

DAILY SPIRIT
JOURNAL

Quotes & Reflections
for 365 Days

*post-liberal, post-modern
& ecozoic pondering*

JOHN P. COCK

Daily Spirit Journal

Quotes & Reflections
for 365 Days

John P. Cock

transcribe books

Daily Spirit Journal:
Quotes & Reflections for 365 Days

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Dedicated To

all journers
on the great spirit journey

and especially Brian Stanfield
of the daily journal tradition

If you are going to take care of yourself, every morning, not every other morning, you are going to get yourself spiritually dressed. . . . Some of you will fall flat on your faces and then wonder what in the world caused it. It was caused way back there when you let this or that or the other reflection go by. . . . [W]ring the profound meaning out of every situation. That is taking care of yourself.

~Joseph W. Mathews

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Either we receive [faith] anew everyday, or it decays. One day is long enough to keep faith. Every morning brings a new struggle to push through all the unbelief, through all the littleness of faith, . . . to reach faith and wrest it from God.

~Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Each day I begin my journey with a reflection from John Cock. He reminds me of wonder, he connects me with Earth and sky and animals, he calls me to care, he tells me God loves me. I journey on.

~Herman F. Greene, Director
Center for Ecozoic Studies
Chapel Hill, NC

Preface

At the suggestion of and with the technical help of my son Jeremiah, I became a blogger (wondering what one was) in 2004, recording daily quotes and reflections, beginning in September and going the year's cycle of days through August 2005. As you will see, there are quotes from all over and reflections on quotes, mostly mine. Daily I posted the reflections to an e-mail list of some size as well as to my weblog, now with 365 archives.

It has been a corporate effort. As many as fifty colleagues have sent quotes: especially Randy Williams, Beret Griffith, Herman Greene, David Rebstock, David Zollars, and Lynda Cock. Others I gleaned from colleagues' e-mails, writings, and shared readings. And, of course, colleagues throughout history up to the present offered quotes: especially Lao Tzu, Rumi, Kierkegaard, Emily Dickinson, Schweitzer, D. H. Lawrence, Tagore, Kazantzakis, Bonhoeffer, Gandhi, de Chardin, Buber, Hesse, Tillich, Fromm, Alan Watts, MLK, Jr., Joseph Mathews, Joseph Campbell, Castaneda, Thomas Berry, Spong, Brian Stanfield, Gene Marshall, John Epps, Sam Keen, Thich Nhat Hanh, D. J. Duncan, Mary Oliver, Swimme, Wilber, Andrew Cohen – on and on. There is so much wisdom in our common universal history to be shared and reflected upon.

Why do the daily lists and blogging? For others' journeys, sure, from family and friends to utter strangers

around the globe, trusting that a word here or there will make a difference in their day and in their life journeys. I hear from some of them daily, either personally or through their comments on the weblog. This contact helps keep me going in this daily spirit exercise and enterprise.

And I do it to feed my own soul for my spirit journey. I had been experimenting with daily meditation, off and on, for most of my life. This way is the most satisfying yet, for a couple of reasons. It keeps me at attention to hear and see, like a reporter looking for a good story. Also, I have a local-global network of dialogue. In religious parlance, this makes my solitary exercise a corporate one, a community one – even if virtual, I can see many faces. It all adds up to a sense of mission even as I do my reflection for my own journey. Can't beat that.

As I begin gathering and listing another year of quotes and reflections – maybe for a volume two – I thank the whole lot of you, creation itself, and *spirit*, that is always present and meeting us in our particular/universal relationships and in the events of our daily journeys.

Have another great year. But how can you keep from it with the universal gifts of billions of neutrinos and bounteous grace in every moment, as the quotes describe?

September 2005

John P. Cock
Greensboro NC
USA

Journal Guide

To help us dialogue with what is written herein, we might ask ourselves such questions as these:

- In what situation might someone say this quote?
- What real life situation does this quote bring to mind?
- What is the truth about life this quote/reflection is trying to communicate?
- Under what circumstances would I share this one? With whom? Why?

Grounding the quotes/reflections in our own life experiences may enhance meaningful dialogue.

Around the edges and spaces in between, let us feel free to jot down anything at all in this daily journal. Who knows, expanded journal entries may flow forth.

One more thing: we can even participate in the age-old practice of memorizing bits to reflect upon during the day and later.

Finally, relish the moment of reflection.

~jpc (initials of John P. Cock, used throughout)

Set aside regular times for meditative thinking, recollection, and silence. As a practical matter, it is good to rise early enough to set the tone of your upcoming day by enjoying leisurely moments – a graceful caress, a ritual shower of purification, a consecrated breakfast. . . . Practice or omit whatever formal rituals you like – meditation, prayer, tai chi, chanting, reading of texts – that will remind you to enter the day with a spirit of gratitude and devotion.

~Sam Keen

September

September 1 Your Business

There is a vitality, a life-force, an energy, a quickening that is translated through you into action. And because there is only one you in all time, your expression is unique. If you block it, it will never exist through any other medium and will be lost. The world will not have it. It is not your business to determine how good it is, nor how it compares with other expressions. It is your business to _____

~Martha Graham

September 2 A New Other-Worldliness

What is needed, then, is a new other-worldliness . . . [a] post-liberal . . . attack on pure secularism.

~H. Richard Niebuhr

Niebuhr's "new other-worldliness" goes back to the Old Testament's "God is with us," or Jesus' "The kingdom of God is at hand If you have seen me you have seen my Father," or Tillich's "the eternal now," or Buber's "meeting the Eternal Thou in any thou," or Alan Watts' "the immediate, everyday, and

present experience is IT," or Wilber's "absolute reality and the relative world are 'not two.'"

These metaphors of the new other-worldliness are as old as consciousness. This understanding supersedes the empty illusions of "pure secularism." Oh, to be a "post-liberal." ~jpc

September 3 The Other World

The Other World is in this world . . . The Other World is the world of transparency.

~Joseph W. Mathews

*There is one world and the Other World is at the heart of every event and element of ongoing creation. Another way to say this is **spirit** is always already present. Sensing, realizing, bowing to, and serving that presence is the essence of the human journey; therefore, we call it the "spirit journey." ~jpc*

September 4 Meditation Is Not and Is

Meditation is not an achievement. There is no method, system or practice. Meditation begins with the ending of comparisons, the ending of becoming or not becoming.

~Jiddu Krishnamurti

"Comparisons" such as unmanifest and manifest,

*human and non-human, you and me, Christian and Muslim, Republican and Democrat, holy and unholy: maybe he's saying that meditation is being at one, in communion. Maybe he's saying meditation is an awareness of **spirit's** presence, or the silence.*

*It's helpful to talk about meditation ontologically rather than morally. That way, righteousness, or I'm more advanced spiritually than you, is silliness. How can anyone be any closer to **spirit** than anyone else?*

*Being aware of **spirit** stops our world, as Castaneda's Don Juan says. ~jpc*

September 5 Holiness?

Chanting is no more holy than listening to the murmur of a stream, counting prayer beads no more sacred than simply breathing, religious robes no more spiritual than work clothes.

~Hua Hu Ching of Lao Tzu

September 6 Eternity Within Time

There is no time *after* time but there is eternity *above* time.

