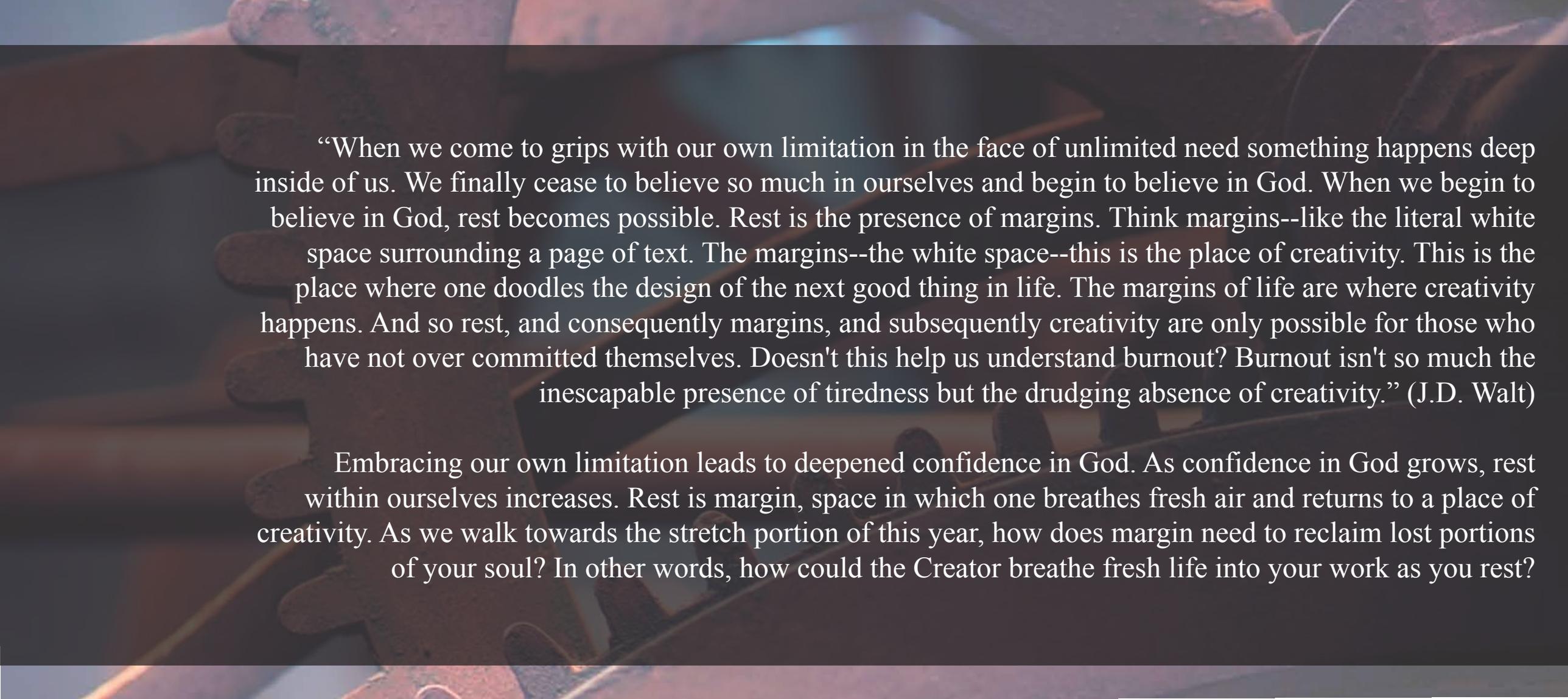




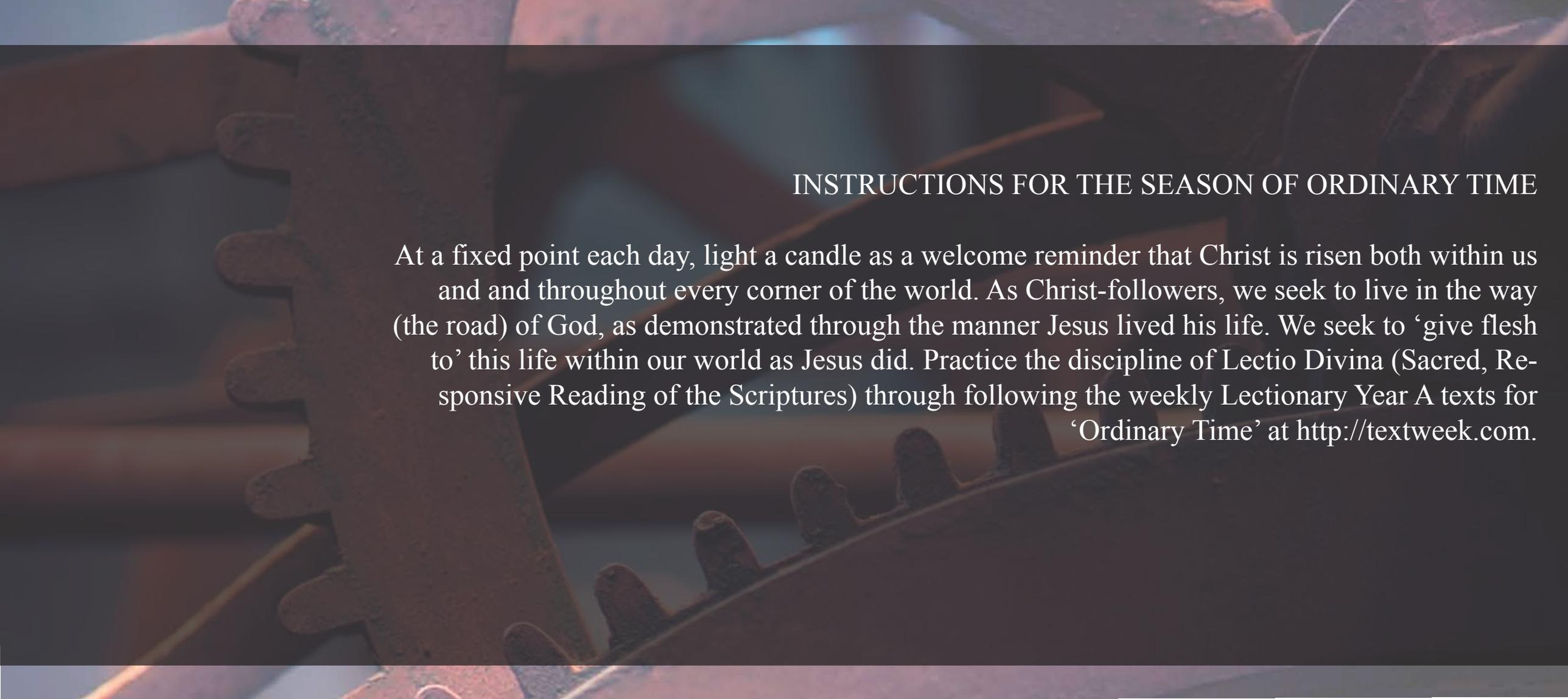
Ordinary time

THE WISDOM OF MARGIN



“When we come to grips with our own limitation in the face of unlimited need something happens deep inside of us. We finally cease to believe so much in ourselves and begin to believe in God. When we begin to believe in God, rest becomes possible. Rest is the presence of margins. Think margins--like the literal white space surrounding a page of text. The margins--the white space--this is the place of creativity. This is the place where one doodles the design of the next good thing in life. The margins of life are where creativity happens. And so rest, and consequently margins, and subsequently creativity are only possible for those who have not over committed themselves. Doesn't this help us understand burnout? Burnout isn't so much the inescapable presence of tiredness but the drudging absence of creativity.” (J.D. Walt)

Embracing our own limitation leads to deepened confidence in God. As confidence in God grows, rest within ourselves increases. Rest is margin, space in which one breathes fresh air and returns to a place of creativity. As we walk towards the stretch portion of this year, how does margin need to reclaim lost portions of your soul? In other words, how could the Creator breathe fresh life into your work as you rest?



INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE SEASON OF ORDINARY TIME

At a fixed point each day, light a candle as a welcome reminder that Christ is risen both within us and throughout every corner of the world. As Christ-followers, we seek to live in the way (the road) of God, as demonstrated through the manner Jesus lived his life. We seek to ‘give flesh to’ this life within our world as Jesus did. Practice the discipline of Lectio Divina (Sacred, Responsive Reading of the Scriptures) through following the weekly Lectionary Year A texts for ‘Ordinary Time’ at <http://textweek.com>.

