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One of God's most beautiful names

Rich Heffern | Aug. 13, 2009 NCR Today

Let?s begin down at the nearest pond. Fr. Ed Hays, founder of the Shantivanam prayer community in Kansas and spiritual writer, advises that we adopt the common frog as a mascot for our spirituality of simple living.

The image of a frog could be hung on our walls as a religious icon, he suggests. One reason for doing so is that the frogs in our local ponds have such great bulging eyes. We need those kind of eyes in order to live deeply and well.

?To the eyes of the soul,? Hays counsels, ?everything is holy. Viewing life with the soul?s enormous staring eyes allows us to see that we are swimming in the sacred.? With those great bulging eyes and a cultivated spirituality of simple living, we can backstroke through the holy, splash and delight in the taste of reality, find it easy to both pray always and to participate in the healing of our world. As theologian Monika Hellwig rightly claims, the primary issue in spirituality is not the redemption of the individual soul but the redemption of our whole world.

Simple living can shape us into wide-eyed, loving, and earth-keeping people, such as scientist Loren Eiseley describes, ?with just a touch of wonders in our eyes, a sense of marvel, a glimpse of what is happening behind the visible, who see the whole of the living world as though turning a child?s kaleidoscope.?

Tall order? Kabir, the famous Muslim mystic, said: ?When we say ?Ahhhhhh!? and say it with a deep sigh? ? the kind of exclamation that comes from our depths whenever we see some aspect of the world?s blessing, ?that ?Ahhhhhh? is one of God?s most beautiful names.? Each time you express that primal sound of wonder, know that you are announcing the presence of holy mystery in our midst. When we breathe out a heartfelt, ?Wow!? we are praying.

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