

DRAWN IN: Hovering

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Genesis 1:1-2

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

Luke 4:1-13

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, 2 where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over, he was famished. 3 The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread." 4 Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone.'" 5 Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. 6 And the devil said to him, "To you I will give their glory and all this authority; for it has

been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. 7 If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours." 8 Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'" 9 Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, 10 for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you,' 11 and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'" 12 Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" 13 When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.

REFLECT & DISCUSS

1. Read the passage slowly. Then take a deep breath and read it again. What word, phrase or image stands out to you?
2. Before God ever utters a creative word, the Spirit (*ruah* in Hebrew can also mean "breath") hovers over the waters. Tony Bronsink calls this "hovering" the "creative posture of patience". God does not rush the creative process and accepts unfinished realities as they unfold. How might this "hovering" be seen in the Spirit leading Jesus into the wilderness before his public ministry begins?

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3. What projects in your neighborhood, city, workplace or family are in unfinished states of progress? What does patience look like or mean with these projects?
4. “Hovering” is about being contented with what you find along the way, instead of forcing or rushing answers, solutions, or finishing touches before they are ready or in the wrong way. How does Jesus exhibit this in the wilderness? How have you experienced or struggled with that kind of patience?
5. Read and reflect on the prayer “Trust in the Slow Work of God.”
6. As you step further into the new year, what things about yourself or your life are you still working on and learning to be patient with as they take shape?

Trust In the Slow Work of God

Above all, trust in the slow work of God. We are quite naturally impatient in everything to reach the end without delay. We should like to skip the intermediate stages. We are impatient of being on the way to something unknown, something new.

And yet it is the law of all progress that it is made by passing through some stages of instability—and that it may take a very long time.

And so I think it is with you; your ideas mature gradually—let them grow, let them shape themselves, without undue haste. Don't try to force them on, as though you could be today what time (that is to say, grace and circumstances acting on your own good will) will make of you tomorrow.

Only God could say what this new spirit gradually forming within you will be. Give Our Lord the benefit of believing that his hand is leading you, and accept the anxiety of feeling yourself in suspense and incomplete.

—Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, SJ
excerpted from *Hearts on Fire*

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