

Discernment and the creative process of art-- Continued

Part III: Cooperating

But because discernment is about cooperating with the Spirit as well as receiving the Spirit, at some point we need to step back into the process. Another experience with art brought home to me the cooperative nature of working with the Spirit in order to engage in the creative process called discernment.

A young friend asked me to take part in a painting workshop in January. Ten women gathered coming from different backgrounds and different levels of experience with painting; travelling from different locations like Minneapolis and Chicago to be part of the group. After all those who were participating in the workshop had gathered, my friend led us in a time of centering silence. Then she asked us to write a positive statement that would carry us through the workshop even if we began to feel we were hopeless at creating art. She asked me to share the story of a time when I was in a difficult training class to learn a new order processing system. Halfway through the class I felt I would never get it. I began to wonder if God was showing me this training was not for me. But after thinking back to the circumstances of how God led me to this job I decided to think positively in spite of how I felt. I printed out this statement from my computer: "I AM AN ORDER PROCESSING QUEEN!" I taped this to the top of my computer in the training class. Because no one in the class said a word to me, I might assume they thought it was pretty strange! But actually things went much better for me after that. I thought about how important it is to have statements in our lives that instill hope and courage in us for the times of joy and the times of pain.

Statements that remind us of who we are, as well as statements that remind us we are not to be self-absorbed. Statements such as, "I am my Beloved's and He is mine"; "In this world you will have trouble, but don't be afraid I have overcome the world"; "Bear one another's burdens, and in this way fulfill the law of Christ". Simple or profound, these statements (in this example, Scriptures) keep us on track and allow us to hear God's voice and not just our fears and negativity. In spiritual discernment, the Word of God is a foundation, which as we read it and meditate on it becomes a part of who we are and is woven into the process of discernment.