~Paul Tillich

He means that there is "eternity within time." That's what he says later in his sermon "The Eternal Now": sometimes we become "aware of this 'eternal now' in the temporal 'now.'" When that happens to us, we

“enter the eternal rest which stops the flux of time and gives us the blessing of the present.” It’s great to know that “eternity” and “eternal rest” are living experiences, at least. ~jpc

September 7 One Prayer

[E]verything that exists, from the tiniest atom to the illimitable universe in which our tiny earth revolves, everything that happens, from the most trivial event to the most seemingly momentous, makes one pattern, tells one story, is comprehended in one prayer: [which is _____].

~Malcolm Muggeridge

September 8 Jump

A bit of advice given to a young Native American at the time of his initiation: “As you go the way of life, you will see a great chasm. Jump. It is not as wide as you think.”

~Joseph Campbell

This is what can be called profound spirit humor. Reminds me of the movie “Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid,” as they debate jumping off a high cliff into a river to escape their enemy [~jpc]:

Butch: You jump first.

Kid: No, I said.

Butch: What's the matter with you?

Kid: I can't swim.

Butch: Why you crazy, the fall will probably kill you.

. . . and then the famous cry as they jump . . .

September 9 Our Vocation

. . . To midwife the Divine – already present in each, but perhaps not shining brightly; already given to each, but perhaps not noticed well; already caring for the world, but perhaps forgotten in all the rush.

~Ken Wilber

The universe understands this as its vocation, e.g., a hurricane can be midwife to the divine. ~jpc

September 10 All of Creation

Right-wing conservatives and left-wing radicals here in the U.S. must be willing and able to sit down at the same table, look across the table at each other and see not an enemy, . . . but a brother, a sister, a fellow American, another child of God. We must expand our hearts and enlarge our identity beyond “my people” to include and embrace all of Creation.

~Eldridge Cleaver, *earthlight.org*, Spring 2004

Eldridge was a credit to the species. Who are other agents of creation reconciliation? ~jpc

September 11 On Their Behalf

... On their behalf
we pledge allegiance
to 200 nations *under God*
with liberty and justice for all

~jpc

Find the poetry, music, art, or other medium that helps you memorialize 9/11 and similar events globally: London . . . Bali . . . Madrid . . . Beslan . . . all over Palestine, Iraq, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Egypt. These may not be as horrific as Hiroshima, Europe of WWII, Cambodia's "killing fields," or genocide in Rwanda, but they hurt the human soul as deeply. ~jpc

September 12 Become as a Little Child

We ought to dance with rapture that we should be alive
and in the flesh, and part of the living incarnate cosmos.

I am part of the sun
as my eye is part of me.
That I am part of the Earth,
my feet know perfectly,
and my blood is part of the sea.

~D. H. Lawrence, adapted jpc

Contemplation is the beginning of wisdom. I see therefore I am, Mr. Descartes. Seeing comes before "thinking." I see the earth and humans and know I am seeing, wondering, questioning – like a child. ~jpc

September 13 Meanings

People have the means for living, but not meanings.

~Viktor Frankl

The problem in the spirit of humans today is that we're aware that there are so damn many gods we don't know what to do with them. That's our problem. Therefore, the spirit question of life is Which god is God?

~Joseph Mathews

There is but one objective, everlasting, unchanging life truth: namely, the living of life as a gift is the meaning of living life.

~Joseph Mathews

September 14 Reverence for Life

Now I knew that a system of values which concerns itself only with our relationship to other people is incomplete. . . . Only by means of reverence for life can we establish a spiritual and human relationship with both people and all living creatures. ~Albert Schweitzer

We believe that the future depends on the transition from the homozoic to the ecozoic – from the house of human to the house of all of life.

~Herman Greene

Human-centeredness is giving way to creation-centeredness, which means aboriginal peoples have been way ahead of their time – thank goodness some of them have survived the ravage. ~jpc

September 15 It Takes a Universe

Thomas Berry, our universe mentor here in Greensboro, goes beyond the well-known African proverb “it takes a village to raise a child” and says

It takes a universe
to make a child both
in outer form and inner
spirit. It takes
a universe to educate
a child. A universe
to fulfill a child.

*Each generation presides over the meeting of these two. Thomas says teach the children to read the wonder and creativity of the universe even before teaching them to read from books, even religious books.
~jpc*

September 16 All Is Well

[A]ll mystics – Catholic, Christian, non-Christian, no matter what their theology, no matter what their religion – are unanimous on one thing: that all is well, all is well. Though everything is a mess, all is well. Strange paradox, to be sure. But most people, tragically, never get to see that all is well because they are asleep. They are having a nightmare.

~Anthony de Mello

They are having an illusion that all is not well, all is bad. When was the last time you experienced “all is well”? ~jpc

September 17 Life Fundamentals

To be authentic, one needs to have an object of devotion to glorify, a cause to serve, and a community to be loyal to. This is from the Hebrew understanding of life interpreted by Richard Niebuhr and passed on by Joseph Mathews. Great wisdom. This stimulates my list:

an ultimate devotion, for example, *spirit* at the heart of creation

a creationview, for example, the big Neighbor

a caring mission, for example, the great work

a bonded community, for example, a spirit net

What is your list of life fundamentals?

~jpc

September 18 Demythologize Capitalism

Capitalism beat communism and is the champ still standing. So far, however, it has not been able to push the poverty line globally or bring prosperity to all. . . . [We must be about] demythologizing capitalism as well as the gods of . . . religion.

~George Holcombe

What are practical examples of demythologizing capitalism? ~jpc

September 19 Meaning in the Mundane

Look at everything as though you were seeing it for the first or the last time.

~Betty Smith

September 20 Intercommunion . . .

- . . . is the way life is, the way it essentially is
- . . . is the fundamental fact of the oneness of creation
- . . . is born out of an experience of communion
- . . . is a covenanted “yes” to creation
- . . . is an *I-thou*, not an *I-it*, relationship with what is
- . . . is a demonstration of unity

“Intercommunion” is of the *spirit*. Divisiveness is of something else. Much of what goes on among humans today is not in touch with *spirit*, is not uniting the 6.4 billions of us humans with the rest of the universe.

~jpc

September 21 Love God in the Neighbor

Besides loving the neighbor in God, . . . Augustine is clear and insistent that Christians must love God in the neighbor. ~Margaret Miles, <http://theologytoday.ptsem.edu/jul1988/v45-2-article2.htm>

I'm not clear what Augustine meant by this, but I am pretty clear what I John in the New Testament means when it says, "He who says he loves God and hates the neighbor is a liar." Let us remember the neighbor is all creation, including humans. ~jpc

September 22 A Big Ritual

Namasté: I bow to the heart of creation;

*Namasté: I bow to the multi-verse, to our universe,
and to Mother Earth;*

*Namasté: I bow to all species, all humans, to my tribe,
and to my own being;*

*Namasté: I bow to *spirit* in creation.*

Such a ritual can help us stand at attention to all that is:

“Creation is Spirit’s and everything in it” (Ps. 24:1). *Spirit* is at the heart of creation. Hopefully, we have not left any of the neighbor out in this ritual.

~jpc

September 23 Communion on the Run

The spiritual challenge of our lives lies not in desperately setting aside moments for God alongside the other activities and commitments of our lives, but rather that of discovering in our basic human activities and commitments the possibility for communion with God *in* our communion with others.

~Richard R. Gaillardetz

I assume “communion with others” means with any other, including humans. ~jpc

September 24 How Does One Live in This World?

Identify with Spirit, Emptiness, the Ultimate, yet walk the middle way between Form and Emptiness, between the Relative and the Ultimate, between Matter and Spirit, trusting in the Mystery of incarnate living, embracing the way life is, loving each moment and each being as perfect.

