

Friends of Silence

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“Is there enough Silence for the Word to be heard?”



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Dear Friends ~ This past weekend we led an intergenerational retreat called “Children of the Earth.” One activity was a story or guided meditation about an imaginary hike through the woods to a grove of gnarly oaks, tall poplars, and aromatic pines. At the base of each tree was a backpack with someone’s name on it. Wild ones gave earthly gifts to add to the backpacks. Chickadee gave a seed to remind the children of their inner resourcefulness, bear gave mud tracks to remind them of strength and courage to defend those they love, owl a feather to remind them to be attentive to the mysterious wonders of the night. We all need a “backpack” of resources to help us on our path. Contemplation and action, pastoral care and prophetic witness, spirituality and service—we all need both so that the inner wisdom that sustains us and keeps us going ensures that the outer work comes from the heart and is done with love. Here are a few gentle reminders of gifts that lie within and some ways to nurture them.



Love is the root of Life that unites all.

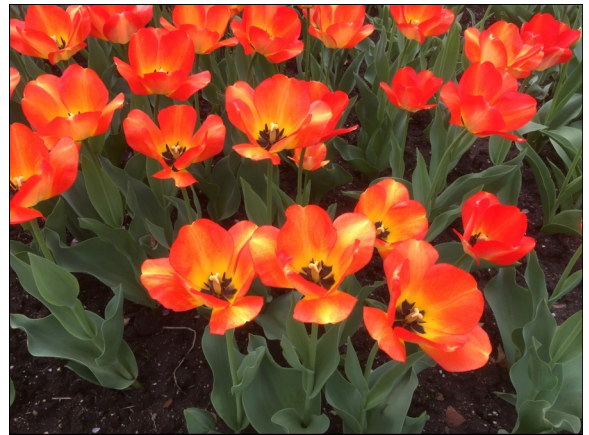
~ from *LUMEN CHRISTI... HOLY WISDOM* by Nan Merrill

The same stream of life that runs through the world runs through my veins night and day and dances in rhythmic measure. It is the same life that shoots in joy through the dust of the Earth into the numberless blades of grass and breaks into tumultuous waves of flowers.

~ Rabindranath Tagore

Compassion for others begins with kindness to ourselves.

~ Pema Chodron



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Faith is strong trust in self and life even in the face of evidence to the contrary. Like belief, it consists more in love than knowledge, or perhaps it is just that love takes precedence. It is intuitive. It is a power of the soul, not of the mind alone and based on the most subtle of perception. It is born and nurtured in the area of the third eye, the open heart, and the sensitivity of an ear tuned to mystery.

~ from *THE SOUL'S RELIGION* by Thomas Moore

If we fall in love with creation deeper and deeper, we will respond to its endangerment with passion.

~ Hildegard of Bingen



Call out to the whole divine night for what you love. What you stand for. Earn your name. Be kind, and wild, and disciplined, and absolutely generous.

~ Martin Shaw

What lies behind us and what lies before us are small matters compared to what lies within us.

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson



The dream of my life
 Is to lie down by a slow river
 And stare at the light in the trees —
 To learn something by being nothing
 A little while but the rich
 Lens of attention. ~ Mary Oliver

An ecological spirituality needs to be built on three premises: the transience of selves, the living interdependency of all things, and the value of the personal in communion. Many spiritual traditions have emphasized the need to “let go of ego” but in ways that diminished the value of the person, undercutting particularly those, like women, who scarcely have been allowed individuated personhood at all. We need to “let go of the ego”

in a different sense. We are called to affirm the integrity of our personal center of being, in mutuality with the personal centers of all other beings across species and, at the same time, accept the transience of these personal selves...

~from *GAIA AND GOD* by Rosemary Radford Ruether

We are overdosed on data and underfed on the mysterious. Our brains inflate while our souls wither. Constant interference by interpreting and explaining can distance us from life itself. God woos us into the wildness of unknowing where we are tempted by deeper senses.

~ from *ALL THE DAYS OF MY LIFE*, by Marv and Nancy Hiles

We live in a time when science is validating what humans have known throughout the ages: that compassion is not a luxury; it is a necessity for our well-being, resilience, and survival.

~ Roshi Joan Halifax as quoted in *EVERYDAY GRATITUDE*

I know not how others see me, but to myself I seem a small child playing on a beach, delighted at the discovery of a shiny stone or shell, while an entire ocean of Truth lays undiscovered before my eyes.

~ Isaac Newton

“First, my child,” said Old Turtle, “remember that there are truths all around us, and within us. They twinkle in the night sky and bloom upon the earth. They fall upon us every day, silent as the snow and gentle as the rain. The people, clutching their one truth, forget that it is a part of all the small and lovely truths of life.”

~ from *OLD TURTLE AND THE BROKEN TRUTH* by Douglas Wood

I believe that God is in me as the sun is in the color and fragrance of a flower — the Light in my darkness, the Voice in my silence.

~ Helen Keller

May your life be like a wildflower, growing freely in the beauty and joy of each day.

~ Native American proverb

Every enlightened person on the earth, everyone who's been liberated has had these virtues. You cannot be freed without them. The first one is compassion. The second one is humility. And the third one is service.

~ from *SILENCE OF THE HEART*
 by Robert Adams

