



# Time, as sacrament

Time is the field of encounter with the divine. *Kathleen Deignan*

“It is morning, afternoon or evening.Begin.” *Thomas Merton, A Book of Hours*

## Exploring our relationship with time

One of our most complex relationships may be the one we have with time. Some of us feel dominated by it. Some see it as opportunity, others a commodity to be used and so an end is achieved. For others time is measured by the extent, spread and depth of our emotional energy, whilst observing time, being cautious toward it, expresses another relational style. Is time, to me, a threat, a bully? Is time expendable - as long as I am having fun? Does it offer me rhythm and structure or is it a thing to be controlled, managed well and tightly? Is time to be saved, sped up, slowed down?



The painting is by Paolo Uccello, dated 1443, is titled *24 hours clock* and is a one handed liturgical clock- Wikiart.org

## Questions for reflection:

- What is your relationship with time? If you were to describe it, what would it look like? Try using the Enneagram here: [www.personalitynation.com/enneagram/3683-enneagram-types-their-rwealtion-time.html](http://www.personalitynation.com/enneagram/3683-enneagram-types-their-rwealtion-time.html)
- How do Merton's discoveries along (with the weight of the incarnation) impact you and may now influence you?
- To what degree might our own solemnity and seriousness an obstacle to a good relationship to time?

A comment on the life of the Cistercian monk Thomas Merton is illuminating, that ‘the more his spiritual life deepened, the more he realized that time was no enemy but rather the field in which God meets us’, and further more that time then ‘is the field of encounter with the divine’. What is our way in given the ‘ever-present tug to the next moment’ as Simon Small puts it? Again, on Merton, ‘he learned that now is eternity’s nearest station, a threshold to the living presence where God is found by sinking into the heart of the moment that is: the sheer reality of now which ‘we are in the mist of and it is in the midst of us, for it beats in our very blood, whether we want it or not’.

The divine will is a deep abyss of which the present moment is the entrance. If you plunge into this abyss you will find it infinitely more vast than your desires. *Jean Pierre de Caussade*

The present moment is [more] the context, the field, within what is happening takes place. It is the silent, spacious presence that is the root and ground of all that happens.

*Roger Housden, For Lovers of God everywhere*

## Reading material:

From the bottom of the pond: The forgotten art of experiencing God in the depth of the present moment by Simon Small, pp. 45-49

A Book of Hours by Thomas Merton, edited by Kathleen Deignan, pp. 32-36

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