

LONELINESS OR SOLITUDE?



Resources for Lockdown

Lockdown challenges us in many ways. For introverts (like me) there's a lot to recommend it, but for extraverts, who need continual stimulation from others, it can be agony. Some are disturbed by the feeling of 'imprisonment' alongside people with whom we did not choose to live quite so closely! Others feel as if they have fallen off the edge of the world! And many many people are getting worn down with layer after layer of worry.

In this booklet I have adapted some ideas used at the St Leonard's Quiet Day in November 2019, resourced by myself and Liz Urben. The theme of 'Loneliness or Solitude' seems even more appropriate today. Loneliness is normal but we are experiencing it in new ways. The flip side of *loneliness* is *solitude* - it has even been called its 'cure'. Loneliness includes pain, but if we transform it into solitude it takes on a peace and tranquillity which is all positive. In particular, it gives the opportunity to draw close to God and learn contentment, to try out new styles of prayer and discover unexpected resources within ourselves. Whilst it has been said that the stress caused by loneliness can be equated to smoking 15 cigarettes a day, in contrast solitude has been described as a form of 'meditation' (maybe even 'medication')!

I hope you find something useful here. After some introductory prayers, there are seven sections exploring different aspects of being alone. You could 'religiously' look at one each day for a week, or maybe just dip in and out tasting what takes your fancy!

There are lots of things which can help our prayers - candles, music, flowers, pictures, crosses – things which feed one or more of our senses. Maybe this is a good time to try something new? Use several different Bible versions (you can find lots online at BibleGateway) and when you read the Scriptures do it as slowly as you can, savouring each idea and letting it sink in before you go on to the next bit; trying to 'feel' the words as well as 'understand' them.

Some of the things I have suggested that you might think about could be painful. That is not necessarily a bad thing but remember to take care of yourself and don't go anywhere in your thoughts if it feels too much for today.

Eileen Turner April 2020

START WITH PRAYER – GOD OF STILLNESS

(Adapted from 'The Iona Worship Book' and Susan Sayers, 'To Worship in Stillness')

My world is no longer vibrating
with action

I can be still

My world no longer has tight
schedules and deadlines

I can absorb the present

My world has limits and
frustrations

I am on the brink of eternity

At a still point in my confusing
world

*I can meet the unchanging God
and know peace*

(Pause)

For the confusion that distracts
Father, forgive

For the anxieties that burden
Jesus, forgive

For the self-centeredness that
isolates

Spirit, forgive

Holy Three, have mercy

*Pardon and deliver me from my
sins*

(Pause)

I pray for all who need God's
stillness in their lives ...

For those anxious about many
things for whom even little
worries loom very large

*Lord give them your peace and
stillness*

For those who have too much to
do and too little time to do it
thoroughly

*Lord give them your peace and
stillness*

For those who are unnerved by
solitude and those who are
desperately lonely

*Lord give them your peace and
stillness*

(Pause)

Lord, you fill me with the wonder
of your love

*Lord Jesus, you are with me in this
place*

I was once busy but now you slow
me down

*Lord Jesus, you are with me in this
place*

I come to you weary and you
refresh us

*Lord Jesus, you are with me in this
place*

I come to you empty and you
renew us with your life

*Lord Jesus, you are with me in this
place*

Nothing can separate me from
the love of God in Christ Jesus

NEVER ALONE

Lockdown challenges us in many ways. Whether we are in total isolation or living with others, almost everything in life is disrupted. That brings with it strong feelings of loss and fear and frustration. Inevitably we start to think 'where is God in all this?' – maybe even 'Why has God forsaken me?'



Think Write down all the questions you have about your current situation. Then make a list of all the feelings you can identify in yourself. You might need a lot of paper, but the exercise will be cathartic! Don't try to answer the questions or deny the feelings - just be honest about them.



Read Romans 8.28,31-end



Pray Turn your questions and feelings into prayers. Look through what you have written and find examples of the following: things that are positive and you can thank God for; things you have the power to change; things about which all you can do is wait patiently. Ask God to show you that nothing can separate you and those you love from God's love and care.

Poems and Quotations

Now, more than ever, we need our solitude. Being alone gives us the power to regulate and adjust our lives. It can teach us fortitude and the ability to satisfy our own needs. A restorer of energy, the stillness of alone experiences provides us with much-needed rest. It

brings forth our longing to explore, our curiosity about the unknown, our will to be an individual, our hopes for freedom. Alone time is fuel for life. (*Ester Buchholz*)

Loneliness is the poverty of self; solitude is richness of self. (*May Sarton in 'Journal of a Solitude'*)

After a while you learn
the subtle difference
After a while you learn
that even sunshine burns if
you ask too much.
So you plant your own
garden
and decorate your own soul
Instead of waiting for
someone else to bring you
flowers.
And you learn
that you really can endure
that you really are strong
and you really do have
worth.
And you learn
and you learn
with every goodbye
you learn
between holding a hand
and chaining a soul.
And you learn
That love doesn't mean
leaning
and company doesn't mean
security.
And you begin to learn
that kisses aren't contracts
and presents aren't
promises.
And you begin to accept your
defeats
with your head up and your
eyes ahead
with the grace of a woman
not the grief of a child

and learn to build all your
roads on today
because tomorrow's ground
is
too uncertain for plans
and futures have a way of
falling down
in midflight.
(Source unknown)

God is sitting inside you,
Nearer than your hands and
feet.
The distance between you
and God
Is as thin as an insect's wing.
We can never be separated
from God,
Neither at birth nor at death.
(A Sikh prayer)

Alone with none but thee,
my God,
I journey on my way.
What need I fear, when thou
art near
O king of night and day?
More safe am I within thy
hand
Than if a host did round me
stand.
Columba (6th century)

GO IT ALONE?

Lockdown challenges us in many ways. After the jolt of enforced isolation, we may even start asking what has been the point of our lives. What has God been doing with us all these years? Or has God even noticed us? Its scary, but there is the opportunity to to look back, perhaps attend to some 'unfinished business'.



Think about your life story, maybe by drawing a 'time line' and marking significant life events. Do it in whatever way you fancy with words or sketches or photographs. Afterwards ask yourself: When did God seem to be very near to me? When did God seem to be distant?



Read Psalm 139

Pray



Oh God, you have searched the depths we cannot know,
and touched what we cannot bear to name:

may we so wait,
enclosed in your darkness,
that we are ready to encounter
the terror of the dawn,
with Jesus Christ. Amen.
(Janet Morley, All Desires Known)

Poems and Quotations

To have passed through life
and never experienced
solitude is to have never
known oneself. To have
never known oneself is to
have never known anyone.
*(Joseph Krutch, 'The Desert
Year')*

You discover in the silence
that you are loved, that you
are lovable. It is the
discovery that everyone
must make in their own lives
if they are going to become
fully themselves, fully
human. *(John Main)*

Footprints

One night I dreamed a dream.

As I was walking along the beach with my Lord.

Across the dark sky flashed scenes from my life.

For each scene, I noticed two sets of footprints in the sand, One belonging to me and one to my Lord.

After the last scene of my life flashed before me, I looked back at the footprints in the sand. I noticed that at many times along the path of my life, especially at the very lowest and saddest times, there was only one set of footprints.

This really troubled me, so I asked the Lord about it.

"Lord, you said once I decided to follow you, You'd walk with me all the way.

But I noticed that during the saddest and most troublesome times of my life, there was only one set of footprints.

I don't understand why, when I needed You the most, You would leave me."

He whispered, "My precious child, I love you and will never leave you

Never, ever, during your trials and testings.

When you saw only one set of footprints,

It was then that I carried you."

(Source unknown)

Before you, Lord

To be there before you, Lord, that's all.

To shut the eyes of my body,
To shut the eyes of my soul,
And be still and silent,
To expose myself to you who are there, exposed to me.

To be there before you, the Eternal Presence.

I am willing to feel nothing, Lord,

to see nothing
to hear nothing.

Empty of all ideas - of all images,

In the darkness.

Here I am, simply,

To meet you without obstacles,

In the silence of faith

Before you, Lord.

(Michel Quoist')

LONELY

Loneliness often hits us as a result of a loss. In lockdown we are experiencing many unexpected losses, big and small. Even relatively insignificant losses can trigger the memories of greater losses and bereavements in the past, especially where these are still painful.

 **Think** Look back at your 'time line' and record the losses you have experienced. Then ask yourself: What did I learn at that painful time? What memories are still extremely painful? Could they be affecting how I am coping now?



Read Matthew 5.1-12



Pray Turn the phrase 'Blessed are they who mourn' into prayers for yourself and other people. Try to imagine what the promised 'comfort' might entail and pray very specifically for the needs of people you know and those you don't know.

Poems and Quotations

Father, we pray for all the lonely people, especially those who, coming home to an empty house, stand at the door hesitant and afraid to enter. May all who stand in any doorway with fear in their hearts, like the two on the Emmaus Road, ask the Living One in. Then, by his grace, may they find that in loneliness they are never alone, and that he peoples

empty rooms by his presence.

(EM Farr)

Though they go mad they shall be sane,
Though they sink through the sea they shall rise again,
Though lovers be lost love shall not;

And death shall have no dominion. *(Dylan Thomas)*

The other

There are nights that are so still
that I can hear the small owl
calling
far off and a fox barking
miles away. It is then that I
lie
in the lean hours awake,
listening
to the swell born somewhere
in the Atlantic
rising and falling, rising and
falling
wave on wave on the long
shore
by the village, that is without
light
and companionless. And the
thought comes
of that other being who is
awake, too,
letting our prayers break on
him,
not like this for a few hours,
but for days, years, for
eternity. (*RS Thomas*)

The worst loneliness is not to
be comfortable with
yourself. (*Mark Twain*)

They that love beyond the
world cannot be separated
by it. Death cannot kill what
never dies. Nor can spirits
ever be divided that love and
live in the same divine
principle: the root and
record of their friendship.

Death is but crossing the
world as friends do the seas;
they live in one another still.
For they must needs be
present that love and live in
that which is omnipresent.
In this divine glass they see
face to face; and their
converse is free as well as
pure. This is the comfort of
friends, that though they
may be said to die, yet their
friendship and society are,
in the best sense, ever
present, because immortal.
(*William Penn, 'More Fruits
in Solitude'*)

God our lover,
in whose arms we are held,
and by whose passion we are
known:
require of us also that love
which is filled with longing,
delights in the truth,
and costs not less than
everything,
through Jesus Christ, Amen.
(*Janet Morley*)

LEAVE WELL ALONE

Lockdown is an opportunity to enjoy our possessions. Rediscovering things we thought we'd lost, using gadgets never time unpacked, trying new recipes, flaunting summer clothes in the sunshine. On the other hand, our delight in 'stuff' brings worries and dangers. The fly-tipping we see on the media is a horrible result of households disposing of unwanted items, but it does feel good to de-clutter! For some of us greed might lead to too much chocolate or wine! More acutely, many people worry because they do not have enough essentials, let alone luxuries, to survive to the end of the week.



Think Find new ways of enjoying what you have. Pick up an old hobby. Read that book. Try a new food. Allow your creativity to blossom. Then think about what is best left alone: obsessions, even trivial habits, that might be doing us harm? Worries that eat away at us from inside?



Read Matthew 6.25-34



Pray Spend lots of time thanking God for your material assets. Then ask God to show you things where it is best to 'leave well alone' (habits, resentments, grudges, worries), acknowledging their potential for destructiveness. Pray that God will supply what you really need.

Poems and Quotations

Solitude is a silent storm that breaks down all our dead branches; yet it sends our living roots deeper into the living heart of the living earth. (*Kahlil Gibran*)

Every kind of creative work demands solitude, and being alone, constructively alone, is a prerequisite for every phase of the creative process. (*Barbara Powell*)

Lord, the trouble about life
just now
is that I seem to have all the
things which don't matter
and to have lost all the
things which do matter.
I have life;
I have enough money to live
on;
I have plenty to occupy me
but I am alone,
and sometimes
I feel that nothing
can make up for that.

Lord, compel me to see the
meaning of my faith.
Make me to realise
that I have hope
as well as memory,
and the unseen cloud of
witnesses is around me;
that you meant it when you
said that
you would always be with
me;
and make me realise that
as long as you leave me here
there is something that I am
meant to do;
and in doing it,
help me to find the comfort
and the courage
that I need to go on.
(*Source unknown*)

Thank you, God of the lonely,
for the call to wrestle with
loneliness. Help me not to
run from it or to give in to it
by buying things,
withdrawing from others or
compensating by eating or
drinking too much. I pray
that I can be with this feeling
of ache and longing for
companionship and
happiness. God, you have
said that you will give the
lonely a home. Well, I need a
home so much now, a sense
of belonging and being loved,
of having a home in the
heart of another. Please help
me to be aware of how much
you love me and how
strongly you are a
companion to me at all
times. Come, visit with your
peace and love. Come, make
your home in me and I will
make mine in you. Help me
to reach out to others and to
go forth from here with hope
in my heart. (*Joyce Rupp*)

BY BREAD ALONE

Lockdown challenges us to distinguish between our wants and our needs. Most of us are surprised that we don't miss some things – but equally surprised at what we do miss! What do we really need to survive? Ultimately we are totally dependent on, and can only find spiritual nourishment in, God.



Ask yourself whether you feel more 'full' or more 'empty' than you did one year ago. In particular, think about the ways you are nourished by the 'word of

God', both in the form of the Lord Jesus Christ himself and through the Bible. Do you 'snack' or eat 'square meals'? Maybe lockdown is an opportunity to start regular patterns of Bible reading and prayer.



Read Deuteronomy 8.1-10 and Matthew 4.1-4



Pray Use the Lord's Prayer and look for alternative versions (see below). Think about the difficult phrase 'lead us not into temptation' which in other commonly used versions translates as 'do not bring us to hard testing'. Other variations:

- Don't bring us to a testing beyond our power to withstand
- Don't bring us to breaking point but lead us out of harm's way

Poems and Quotations

Eternal Spirit, Earth-Maker,
Pain-bearer, Life-giver,
source of all that is and that
shall be,
Father and Mother of us
all. Loving God, in whom is
heaven.
The hallowing of your name
echoes through the
universe!

The way of your justice be
followed by the peoples of
the earth!
Your heavenly will be done
by all created beings!
Your commonwealth of
peace and freedom
sustain our hope and come
on earth.

With the bread we need for
today, feed us.
In the hurts we absorb from
one another, forgive us.
In times of temptation and
test, spare us.
From the grip of all that is
evil, free us.
For you reign in the glory of
the power that is love,
now and forever.
(*New Zealand Prayer Book*)

Beloved, Our Father and
Mother,
in whom is heaven.
Hallowed be your name,
followed by your royal way,
done be your will and rule,
throughout the whole
creation.
With the bread that we need
for today,
feed us,
In the hurts we absorb from
one another,
forgive us,
In times of temptation and
test,
strengthen us.
From trials too great to
endure, spare us.
From the grip of all that is
evil, free us.
For you reign in the glory
of the power that is love.
Amen.

And you held me
and you held me and there
were no words
and there was no time and
you held me
and there was only wanting
and
being held and being filled
with wanting
and I was nothing but letting
go
and being held
and there were no words and
there
needed to be no words
and there was no terror
only stillness
and I was wanting nothing
and
it was fullness and it was like
aching for God
and it was touch and
warmth and
darkness and no time and no
words and we flowed and I
flowed and I was not empty
and I was given up to the
dark and
in the darkness I was not
lost
and the wanting was like
fullness and I could
hardly hold it and I was held
and
you were dark and warm
and without time and
without words and you held
me. (*Janet Morley*)

ALONE IN A CROWD

Germaine Greer says 'loneliness is never more cruel than when it is felt in close propinquity with someone who has ceased to communicate'! A similar quote: 'There are worse things than feeling alone. Things like being with someone and still feeling alone.' Even if we adore those with whom we live, we might be struggling to identify our own 'space'.



Think Where do you go to be alone? Find somewhere – even if it is only a tiny corner, a moment on your daily walk, or maybe just inside your head! Remember that solitude is a *choice*, so do it! As you read the Bible ask yourself how you can love yourself more as well as loving others.



Read Matthew 22:34-40



Pray Pray for yourself and then those in your household, one by one. If you live alone work through those people who are most important to you in your head!

Poems and Quotations

Lord, I can no longer find my
own door.
I grope around blindly,
I knock against my own
walls, my own boundaries.
I hurt myself,
I am in pain.
I am in too much pain, and
no one knows it, for no one
has come in.
I am alone, all alone.
(*Michel Quoist*)

Solitude is not found so
much by looking outside the
boundaries of your dwelling
as by staying within them.
Solitude is not something
you must hope for in the
future. Rather, it is a
deepening of the present;
and unless you look for it in
the present, you will never
find it. (*Thomas Merton*)

Not everyone knows how to be alone with others, how to share solitude. We have to help each other to understand how to be in our solitude, so that we can relate to each other without grabbing on to each other. We can be interdependent but not dependent. Loneliness is rejected despondency. Solitude is shared interdependence. (*David Spangler*)