~Robertson Work

September 25 Bumper Sticker Sightings

Assist airport security: fly naked.
The buck doesn't even slow down here.
Come the Rapture, may I have your car?

September 26 The Happening of Passion

Joe Pierce once gave a lecture in which he witnessed that true passion in pedagogy (in that case, teaching Religious Studies I) arose when one had no passion left but chose to fake it, in which case true passion, rekindled, arose [sometimes].

~Tom Bergdall

September 27 Spirit and Vision

Let the way of the Spirit refresh your heart. Let the vision of a transformed world ground your actions.

~Rabindranath Tagore

September 28 Time to Kiss the Earth Again

He had fallen on the earth a weak boy, but he rose up a resolute champion, and he knew and felt it suddenly at the very moment of his ecstasy. And never, never, his life long, could Alyosha forget that minute.

~Fyodor Dostoevsky

[I]t is time for us to kiss the earth again.

~Robinson Jeffers

September 29 Vanguard or Rearguard?

Christianity is the dominant religion in the West, and the West is the dominant polluter in the world.

~Dennis O'Hara

<<http://rels.queensu.ca/cfore/news.star.php>>

September 30 We Need Not Be Victims

Spirit means our capacity to relate to the totality of things.

~Thomas Aquinas via Matthew Fox

We most naturally relate to God and neighbor as it, but it is possible to relate to the other as thou. Spirit gives us the possibility and occasion to decide, and even triggers our decision to relate to the other creatively. Is it not possible, even, to bow to the enemy? And is it not possible to decide to do so? And if so, we need not be victims to hate. New decisions and new relationships are always possible. ~jpc

October

October 1 A Journey in a Journey in a Journey

Our time line stretches from the big bang some 14 billion years ago till now and to many trillions of years in the future when our universe will disappear. See the pictures of our universe journey for a bigger context for our personal journeys – both spirit journeys. ~jpc

<<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/origins/universe.html>>

October 2 Others

It is well to remember that the entire universe, with one trifling exception, is composed of others.

~John Andrew Holmes

“Others, Lord, yes, others, let this my motto be” – as the hymn goes – and let me remember the others are not just in my family, my tribe, my species, and maybe not even in my universe. ~jpc

October 3 Life and Death

... life's not a paragraph

And death I think is no parenthesis

~e. e. cummings

What think ye? ~jpc

October 4 Realize the Way It Is

Realize that neither brokenness nor wholeness will ever go away.

~Vance Engleman

[T]he state of union . . . can neither be attained nor lost; all [humans] and all things have it, in spite of themselves. It can only be realized.

~Alan Watts

October 5 Disagree and Commit

As for people management, I think living in a constructive and open culture in which people can speak their minds is crucial to getting to the right answer to things. But the debate has to stop at one point, and everyone has to accept the position and support it, whether or not they advocated for it. The shorthand inside Intel is “disagree and commit.” . . . Strategy is what you do, not what you say. . . . [L]ook at what they do and infer [their strategy] from this. Forget their strategic talk.

~Andy Grove, past chairman of Intel Corp.

October 6 Weaving a New Society

In the final scene in the film version of Tony Kushner's play *Angels in America*, the protagonist, living with AIDS, looks directly into the camera and therefore squarely into the viewers' eyes, advising, "The world only spins forward. . . . The time has come. The great work begins." And so our great work must begin here in Antigua – the work of weaving a new society.

~Sid L. Mohn

October 7 Vocational Gratitude

I don't have time for death! My chosen vocation is a full-time job. There is no pride in being so driven, only gratitude for the infinite opportunities.

~T.C. Wright, poet transcending cancer

October 8 Your Response?

I don't believe that nature is God, or that we ought to be worshipping it as God. But I do believe that it's the way God communicates to us most forcefully. God talks to human beings through many vectors – through each other, through organized religion, through the great books of those religions, through art, literature, music, poetry, and dance – but nowhere with such force and clarity and texture and grace and joy as through creation.

~Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.

Although Kennedy's statement is better than that of many theologians and environmentalists today, his use of the word "creation" as synonymous with "nature" – and both not including human existence – points to a contradiction. We humans think, organize, and act as though we're not a part of nature and creation.
~jpc

October 9 My Offering

On the day when death will knock at thy door what wilt
thou offer to him?
Oh, I will set before my guest the full vessel of my life. . . .
~Tagore

We pay homage to our colleague Mark Poole. ~jpc

October 10 Justing Love

It is one thing to say with the prophet Amos, "Let justice roll down like mighty waters," and quite another to work out the irrigation system.

~William Sloane Coffin

October 11 that which will NOT deconstruct

you call it what you will . . .
the mysterious is real
it graciously fulfills

it gives wonder and spirit
it is true and certain
it's worthy of faith and trust
it is the greatest loss
you run to it or from it
all reveals its presence
all is transparent to it
all is thereby holy
mystery permeates all
consecrates creation
mystery's primordial
it is never absent
mystery is here for aye

~jpc, after reading of the death of the father of
deconstructionism, Jacques Derrida

October 12 Torn

I arise in the morning torn between a desire to improve
(or save) the world and a desire to enjoy (or savor) the
world. This makes it hard to plan the day.

~ E.B. White

October 13 Democide

*At the recent exhibit here, "From Cambodia to Greens-
boro: Tracing the Journeys of New North Carolinans,"
we were struck in a new way by the 2.4 million killed*

by the Khmer Rouge. Browsing the internet I came on this page, charting the estimated 169 million humans killed by governments during the 20th century. ~jpc

<http://www.freedomstnest.com/rummel_totals.htm>

October 14 Economic WMDs

There are such things as economic weapons of massive destruction, and we have allowed them to be used against us. . . . The general purpose of the present economy is to exploit, not to foster or conserve. . . . It is impossible to understand, let alone justify, a government's willingness to allow the human sources of necessary goods to be destroyed by the "freedom" of corporate anarchy. . . . [T]here is no difference between a domestic threat to the sources of our life and a foreign one.

~Wendell Berry

October 15 Miracles

The miracles of the church seem to me to rest . . . upon our perceptions being made finer, so that for a moment our eyes can see and our ears can hear what is there about us always.

~Willa Cather

October 16 Bumper Sticker Sighting

Humans aren't the only species on earth.
We just act like it!

Just in case we think this is a cute sticker, consider a couple of pieces of data out this week: one-third of amphibians across the earth are close to extinction – getting closer to our species; and global insurance companies are raising flood premium rates because of sea levels rising. ~jpc

October 17 Living in Sin

Once in a vocational retreat, a student asked Joe [Mathews] what would be a significant vocation. His reply was to ask the student to name the three most important issues in the world. The student gave his response, to which Joe replied, “If, when I come back next year, you’re not doing something about those, then you’re living in sin!”

~John Epps

October 18 Sin Against Life

If there is a sin against life, it consists perhaps not so much in despairing of life as in hoping for another life and in eluding the implacable grandeur of this life.

~Albert Camus

October 19 Other Words for “Spirit”

*I [jpc] am reminded of Thomas Berry's last sentence at the end of his chapter on "The Dynamics of the Future," in his book **The Great Work**: he has been spinning with other words such as "power" and "force," then says,*

"This energy, in an ultimate sense, is ours not by domination but by invocation."

October 20 What Does It Take to Create Change?

[Thomas de] Zengotita said to me, "You can't force a historical moment into existence. The talent is always there, and there are just some moments where things start to swim into focus. But if the moment's not right, you can strain and strain and you're not going to lay an egg. When it's ready to happen, then it will start happening." If ever there was a right or ready moment, it's now. Tired of irony, hungry for the real, young people are poised on the brink of change, our quiescent potential beginning to stir restlessly.

