



Grain

“My Zen is the slow swinging tops of 16 pine trees.”

Thomas Merton

Submitted by Lou Ann Petersen, Lake Nabagamon, WI

Field

³⁶ He took a little child whom he placed among them. Taking the child in his arms, he said to them, ³⁷ “Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me.” ³⁸ John said to him, “Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us.” ³⁹ But Jesus said, “Do not stop him; for no one who does a deed of power in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me. ⁴⁰ Whoever is not against us is for us. ⁴¹ For truly I tell you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ will by no means lose the reward. ⁴² If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were hung around your neck and you were thrown into the sea.” Mark 9:38-42

Thoughts

A quote with the word, Zen, was just offered for Monday Quotes. Zen is a sect of Buddhism and some say a way of envisioning. Does Zen belong in a Christian reflection? As it happens, in the upcoming Gospel lesson, Jesus says, “Whoever is not against us is for us.” The circle of those who can express love and compassion and who can confront evil is wide. Don’t get caught up in how wisdom may come from someone outside our own exact path. Be more concerned about caring for children.

Jesus spoke while still holding a child, but he wasn’t leading a parenting class. Did any of those present even have children? His message was for everyone regardless of what kind of family they may have had, and the question they/we were left with is compelling. Do we care about children? Do we value them in how we directly treat them, but also in the way we support public policies? Do we think of children when we evaluate candidates for public offices and in the way we hold those elected accountable? What do we say about state and federal policies that impact children in poverty, to immigrant children separated from their parents, to refugee families waiting in the wings while the U.S. is not even welcoming the quota we agreed to, or to the young who will feel the impacts of climate change in their lifetime?

May we be graced to know how to express our care, and also to rest in the view or sound of the slow swinging tops of trees and the beauty that surrounds us. Happy Monday!

Prayer

Highly recommended.

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Many blessings upon you,

Pastor Cindy