Now, more than ever, we need our solitude. Being alone gives us the power to regulate and adjust our lives. It can teach us fortitude and the ability to satisfy our own needs. A restorer of energy, the stillness of alone experiences provides us with much-needed rest. It brings forth our longing to explore, our curiosity about the unknown, our will to be an individual, our hopes for freedom. Alone time is fuel for life. (*Ester Buchholz*)

Loneliness is the human condition. Cultivate it. The way it tunnels into you allows your soul room to grow. Never expect to outgrow loneliness. Never hope to find people who will understand you, someone to fill that space. An intelligent, sensitive person is the exception, the very great exception. If you expect to find people who will understand you, you will grow murderous with disappointment. The best you'll ever do is to understand yourself, know what it is that you want, and not let the cattle stand in your way. (*Janet Fitch in 'White Oleander'*)

When the dust settles,
we will probably have a
deeper understanding of
how little we need,
how much we truly have,
And the extraordinary value
of human love and
connection
(*Facebook*)

ALONE IN THE WORLD

Even though we may feel we are 'alone in the world', the spread of Coronavirus and its spin offs for our economy has brought a stark reminder that we are 'citizens of the world'. We are dependent on complicated (maybe previously unknown to us) interaction between the nations. The challenge is to look outwards, rather than inwards, and 'pray without ceasing'.



Even if you are usually avoid it, gorge yourself with the media: TV, radio, on-line newspapers, social media. Explore news outlets that are unfamiliar to find out what is happening overseas, particularly in places rarely reported on. Try to get a picture of the whole world!



Read Genesis 1.1-2.4



Pray Turn your thoughts into prayers for the world: first the natural world created lovingly by God but spoilt by human beings; then the people and economies and health care in far off places. Travel to each place in your imagination and picture the ways in which God could answer your prayers there.

Poems and Quotations

God, grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot
change, courage to change
the things I can and the
wisdom to know the
difference.

Living one day at a time
Enjoying one moment at a
time

Accepting hardship as the
pathway to peace

Taking, as he did, this sinful
world as it is, not as I would
have it.

Trusting that he will make
all things right if I surrender
to his will that I may be
reasonably happy in this life,
and supremely happy with
him forever in the next.

Amen. (Serenity Prayer)

I am walking in a dark place;
my footsteps echo with the
sound of loneliness. The
trees are bare, and yet no
light shines between the
hard bark of their branches.
Beneath my feet the ground
is parched and hard, and the
dry twigs snap like brittle
bones of oblivion. I seek you,
my Lord. I have heard the
rumour of skies filled with
the flight of birds and with
the music of their
marvellous chatter.
Whispers hint at brilliant
flashes of raindrops caught
in the sunshine, while buds
push through and bloom.
Hear me calling, Lord;
whether in thunder or quiet
breeze, come. (*John Simon*)

Vulnerable God,
you challenge the powers
that rule the world
through the needy, the
compassionate,
and those who are filled with
longing.
make us hunger and thirst to
see right prevail,
and single-minded in seeking
peace;
that we may see your face
and be satisfied in you,
through Jesus Christ. Amen.
(*Janet Morley*)

Without great solitude no
serious work is possible.
(*Pablo Picasso*)

I have learned to be content
with whatever I have. I know
what it is to have little, and I
know what it is to have
plenty. In any and all
circumstances I have
learned the secret of being
well-fed and of going hungry,
of having plenty and of being
in need. I can do all things
through him who
strengthens me.
(*Philippians 4.11, 13*)

Holy Spirit,
mighty wind of God,
inhabit our darkness
brood over our abyss
and speak to our chaos;
that we may breathe with
your life
and share your creation
in the power of Jesus Christ.
Amen.
(*Janet Morley*)

The inability to stay quiet is
one of the conspicuous
failings of mankind.
(*Walter Bagehot, 1870*)

MORE RESOURCES

Lord, do you hear me?
I'm suffering dreadfully.
Locked in myself,
Prisoner of myself,
I hear nothing but my voice,
I see nothing but myself,
And behind me there is
nothing but suffering.
Lord, do you hear me?
Deliver me from my body; it is
nothing but hunger, with its
thousands of tentacles
outstretched to appease its
insatiable appetite.
Lord, do you hear me?
Deliver me from my heart;
when I think that it is
overflowing with love, I realise
angrily that again it is myself I
love through the loved one.
Lord, do you hear me?
Deliver me from my mind; it is
full of itself, of its ideas, its
opinions; it cannot carry on a
dialogue, as no words reach it
but its own.
Alone, I am bored
 I am weary
 I hate myself
 I am disgusted with
myself.
For ages I have been turning
around inside myself like a
sick man in his feverish bed.
Everything seems dark, ugly,
horrid.
It's because I can look only
through myself.

I feel ready to hate men and
the whole world.
It's because I am disappointed
that I cannot love them.
I would like to get away,
Walk, run, to another land.
I know that joy exists, I have
seen it on singing faces.
I know that light exists, I have
seen it in radiant eyes.
But, Lord, I cannot get away,
for I love my prison and I hate
it,
For my prison is myself,
And I love myself, Lord
I both love and loathe myself.
(*Michel Quoist*)

Not everything is cancelled
sunshine is not cancelled
spring is not cancelled
love is not cancelled
relationships are not cancelled
reading is not cancelled
naps are not cancelled
devotion is not cancelled
music is not cancelled
dancing is not cancelled
imagination is not cancelled
kindness is not cancelled
conversations are not
cancelled
hope is not cancelled
(*Facebook*)

Lord, I'm lonely, a sparrow
alone on the housetop.
Yes, I know you are right here,
But I crave human
companionship. Is that wrong,
Lord?
Someone to sit awhile, to look
at me and see me,
To listen and really hear.
Someone to say, "You count
with me. I care about you."
Lord Jesus, you visited the
lonely world.
You brought love and comfort
to the solitary.
Turn me about. Let me reach
out.
Is there someone I can listen
to?
Someone in need of my
companionship and your love?
(*Catharine Brand, 'Soul
Weavings'*)

Silence,
Waves upon waves filling my
nights,
Intense contemplation,
Dreams that came visiting,
tempting...
took me higher and higher, to
places...
Where even stars will not dare
to stay.
Solitude,
A deliberate choice, an
ultimate freedom...
a lonely path in search of my
inner soul,

deeper and deeper, but
strangely I felt stronger and
stronger...

Thus in silence and solitude,
I discovered inner peace and
love that intoxicates.
(*Source unknown*)

In Weal or Woe

Supreme assurance filled my
soul. I felt
a peace surpassing all the
peace on earth
as though within my heart had
ever dwelt
that joy which is the pearl of
greatest worth.
A moment later darkness
overtook
my senses, all I knew was
loneliness,
despair and life's futility. I
shook
with fear, uncomforted in my
distress.
Again the joy returned, again
the pain;
they alternated in my soul
until
I saw the lesson of the Lord is
this:
that we, in weal or woe alike,
remain
within his love, and through it
all the will
of God is bringing us to final
bliss.
(*Richard Skinner, based on
Julian of Norwich*)'

PAX

All that matters is to be at one
with the living God
to be a creature in the house of
the God of Life.

Like a cat asleep on a chair
at peace, in peace
and at one with the master of
the house, with the mistress,
at home, at home in the house
of the living,
sleeping on the hearth, and
yawning before the fire.

Sleeping on the hearth of the
living world
yawning at home before the
fire of life
feeling the presence of the
living God
like a great reassurance
a deep calm in the heart
a presence
as of the master sitting at the
board
in his own and greater being,
in the house of life.
(*D H Lawrence*)

The world of men has
forgotten the joys of silence,
the peace of solitude which is
necessary, to some extent, for
the fullness of human living.
Not all men are called to be
hermits, but all men need
enough silence and solitude in
their lives to enable the deep
inner voice of their own true
self to be heard at least
occasionally.

When that inner voice is not
heard, when man cannot
attain the spiritual peace that
comes from being perfectly at
one with his own true self, his
life is always miserable and
exhausting. For he cannot go
on happily for long unless he is
in contact with the springs of
spiritual life which are hidden
in the depths of his own soul.
(*Thomas Merton*)

I am

I am the rock and the tectonic
shift,
The shelter and the raging
storm;
I am the still point and the
spinning stars,
Glimpsed but unknowable,
present and far beyond.
I am the candle and the
darkness,
the answer and the questions.
I am home-coming and the
journey too.
Grab hold and I'll switch shape
- and yet I do not change.
You can't control me, grasp
me, catch me, second-guess or
fathom what I'll do.
My sight spans aeons,
lightyears, space.
Hold fast to this alone:
I am - and you are mine.
(*Mary Lean*)

The cure for loneliness is
solitude. (*Marianne Moore*)