~Maura R. O'Connor

<<http://www.wie.org/j25/vanguard.asp?page=3>>

Where do you see evidence that "young people are poised on the brink of change," beginning to move?

~jpc

October 21 Touch the Source

The cosmological powers of the Universe are coursing through us moment by moment. To become aware of these powers is to touch the source of Life.

~Brian Swimme

I touched the source of these powers recently, in a moment, when my son's dog jumped upon the bed and licked my face to wake me up. The moments are mostly quite mundane. ~jpc

October 22 We Are One

We are one. From the blind worm in the depths of the ocean to the endless arena of the Galaxy, only one person struggles and is imperiled: You. And within your small and earthen breast only one thing struggles and is imperiled: the Universe.

~Kazantzakis

October 23 Bumper Sticker Sighting

God Wants Spiritual Fruit, Not Religious Nuts

October 24 Godly Encounter

I am not . . . what God made me; I am, rather, who I

choose to be standing in the presence of God. I am not made in the Image of God; I am made to image God. The noun ["image"] has become a verb, symbolic of the fact that the relationship is a living one. I do not know God's Being; I encounter God's Being. God is not a passive principle in my life but an active creative force.

~Charles Ketcham

A non-mundane time recently when "God's Being, an active creative force" encountered me was during the tragic death of a friend. ~jpc

October 25 Enlightenment

[E]verybody wants to get enlightened but nobody wants to change.

~Andrew Cohen

When's the last time you really got changed? [I use the passive voice, but such change isn't usually passive.] ~jpc

October 26 Peacemaking

There is no way to peace along the way of safety. For peace has to be dared. It is the great venture. It can never be safe. Peace is the opposite of security. To demand guarantees is to mistrust and this mistrust brings forth war.

Battles are won, not with weapons, but with God.

~Bonhoeffer

One way Bonhoeffer won "battles with God" was when he saw a Jewish woman on the street being abused by the Nazis, which became part of God's call to him as a pacifist to dare to risk his safety, and eventually his life, as he joined the plot to kill Hitler.
~jpc

October 27 The Imaginal Stuns Us

When soul is eclipsed, matter and spirit fall apart, nature and mind fall apart. . . . [We] are stuck in the Cartesian dream of either matter or mind [that] leaves no place for soul. . . . [T]he imaginal is the eruption of the numinous face of the ordinary, and . . . it always has a sacred dimension to it which is awe-ful. . . . [T]he imaginal initially stuns us with its presence.

~Robert Romanysyn

<http://www.cgjungpage.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=684&Itemid=40>

This is like a Christ event that changes us by exploding a cherished operating image? ~jpc

October 28 An Unexpected Holiness

Earth takes on a new virginity. Bread and water and women take on a new flavor. Action takes on a new, incalculable value. All acquire an unexpected holiness – beauty, knowledge, hope, the economic struggle, daily and seemingly meaningless cares. Shuddering, we feel everywhere about us the same gigantic, enslaved Spirit striving for freedom.

~Kazantzakis

October 29 Do Not Seek Illumination Unless . . .

Sri Ramakrishna said: “Do not seek illumination unless you seek it as a man whose hair is on fire seeks a pond.” If you want the whole thing, the gods will give it to you.

~Joseph Campbell

October 30 What Kind of Leader Was Moses?

He wandered around for forty years looking for the Promised Land and picked out the only country in the Middle East without any oil. Compare him to Abraham who picked Iraq and Mohammed who picked Saudi Arabia.

~jpc, *sort of a joke George Walters told me*

October 31 Loss of Divinity

Wherever the “eternal Thou” can be manipulated, . . . whether by morals or by dogmas or by cults, the divine “Thou” has become an “It” and has lost its divinity.

~Tillich

Examples of human manipulation: “by morals” – do this and you will be saved; “by dogmas” – believe this and you will be saved; “by cults” – be a member of this and you will be saved. The fact is, you’re always already saved. ~jpc

November

November 1 Times They Are A-Changin’

Come gather ‘round people
Wherever you roam
And admit that the waters
Around you have grown
And accept it that soon
You’ll be drenched to the bone.
If your time to you
Is worth savin’
Then you better start swimmin’
Or you’ll sink like a stone
For the times they are a-changin’.

~Bob Dylan

November 2 Through a Thousand Destinies

You have a great responsibility. You do not govern now only your own small, insignificant existence. You are a throw of the dice on which, for a moment, the entire fate of your race is gambled. Everything you do [or don’t do] reverberates through a thousand destinies.

~Kazantzakis, *The Saviors of God*

*A gift: <<http://www.angel.net/~nic/askitiki.html>>
– the little Kaz book online. It could give you a renewed
sense of reality, hope, and courage – born of awe. But
it could also challenge your belief system and your
way of security. ~jpc*

November 3 Inescapable Network of Mutuality

We are all caught in an inescapable network of mutuality,
tied into a single garment of destiny.

~Martin Luther King, Jr.

November 4 Brush Up on Your Theology

Craig Biggio said, when his Houston Astros baseball team had lost the Division championship year after year, “It’s like someone upstairs doesn’t like us, and I don’t know why. We’re good people. We live right.”

Why is this a natural human complaint, especially when great expectations are dashed, when elections are lost, for example? But guess what, Craig, what goes on “down here” is not a result of magic and rightness. Everyone of the 115 million USA citizens voted their moral values Tuesday. They all are good people and they all thought they were living right. About 56 million lost, however. So brush up on your theology in the off-season. Oh, and ask the players why they point to the sky when they get a hit.

~jpc

November 5 Speak to the Hearts and Souls

At the Villa tonight, the owner and I discussed the election as I waited for my gyros. He said, "The reason we lost was they did not speak to the hearts and souls of the people. The campaign was run by a lot of folks who don't seem to have much heart or soul. Kerry showed the most during his concession speech." A young black, about twenty, said "Amen!" as he put another pizza into the oven. I asked, "So who will run next time?" Without hesitation he said, with a smile, "The Lady and the Kenyan American." I responded, "You do declare." ~jpc

November 6 Grand Paradox

Don't wait for the Last Judgment. It takes place every day.

~Albert Camus

Another way to say this: all times are end times (which makes them beginning times, paradoxically). ~jpc

November 7 The Fundamental Reality

Twenty years ago, my sister gave me the Jung plaque above my desk. One translation is "Invoked or not invoked, God is present." It was above the front door to his house and on his tombstone. Jung must have known the power of symbol and the fundamental reality of

existence. My translation: “Invoked or not, spirit is always already present.” ~jpc

November 8 They Don’t Want to Hear . . .

I find it strange that the last place I can really quote Jesus these days is in American churches. They don’t want to hear “overcome evil with good.” They don’t want to hear “those who live by the sword die by the sword.” They don’t want to hear “if your enemy hurts you, do good, feed, clothe, minister to him.” They don’t want to hear “blessed are the merciful.” They don’t want to hear “love your enemies.”

~Tony Campolo

Should they take down their Christian flags, Tony, or what? ~jpc

November 9 “Ecology” Is a Sacred Word

[T]he ancient words that make up “eco-logy” are sacred words. The combined roots of “ecology” could be translated as “the mystery of being at home in this life.” When you live ecologically, you are part of life, a member of the family, and not apart from it. . . . Ecology is basically a form of love, and only out of love for life can you find good reason for protecting your environment.

