



FIRST-SUNDAY CONTEMPLATIVE SITTING

MAY 2021

THE UNIVERSE

The universe is pulsing with strands of energy, a vibrating cosmic symphony.

The above statement was uttered several years ago by the narrator of a PBS program on “String Theory.” Was this just a hyperbolic metaphor or an actual theory of physics? Either way, it invites us into an awe-inspired moment. If we could visualize billions of one dimensional threads and imagine hearing the hum produced by their vibrations, we might indeed experience the harmony of the cosmos. It would stretch us beyond a flat impression of the universe, a classroom chart of the eight planets in our galaxy.

Scientific exploration of deep space invites us into mystery, the mystery of black holes, distant suns, as yet undiscovered matter, and much more. We marvel at God’s imaginative creation of the atom and micro-organisms; we are thrilled at the fingers and toes of a newborn; we are inspired by the grandeur of a sunset. Now, scientific exploration calls forth a sense of profound wonder at the mystery of the living universe. The symphony of vibrating strings and deep space afford us the opportunity to recognize God’s holy, loving spirit: alive, in motion, creating a life-giving pulse.



Thomas Berry asserts that we bear the universe in our being as the universe bears us in its being, both having emerged from a deeper mystery.¹ We name this mystery, “God.”

Be still. Look within yourself and recognize the pulse that began in you about eight days after your conception; attend to your heartbeat that joins in the rhythms of the loving heart of the universe, in praise of the Composer. Perhaps, listening to some classical music, you might glimpse the spark and hear the heart of divinity within. Rest in that moment.

¹Thomas Berry. *Dream of the Earth*, Sierra Club Books, 1988

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*Mindfulness gives you the inner space and quietness to look deeply,
listen well, and be alive, awake and aware.*

- In stillness dwells the calm abiding Presence. I rest in you.
- There beyond reason, and thought is the One who draws me on. Be still my soul.
- Nothing to do, nowhere to go, no bells and whistles, only silence. I am free.

*Mindfulness, that deep silent encounter with the innermost center of our being.
Therein grows our capacity for the universe, for spirit, for God.*

Remember, AWARENESS is key – awareness I am sad, awareness I am cranky, awareness I am withholding, awareness I am at ease, awareness of such felt gratitude.
Awareness of just what is without blame or judgment or criticism ... Awareness is the gift.

Mindfulness Practice: Set a time of 5, 10, or more minutes.

Gently in silence, invite yourself to be with whatever you are aware of, whatever is arising in you ... thoughts or feelings ... breathing into it and out ...

- If what you are aware of is unpleasant, difficult or brings dis-ease, focus your breath there and allow the discomfort to soften and release.
- If your awareness is pleasant, receive it with a smile and release, pass it on. Each time returning to the breath, in and out.
- If your mind wanders, gently bring it back to the breath flowing in and out.

Simple mindful verses: You may choose just one to practice.

- Breathing in, I know I am breathing in. Breathing out, I know I am breathing out.
- Breathing in ... breathing out, breathing in ... breathing out, in and out.
- Breathing in, 2,3,4. Breathing out, 2,3,4.
- Breathing in, I am aware of my heart, Breathing out, I smile at my heart.

Let your imagination name any part of your body you wish; you could name friends, family, co-workers, elements of the cosmos, Earth, and other species.

My responses to this First Sunday reflection:


