

Peace and Quiet in Troubled Times

June 2026

Welcome to this opportunity to give yourself time and space away from the daily tasks, worries and fears which put our minds in turmoil. You are invited to focus on the music, words and pictures. You may find it helpful to read the poems out loud and then to keep silences in between, entering into an oasis of calm, to engage in 'mindfulness'. Each month we explore a different theme, relevant to our common experiences of life and the world around us. We follow the pattern of the seasons of the Church year.

Please click on the underlined text beneath the images to hear the music via YouTube. Please do skip or close any adverts that appear.

What is this life?



<https://youtu.be/CrEMHDgN5dl>

Guitar Concerto in D major 2nd Movement – Vivaldi

In her book 'It's OK that you're not OK' subtitled 'Meeting Grief and Loss in a Culture That Doesn't Understand', Megan Devine writes: "Spiritual practices in any tradition, including mindfulness in its many forms, are meant to help you live what is yours to live, not to make you rise above it. These tools are meant to help you feel companioned inside your grief. They're meant to give you a tiny bit of breathing room inside what is wholly unbearable. That's not at all the same thing as making your pain go away. Rather than help us rise above being human, teachings in any true tradition help us become *more* human: more connected, not less attached."

Leisure

WHAT is this life if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare?-

No time to stand beneath the boughs,
And stare as long as sheep and cows:

No time to see, when woods we pass,
Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass:

No time to see, in broad daylight,
Streams full of stars, like skies at night:

No time to turn at Beauty's glance,
And watch her feet, how they can dance:

No time to wait till her mouth can
Enrich that smile her eyes began?

A poor life this if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare.

W.H. Davies (b.1871-d.1940)



A Northern Morning

It rained from dawn. The fire died in the night.
I poured hot water on some foreign leaves;
I brought the fire to life. Comfort
spread from the kitchen like a taste of chocolate
through the head-waters of a body,
accompanied by that little-water-music.
The knotted veins of the old house tremble and carry
a louder burden: the audience joining in.

People are peaceful in a world so lavish
with the ingredients of life:
the world of breakfast easy as Tahiti.
But we must leave. Head down in my new coat



I dodge to the High Street conscious of my fellows
damp and sad in their vegetable fibres.
But by the bus stop I look up: the spring trees
exult in the downpour, radiant, clean for hours:
This is the life! This is the only life!

Alistair Elliot

Prayer

Some days, although we cannot pray, a prayer
utters itself. So, a woman will lift
her head from the sieve of her hands and stare
at the minims sung by a tree, a sudden gift.

Some nights, although we are faithless, the truth
enters our hearts, that small familiar pain;
then a man will stand stock-still, hearing his youth
in the distant Latin chanting of a train.

Pray for us now. Grade I piano scales
console the lodger looking out across
a Midlands town. Then dusk, and someone calls
a child's name as though they named their loss.

Darkness outside. Inside, the radio's prayer -
Rockall. Malin. Dogger. Finisterre.

Carol Ann Duffy



<https://youtu.be/MPIkHxFA-Qg>

Una Mattina – Ludovico Einaudi

Alternative Beatitudes

Blessed are you who do not shun me
but embrace me as I struggle to find the gift within the pain.

Blessed are you who do not shrink from sharing
that you too have known the searing cloud.

Blessed are you who listen
and by listening affirm me as I am.

Blessed are you to tell me I am precious
and worthy of the deepest cherishing.

Blessed are you who fan the tiny flame
that shines more brightly in the dark.

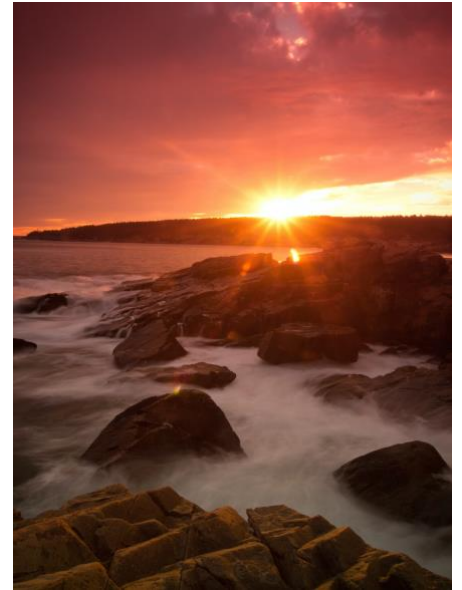
Blessed are you who know me as I am.