~Thomas Moore

November 10 Beloved Three-legged Pig

[W]e have powerful political opponents who insist that an Earth-destroying economy is justified by freedom and profit. And so we compromise by agreeing to permit the destruction only of parts of the Earth, or to permit the Earth to be destroyed a little at a time – like the famous three-legged pig that was too well loved to be slaughtered all at once.

~Wendell Berry

November 11 Dying the Happy Death

A ten-year Netherlands study suggests that highly optimistic people have lower risks of all-cause death, and lower rates of cardiovascular death than those with high levels of pessimism.

From friend who's become minister, who was around abusive, alcoholic father; she's had two bouts of memory loss recently for week or longer each: she wrote, "I am a better person because of it all. In fact all of the bad things in my life have come together and made something good and precious. I love being a pastor, I love preaching, I love the mountains, and I love caring for my flock. God is good . . . all the time and in all situations." Relative to the study, will she live longer because of her "optimism"? Not sure, but as Camus would suggest, she is dying "the happy

death,” which trumps living the long life. ~jpc

November 12 Plain Brown Wrapper of Surprise

... Eventually my little one
will learn to express
gratitude for what she has
actually received, knowing
simply that life has once
again blessed with a
gift in the plain brown
wrapper of surprise

~T.C. Wright

November 13 Bumper Sticker Sighting

When you're as great as I am, it's hard to be humble.

~Muhammad Ali

November 14 Suffering

Suffering is the constant reminder of the pain of being human, but also one of the most elemental ways that we all connect with each other. . . . Suffering is not just “negative”; it is a bond through which we all touch each other. Suffering, truly, is the first grace.

~Ken Wilber

November 15 Empires Are Scary

Our cultural religion has taken us over. We could point out our ultimate loyalties – other than “God” – that have pulled in “God” to sanctify them, justify us, and to give them authority and us power. For example, that’s what Constantine was doing when he decided to make Christianity the Empire religion. Some historians say it was good that he did. I say it’s scary to make any religion the Empire religion.

~jpc

November 16 That’s Very Good to Know

The Tao is that from which you cannot depart;
if you can depart from it, it’s not the Tao. ~Confucius

Spirit is the only thing that is never absent. ~Ken Wilber

Where can I go from your Spirit? ~Psalmist

SAP: *spirit’s* always present. ~jpc

November 17 A Part of Nature We Are

Anyone who’s doing science and religion right these days
is concerned with the human’s place in the natural world.

~Holmes Rolston III, *Davidson Journal*, Vol.
XXXIII, Summer 2004

... the Human Venture within the Earth Venture.

~Thomas Berry

I like the way Rolston and Berry choose their words: they understand that the human is a part of the natural world. In reality, humans are not something alongside nature, but nature includes humans. But we act as though we're in a tug-of-war: "care for me and mine" as opposed to "care for other humans" as opposed to "care for the earth." Wouldn't it be more healing and effective to integrate our caring, as indicated by Rolston and Berry? ~jpc

November 18 True Religion

Man is the religious animal. He is the only religious animal. He is the only animal that has the True Religion – several of them. He is the only animal that loves his neighbor as himself and cuts his throat, if his theology isn't straight. He has made a graveyard of the globe in trying his honest best to smooth his brother's path to happiness and heaven.

~Mark Twain

November 19 When I Fight Change

When I fight unwanted and unsought changes and when I seek to keep things just as they are, place me on the wings of birds flying south for another season. Gather their spirit

of freedom into my heart. Let me be willing to leave my well-satisfied place of comfort. . . . Thank you, God of transformation, for all these lessons that the autumned earth teaches me.

~Joyce Rupp

November 20 Bumper Sticker Sighting

I believe in life BEFORE death!

November 21 Emptied and Filled

Thou hast made me endless, such is thy pleasure.
This frail vessel thou emptiest again and again,
and fillest it ever with fresh life.

~Tagore

Sort of like death and resurrection. ~jpc

November 22 The Enemy Has Our Key

There is no way to God for our time but through the enemy.
The enemy has our key to survival and transformation.

~Walter Wink

Sounds like something Jesus would say today. ~jpc

November 23 Making Divinity Explicit

[T]he universe is accomplishing [the] great work of making divinity explicit.

~Swimme

Since we humans are a part of the universe, our great work, as well, is making divinity explicit. For this vocation we give great thanks and pray for the eyes to see and the heart and will to relate. ~jpc

November 24 A Credit to His Race

When some called [Joe] Louis “a credit to his race,” sportswriter Jimmy Cannon responded, “Yes, Louis is a credit to his race – the human race.” ~*espn.com*

November 25 Enduring Promises Worthy of Thanks

“God has made many enduring promises to us. The card names these:

*to love us absolutely
to be with us no matter what
to bind up our deepest wounds
everlasting arms to catch us when we're falling
faithfulness amid our unfaithfulness
grace sufficient for every need
peace that passes understanding
purpose when we have lost our way*

*mercy without our ever asking
a future when all seems impossible
balm for the deepest grief
forgiveness when we deserve none
more freedom than we will ever want
welcome home with open arms regardless
resurrection in this life
comfort when we are in greatest pain
refuge when the storms of life are raging
rest for the weariest
hope against hope
light in the darkest night
joy unspeakable*
~John P. Cock

“What a list! . . . Thanks . . . for inviting us to reflect, with gratitude and hope, on the enduring promises of our loving God!”

~Archbishop Alex J. Brunett, newsletter, “The Catholic Northwest Progress,” November 22, 2001

November 26 Humility, Gratitude, Compassion

In humility we acknowledge the contingency of all.
In gratitude we experience the abundance for all.
In compassion we live our interdependence with all.

~Randy Williams

November 27 Bumper Sticker Sighting

Born OK the first time!

November 28 Great Expectations

People dwell sometimes very explicitly, most times quite vaguely, in great expectations of that which will relieve them of the necessity of living their given life in the present situation.

~Joseph W. Mathews

With the beginning of Advent, we can expect reality or illusion, beginning or end. Let us choose the ever-present coming of possibility and new life instead of the deathly impossibility that is ever-present in cynicism, victimism, and hopelessness. Our choice makes all the difference. ~jpc

November 29 The Option

We know now what we could never have known before – that we now have the option for all humanity to “make it” successfully on this planet in this lifetime. Whether it is to be Utopia or Oblivion will be a touch-and-go relay race.

~Buckminster Fuller, 1980

November 30 Earthrise re Problem Solving

I wanted to evoke in people a sense of awe and wonder and mystery, and to give them a definite sense of the divinity that's in front of us every day. When you look at the earth from space, you can't help but be struck or touched by the mystery of it all. That mystery is an essential part of living, and it's an essential part of solving the problems that we have today – we have to be inspired to muse and wonder. I don't think that we could even comprehend the changes we need to make, much less make them, if we didn't have that visual model [of the Earthrise].

~Kevin W. Kelley

December

December 1 When Waking

... To remember the *other world in this world* is to live in your true inheritance.

~DavidWhyte

Wonder where Whyte got "other world in this world"? Joseph Mathews used it hundreds of times as the primary paradigm of the new spirituality. ~jpc

December 2 Swelling Spirit Movement

[B]elieve you are a part of a groundswell, ... a seemingly small but actually very, very large impending karmic overhaul, a great shift, the beginning of something important and potent and unstoppable.

~Mark Morford <<http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/g/a/2002/10/18/notes101802.DTL>>

December 3 Universal Urge

[T]here's nothing personal about that pure, passionate aspiration to awaken, to create, to become, to evolve. When the awakening human being experiences that urge

at the level of consciousness, that's the very same impulse that created this universe.

