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Friends of Silence

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

Dear friends ~ In February the holiday calendar directs our hearts toward love. What the world needs now, however, is not the amorous affection peddled in Hallmark valentines but the deep down, soul-searching agape love of attentive care, healing, and compassion. As Adrienne Rich would phrase it, we need to cultivate “honorable relationships” - relationships forged out of truth, respect, and integrity. But how do we get there? The cultural and political landscape of this country has set the bar so low for cultivating any kind of meaningful relationships that we need to relearn what it truly means to interact with each other honorably. In my teaching years, the most essential lessons were not about knowledge of the mind but matters of the heart—learning how to treat each other—how to love and to be loved.



The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members, a heart of grace, and a soul generated by love.

~ Coretta Scott King

The warmth provided by our capacity to love is as necessary for the soul’s growth as any part of the meditational way... Love increases as we look out for the strangers and welcome them and particularly as we work at trying to transform our enemies into friends. Steadily the warmth that is given by this kind of action draws the soul toward the reality of the loving God. Step by step the soul’s reach grows, so that it becomes easier to find the One who is Love and to carry more Love out actively to others.

~ from THE OTHER SIDE OF SILENCE by Morton Kelsey



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Winding down a path unknown
With souls entwined together
Staying in the dark recesses of the
underworld, waiting patiently
Until that which has been forgotten
Can be remembered
And once remembered, can be healed.

~from DANCING BETWEEN TWO
WORLDS
by Margaret Smerlinski

++ Many thanks, dear friends, for your spiritual and material support, your encouraging notes, your prayers and good wishes for FOS. ++

In living with the mystery, we realize that recognizing our wounds is a prerequisite for recognizing and embracing the wounds of another. The fruit of personal suffering is a more compassionate heart....When this important first step is taken, when each of us tears away the bandages and takes the risk to allow our wounds to breathe, we begin to conspire together for the healing of our world.

~ from THE CONSPIRACY OF COMPASSION by Joseph Nassal

Great strength exists in the smallest things... Love can be a mere glance, a brief word, a silent touch. But it reaches past time and space and mere existence. Prayer, short, deep—a word from the depth of heart and spirit can work miracles and change a whole world.

~ from A CHEROKEE FEAST OF DAYS by Joyce Sequiche Hifler



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Think of the high noon of summer, or of the stillness of a snow-covered country, how the heat or lightness everywhere gives an intense sense of overflowing and abounding life, making a quietness of rapture rather than fear. Such, only of a deeper and far more intimate kind, is the atmosphere of waiting souls...Gradually, as mind, soul and even body grow still, sinking deeper and deeper into the life of God, the pettiness, the tangles, the failures of the outer life begin to be seen in their true proportions, and the sense of the divine infilling, uplifting, redeeming Love becomes real and illuminating.

~ from THE COMMUNION OF LIFE by Joan Mary Fry

The skin of deeply spiritual persons is not a dividing membrane that separates them from the world—
but
a connecting membrane,
a permeable membrane,
through which
events of the world and
events of their inner life
flow into one another.

~ from TOWARD A GLOBAL SPIRITUALITY
by Patricia Mische

The polestar that will guide you into a more loving future is already shining bright in the night sky of your soul. But to see it, you must accustom your eyes to the fertile darkness you have tried to avoid. Look deeply into your disappointments, examine your heartache, interrogate your longing, probe your loneliness, meditate honestly on the elements of love of which you are still ignorant, and you will discover that the void within you is already filled with the desire for fulfillment. Your yearning itself is an internal guidance system that is moving you to become a lover.

~ from TO LOVE AND BE LOVED by Sam Keen

We are all in this together. So when you realize that you're talking to yourself, label it "thinking" and notice your tone of voice. Let it be compassionate and gentle and humorous. Then you'll be changing old stuck patterns that are shared by the whole human race. Compassion for others begins with kindness to ourselves. ~ Pema Chodron

While all major religions rightly expect people to help others in need, paradoxically the real refreshing, and mysterious challenge of spiritual life is not primarily to give love, but to receive it. For when our hearts are alive with love, we can, and do, spontaneously share with a sense of mitzvah (giving and expecting nothing in return)... With a healthy sense of self-love, the call from God to love others as we love ourselves is transformed from an exterior command into a powerful interior attitude of hope that can lead to true compassion, sound friendship, and effective social action.

~ from TOUCHING THE HOLY by Robert J. Wicks

The conclusion is always the same:
love is the most powerful
and still the most unknown
energy of the world.

~Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

We live in a moment of grace. Through the hedges of our divisions we are beginning to glimpse again the beauty of life's oneness. We are beginning to hear . . . the essential harmony that lies at the heart of the universe. And we are beginning to understand . . . that we will be well to the extent that we move back into relationship with one another, whether as individuals and families or as nations and species. The time is right. The time is desperately right.

~ from A NEW HARMONY by John Philip Newell



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Although the wind
blows terribly here,
the moonlight also leaks
between the roof planks
of this ruined house.

~ Izumi Shikibu, "Although the wind ...,"
translated by Jane Hirshfield and
Mariko Aratani, from THE INK
DARK MOON.