



**Image inspiration:** *What is next? We may want to know, right now. We may want this suspended droplet of water to drop, right now, but it will take its own time. It is beyond our control. We are invited to trust the suspension of liminal moments.*

## Trust in the Slow Work of God By Teilhard de Chardin

Above all, trust in the slow work of God.

We are quite naturally impatient in everything to reach the end without delay. We should like to skip the intermediate stages. We are impatient of being on the way to something unknown, something new.

And yet it is the law of all progress, that it is made by passing through some stages of instability, and that it may take a very long time.

And so I think it is with you

Your ideas mature gradually. Let them grow.  
Let them shape themselves, without undue haste.

Don't try to force them on  
as though you could be today what time (that is to say, grace and circumstances acting on your own good) will make you tomorrow.

Only God could say what this new spirit gradually forming within you will be.

Give our Lord the benefit of believing that his hand is leading you and accept the anxiety of feeling yourself in suspense and incomplete.

## Contemplation and Right Action

(Fr. Richard Rohr, OSF, Daily Meditations, August 22, 2022)

Father Richard shares about an important time of discernment in his own life:

There are two spiritual disciplines that keep me honest and growing: contemplative prayer and the perspective from the bottom. In 1985, I was freed for a year to pursue the contemplative part of my vocation. It was a major turning point. Father William McNamara's definition of contemplation—"a long loving look at the real"—became transformative. [1] The world, my own issues and hurts, all goals and desires gradually dissolved into proper perspective. God became obvious and everywhere.

Ultimately, we do not earn or find God. We just get ourselves out of the way. We let go of illusions and the preoccupations of our smaller selves. As the cheap scaffolding falls away, the soul stands revealed. The soul, or True Self, cannot be created or achieved by our work. It just is, and it is already. The soul is God's "I AM" continued in me. That part of me already knows, desires, and truly seeks God. Discernment of God's will comes naturally to the True Self because here "I" and God seem to be one "I."

Richard reflects on how this extended time of contemplation brought him to a point of decisive action: After my sabbatical year, I found my way to the conviction that I should open the Center for Action and Contemplation in New Mexico. I wanted to help people get thoroughly involved in the issues and goals of social justice, to help people work in solidarity with those on the margins, but from the right point of departure. It is possible to do the right thing for the wrong reasons!

Contemplation is a way to hear with the Spirit and not just with the head. Contemplation is the search for a wide-open space, a space broad enough for the head, the heart, the feelings, the gut, the subconscious, our memories, our intuitions, our whole body. We need a holistic place for discerning wisdom.

The effect of contemplation is authentic action; if contemplation doesn't lead to genuine action, then it remains only navel-gazing and self-preoccupation.

I'm convinced that if we stick with it, if we practice contemplation regularly, then we will come to an inner place of compassion—for ourselves and for others. In this place, we notice how much the suffering of the world is our suffering. We become committed to this world, not cerebrally, but from the much deeper perspective of our soul. At this point, we're indestructible, because in that place we find the peace that the world cannot give. We don't need to win anymore; we just need to do what we have to do, as naive and simplistic as that might sound. That's why Augustine could make such an outrageous statement as "Love [God] and do what you will"! [2] People who are living from a truly God-centered place instead of a self-centered place are dangerously free precisely because they are tethered at the center.

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[1] William McNamara as quoted by Walter J. Burghardt, "Contemplation: A Long, Loving Look at the Real," in *An Ignatian Spirituality Reader*, ed. George W. Traub (Chicago: Loyola Press, 2008), 91.

[2] Augustine, *Ten Homilies on the First Epistle of John to the Parthians*, tractate 7.8. Adapted from Richard Rohr, *Essential Teachings on Love*, selected by Joelle Chase and Judy Traeger (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2018), 133, 141–142.