

World Day of Prayer for Consecrated Life

February 2 2023

Suggested music for **Centring Prayer**: *Let your Beauty Shine in Me, Lord*—Margaret Rizza

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EmZ3RJobQ_o

Message from author, **Margaret Silf**, to the *Hidden Wings* Book Club for the Federation Vocation Animation Committee; January 18-February 8 2023

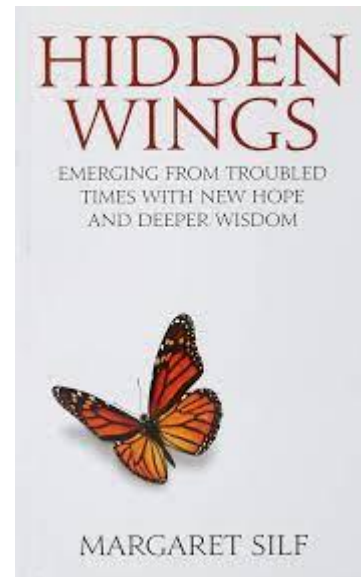
Dear friends and fellow pilgrims,

I was delighted to learn that you have chosen to journey together for a while with the caterpillar story and in search of your own imaginal cells.

The latest thinking in quantum science tells us that at the particle level all existence is inter-connected, and that whatever happens to any particle in creation affects everything else. I am becoming more and more conscious of this mystery as together we live through one crisis after another along our human journey on planet Earth. ...

Our situation now in 2023 reminds me of the first time I stood at the head of the Niagara Falls (on the Canadian side!) and watched the turbulent waters gathering so furiously before going over the edge. It feels to me as though we are experiencing the confluence of several raging rivers all converging simultaneously on a precipice - climate change, pandemic, global inequality and injustice, unprovoked armed conflict, the soaring cost of living, the breakdown of services we used to depend on, widespread political instability and a breakdown of trust in leadership at so many levels...

However, friends, where there are caterpillars, can butterflies be far behind? I really enjoyed exploring, metaphorically, the process of transformation by which a completely new creation emerges out of the collapse of the old. In reality, of course, this process is far from enjoyable. It seems clear to me that the human family is currently floundering in the end stage of its caterpillar phase, and entering the dark, frightening and uncharted territory of the chrysalis. It is also clear that inside this chrysalis state there is a growing realisation that something momentous is happening in our times and that more and more human hearts and minds are beginning to walk to a different drumbeat. A new consciousness is dawning - long foretold by ancient prophets and mystics—and more recently by contemporary thinkers such as Teilhard de Chardin. Quite possibly a tipping point is not so far away when the new consciousness will eclipse the old.



The caterpillar story shows us that transformation is inevitable, that it is costly, and that it is our human destiny. Everything in our present culture urges us to avoid pain and strive to preserve what we think we have. The bigger story speaks a different language - the language of letting go, and making space for the next stage of our being to emerge. In Christian terms this is the language of the paschal mystery, in which 'ascension' can only happen via the darkness of the tomb. We are engaged in the birthing of a whole new level of what it means to be human, but this can only come into existence through a shedding of old attitudes and assumptions, a surrender of control, a trust in the mystery in and through which it is taking place and an active labouring to cooperate with this mystery to ensure that the new creation is the best possible version of humanity that we can envisage and hope for.

If you, like me, are constantly dismayed at all that is unfolding in our world, never lose sight of the truth of the imaginal cell, that 'the Kingdom is within you', already coming to birth. Jesus warned us that the seed must fall into the ground and rot, before the new life it contains can sprout and bear fruit. May we learn from the humbled and broken caterpillar, may we be granted the courage and the patience of the chrysalis, and may we rise in the fullness of time to the butterfly's vision and the beating of greater wings.



Heather A. Menden

My warmest greetings and good wishes to you all,

Margaret, January 2023

For your reflection and sharing:

What do you feel may be the “momentous thing” that is happening in our world right now?

What do you believe may be the role of religious life as a result of these times?

What may be the attitudes and old assumptions that we may need to shed as we sit in the courage and patience of the chrysalis?

What else is stirring in your “imaginal cells” right now?

Concluding Prayer:

We must be broken because there is a good so great
It breaks through the bounds of our littleness.
We must be broken because there is a power
Which works in our lives to achieve a good
We cannot compass and cannot discern,
Until some later time in retrospect
Reveals the form of a new creation
Now visibly emerging.

We must be broken because there is a God
Who works for righteousness so great
That it cannot be confined to the limits of our control.
We must be broken because there is, day by day,
The creating of a kingdom of goodness
In depth and height and scope
So far beyond the reach of any human plan
That it must not be constricted to our imposed directive.
We must be broken because above us,

Above the breakdown and the ruin
Of plans and persons and ages and nations,
There is a beating of great wings.

Henry Nelson Wieman in *The Source of Human Good*

