

# Heart ♥ to ♥ Heart



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*“Finding God in the Now” is the theme for our March Heart to Heart, inspired by this reflection:*

*The present moment is treasured by the praying Christian. My “now” is God’s “now.” Each moment is to be cherished, lived fully, accepted completely as if it were a sacrament. “...we ought to plunge fully into the moment as it passes in order to fulfill, in this instant, the will of Jesus, the One who calls himself “the Way.” The moment that is past no longer exists, and we may never possess the moment which has still to come. The one certainty is that we can love God in the present moment that is given to us.*

*(Chiara Lubich, Meditations)*



*“...love God in the present moment that is given to us” (Lubich)*

Several years ago, I joined the St. Vincent de Paul Society at our parish. This wonderful organization has given me new friendships in our parish community and provided a way for me to reach out to people in need in our city.

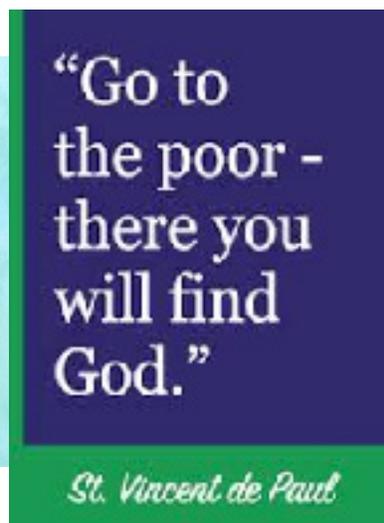
The above quote from Lubich has come to mean so much to me as I make home visits as a Vincentian. Entering someone’s home to hear and learn their story reminds me so often of Angela who did this very same thing. Compassionate listening, not judging as the person’s story pours forth, is what this moment is about. Finding God in words shared, experiencing the NOW with someone who feels broken, forgotten, afraid because of the situation in which they find

themselves always brings me to the realization to place trust in God. Sometimes a situation can be overwhelming and one wonders how this will

ever be resolved, but that is where trust comes in. Angela has counseled us to “not lose heart if you do not know how or what to do. Have hope and firm faith in God, for God will help you in everything.” Looking for a way to help someone always brings a sense of peace and gratitude.

We have this moment NOW; yesterday is history and tomorrow is not guaranteed, so we need to do what we can to help. We have this moment to be present to

someone and to listen gently and with respect and then trust that we may experience big surprises.



—Rita Ann Bregenhorn, OSU  
St. Louis, MO

A few weeks ago, I had an experience that touched me and again revealed to me that God comes often in those least expected. I had driven downtown a few days after the snow had melted and parked perpendicular to the street. Upon returning to my car, when I tried to back out, the wheels spun. I got out and saw that there was ice and snow against the curb. I tried to kick some of it out from under the tire, tried reverse, no response, tried again to kick the snow out from under the tire. I did this at least six times, and each time I looked for someone to help. Finally, I saw a homeless man walking down the street, got out of my car and waited to ask for help. His response was, "I thought you might need help."

When I started to put the car in reverse, I wondered what he was doing as unlike most who push on the hood, I could see that he must be crouched down; all I could see was the very top of his head. But my car was moving. When I got into the street with no cars behind me, I waved him over to give him a few dollars. He said thank you with a big grin, unzipped his coat, where I saw his arm in a sling. He said, "I did it. I did it." I could tell he was so proud of himself and I was relieved that I was no longer stuck. Thanks to the generous heart of a homeless man I was on my way home.

—Mary Dostal, OSU  
Billings, MT



As I think of my ministry with grief through the years, I visualize the sculpture from South Africa of Angela on a bench, inviting us to come beside her and pour out our heart. Grief ministry has been a sacred journey and experience for me. To have someone share their most vulnerable self with me has been very humbling. It is truly an extension of Angela's charism of gentle counsel and hospitality. I see the Christ in that moment of the "Now" with each person. I am reminded of the title of one of Annie Lamott's books, *Help Thanks Wow*. As we are suspended in the process of grief, in "the thin space" between the "now" of pain and the hope of the "now" of wholeness and healing, we cry out, "Help, Thanks, Wow" at the presence of God's love.

communicate to the end. Her family and all who visited her were gifted as well with her openness to welcome the Divine. I am grateful for the sacred moment I was able to share with her.



I have come to believe grief is a process of healing, a journey we all experience in a myriad of ways. Personal loss touches us as we face diminishment of health, change in jobs or living arrangements, rupture of a relationship, or loss of a loved one through death. We also find ourselves grieving the many injustices in our society; the degrading of human life, the abuse of the vulnerable, the lack of care for the poor and marginalized, the refugee and immigrant and all without resources to live life with dignity. In prayer we embrace all as we grieve these losses. We call on Angela to be in our midst lending aid to our efforts to heal and reach out anew each day.

Sitting recently with a woman dying of cancer, I was drawn in to the "now" she was experiencing. She was gifted with lucidity and the ability to

—Jeanette Lombardi, OSU  
Novato, CA



For me, “Finding God in the Now” is discovering the extraordinary in the ordinary. The call and invitation is to be attentive and present in the day to day and in the moment. At times, this can be challenging, especially in our present world situations. Persons and events in the “now” often speak to me of God’s Presence. Angela was out among the people and attending to their needs and that is where I experience my God. God often speaks to me through them and, hopefully, I can, in some way, share Angela’s charism with them. At times, no words are necessary, but trying to be present to the

moment is. I feel blessed to be among the people in my apartment building, in ministry, in parish community and in other areas of my life where God is present in the “Now” and frequently with surprises! We have heard it said that the “Present Moment is Gift” and that is why it is called “present.” As we journey each day, we are being called to live in the “Now” and to discover what that means for each one of us.

—Marion Lynch, OSU  
Wilmington, DE



I see God most clearly when I am serving as a volunteer Eucharistic minister/pastoral visitor to hospitalized patients. Being present to extremely sick patients, and sometimes also their families, listening to and praying with them, is when I sense God helping them deal with their fears and accept their situations. Often people speak in detail about the blessings they have had in their lives, and how they are slowly coming to terms with their mortality. Others talk about the great peace they have found in forgiving old wounds and making amends with ex-spouses or estranged children. Sometimes people

break down and cry as they, for the first time, say aloud how scared they feel. I am positive I witness the grace of God and work of the Holy Spirit in the heartfelt words of all these people.

Angela’s words are so true: “The most direct path that leads us to God is through works of mercy.”

May we never forget that we always carry God’s presence with us wherever we go.

—Russ Weil  
St. Louis, MO