Anon.



Wild Geese

You do not have to be good.
You do not have to walk on your knees
for a hundred miles through the desert, repenting.
You only have to let the soft animal of your body
love what it loves.
Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.
Meanwhile the world goes on.
Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain
are moving across the landscapes,
over the prairies and the deep trees,
the mountains and the rivers.
Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,
are heading home again.
Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,
the world offers itself to your imagination,
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting -
over and over announcing your place
in the family of things.



Mary Oliver



<https://youtu.be/aFa2S071re8>

Let it Be (The Beatles) Milos Karadaglic Ft. Gregory Porter

Hope is the thing with feathers

Hope is the thing with feathers
That perches in the soul,
And sings the tune without the words,
And never stops at all,

And sweetest in the gale is heard;
And sore must be the storm
That could abash the little bird
That kept so many warm.

I've heard it in the chillest land,
And on the strangest sea;
Yet, never, in extremity,
It asked a crumb of me.

Emily Dickinson



Blessed and Blessing

I give thanks to name ways I am blessed:
The laughter of children,
The songs of a choir,
The smile of a stranger,
The touch of a friend.

We hold blessings tenderly,
For they are fragile
And can slip away.

I wonder at blessings that are given unexpectedly:
A call at the right time,
A word of encouragement
The one who understands
And loves without question.

We cherish blessings thankfully,
For they make dark times
Easier to bear.

I open my eyes to places where blessings are found:
The quiet of nature,
A family home,
My place of worship,
The words of a book.

We acknowledge blessings carefully,
For so many others
Have gone unnoticed.

I pause to name times of blessing:
In joy,
Or mourning,
In celebration,
And the everyday.

We create blessings lovingly,
For we know that God works through us
To be a blessing to others.

I take courage to name ways I am a blessing:
The hands to create,
An ear to listen,
A heart to care,
A soul to connect.

We await blessings faithfully,
For we know that God
Has created us to be
Blessed and Blessing.

Louise Margaret Granahan



<https://youtu.be/RLd9PcZW5PQ>
Hallelujah – Leonard Cohen

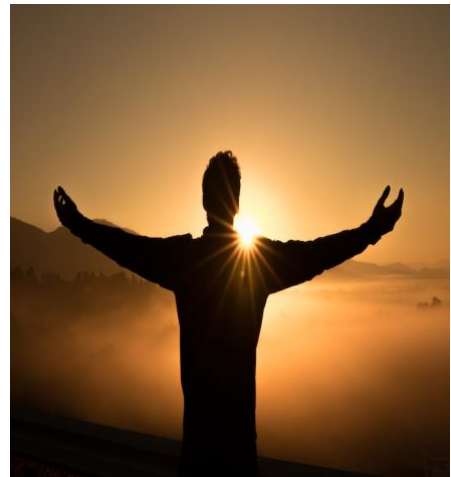
Gifts

Gifts come in strange ways -
when we least expect them;
when they're hardly needed;
when we're unprepared...

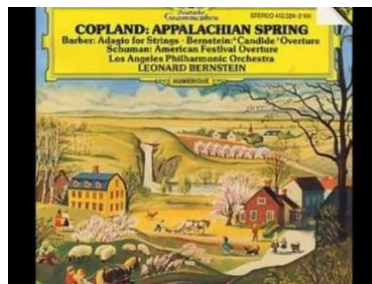
Gifts of hope
in the midst of sadness;
gifts of healing
in the face of brokenness;
gifts of love
in the depths of despair.

Help me to expect the gift of hope
even when I didn't think there'd be one;
make me ready for the gift of healing
even when I didn't know I needed one;
prepare me now for the gift of love
even when I didn't believe love would be enough.

Tom Gordon



Life is an opportunity, avail it,
Life is a beauty, admire it.
Life is bliss, taste it.
Life is a dream, realize it.
Life is a challenge, meet it.
Life is a duty, complete it.
Life is a game, play it.
Life is costly, care for it.
Life is wealth, keep it.
Life is love, enjoy it.
Life is mystery, know it.
Life is a promise, fulfil it.
Life is sorrow, overcome it.
Life is a song, sing it.
Life is a struggle, accept it.
Life is a tragedy, confront it.
Life is an adventure, dare it.
Life is life, save it!
Life is luck, make it.
Life is too precious, do not destroy it.
Written by Mother Teresa in her
seventies.



<https://youtu.be/JI6RYZygevA>

Simple Gifts – Leonard Bernstein