

“Remarks on Simone Weil’s Mysticism”

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The Roots of Christian Mysticism

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But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus: “And who is my neighbor?”

Then Jesus answered and said: “A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounding him, and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion.” Luke 10: 29-33

Our topic today focuses on another certain Samaritan, a 20th century mystic who was born a Jew of the secular, intellectual variety and became, not at all of her own seeking, perhaps the greatest Christian mystic of the 20th century—and a teacher whose thought has tremendous spiritual, social and political implications for us today.

We are meeting today with Simone Weil (spelled Weil and pronounced “Vay”), who was born in Paris in 1909 and died of TB and self-imposed starvation in England in 1943. T.S. Eliot said she was “not just a woman of genius, but was of a kind of genius akin to that of a saint.” Albert Camus said she was “the only great spirit of our time.” Hers, as Leslie Fiedler describes in his introduction to one of the best collections of her work,

Waiting for God, was a life of “terrible purity.” Her 34 years were marked by a stunning intensity, uncompromising integrity, hard labor, and almost complete obscurity. She said in her very last letter, written only two months before her death, that “Indeed, for other people, I do not exist. I am the color of dead leaves. . .” And she trembled at the image of the barren fig tree, which she saw as her self-portrait. She trembled not because she lusted after fame or celebrity, but because she wanted to be of consequence—and she had a singular definition of consequence: relieving the suffering of others.

Except for a few political writings published in her lifetime, only after her death did her relatively small collection of letters and essays come to be seen as among the most significant theological and philosophical expressions of our time.

Simone Weil was a reluctant mystic. Fiedler says “surely *no* ‘friend of God’ in all history had moved more unwillingly toward the mystic encounter.” She was a mystic who refused to let her mystical experience of Christ imprison her in the Christian Church or in the safe confines of any defined religious group. Instead, that experience, which happened relatively late in her life and dominated its final four years, called her to true lower-case catholicism. She refused baptism and the temptation of what she called “Church patriotism.” She was so keenly aware of how easily human beings tend to create and dwell inside closed off little worlds from which they try to explain and judge and assign purpose and intent to virtually everything that has ever happened or will happen, all with a little pile of inherited words and images that they are certain are the only words and images in the universe. Sound familiar? Run into any Christian patriots lately? Muslim? Jewish?

Unfortunately, we have countless examples in our history, both recent and distant. We love to ascribe to God’s special intent everything from hurricanes to voter turnout to favorably changing traffic lights. And while some of this is simply silly, we know too painfully, how hideously brutal it can be in so many other situations, most recently in Pakistan or Paris. But back to the silly, here’s one of Simone Weil’s favorite examples that riled her up: American Christians during WWII claimed that God sent

Christopher Columbus to discover the new world so Americans could return centuries later to deliver Europe from Hitler. (Simone Weil said she thought if God had wanted to intervene he would have better sent an assassin to Vienna in 1936.) The point is, she *hated* piety and pious certainty.

She exercised a militant resistance against the ways we compromise our freedom and shut up the eye of the heart through which, as St Augustine said, we see God in all things. Instead she bore a more difficult and more humble citizenship in what she called a “fully explicit universality,” the world **as it is** in its entirety, the world with *all* your neighbors in it.

“And who is my neighbor?” That’s the question at the heart of her thought and work. She knew the answer as powerfully as any person ever, maybe as powerfully as Jesus knew it. And she knew that the plight of many or most of those neighbors at any given time was full of suffering and sorrow. Simone Weil didn’t see a very pretty world. She saw, without delusion or illusion or false comfort, a world marked by material necessity, brute facts of scarcity and poverty, unavoidable and inexplicable affliction. But even more important, she saw it marked by human freedom, our capacity to turn toward or away from the good, a good defined as love of our neighbor, which for her was the same as the love of God.

Before we talk more about her life, I want to introduce two of the central features of her thought: two attributes, one of mind and one of the world. The first, *attention*, describes our best habit of mind, and the other, *universality*, describes what we see or experience through that attention.

Together, these two attributes, attention and universality, make possible what she called the “new saintliness” or “new holiness,” a lived, practical holiness for our time. To be a saint or to be newly holy was not a way of escaping reality, but a way of being in the world, *in this world*, that demands, as another great female mystic, Julian of Norwich, describes it, “nothing less than everything.” It most especially demands our attention—and we will see that the right exercise of human attention is always at the crux for Simone Weil, always the gateway between illusion and clarity,

between the seductions of the false self and the truth of the world. As Rumi says, “The gates of light swing open. You see in.” Here’s what Simone Weil says in her great essay, “Forms of the Implicit Love of God”:

We live in a world of unreality and dreams. To give up our imaginary position as the center, to renounce it, not only intellectually but in the imaginative part of our soul, means to awaken to what is real and eternal, to see the true light and hear the true silence. A transformation then takes place at the very roots of our sensibility, in our immediate reception of sense and psychological impressions. It is a transformation analogous to that which takes place in the dusk of evening on a road, where we suddenly discern as a tree what we had at first seen as a stooping man, or where we suddenly recognize as a rustling of leaves that we thought at first was whispering voices. We see the same colors, we hear the same sounds, but not in the same way.

[And here is the crux of it all: We must;]

Empty ourselves of our false divinity, deny ourselves, give up being the center of the world, and discern that ***all points in the world are equally centers***” (*Waiting on God*, p. 100)

We must attend to the fact that *everyone* is my neighbor. We will come back to these two ideas that uphold the contention that everyone is my neighbor shortly, but let’s look a little more closely at the life that made the thought possible.

Simone Weil was born to an educated, professional Jewish family in Paris. Her father was a doctor and the household, as she described it, was completely agnostic. She was one of two children, and her older brother, Andre, was an acclaimed mathematical genius, even as a child. (Andre, 1906-1998) was a world renowned mathematics professor at Princeton University and someone who read the Bhagavad Gita in the original Sanskrit

at age 16. But by all accounts he was not the easiest person to get along with in the world.

Notoriously cantankerous, here's just one example of his way of being in the world: He was attending a Mozart concert that was interrupted by a man collapsing and being taken out on a stretcher. People were understandably buzzing and whispering as they waited for the orchestra to continue and Andre shouted out, QUIET! A woman in front of him said, "But a man just died." Andre said for quite scornfully for all to hear, "There are worse things than dying while listening to Mozart." Get on with it!

In the course of their studies, *both* children were recognized for the exceptional power of their intellects. But it was Simone, quite unlike anyone, however, who demonstrated very early in life a formidable power of character. At five, for example, she refused to eat sugar because the soldiers in the field during the Great War were not able to enjoy it. This early act marks the profound other-centeredness and solidarity with suffering that dominated her entire life and thought. She was ever the Good Samaritan, never the one to look away, to pass by.

Around the age of 12 she began to suffer the headaches that tormented her for the rest of her life. She excelled in school and studied philosophy, ranking first in her university entrance exams in 1928 (Simone de Beauvoir placed second---and once said to Simone Weil that the main problem in life was not to make people happy but to discover the reason for their existence. Simone Weil said it was easy to see that the other Simone had never been hungry.) During her university years she became deeply interested in the trade union movement and the plight of the working classes. She took in 1931 the first of several teaching posts, teaching, more or less unsuccessfully, philosophy to bourgeois school girls); she continued her involvement in the union movement, began to write essays, and then in 1934 decided to take a year's leave to actually *live* the life she observed and thought about so intently.

She undertook a series of grueling factory and farm jobs, where she experienced directly what it was like to be depersonalized by circumstance, “a mere thing,” an object of another’s power and privilege. Here’s how she describes it in her “Spiritual Autobiography:”

As I worked in the factory, indistinguishable to all eyes, including my own, from the anonymous mass, the affliction of others entered into my flesh and my soul. Nothing separated me from it for I had really forgotten my past and I looked forward to no future. Finding it difficult to imagine the possibility of surviving all the fatigue. What I went through there marked me in so lasting a manner that still today when any human being, whosoever he may be, speaks to me without brutality, I cannot help having the impression that there must be a mistake. . . . There I received forever the mark of a slave, like the branding of the red-hot iron, which the Romans put on the foreheads of their most despised slaves. (Waiting, p. 25)

Mercifully, many of us have experienced only minor versions of this brutal anonymity—maybe the most harrowing is something like going through the TSA line. We can only imagine the plight of the refugee or the victims of horrific natural disasters. But we should imagine. We should always know that the armor of class and privilege is very very thin, that our resume or identification card mean nothing in the face of this kind of affliction. It is all easily stripped away, and there we are.

