

Friends of Silence

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



LindaDeGraf © 2015

Dear Friends ~ In this part of the world, frost crusts at the edges of minute leaves and blades of grass. The chill air illuminates each breath, making us mindful once again how crucial warmth is to sustaining life. Whether sitting in a rocker by the crackling fire of a homey hearth or huddling over a trash can fire under the freeway to fend off the cold bite of homelessness, we gather round fires because we crave the heat and light they generate. In this moment of history when so much of the world has become harsh and bitter cold, people cry out for a rekindling of the fires of love and compassion.

We need to build heart hearths—havens of warmth and light where we can look across the sparks and flames to see the same longings in each others’ eyes. We need to gather the kindling, feed the fires, tend the flames, bend toward the light – whatever it takes to not just survive winter but to allow its harshness to teach us, its rigors to hone us, its clearing away of distraction to burn our hearts down to the essence of the light within.

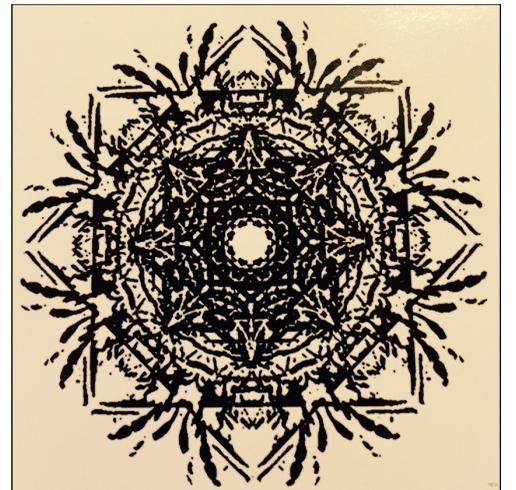


There is a spiritual hearth at the heart of every person, congregation, and diocese. The fire is ignitable precisely where we have a passion to begin again in the face of immense community and cultural brokenness. Perhaps there has never been a time in history where the need for rekindling has matched so strongly with the individual and communal desire to “begin again.”

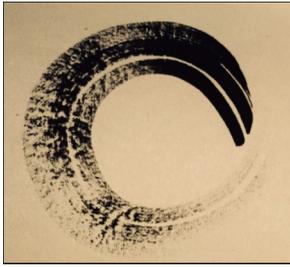
~from AWAKENING GRASSROOTS SPIRITUALITY:
A CELTIC GUIDE FOR NURTURING THE SOUL
by Edwin M. Leidel

That which is called light in creation is, in all its forms and in every being, one and the same spirit, a flame unique.

~ Arthur Lajone



Brushwork by Pamela A. Babusci © 2015



Silence is the discipline
by which the inner fire of
God is tended and kept.

~Henri Nouwen

FRIENDS OF SILENCE
120 Jubilee Lane
Harpers Ferry, WV 25425
www.friendsofsilence.net
304-724-1069

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Everything is a spark of that eternal radiance.
Why flee from the world in order to find it
when you yourself are already on fire?

~from MY SECRETS IS SILENCE by Adyashanti

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The presence of love kindles into the will a fire of sacred love. Being always with the Holy One, who is a consuming fire, reduces to ashes whatever can be in opposition to it. The soul thus aflame can no longer live except in the Presence, a presence that produces in its heart a holy ardor, a sacred eagerness, and a fierce yearning to see God loved, known, served, and loved by all creatures.

Earth's crammed with heaven,
And every common bush afire with God.
And only those who see take off their shoes;
The rest sit around and pluck blackberries.

~Elizabeth Barrett Browning

~from PRACTICING THE PRESENCE by
Br. Lawrence (17th c.)

Abba Paul went to see Abba Basil and said, "Abba, as far as I can, I say my little office, I fast a little, I read and meditate, I live in peace and as far as I can, I purify my thoughts. What else can I do?"

Then the old man stood up and stretched his hands towards heaven. His fingers became like ten lamps of fire and he responded, "If you will, you can become all fire. You cannot be a monk unless you become like a consuming fire."

~Desert Fathers (4th-6th c.)

When you enter the stillness of the eternal now by letting go of the fictional me, you see that reality, enlightenment, or God is like a flame. It's alive, ever moving, and ever dancing—the flame is always here. But the flame is impermanent. There is nothing about a flame that is permanent, static, or stable. If it were, it would be dead. Reality is alive, ever on the move, like a flame that leaps up from the log into the air.

~from EMPTY DANCING by Adyashanti

The human heart has been so made by Love that, like a flint, it contains a hidden fire which is evolved by music and harmony, and renders us beside ourselves with ecstasy. These harmonics are echoes of that higher world of reality which we call the world of spirits...they fan into a flame whatever love is already dormant in the heart.

~Al-Ghazzali (12th c.)



Love is the unfamiliar Name
Behind the hands that wove
The intolerable shirt of flame
Which human power cannot remove.
We only live, only suspire
Consumed by either fire or Fire.

~from FOUR QUARTETS by T. S. Elliot

"Okay—what are the other kinds of fire?" my father asks as he adds a stick to the fire at his feet... "There's a fire you must tend to every day. The hardest one to take care of is the one right here" he says, tapping his finger against his chest. "Your own fire, your spirit. We all carry a piece of that sacred fire within us. We have to honor it and care for it. You are the firekeeper."

~ from BRAIDING SWEETGRASS
by Robin Wall Kimmerer

Invite the Sacred to participate in your joy in little things, as well as in your agony over the great ones. There are as many miracles to be seen through a microscope as through a telescope. Start with the little things seen through a magnifying glass of wonder, and just as a magnifying glass can focus the sunlight into a burning beam that can set a leaf aflame, so can your focused wonder set you ablaze with insight. Find the light in each other and just fan it.

~Alice O. Howell

The inner fire is the most important thing humankind possesses.

~Edith Sodergran

As the flames of all the lamps of the Festival of Lights celebration burn brightly and reach upward through the entire night, they show the possibility that, with the removal of darkness, grossness, and ignorance, the tiny flickering light in our hearts can also shine brightly, illuminating the whole universe. May we see all progress speedily to the highest levels of spirituality—from darkness to light, and beyond.

~from "A Hidden Illumination" by M. M. Schneerson in Parabola 5, 2001

May the blessing of light be on you,
light outside, light inside.
May the blessed sunlight shine upon you
and warm your heart till it glows
like a great fire, so that the stranger
may be warmed at it, as well as the friend.
And may the light shine upon your eyes
like a candle set in the window,
bidding the wanderer in out of the storm.

~traditional Kenyan prayer