



Center for Spiritual Development

# *Daily Reflections*

Image by Christine Sponchia

## ON THE EDGE OF ETERNITY

By Julie Mussché

*“Salvation is exactly this -- the two-fold love of God and of our neighbor.”*

**AMMA SYNCLETICA**

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### Reflection

Recently I've been participating in and preparing materials for a book study. One of the selected books is *The Desert Mothers: Spiritual Practices from the Women of the Wilderness* by Mary C. Earle. As a spiritual director, it has been gratifying and inspirational to be reminded of the nascent foundations and traditions of the ministry.

The desert mothers and fathers responded to the context of their time, living in a liminal period of the early Church as it transitioned from a persecuted minority to a state-established institution. Seeking to live a life of spiritual integrity, these early monastics established communities of like-minded people on the fringes of the wilderness. There, depending on their call, they lived a life that included prayer, silence, fasting, charitable works, and generous

hospitality. Over time, persons sought out their counsel and wisdom.

What inspired me, in refreshing my memory of the beginnings of my ministry, were the fundamentals of the spirituality of the desert mothers. On a day-to-day basis, we are invited to love God, our neighbor and ourselves. This is the integrated essence of being faithful to God's teachings. Further, activating silence and stillness is a spiritual discipline that opens us up to hear God's desire for us and to be present to the holiness of all things. We are called to be humble in recognizing our place in time and space, and with a sense of gratitude for the gift of existence. Discernment is a way of life, not an event. To not judge others; to welcome and honor all; to seek and be the agent of mercy and reconciliation; to repent as a matter of spiritual integrity; all of these virtues hold true to being a follower of Jesus.

One of the points the author makes is that the desert mothers were not going to the fringes to escape life, but to live it more fully present to God. "The Wisdom of the desert tells us that this way of life does require creating regular space and time to be still and silent." (Earle, 27 Kindle) Now, that makes sense.

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Judean Desert  
Photo by Julie Muscch é

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## For Pondering

- How are you invited to make time for God through silence and stillness?

- Where do you find your desert, your sanctuary?
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## For Prayer

*You have searched me, Lord,  
and you know me.  
You know when I sit and when I rise;  
you perceive my thoughts from afar.  
You discern my going out and my lying down;  
you are familiar with all my ways.  
Before a word is on my tongue  
you, Lord, know it completely.  
You hem me in behind and before,  
and you lay your hand upon me.  
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,  
too lofty for me to attain.  
Where can I go from your Spirit?  
Where can I flee from your presence?  
I go up to the heavens, you are there;  
if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.  
If I rise on the wings of the dawn,  
if I settle on the far side of the sea,  
even there your hand will guide me,  
your right hand will hold me fast.  
If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me  
and the light become night around me,"  
even the darkness will not be dark to you;  
the night will shine like the day,  
for darkness is as light to you.*

**PSALM 139:1-12**

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