

This month, the first group meeting will focus on the Reflection Questions, Quotes, and Poetry. The second meeting will focus FOR FURTHER REFLECTION, which is an art project. YES, Rev. Tony will be doing it, too.

Reflect on RENEWAL

- Have you ever been “washed clean”? (Is there something in you that longs for it now?)
- You’ve been telling yourself you need rest, but what if what you really need is play?
- How would your life change if you saw rest as “a form of resistance” against a culture that gladly “uses us,” deforms us and lures us into believing that exhaustion is a mark of success?
- Which of your commitments to the greater good needs renewing this year?

RENEWAL Quotes

- “Taking care of yourself doesn't mean me first, it means me too.” - L.R. Knost
- “Anyone can slay a dragon, she told me, but try waking up every morning & loving the world all over again. That's what takes a real hero.” - Brian Andreas
- “We have only begun to imagine the fullness of life. How could we tire of hope? —so much is in bud...” Denise Levertov
- “It’s made me see that more than holding, we need to be held, by the larger things that enable us to live out loud...” – Mark Nepo

RENEWAL Poetry

“Monet Refuses The Operation” by Lisel Mueller

Full poem at <https://www.poemhunter.com/poem/monet-refuses-the-operation/>

Read by author: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dR1j-o_0x5A

Accompanying his paintings: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eC0sotAbdIA>

“Saint Francis and the Sow” by Galway Kinnell

Full poem at <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/42683/saint-francis-and-the-sow>

Reading by the author: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yBJ3Llp_Lj8

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

A Renewal Box to Remind You by Soul Matters Creativity Consultant, Elizabeth McKoy.

Reminders are essential to renewal. Normal life crowds out opportunities for rest, rejuvenation and what matters most. Given this, we have to be intentional about reminding ourselves to make room for renewal. And nothing helps us remember better than physical reminders. So this month engage your creativity and create “a renewal box” covered with and containing physical items and visual images that will help you renew your core commitments and keep you connected to the things that nourish you most. This exercise invites us into that special spiritual space of play, art, and joy that only comes when we let creativity lead.

Instructional Video - Watch a 6-minuter video tutorial here: <https://vimeo.com/438352521>

Written Instructions - Personalize and decorate the outside of Box. The goal is to make it visually attractive to yourself. You can use images that represent what renews you or words that capture key values you want to renew your commitment to.

1. Write/Journal a list of 6-10 goals regarding self-care and/or overarching goals for this year in terms of renewal.
2. Write down a few ideas answering the question: what renewal means to you? See below for an example. Are there things? Actions? Events? that connect you to your renewal goals for this year? Re: social justice/black lives matter work/witness, environment, politics. What might you put in this box to help remind you and inspire you?
3. Spend a few days curating items to put in the box. Try not to just “get it done.” The process of finding and creating items for the box is integral to the impact of the exercise. Try to find items that engage your senses: feeling/smell/sounds....take the time to personalize and endow with meaning.
4. Sort, Save, Discard. Try making piles of symbols/ideas/expressions of your renewal elements: look through magazines, make index cards with a few quotes or ideas. If you can't find an item that is “just right,” sketch or print a picture of it.
5. Share: With your small group, share a few of the items in the box as well as highlights from your experience of creating the box and selecting its items.

Supplies Needed:

- A Box (re-used small box, craft box etc. Here's one from Michael's Crafts.)
- Glue - I love using Modgepodge to glow and coat surfaces of the outside and inside of the box with collages.
- Scissors
- Found items that can be “sacrificed” for the year -ex. Old watch, mini-cactus....etc.
- Index cards
- Paper
- Magazine pictures and text
- Crayons/markers/sharpies
- Inexpensive water color set for color and fun!
- Sketchbook (optional) - I love using a blank inexpensive sketchbook- and markers to work with Soul Matters throughout the year.