

## **Respect: Worthy of Gentle Regard**

**Date :** December 14, 2017

Study

**RESPECT.** THE UTTER RESPECT THAT EACH MONK ACCORDS to every brother or sister is palpable in healthy monastic communities. There is a sense that each of us is a living example of divine possibility and, therefore, is worthy of gentle regard. Our journeys are mysterious. We will never fully know another person's soul and can never presume to have crossed over the boundary of his or her heart. Whatever glimpses we are granted into each other's lives are glimpses of grace. The true monk honors others' search for truth and, by his or her presence, shares in their trials and frailties as well as their joys and strengths. Therefore, we offer each other mutual respect, which always tries to see through the eyes of the heart, and seeks not to judge, ridicule, or in any way offend the divine mystery in each person.

Whatever impurities we carry in ourselves—and these monks did not hold themselves up as enlightened beings—are kept in check by the command for mutual respect, this command of the heart.

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Excerpt, "My Soul a Feast of Prayers," Forthcoming, © Beverly Lanzetta 2017



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