My somewhat 'hole-y' state

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For most, summer is a time of slowing down, but it has been a long time since I have experienced it as such. In my profession of publications, deadlines never take a holiday. A friend asked me the other day if I was dealing with a lot of deadlines this summer and I said, "Yes, but unfortunately, I seem to be the only one who is!" Always the editor's lament, I suppose.

Nevertheless, I do try to safeguard some quiet time in the mornings. Before I plant myself before my computer at work for the day, I sit with a cup of coffee, my prayer thoughts, the prayer thoughts of others and sink into the moment.

In those few moments, I have nothing to do, nowhere to go, no one to meet, no deadline waiting, no answer to give. I am. Oh, not that the random, chaotic thoughts don't lumber and spin like bumper cars into my mind. But, on good days, I can sigh and sip them away and return to the present moment.

Jean Pierre de Caussade, the French Catholic Jesuit writer of the 1700s, would call this sinking into the present moment "abandonment to God." He believed and taught that "the present moment is a sacrament from God and that self-abandonment to it and its needs is a holy state." Known for the letters of instruction he wrote to the Nuns of the Visitation at Nancy, Caussade advised that we welcome whatever was given in the present moment as flowing directly from God, and that this is, in fact, the heart of the spiritual life.

We must trust God with all these things, resting from our state of 'doing' so that we can remember we are first 'beings.'

In an excerpt from *The Sacrament of the Present Moment*, he compares our life to that of a stone being chiseled by the master mason. Each cut and blow, he says, can seem to us like "ruin, destruction and defacement." But then, he adds, it is not ours to ask the mason what his ultimate design for us is, "only to remain steady under the hand of my master and to love him and suffer him to work out my destiny."

Abandonment. Trust. Peace. A sacred trinity in itself, it is the call to each of us to let go. The church I attend takes the month of July off as Sabbath. No services, programs, mission work or meetings are held. As the pastor says, "We must trust God with all these things, resting from our state of 'doing' so that we can remember we are first 'beings' – God's creation."

These are tough instructions for one such as myself: a classic Type A, task-oriented, product-driven, deadline-conscious (some would add anal) workaholic. "Doing" is what I'm all about.

Except it's not. By God's grace, it is not. I keep reading Caussade, often in my morning moments, hoping I can move from scoffing in dismay at some of his words to a humble realization that he knows a better way.

But here's the good news: There's no deadline on this learning curve, and no test to pass, and no "right" answer. Just each moment. One at a time.