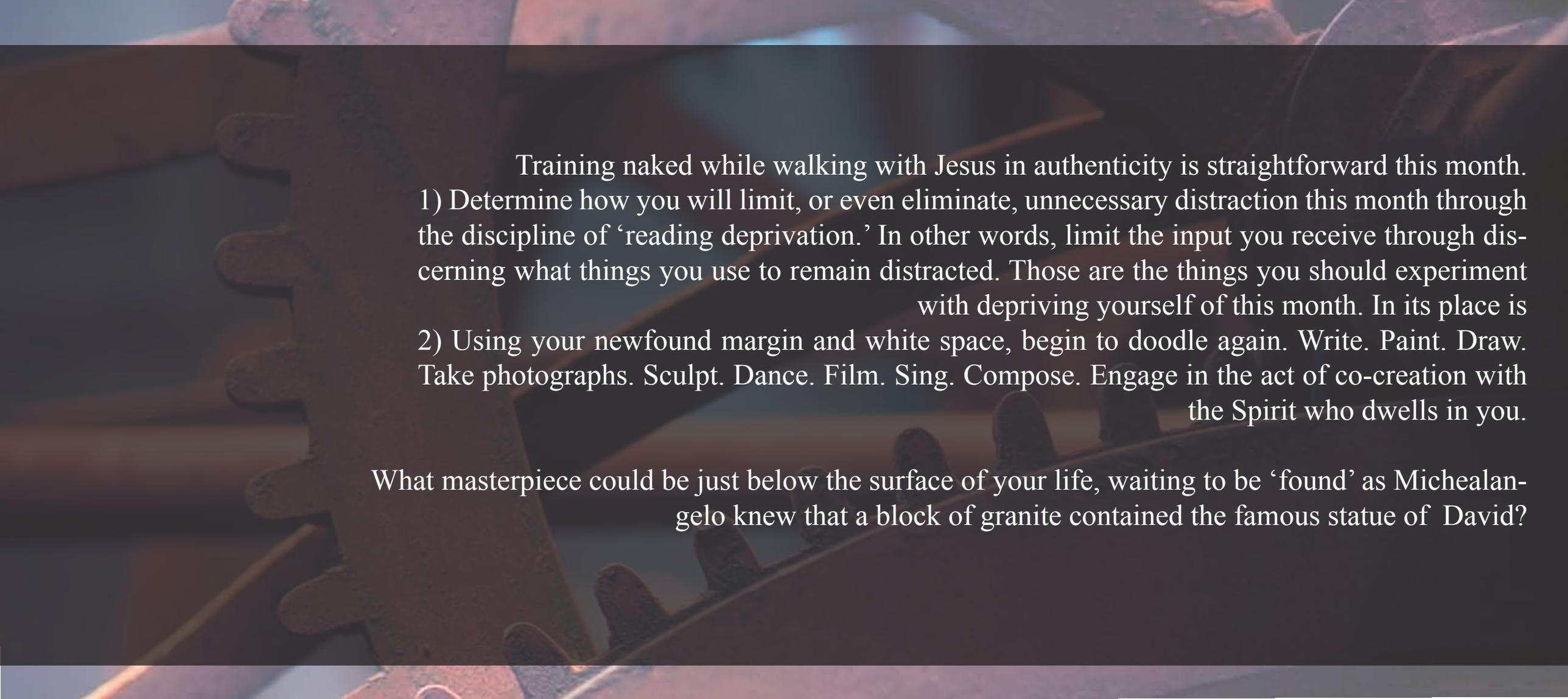
THE WISDOM OF MARGIN IN US: RECOVERING A SPIRITUALITY OF PLAY

"The creation of something new is not accomplished by the intellect but by the play instinct acting from inner necessity. The creative mind plays with the objects it loves." (Carl Jung)

One of my favorite verses in the Psalms is Psalm 104:25-26, where we find the writer holding up the Leviathan (a whale-like creature) as a model of behavior. "Here is the sea, great and wide, which teems with creatures innumerable, living things both small and great. There go the ships, and the Leviathan, which You (God) formed to play in it." Oh to live as a Leviathan, engaging our world through whimsy, creativity, and play, approaching life through the gratitude of a creature formed in the image of a full-hearted Creator. What if we spent this month re-discovering play, in whatever form it takes, as a discipline that created healthy margin in our lives, and allowed our souls to breathe? As the jacaranda blossoms turn Pretoria into a living, breathing canopy of life, a painting in motion, may your spirit blossom in fresh ways as we play with God, the Creator, this month.

TRAINING NAKED: FILLING THE WELL THROUGH READING DEPRIVATION

"It is a paradox that by emptying our lives of distractions we are actually filling the well. Without distractions, we are once again thrust into a sensory world. With no cell phone or laptop to shield us, a train becomes a viewing gallery. With no novel to sink into (and no television to numb us out) an evening becomes a vast savannah in which furniture--and other assumptions--get rearranged. Reading deprivation casts us into our inner silence, a space some of us begin to immediately fill with new words--long gossipy conversations, television bingeing, iPods as a constant, chatty companion. We often cannot hear our own inner voice, the voice of our artist's inspiration, above the static. In practicing reading deprivation, we need to cast a watchful eye on these other pollutants. They poison the well. If we monitor the inflow and keep it to a minimum, we will be rewarded for our reading deprivation with embarrassing speed. Our reward will be a new outflow. Our own art, our own thoughts and feelings, will begin to nudge aside the sludge of blockage, to loosen it and move it upward and outward until once again our well is running freely." (Julia Cameron)



Training naked while walking with Jesus in authenticity is straightforward this month.

- 1) Determine how you will limit, or even eliminate, unnecessary distraction this month through the discipline of ‘reading deprivation.’ In other words, limit the input you receive through discerning what things you use to remain distracted. Those are the things you should experiment with depriving yourself of this month. In its place is
- 2) Using your newfound margin and white space, begin to doodle again. Write. Paint. Draw. Take photographs. Sculpt. Dance. Film. Sing. Compose. Engage in the act of co-creation with the Spirit who dwells in you.

What masterpiece could be just below the surface of your life, waiting to be ‘found’ as Michealangelo knew that a block of granite contained the famous statue of David?