~Andrew Cohen

December 4 We Remember

When through the deep waters I call thee to go,
The rivers of woe shall not thee overflow;
For I will be with thee, thy troubles to bless,
And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.

When through fiery trials thy pathways shall lie,
My grace, all sufficient, shall be thy supply;
The flame shall not hurt thee; I only design
Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.

~hymn "How Firm a Foundation" (ye saints of the Lord)

We remember Nadine's singing "When the trumpet sounds, I shall wear a crown." She and Mary Lou wear their golden crowns today. ~jpc

December 5 Consecration of the World

It is neither acceptance of the world as it is, nor bypassing the world in the direction of a transcendent divine, but is consecration . . . of seeing the divine in everything. This attitude removes the dualism of a holy and a secular sphere.

~Tillich

Another way to say this: there is only a holy sphere, even though we're practiced in profaning it. ~jpc

December 6 Gandolf Speaks as a Steward

The rule of no realm is mine. But all worthy things that are in peril as the world now stands, those are my care. And for my part, I shall not wholly fail in my task if anything that passes through this night can still grow fairer or bear fruit and flower again in days to come. For I too am a steward.

~Tolkien

December 7 Why So Pessimistic?

What if, as Arnold Toynbee suggested, we were committed to a project that imagined "the welfare of the whole human race as a practical objective"? Bruce Mau, whom I would call an earth community designer, improves upon Toynbee: What if we imagined the welfare of all of life – which includes the human – as a practical objective? As a designer he says design can be changed, failures can be redesigned; we do it all the time. A realistic optimist.

Listen to "Massive Change," NPR Dick Gordon's forty-five-minutes interview with Bruce Mau – raised in Sudbury – and sometimes called "Chairman Mau." Listen to him dialogue with pessimistic callers. <http://www.theconnection.org/shows/2004/11/20041123_b_main.asp>. ~jpc

December 8 Peace On Earth

Until he extends the circle of his compassion to all living things, man will not himself find peace.

~Schweitzer

Then "Peace on Earth" means total earth community peace? ~jpc

December 9 Turn Loose

Turn loose! Slip past shape and shadow,
Sit side by side with nothing, save [*spirit*].

~Shih-shu, adapted by jpc

December 10 Ethical Questions

What must I know myself to be responsible for? And what does not lie within the scope of my responsibility? Is there any purpose in regarding myself as responsible for everything that takes place in the world? Or can I stand by and watch these great events as an unconcerned spectator so long as my own tiny domain is in order? Am I to wear myself out in impotent zeal against all the wrong and all the misery that is in the world? Or am I entitled, in self-satisfied security, to let the wicked world run its course, so long as I cannot myself do anything to change it and so long as I have done my own work? What is the

place and what are the limits of my responsibility?

~Bonhoeffer

December 11 Bumper Sticker Sighting

God is too big to fit into any or all of our religions

December 12 Shall We Dance?

Dance first. Think later. It's the natural order.

~Samuel Beckett

And those who were seen dancing were thought to be insane by those who could not hear the music.

~Nietzsche

Anyone who says sunshine brings happiness has never danced in the rain.

~Author Unknown

We're fools whether we dance or not, so we might as well dance.

~Japanese proverb

Any wonder we call life a dance? ~jpc

December 13 My Loyalties

My loyalties will not be bound by national borders, or confined in time by one nation's history, or limited in the spiritual dimension by one language or culture. I pledge my allegiance to the . . . human race, and my everlasting

love to the green hills of Earth, and my intimations of glory to the singing stars, to the very end of space and time.

~Edward Abbey

December 14 A Different Kind of Election

Election is not about who gets to go to heaven; election is about who God chooses to be part of his crisis-response team to bring healing to the world.

~Brian McLaren, leader of the evangelical “emergent church”

The evangelicals surely are not going to listen to the likes of me. Reform of the evangelical church will come from within its ranks. Maybe it's happening. ~jpc

December 15 Find the Life Underneath

Find the “narrow gate that leads to life.” It is called the Now. Narrow your life down to this moment. Your life situation may be full of problems – most life situations are – but find out if you have any problem at this moment. Not tomorrow or in ten minutes, but now. Do you have a problem now? When you are full of problems, there is no room for anything new to enter, no room for a solution. So whenever you can, make some room, create some space, so that you find the life underneath your life situation.

~Eckhart Tolle

December 16 Feeling at Home in the Universe

Faith is a quality of human living. At its best it has taken the form of security and courage and service; a quiet confidence and joy that enable one to feel at home in the universe, and to find meaning in the world and in one's life, a meaning that is profound and ultimate, and is stable no matter what may happen to oneself at the level of immediate event.

~Wilfred Cantwell Smith

To feel radically at home is an extraordinary mystery. You may suddenly sense it at the edge of the sea or in a friend's living room. It seizes you – an emotion, a fantasy, a realisation. It cannot be manufactured or contained. Ecology [feeling radically at home in the universe] is a sacred art, understood only by theology. It is the primary work of us all, no matter what we do. It is the primary thing, the only thing. You are either an ecologist or a lost soul.

~Thomas Moore

December 17 Healing Wounds

We are called to assist the Earth to heal her wounds, and in the process heal our own, indeed, to embrace the whole creation in all its diversity, beauty and wonder.

~Wangari Maathai

December 18 Bumper Sticker Sighting

6 billion births beget big blessings beyond big burdens

December 19 Light From Within

People are like stained-glass windows. They sparkle and shine when the sun is out, but when the darkness sets in, their true beauty is revealed only if there is a light from within.

~Elisabeth Kübler-Ross

December 20 Christmas Is About . . .

Christmas is about finding life where we do not expect life to be.

~Joan Chittister

Go ahead and memorize this one. ~jpc

December 21

“Santa Claus Is Coming To Town”

It is said of old
That the bad boys and girls got no gifts for Christmas –
Only a switch to lash them with.
But so far as anyone knows,
No switches have ever been left at Christmas.

Santa Claus takes good gifts to every house,
To every person in the whole world.

This is not an exaggeration.
This is the way the story reads.
Every person, every house.
If a child receives no gift from Santa Claus,
That is a devastating blow.
No matter how many gifts are received
 from mom, dad, brother, sister,
Those gifts cannot replace the gift not received
From the one who takes gifts to all.
You see, in this story, all girls are good girls,
 for all receive gifts.
And all boys are good boys, for all receive gifts.

Now, I ask you: Is this a true story?
Have you ever met that which gives good gifts to all?
Into every house?
By any criteria you and I have created,
 we all deserve switches.
Yet, in spite of how we see ourselves,
There is that experience in our lives
 of the one who brings good gifts to all.
St. Nick, Santa Claus, or whatever other name is used,
They all depend upon our common life experiences
Of the one who brings good gifts to all, to every house.
The story does not say how this is done or why.
It simply says that it is done.

“You better watch out. . . . I’m telling you why!
Santa Claus is coming to town!” ~Gene W. Marshall

December 22 All Are Virgin Born

In the beginning Jesus was born,
like us,
that we might be like him:
purely human.
All are virgin born,
says the gospeler in John: 1 . . .

~jpc

December 23 All Are Born Again

How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given;
so God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heaven.

. . . where meek souls will receive him,
still the dear Christ enters in.

~Phillips Brooks

Dear Christ enters in –
love is born again . . .
the gift of heaven.

We receive it still –
silently . . . our souls
and hearts are filled.

Dear Christ enters in –

and is born again . . .
we are born again.

