



**CATHOLIC CEMETERIES
DIOCESE OF BRIDGEPORT
ONE-DAY RETREAT
DECEMBER 7, 2024**

**FR. DAVID MARCOTTE REFLECTION
REFERENCES**

BOOK: Paula D'Arcy, [*Winter of the Heart*](#)

24-HOUR ADORATION: www.savior.org

Let's lay down our pains, sorrows, and burdens before the Eucharistic Lord and He will speak to us words of consolation.

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION (Via Zoom or in person):
Fairfield University. Call 203-524-4000

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MEDITATION: “For Absence” (John O’Donohue),
To Bless the Spaces Between Us

May you know that absence is alive with hidden presence
That nothing is ever lost or forgotten

May you sense around you the secret Elsewhere
Where the presences that have left you dwell

May the sore well of grief turn into a seamless flow of presence.

SCRIPTURE: Kings 19: 11-13

- a. The Lord said [to Elijah], “Go outside and stand on the mountain before the Lord; the Lord will be passing by. ‘A strong and heavy wind was rending the mountains and crushing rocks before the Lord—but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake—but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake, there was fire—but the Lord was not in the fire, After the fire, there was a tiny whispering sound. When he heard this, Elijah hid his face in his cloak and went and stood at the entrance of the cave.”
- b. Elijah is then given instructions about what to do next.

QUOTE: Paula D’Arcy

“Sometimes bitterness and anger protect us from feeling deeper emotions, such as sadness, fear, pain.”



MEDITATION: Mary Oliver, from *Mockingbirds*

In Greece
A long time ago
An old couple
Opened their door

To two strangers
Who were,
It soon appeared,
Not men at all.

But gods.
It's my favorite story—
How the old couple
Had almost nothing to give.

But their willingness
To be attentive—
But for this alone
The gods loved them.

When they rose
Out of their mortal bodies,
Like a million particles of water

From a fountain,
The light
Swept into all the corners
Of the cottage,

And the old couple,
Shaken with understanding,
Bowed down...
Wherever it was
I was supposed to be
This morning—

Through my own soul,
Opening its dark doors—
I was leaning out;
I was listening.



QUOTES: Pema Chodron

“When I was about six years old, I received [an essential teaching about life] from an old woman sitting in the sun. I was walking by her house one day feeling lonely, unloved, and mad, kicking anything I could find. Laughing, she said to me, “Little girl, don’t you go letting life harden your heart.”

“Can we ask ourselves: Do I prefer to grow up and relate to life directly, or do I choose to live and die in fear?”

“When we touch the center of sorrow, when we sit with discomfort without trying to fix it, when we stay present to the pain of disapproval or betrayal and let it soften us, these are the times that we connect with [deep enduring love].”

QUOTE: Jisan Tova Green (Monk at Zen Center in San Francisco)

“How do we make the unwanted wanted?”

- Notice what I need.
- Be kind to ourselves and one another.
- Be gentle with yourself as you move through this experience.
- Find moments of rest in the middle of things.
- Take care of the body and its needs.
- Find people who nourish you. Spend time with them.



MEDITATION: John O'Donohue,
"For a Parent on the Death of a Child" from *To Bless the Spaces Between Us*

No one knows the wonder
Your child awoke in you,
Your heart a perfect cradle
To hold its presence.
Inside and outside became one
As new waves of love
Kept surprising your soul.

Now you sit bereft
Inside a nightmare,
Your eyes are numbed
By the sight of a grave
No parent should ever see.

You will wear this absence
Like a secret locket,
Always wondering why
Such a new soul
Was taken home so soon.

Let the silent tears flow
And when your eyes clear
Perhaps you will glimpse
How your eternal child
Has become the unseen angel
Who parents your heart
And persuades the moon
To send new gifts ashore.