These very difficult and demeaning jobs were interspersed with a few short-lived teaching positions and, finally, a visit to the Spanish Civil War in 1936, where she severely injured herself with boiling oil while serving as a camp cook. Distraught and physically fragile, she went off at her parents’ insistence to Portugal for a holiday, where she went off by herself to a little village on the coast where she had the first of what she called her “three contacts with Christianity.” Here’s how she describes this first experience:

In this state of mind then and in a wretched condition physically, I entered the little Portuguese village, which, alas was very wretched

too, on the very day of its patron saint's festival. I was alone. It was evening and there was a full moon. It was by the sea. The wives of the fishermen were going in procession to make a tour of all the ships, carrying candles and singing what must certainly have been a very ancient hymn of a heart-rending sadness. Nothing can give any idea of it. I have never heard anything so poignant unless it were the song of the boatmen on the Volga. There the conviction was suddenly borne in upon me that Christianity is preeminently the religion of slaves, that slaves cannot help belonging to it, and I among others. (Waiting, p. 26)

And why is Christianity the religion of slaves? The deepest truth is that despite our positions and pretensions otherwise, we *are* all slaves: vulnerable, subject to forces (natural and human, brute and cruel) beyond our control, never entirely in control, always in need of care, mercy, love.

From this point on, her interest in things of the spirit, which had been flickering around the edges, began to take on centrality. In 1937, she visited Assisi and had her "second contact." For the first time in her life at age 28 she actually knelt down in a 12th century Chapel St Francis used for prayer—not to pray herself (something she had never done), but to express a humble response to the call of what she said was "something stronger than I."

And then on the third contact, and the culminating spiritual experience of her life. It occurred in 1938 on a ten-day retreat at Easter at the Benedictine Monastery of Solesmes (in Sarthe, France), where suffering from a violent headache and soothed by the beauty of that monastery's Gregorian Chant, she experienced a mystical revelation that changed everything.

So here's how it happened. When she first arrived at the monastery, she had met a young English Catholic who introduced her to the 17th century English metaphysical poets. Among these she discovered a poem by George Herbert called simply "Love." She quickly learned it by heart and began to recite it over and over, "concentrating all my attention upon it and clinging with all

my soul to the tenderness it enshrines.” The poem became a very long mantra. Let’s take a moment to remember this little poem.

Love bade me welcome, yet my soul drew back,
Guilty of dust and sin.
But quick-ey’d Love, observing me grow slack
From my first entrance in,
Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning
If I lack’d anything.

“A guest,” I answered, “worthy to be here”;
Love said, “You shall be he.”
“I, the unkind, the ungrateful? Ah my dear,
I cannot look on thee.”
Love took my hand and smiling did reply,
“Who made the eyes but I?”

“Truth, Lord, but I have marr’d them; let my shame
Go where it doth deserve.”
“And know you not,” says Love, “who bore the blame?”
“My dear, then I will serve.”
“You must sit down,” says Love, “and taste my meat.”
So I did sit and eat.

She said, “I thought I was only reciting a beautiful poem, but, unknown to me, it was a prayer.” (Springsted, p. 41) And during one of these recitations, she described in a letter she calls her “Spiritual Autobiography,” written in the last year of her life, she said very simply, “Christ himself came down and took possession of me.” (Waiting, p. 27)

She said that in all her thought and previous deliberations, she had *never* foreseen the possibility of such an experience, a real contact, person-to-person, here-below direct experience between a human being and God. “This sudden possession of me by Christ,” she said, was not the product of

the senses or imagination. “I only felt in the middle of my suffering the presence of a love like that which one can read in the smile on a beloved face.” “A presence more personal, more certain, more real than that of a human being, though inaccessible to the sense and the imagination.” (Waiting, xxiii) Fiedler argues that her very outsidership, her complete disassociation from conventional piety and religious seeking gives her a special authority as a witness of mystical experience. Indeed, he called her the “patron saint of outsiders.”

She herself said she had been fortunate not to have read any mystical works before her own experience. She said she had never had any call to read them. “God in his mercy had prevented me from reading the mystics,” she said, “so that it should be evident to me that I had not invented this absolutely unexpected contact.”

