

# Friends of Silence

Vol. XXX, No. 1

+++++

January, 2017

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



Photo of stained glass—  
Linda DeGraf © 2016

Dear Friends ~ As we welcome 2017, saying “Happy New Year” may feel a bit trite and hollow in this troubled world. Yet in a recently published collection of songs, Carrie Newcomer reminds us to hold on to what sustains us:

*“The shadows of this world will say—There’s no hope why try anyway?  
But every kindness large or slight—shifts the balance toward the Light...  
When justice seems in short supply, lean in toward the Light.”*

The only way to deepen this moment into something more meaningful is to use this transition for reflection—to cultivate gratitude for all we have been given and to ponder anew why we are here and what we are meant to be doing. How will we slip through the doorway into a new year? What is the next step we are called to take, the work we are meant to do? Whatever it is, know that you carry with you the love and blessings of this circle of friends and the everlasting presence of the One that sustains us all.



To learn to meet our needs without continuous violence against one another and our only world would require an immense intellectual and practical effort, requiring the help of every human being perhaps to the end of human time.

This would be work worthy of the name “human.” It would be fascinating and lovely.

~ Wendell Berry in *OUR ONLY WORLD*



Linda DeGraf © 2016

Blessing means to lay the hand upon the shoulder and say, “Despite everything you belong to God.” That is how we deal with the world that inflicts so much suffering upon us. We don’t give up, reject or despise it; we call it to love; we give it hope, we lay our hand upon it and receive God’s blessing in joy and in sorrow. We who have ourselves been blessed can do no other than pass on this blessing...to be a blessing wherever we are. Only by the impossible can the world be renewed and God’s blessing is the impossible.

~ from *MY SOUL FINDS REST: REFLECTIONS ON THE PSALMS*  
by Dietrich Bonhoeffer

The workplace is as good a school for spirituality as a monastery. Our work, our homes, our neighborhoods, our public meeting places, our voting booths, our classrooms – all are conducive to the practice of spirituality. Our turf, our stuff, however cluttered and discombobulated, are holy ground. The ordinary hassles of daily living are rich soil in which to grow and bloom.

~from *ADVENTURES FOR SIMPLE LIVING* by Rich Jeffery

Work comes from the depth of our silence connected to the silent suffering, the silent needs, and the silent joy of others.

~from *THE REINVENTION OF WORK* by Matthew Fox



Photo of stained glass—Linda DeGraf © 2016

I'm done with great things and big things, great intentions and big success, and I am for those tiny invisible molecular moral forces that work from individual to individual, creeping through the crannies of the world like so many rootlets, or like the capillary oozing of water. Yet which, if you give them time, will rend the hardest monuments of our pride.

~William James

Loving service rendered with integrity teaches multitudes in darkness, those who still sleep, far faster than books or lectures.

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

Work when there is work to do. Rest when you are tired. One thing done in peace will most likely be better than ten things done in panic.

~ Susan McHenry

If we have a goal in life, work becomes like mountaineering. We have a view of the role we want to play: a vision of becoming a complete person, contributing both as an individual and one of humankind. One stands at the foot of the mountain and the climb seems easy; yet after the first few hours it becomes difficult, you get tired, you rest, then the path clears only to get difficult again before the summit — but what joy and what ecstasy on reaching the top where the canopy of Heaven is all-embracing.

~ from *THE VOICE OF SILENCE* by Oonagh Stanley-Foffolo

## Seeking Clarity

if each day falls  
inside each night  
there exists a well  
where clarity is imprisoned.

we need to sit on the rim  
of the well of darkness  
and fish for fallen light  
with patience.

~ Pablo Neruda

Service is the rent we pay for the privilege of living on this earth. It is the very purpose of life, and not something you do in your spare time.

~ Shirley Chisholm

Responsibility does not only lie with the leaders of our countries or with those who have been appointed or elected to do a particular job. It lies with each of us individually. Peace, for example, starts within each one of us. When we have inner peace, we can be at peace with those around us. When our community is in a state of peace, it can share that peace with neighboring communities, and so on. When we feel love and kindness towards others, it not only makes others feel loved and cared for, but it helps us also to develop inner happiness and peace.

~ Dalai Lama

If we...can see the issues of our day—the poverty, the racism, war and injustice—and if we can use the skills and resources that we get from our training at school or on

the job, and if we can really be open to being equipped by the Spirit of God, then we will be used. We must lie on our beds at night and wrestle with how we can individually and collectively bring our faith from talk to power, how we can bring our faith and works to bear on the real issues of human need. I believe that right now we are facing a most difficult time in history. We are discovering that old strategies have failed and that the new ones, or rediscovered ones, will not let us hold onto our old lifestyles.

~ John Perkins in *MOVING FROM TALK TO POWER*

I had wondered what Nicholas was doing behind the closed door of his study at an early morning hour. Now I knew. He was not just reading and praying. He was following a discipline which focused him and made it possible for him to realize his full potential. He was lining up his center with the integrating principle at work in the universe, the principle which was ultimately stronger than the drive to fragment. He was tapping into the power of light which would allow him to live dynamically, surfing the chaos, splitting the darkness, serving the creator by serving others again and again.

~ from *THE HIGH FLYER* by Susan Howatch



Quilt by Linda DeGraf © 2010

## The Farmer's Pride

Some folks transplant rice for wages,  
but I have other reasons.

I watch the sky, the earth, the clouds,  
observe the rain, the nights, the days,  
keep track, stand guard till my legs  
are stone, till the stone melts,  
till the sky is clear and the sea calm.

Then I feel at peace.

Anonymous, 16th c.