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## *My Walk with Millie*

**An article for the *Cathedral Times*  
by the Rev. Canon George Maxwell  
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It was early in the morning on

Monhegan, which calls itself one of Maine's wildest offshore islands.

We were staying at a place called the Trailing Yew. It's an eclectic collection of buildings dating from the middle of the nineteenth century. The plumbing is fragile, there always seems to be a water shortage, and there are no extra amenities. You know what they say when you're visiting friends, though. If they don't have it, then you probably don't need it.

I didn't want to miss anything, so I put our dog, Millie, on her leash and sprinted out of the cabin. Mary Hunter was gracious enough to pretend that my banging around didn't wake her up!

The sunrise was stunning. It was hard to believe that it was real. Even the sea birds were silent. I was filled with awe. There was nothing for me to do but stand back and stare. I wasn't thinking about the world or trying to understand it. I was just being in it.

Millie, of course, has her own morning disciplines. After tolerating a reasonable amount of my standing back and staring, she began to argue for a little more "thinking about" and a little less "being in." We took care of the logistics associated with her disciplines and then headed for the trail to the Burnthead Cliffs at the back of the island.

I must admit that the trailhead looked a little like a scene in a movie, maybe the one from *The Hobbit* when Bilbo takes the path into the Mirkwood forest. Thankfully, what looked like the entrance to a dark gloomy tunnel turned out to be a gateway to a parade of wildflowers, bog bridges, a field turning back into forest, rock formations, and truly dramatic views of the ocean and the Monhegan coastline. I forgot my nature guide and

didn't really know anything about what I was seeing. Perhaps that was for the best. More "being in" and less "thinking about!"

Now, I know what you're thinking about. Don't worry. Millie and I satisfied all of our spiritual yearnings and still got back to the cabin in time to pick-up and deliver breakfast to Mary Hunter!

I am intrigued by how meaningful I find the time that I have spent over the years "being in." It has prompted some of my greatest change and growth. It has also provided me with some of my greatest moments of gratitude. "Thinking about" is important too. We wouldn't get much done without it. It's "being in," though, that reveals to us not only what we should be "thinking about" but also how we should be "thinking about" it.

Fortunately, you don't have to go all of the way to one of Maine's wildest offshore islands to have the awesome experience of "being in." I have had the same feelings of awe in the simple moments in the relationships with my family and friends that occur in my daily life. You just have to cultivate the practice of seeing these moments when they appear and then the willingness to open yourself to relationship and intimacy to each other.

These are just the sorts of things that we teach at Church.

I look forward to seeing you there!