Instead of leading her into the ironclad certainty of Catholic dogma, she began to read widely on the mystical experience of unity with the Divine, which she saw as universal in all religions. She went to the Bhagavad-Gita and the Upanishads; she began to learn Sanskrit and Hindu. She began to appreciate the multiplicity of revelation, the insight that the same truth emerges in different languages and different settings. Like Huston Smith describes it, the finger of each of the major religions is rooted in the same palm, has the same anchor and source. Like Richard Rohr is telling us in his daily teachings this year, she grasped what we call the Perennial Tradition.

And like Fr. Richard would teach, embrace of this tradition is not contradictory of embracing Christ, the Christ of entire cosmos, the incarnation of which was born at the moment of the Big Bang. She accepted with all her heart and soul the personal embrace of Christ, which brought her to a profound faith and discipleship, but she saw that her task was to remain outside, to stay at the intersection between Christianity and all that was not Christian, all that was the rest of the world and human experience.

For her Christ was love and recognition: not the institution of Christianity. And the love of Christ was not sectarian; it was universal, cosmic, inclusive. And it is not about personal comfort and assurance. “Religion insofar as it is a source of consolation is a hindrance to true faith. . .” (Springsted. P. 112) For Weil, It is perhaps best expressed in one of the central claims of her thought: **“Love is not consolation. It is light.”** We will return to this powerful and unsettling claim in Part 2

She remains in wartime France, moving from Paris to Vichy to Marseilles, where in 1941 she meets a Dominican priest, Fr Perrin, and forms the most important friendship of her life. During this time of friendship, she began to teach Greek to a friend of Fr. Perrin and used the “Our Father” to do so. She learned the prayer by heart and from this time for the rest of her life this was her prayer, her meditation: she began to say it every morning with absolute attention. Here’s how she describes it:

At time, the very first words tear my thoughts from my body and transport them to a place outside space where there is neither perspective nor point of view. Space opens up. The infinity of the ordinary expanses of perception is replaced by an infinity to the second or sometimes to the third degree. At the same time, filling every part of this infinity, there is a silence, a silence that is not an absence of all sound, but that is the object of a positive sensation more positive than that of sound. Noises, if there are any, only reach me after crossing that silence. . . . Sometimes, also, during this recitation or at other moments, Christ is present with me in person, but his presence is infinitely more real, more poignant and clearer than on the first occasion when he took possession of me. (Waiting, p. 29)

All in all a stunning description of meditation and contemplative practice.

She leaves in 1942 for the US with her parents and lives for a short time in New York City, where she attends daily mass at the little Church of Corpus Christi on 121st street, where just the year before Thomas Merton went to daily mass before his journey in 1941 to Gethsemani. She is frantic to leave

her parents and go to London to work there with the French Resistance, and in early 1943 she sails for London and works for the Ministry of the Interior and the Free French organization. She writes her main political work, "The Need for Roots," but grows increasingly weak. Suffering from tuberculosis and refusing most food in sympathy for those starving in occupied France, she died on August 24, 1943 in a Sanatorium in Ashford, Kent. She was buried in grave #79, where some years later an anonymous admirer placed a simple plaque in Italian that reads: "*My solitude held in its grasp the grief of others till my death.*"

Simone Weil's mystical encounter did not remove her from the world, physically or emotionally or socially. Her experience and ensuing contemplative practice helped her articulate a unique call to action. And the action most needed was the action of paying attention, attention that shattered the cocoons of the individual *and* the group ego, the tyrannies of both the "I" and the "We." Only by paying attention can we see that "all points in the world are equally centers."

Break

Simone Weil said that the world at present had desperate need for a new holiness "as a plague-stricken town needs doctors." And indeed she saw the plagues of nationalism, sectarianism, materialism as keenly as anyone. She saw how readily we justify and moralize our self-interest and circumstances, at the terrible expense of others. The new saint, she said, "should not have any other country here below but the universe itself, with the totality of all the reasoning creatures it ever has contained, contains, or ever will contain. That is the native city to which we own our love." (Waiting. P. 49)

When we attach and identify ourselves utterly to any defined and exclusive category, whether church or party or family, as if it were an earthly country, we might find some satisfaction and comfort and righteousness, but we will never encounter truth---and most important, we will never truly be able to love our neighbor, who is hardly ever easy to recognize but who is everywhere.

