

Sustained in God's Love by Richard Rohr

In the light of eternity, we're here for a very short time, really. We're here for one thing, ultimately: to learn how to love, because God is love. Love is our origin, love is our ground, and love is our destiny. —James Finley

CAC faculty member James Finley offers a contemplative practice to help us experience the love of God even in the midst of chaos. Living out of that love transforms both ourselves and the world.

What is the practice that matters now? A practice is any act habitually entered into with our whole heart that takes us to the deeper place. Some of these practices, we might not think of as prayer and meditation: tending the roses, a long, slow walk to no place in particular, a quiet moment at day's end, being vulnerable in the presence of that person in whose presence we're taken to the deeper place, the pause between two lines of a poem. There are these acts that reground us in the depth dimensions of our life that matter most; so if we're faithful to our practice, our practice will be faithful to us. . . .

In this contemplative practice, sit and renew your awareness that you're sitting in the presence of God all about you and within you. As you inhale, inhale God's silent "*I love you*," in which God is being poured out and utterly given away to you as the miracle of your very life. Then when you exhale, exhale yourself in love: "I love you." And so, we are breathing [along with God], "*I love you. I love you. I love you. I love you.*" From the reciprocity of love, destiny is fulfilled, and the foundations of suffering are healed.

As we sit this way, suffering arises. The suffering then might be our anxiety and concerns today, for ourselves, for our loved ones, for the world. As we sit in the midst of the arising of the anxiety, when we inhale, we inhale this love of God loving us through and through, anxiety and all, finding no hindrance in our anxiety, loving us so unexplainably forever. Then when we exhale, we exhale ourselves in love, anxiety and all, to the love that loves us. This requires gentle perseverance, because anxiety arises again. It doesn't automatically go away. We sit with it, we lean into it again, and we hold fast to this love that sustains us in the midst of things. It is in this way, little by little, that we come to understand the unsubstantiality of everything but love. Love and love alone has the authority to name who we are.

This practice, then, experientially grounds us in this love wisdom. This love wisdom—grounded in practice—empowers us to go out and share this with other people in the circumstances in which we find ourselves.