All are born again –
silently God’s gift
of love finds its end.

~jpc

December 24 The Christmas Word

The Word is at the heart of creation.
The Word is historical.
The Word is in the hearts of all those
who have said “Yes” to its power
throughout all ages – even before Jesus –
and in all places – even where Christianity has never been.

~jpc

December 25 The Messiah Has Come

. . . The mystery of the messiah comes
 into our world anew in the birth of a baby,
 whoever it belongs to,
 whatever gender, nationality, color, or religion.

It comes to us who think we do not want it or need it.
It comes to us hardened cynics who have given up
 on new life ever happening to us again.

It comes to us who think we have learned
to live with separation
and have given up on reunion.
It comes to us who have shunned religion;
yet, it rattles us with deep spiritual rumblings.
It comes to us who are following
every wise man and every star,
looking for that which we will never find
and which was never promised.

The mystery of the messiah comes as it wills,
where it wills,
when it wills.
Sometimes it wills to come in the form of a child.

The Messiah has come . . . again.

~jpc

December 26 The Messiah Is a Mystery

The presence of the Messiah is a mystery. . . . There is something surprising, unexpected about the appearance of salvation, something which contradicts pious opinions and intellectual demands. The mystery of salvation is the mystery of a child. . . . A child is real and not yet real, it is in history and not yet historical. Its nature is visible and invisible, it is here and not yet here. And just this is the character of salvation. Salvation has the nature of a child. . . . Only he who can see power in weakness, the whole

in the fragment, victory in defeat, glory in suffering, innocence in guilt, sanctity in the sinner, life in death can say (with Simeon): Mine eyes have seen thy salvation.

~Tillich

December 27 She Is Sheer Being

Grandbaby Kaitlyn has mesmerized us since November 14th. We see the miracle of her through Jeremiah's countenance and announcement ("It's a girl!") as he carried her out of the delivery room. She is brand spanking new, filling us with wonder and awe. She comes ready or not, forcing us to respond to her in all her utter vulnerability with our fumbling care. She tries to see us who are loving her, but accepts our love blindly. She does nothing useful; no one asks her what she does for a living. She knows almost nothing; no one judges her for her lack of education. She is sheer being, just there to be cared for and loved. The miracle is that her "job" of just being transforms those around her: relatives that were alienated are reconciled; strangers become friends; great-grandparents are rejuvenated; grumps show compassion; judges show mercy. Where did she learn to do all this? She has mysterious power. She must be a bit of being itself – like all God's creatures – bringing with her a bit of the new creation or new reality.

~jpc

December 28 Giving Birth Eternally

[God] has been giving his Son birth eternally, is giving him birth now and will go on giving him birth forever. . . . When this birth happens nowadays in the good loving soul, it gives God greater pleasure than his creation of the heavens and earth.

~Meister Eckhart

To me this morsel of the Third Testament says that creation never ends and that my role in creation is to be the recipient and participant in such creative eventfulness. This is what the Second Testament means when it talks about being a handmaiden of spirit, and what the First Testament means when it talks about being a steward of creation – both the fruit of eternal birth happening in sensitive and responsive souls. ~jpc

December 29 How Do We Put God First?

Some of the leaders in the company I work with are fond of saying, “God first, family second, work third.” This would make us think God was in competition with our family and our work for our affection. . . . [T]he only way to put God first is to serve those whom God loves. . . . When Peter professed to Jesus that he loved him, Jesus said to him, “Feed my sheep.” To be sure he got it, he said it three times.

~Randy Williams

The last few days I thought I had a big problem to solve, which was stressing me out. Then I began to follow the alarming news from places like Indonesia and India where we'd lived. My individual problem was washed away as I considered our planet's problems. What does it mean to "feed God's sheep" right now with the more than 70,000 killed by crashing waves in the last few days and so many more directly affected, the carnage of warring, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and the looming implications of global warming? To at least find a personal and local way to give to the growing efforts to relieve such suffering, to petition our associations and governments to take really appropriate action, to compassionately pray for our wounded planet daily and to give thanks for its bounty, and to continue to build and implement our three-point plans to "feed creation's sheep." ~jpc

December 30 Together on the Cosmic Loom

[W]hen I think of the "I" at the center of my being, I do not think of a spider spinning everything out of its own self. Rather, I think of it as both spinning threads and working a loom on which its threads are blended with those coming from all the other beings that make up the cosmos.

~David Spangler, *In Context*, Winter 1993

We people of the planet find ourselves blending threads in one of the largest restorative efforts yet in our corporate human history. And all this was let loose by the shifting of the plates beneath the ocean. What spinning threads of evolution we rocks and waves and humans are working out together on the cosmic loom.

~jpc

December 31 Spiritual Practice

Spiritual practice involves, on the one hand, acting out of concern for others' well-being. On the other hand, it entails transforming ourselves so that we become more readily disposed to do so. To speak of spiritual practice in any terms other than these is meaningless.

~The Dalai Lama

January

January 1 Annual Reflection Guide

Look at the year in pictures from some news source. Then take some time and list your reflections in your journal or PC file (so you can review next year):

- 5 Planetary events of the past year
- 15 Events I participated in (maybe by months)
- 5 People I remember (beyond family/friends)
- 5 Places I visited, near and far
- 5 Books/poems/articles I read
- 5 Movies/TV shows/plays/sport events I saw
- My key family event of the past year
- My key personal event of the past year
- Key community event of the past year
- My key struggle of the past year
- My key creation of the past year
- What I learned about myself during the past year
- What I learned about life during the past year
- My name for past year: The Great Year of _____
- Who am I, going into the new year
- 5 things I'm focused on for the new year beyond self
- 5 things I anticipate participating in during the new year

“You must do the thing you think you cannot do.”

~Eleanor Roosevelt

During the new year that “thing” you must do but think you can’t is _____

Now, give thanks for the past year and the new year ~jpc

January 2 Plant the Apple Tree

Even if I knew that tomorrow the world would go to pieces, I would still plant my apple tree.

~MLK, Jr., quoting Martin Luther

New life always comes in the midst of dying life, especially through such faith in the future to plant new life. ~jpc

January 3 Beyond Explanation and Teaching

No matter what path you follow to reach the place of truth, the place you arrive at is the same. When people are totally committed to their religious practice, they no longer need to be chauvinistic about it. All that is necessary is to dig into that basic question, to reach that deepest essence, and humbly accept Grace. . . . This state of mind is beyond explanation and teaching with words and phrases. It cannot be spoken about; it can only be realized through each person’s individual experience.

~Shodo Harada Roshi <http://www.yakrider.com/Resources/books/books_zen.htm>

January 4 All We Need To Know?

Tillich talks about “the eternal now.” Plotinus and Heisenberg talk about the “translucent splendor of the eternal shining through the material phenomena.” Teilhard talks about “the eyes to see.” Swedenborg talks about the spiritual as one’s “deep loves” related to what is. Probably all we need to know.

~jpc

January 5 Denying the Divinity of the Divine (I)

*The following four quotes come from Paul Tillich's little book **The Irrelevance and Relevance of the Christian Message**. ~jpc*

When we try to explain [the vertical dimension] to people today, let us not start with the “question of God.” For people of our objectified world take “God” as an object whose existence or nonexistence is debated like that of another galaxy. This denies the divinity of the divine.

~Tillich

January 6 Epiphany (II)

In all great religious experiences, the divine appears and disappears. . . . For this we have the word “epiphany,” which means the appearing of an ungraspable divine

power – being there and not being there. This “yes and no” is the foundation of all speaking about the divine. Thus may the vertical line of the divine enter the horizontal dynamics of human history . . . the vertical depth in everything encountered.

