

We are, each of us, a little universe

How many of us can stand next to Niagara Falls without thinking about the Divine? Or the impossible power of thunder in a summer storm, the breathtaking beauty of a mountainside, the height of ocean waves, the innumerable stars in the sky, the majesty of an old growth Redwood Forest, or the force of gale winds?

From the grandest heights to the most minute organisms, God is there. The incredible majesty of the earth we inhabit and its mysterious forces can only reinforce our sense of wonder at the vastness of the universe.

Kent Nerburn, a writer who has spent many years bridging native and non-native culture, says, “We are all born with a belief in God. It may not have a last name or a face. We may not even see it as God. But it is there. It is the sense that comes over us as we stare into the starlit sky or watch the last fiery rays of an evening sunset. It is the morning shiver as we wake on a beautiful day and smell a richness in the air that we know and love from somewhere we can’t recall. It is the mystery behind the beginning of time and beyond the limits of space. It is a sense of otherness that brings alive something deep within our hearts.”

According to Astrophysicist Neil DeGrasse Tyson, “There’s as many atoms in a single molecule of your DNA as there are stars in the typical galaxy. We are, each of us, a little universe.” How cool is it that the same God that created the mountains, oceans, galaxies and molecules looked at all that is and thought the world needed one of you, too?

Prayer: Dear God. Help me to embrace the beauty and mystery of the world you have created...and that includes me!

06/2018

Take a Moment to Connect

Here are a few simple ideas to help you connect with God in nature.

1. Read the landscape.

Take a walk and find something in the natural environment. Look for signs where the natural features have adapted to natural or human impact. Why do trees lean or fall? What signs can you see of where water has created an impact in the earth, or lack of water? What signs of human activity do you see that have affected the environment you are in? How does nature adapt to change? What are some things you can do to better care for God’s creation? Can you commit to do an action step for 30 days?

2. Use your imagination.

Pick up a blade of grass, leaf, stone or piece of bark. Smell it, feel it, look at it very slowly and closely. Imagine you can shrink yourself and go into the leaf itself. Go as far as you can in your imagination...all the way down to the atoms that make up the leaf. Then start moving outward. Imagine stepping further and further back from your object until you are high above the earth. Keep moving as far as your imagination will take you. What do you experience in your body as you go in close? As you move far out?

3. Use your senses.

Find a natural location near water or after a fresh rain. Close your eyes, relax, and breathe through your nose for 10 minutes. Listen, smell, and touch the water if you can. Feel it slip through your fingertips. Smell how it changes the air. Feel, and be aware of, how the moisture in the air wets your breath. Imagine water flowing through your body – in your blood, in your organs, in your breath, in your stomach, in your skin. Offer gratitude for the water that keeps you alive.

From *Connecting Nature, Spirit and Health: A Spiritual Guide for Encountering Nature*. Available online at www.faithhealthtransformation.org. Click on the Nature, Faith and Health tab on the home page.

06/2018