“Our love,” she argues in “Last Thoughts,” “must stretch as widely across all space and should be as equally distributed in every portion of it, as is the very light of the sun. Christ has bidden us to attain to the perfection of our heavenly Father by imitating his indiscriminate bestowal of light.” “Our intelligence too,” she argues, “should have the same complete impartiality.” (Waiting, p. 50)

“We must be catholic, that is to say, not bound by so much as a thread to any created thing, unless it to be creation in its totality.” It used to be that such universality could be implicit. “But now we are living in times that have no precedent, and in our present situation, universality, which could formerly be implicit, has to be fully explicit. *It must permeate our language and the whole of our way of life.*” (Waiting, p. 50)

The capacity for explicit universality is not a gift in itself; it is not given, not the inevitable consequence of a mystical experience. Indeed we ourselves needn't have our own mystical encounter with God to recognize the truth revealed by the one who has. Simone Weil says that the most important and necessary thing we must do is to “pay attention.” This doesn't mean some mental exertion or muscular effort. It is something far more humble, far more in keeping with the contemplative practice of meditation. “Twenty minutes of concentrated, untired attention is infinitely better than three hours of the kind of frowning application that leads us to . . . a sense of duty done.” (Waiting, p. 61) She continues:

Attention consists of suspending our thought, leaving it detached, empty, and ready to be penetrated by the object; it means holding in our minds, without reach of this thought, but on a lower level and not in contact with it, the diverse knowledge we have acquired which we are forced to make use of. Our thought should be in relation to all particular and already formulated thoughts, as a person on a mountain who, as he looks forward, sees also below him, without actually looking at them, a great many forests and plains. Above all our thought should be empty, waiting, not seeking anything, but ready to

receive in its naked truth the object that is to penetrate it.” (Waiting, p. 62)

And of course this isn't easy. It's probably the most difficult thing we have to do. “Something in our soul,” she says in the same essay, “has a far more violent repugnance for true attention than the flesh has for pain. This something is much more closely connected with evil than is the flesh. That is why every time that we really concentrate our attention, we destroy evil in ourselves.” (Waiting, p. 62) As John Main said about meditation, the daily discipline dries up the root of sin. Indeed, she says elsewhere that *distraction is the original sin*. Mindfulness or attention allows us to see, not a reflection of ourselves, but the reality of others and the reality of the world. Here let me read one of the most poignant passages in Weil's body of work: her own telling of the Gospel in “Forms of the Implicit Love of God:”

A person has been beaten and is lying in a ditch, “only a little piece of flesh, naked, inert, and bleeding. He is nameless, no one knows anything about him. Most who pass by this thing scarcely notice it, and a few minutes afterward don't even know that they saw it. But one person stops and turns his attention toward it. The actions that follow are the automatic effect of this moment of attention. The attention is creative. [It bestows humanity on the thing.] But at the moment it is engaged it is a renunciation. The passer-by accepts to be diminished by concentration on an expenditure of energy, which will not extend his own power but will only give existence to a being other than himself. (Waiting, p. 90)

For Simone Weil, attention is love, and love is justice. There can be no love or justice without attention. Remember, “Love is not consolation. It is light.” It is not personal comfort, not about feeling snugly or certain or secure. It is capacity: capacity to see, recognize, act.

The Gospel, she says, in “Reflections on Love and Faith,”

contains a conception of human life, not a theology. If I turn on an electric light at night out of doors I don't judge its power by looking at the bulb, but by seeing how many objects it lights up. The brightness of a source of light is appreciated by the illumination it projects on non-luminous objects. The value of . . . a spiritual way of life is appreciated by the amount of illumination thrown upon the things of this world. (Springsted, p. 109)

One of the myths that Simone Weil enjoyed and employed in her work was the legend of the Fisher King. This little story, maybe better than anything, sums up her teaching. You will probably remember how the legend begins. You have to imagine a most desolate landscape, marked in the middle by a frozen pond. There is absolutely nothing living here but in the center of the pond sits a man, who happens to be a king, a horribly wounded king whose wound is deeply painful and unhealed. He's ice-fishing, of all things, sitting by a little hole in the ice, catching nothing. Now onto this God-forsaken landscape rides a dazzling young knight. He's high on a big powerful horse, armor brilliant, full of confidence and purpose. He's got an MBA. He, of course, is in pursuit of the Holy Grail and he charges up to our poor pitiful king and barks out: "Where's the grail?" The king is hardly engaged by his visitor and simply looks away.

