Matthew 11:28-30

You are now about halfway through Part 2: The Human Condition. We have covered the Evolutionary Model, the Existential Model, the Pre-Rational Energy Centers, and over-identification with groups as part of the Mythic Membership level of consciousness. Today, pause and reflect, breathe in and out: What have you heard? What has spoken to your heart? What do you wish to carry forward?

### **A Meditation**

"If God is the sculptor, our practice is like a chisel that works effectively and patiently to remove the stone. Just as the progress of chiseling, brushing, and blowing away debris and dust is not by way of acquisition, the way an assembly of bricks and mortar acquires us a building, so the practice of contemplation does not acquire for us some-*thing*. Contemplative practice proceeds by way of the engaged receptivity of release, of prying loose, of letting go of the need to have our life circumstances be a certain way in order for us to live or pray or be deeply happy.

"The stone that is removed is our embedded and frenzied preoccupation with the inner video and all the ego-metrics involved in trying to gauge just how our spiritual lives are progressing. With enough of this stone removed, the chiseling becomes a quiet excavation of the present moment. What emerges from the chiseled and richly veined poverty of the present moment? The emerging figure is our life as Christ (Phil 1:21, Col 3:3-4)."

- Martin Laird, *A Sunlit Absence*

### **To Practice**

- Pause and review: You may wish to review any of the videos or emails from Session 13 onward that spoke to you or that you want to take in more deeply. You may also want to review the transcripts for those videos.

- Reflect on the meditation from Martin Laird. Remembering that God is the sculptor, what in you is being chiseled away, released, loosed?

- Ponder your unfolding experience with Centering Prayer and the Spiritual Journey program. What has touched your heart? Take note.

### **Resources for Further Study:**

You may wish to read or review the recommended sections from *Invitation to Love*, the Introduction and Chapters 1-5 and 7 (20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition) and the Introduction through Chapter 6, in older editions.

### **Notes and Reflections:**