



## One at a Time

**There is something about van Gogh's riot of irises in a wild meadow that captures a freeze-frame of life for me.**

Like that one cluster of blue among a multitude of orange, like that one white iris on the edge of the frame, I am always immersed in something beautiful. But none of it is the totality of life. It is all only a small and transient sliver of it, struggling for breath in the crush of the rest of it. It's all alluring and all momentary; it's all worthwhile and all transitory. And when it's over; I realize that I had very little time to look at any of it completely.

We rush from one thing to another and wonder why we don't remember where we've been or what we've done or whom we met there. Or worse yet, we go from one thing to another so fast we have no idea what was there, pressed in the midst of it that we never even saw.

Indeed, life is a meadow of irises crushed by the plenty of the beauty around them. Its learning to look for one white iris everywhere we are that will, in the end, save the soul from the confusion of abundance.

Life is made up of small things – single incidents, separate questions, distinct events, one person at a time. One of life's greatest gifts is knowing how to give the self to each of them as they appear rather than allow any of them to blur into nothingness. It is learning to be present to where we are and what we're doing that gives life substance. As Vincent van Gogh said, 'Great things are not done by impulse but by a series of small things brought together.'

To see one blade of grass at a time rather than simply a mountainside of green makes every element of life important.

Joan Chittister: *The Art of Life*. Pp 56-57. 2012

### REFLECTION

- > What is the one white iris in your freeze frame of life?
- > To what do you need to pay more attention?