Now, as we get to do in legends, we will fast forward 30 years. Back to the same frozen scene. King, still wounded, still no fish. But our returning knight who comes riding down to the pond is looking a little worse for wear. He's not quite as shiny and brash, and this time, he looks at the King and instead of asking him the self-centered question, "Where's what **I'm** looking for?" he asks him what's called in the legend, the redemptive question: "*What ails thee?*" At that moment, the scene is transformed. The wound is healed, the landscape bursts into flower, fish leap from the sparkling pond, birds sing. And the King says to our knight, the grail is just up over that hill.

Now of course the grail the knight found didn't look at all like what he thought it would look, and he found it through the agency of a person he would never have imagined could reveal the truth, someone he never

thought was his neighbor. But the pivotal moment in the story is when the knight actually looks at the king, when he gives him the creative, redemptive gift of his attention.

And here is what Simone Weil had to say about it in one of her most beautiful essays, “Reflections on the Right Use of School Studies with a View to the Love of God,”

Not only does the love of God have attention for its substance, the love of our neighbor, which we know to be the same love, is made of this same substance. Those who are unhappy have no need for anything in this world but people capable of giving them their attention. The capacity to give one’s attention to a sufferer is a very rare and difficult thing; it is almost a miracle; it is a miracle. Nearly all those who think they have this capacity do not possess it. Warmth of heart, impulsiveness, pity are not enough. In the first legend of the grail, it is said that the Grail (the miraculous vessel that satisfies all hunger by virtue of the consecrated host) belongs to the first comer who asks the guardian of the vessel, a king paralyzed by the most painful wound, “What ails thee?” “What are you going through?”

The love of our neighbor in all its fullness simply means being able to say to him: “What are you going through?” It is a recognition that the sufferer exists, not only as a unit in a collection, or a specimen from the social category we call unfortunate, but as a person, *exactly like us*, who was one day stamped with a special mark by affliction. For this reason it is enough, but it is indispensable, to know how to look at him in a certain way. This way of looking is first of all attentive. The soul empties itself of all its own content in order to receive into itself the being it is looking at, just as he is, in all his truth.

Only the person who is capable of attention can do this. (Waiting, pp. 64-65)

That act of attention, to Simone Weil, is at the heart of all we can know, all we can do, and all we can hope for. Weil was a brilliant, secular philosopher whose unanticipated and unsought mystical encounter with God made her a profoundly humble citizen of the universe. She asks us to be citizens, too. Not church patriots or national patriots, but citizens of the universe. And she shows us the way, never understating the cost, to the “field containing the pearl so precious that it is worth leaving all our possessions behind, keeping nothing for ourselves in order to acquire it.” (Waiting, p. 65)

Simone Weil is a mystery that should keep us all humble,” said Flannery O’Connor. But don’t look for her beatification, much less canonization. As George Panichas says in his moving introduction to *The Simone Weil Reader*, “we cannot expect to find lessons in orthodoxy or in doctrinal sustenance” from her work. “Her religious thought, even as it enabled her to reach the apogee of spiritual life, is rife with heterodoxy. (SW Reader, p. xxiii) But in the end, he says,

Simone Weil chose to remain “a stranger and an exile” at the threshold of the Church. And yet she did pass through the sacred doors of infinity. Ultimately, miraculously, her life and thought instance a spiritual victory that is perhaps unparalleled in the twentieth century. The paths of her unceasing meditations led her out of herself to God. (SW Reader, p. 399)

A God not confined to any particular time or place, any particular institution or orthodoxy. A God, who is, always and everywhere, she concludes in “Forms of the Implicit Love of God, “our real neighbor.” (SW Reader, p. 490)

Waiting for God, tr. E. Craufurd and intro. L Fiedler (New York: HarperCollins Perennial Classics, 2001).

Simone Weil: Writings Selected with Introduction by Eric O. Springsted (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, Modern Spiritual Masters Series, 1998).

Simone Weil Reader, ed. George A Panichas (Wakefield, RI and London: Moyer Bell, 1999).