~Tillich, *Ibid.*

January 7 Everything Is Sacramental (III)

If we had a different feeling toward nature, we would have different feelings for the wholeness and holiness of life. Not having this contributes to our loss of everything sacramental – because if the whole universe is not seen sacramentally, the partial sacraments die off. And in all cultural creations too we must show the presence of the holy. We need an understanding of culture not only measured by productivity but in terms of the ultimate meaning that shines through – through the most seemingly atheistic novels and the most radically anti-human visual art of our time. The ultimate meaning shines as well through the different political experiments all over the world, shines through social systems, even through one of the worst forms of objectifying persons – modern advertising. In their unholiness all these things nevertheless have a point that, however small, is inexpressibly strong: the divine ground that shines through every creative human act.

~Tillich, *Ibid.*

January 8 The Secular Realm, Godless? (IV)

Never consider the secular realm Godless just because it does not speak of God. To speak of a realm of divine creation and providence as Godless is Godless. It denies God's power over the world. It would force God to confine Godself to religion and church.

~Tillich, *Ibid.*

January 9 External and Internal Nonviolence

Nonviolence means avoiding not only external physical violence but also internal violence of spirit. You not only refuse to shoot a man, but you refuse to hate him.

~MLK, Jr.

January 10 Loving the Distance Between

Once the realization is accepted that even between the closest human beings infinite distances exist, a wonderful living side by side can grow up, if they succeed in loving the distance between them which makes it possible for each to see each other whole against the sky.

~Rainer Rilke

We often say of our spouses, "S/he is a mystery to me." Isn't that key to the union? ~jpc

January 11 Renaissance of the Human Spirit?

So what I'm saying is that these questions – what is reality? what is intelligence and consciousness? what is humanness, what is life? – are . . . being answered by a bunch of people who are trying out things, who are doing things sort of experimentally. . . . [Y]ou have the online people who are trying to make democracy online and they start saying: What is democracy? What are the ingredients of democracy? It's very evident this is not electronic voting and so they say: How do we do this? And they have these great big discussions about democracy . . . and if it doesn't work, they try again. And this is the great renaissance of the human spirit.

~Kevin Kelly, exec. editor of *Wired* magazine

January 12 What Would a Happy Ending Look Like?

Three years ago we learned that the Milky Way galaxy, in which we reside, contains a black hole weighing as much as 2 million suns. “Thus,” says [Michio] Kaku, “our moon revolves around the earth, the earth revolves around the sun, and the sun revolves around a black hole.” Can this story have a happy ending?

~George Will, *washingtonpost.com*, 1/6/2005

You'd better believe it does, George. ~jpc

January 13 His New Role: Beloved Ancestor

The energy and insight, the passion and vision my father was able to transmit so well to others – these are what we can continue to call on him for, in his new role as our beloved ancestor. He reminds us that the brilliant fire we felt through him didn't belong to him, and it doesn't die with him. It's always here.

~Carol Poole at Mark Poole's memorial service

January 14 Death of 10,000-year-tradition of God

[T]he primary way we have thought about God for almost 10,000 years is dying or is dead. Since most people do not or cannot separate God from our traditional definition of God, it feels to many like there is no God or that God has died. God and the human definition of God are, however, not identical.

~Spong

January 15 The True Axis of Evil

[P]overty, disease and environmental decline [are] the “true axis of evil”... [that] cannot be resolved by raising military expenditures or dispatching troops. Nor can they be contained by sealing borders or maintaining the status quo in a highly unequal world. . . . Global military spending is now approaching one trillion dollars a year. . . . Preventive

strategies to deal with social and environment problems generally cost so much less.

~Jim Lobe <<http://www.commondreams.org/headlines05/0113-06.htm>>

January 16 The Stuff of Real Covenant

As we were thrust into the cause, it was my cause, too. I married the man and the cause. I realized I, too, could be killed. . . . I would tell him, "You're the only one who's making any sense right now." I tried to think of positive, uplifting and true things to say. . . . When he died, I knew I didn't have his abilities and skills, but I have my own. . . . If Martin's philosophy had been lived out in Iraq. . . . Nonviolence would work today, it would work 2,000 years from now.

~Coretta Scott King, *usatoday.com*, 1/15/05

January 17 MLK Day

The first question which the priest and the Levite asked was: "If I stop to help this man, what will happen to me?" But . . . the good Samaritan reversed the question: "If I do not stop to help this man, what will happen to him?"

~MLK, Jr.

Thank you, Martin. We'll memorize this. ~jpc

January 18 The Attitude We Bring to Life

What life means to us is determined not so much by what life brings to us as by the attitude we bring to life. Not so much by what happens to us as our reaction to what happens.

~Lewis Dunning

January 19 Job's Lessons For Today

(1) Victims of this cataclysm in no way “deserved” a fate inflicted by the Leviathanic force of nature.

(2) Questioning God's inscrutable ways has its exemplar in the Bible and need not undermine faith.

(3) Humanity's obligation to ameliorate injustice on earth is being expressed in a surge of generosity.

~William Safire, *nytimes.com*, 1/10/2005

January 20 “I'm In That, Too.”

At the end of the Book of Job, if I read it correctly, in the whirlwind speech – I think it's chapter 38, 39 – God sort of shows Job the ultimate Mutual of Omaha Wild Kingdom video with lions ripping apart gazelles and vultures tearing carrion and hailstorms and earthquakes and all. And then God says to Job, “What do you think of that, Job? Hope you like it because I'm in that, too. Goodbye.”

~Rabbi Lawrence Kushner

January 21 Dreaming and Awakening

Your vision will become clear only when you can look into your own heart. Who looks outside, dreams; who looks inside, awakens.

~Carl Jung

I'd say that dreaming (one's imagination) and awakening (one's spirit) are deeply related. Both are of the heart. I hope that's what Jung meant. ~jpc

January 22 Heaven & Hell

There is a profound contrast between the enlightened perspective, which is the absolute, universal, and impersonal view of the Authentic Self, and the unenlightened perspective, which is the relative, separate, and personal view of the narcissistic ego. It's literally the difference between heaven and hell.

~Andrew Cohen

January 23 New-Time Spirituality

It is easy to assume that a more religious world means a more fractious world, where violent conflict is fueled by violent fundamentalist movements.

~Laurie Goodstein, *nytimes.com*, 1/9/2005

I would say it this way: A more spiritual world means a more united world, where evolution is enhanced not by old-time religion but new-time spirituality, where the highest moral value is unity. That which unites is of the spirit. ~jpc

January 24 The Evolving Work Ethic

[We] desire . . . continual growth and [have] a constitutional aversion to complacency. . . . Upstream the water's deeper. Rather than flowing down river, we prefer to labour against the current, to resist the simple solution, because that's where we find the real opportunity within a project. . . . Our projects, and the intensive research we favour, provoke us to learn about the world, and we are enriched and changed by that level of engagement. But this rigorous process has also proven to be the way to produce the best people with the highest capacity for tackling the most difficult projects. . . . Our capacity is constantly evolving in response to projects undertaken and as a defense against unhappiness. . . . If we feel we are contributing something of value, our ambition has no boundaries.

~"Philosophy" of Bruce Mau Inc.

January 25 Whose Pictures at Your Desk?

I learned a long time ago that I am part of a communion of saints and that they surely help motivate me. So I have

surrounded myself with pictures of some of them: Dali's Jesus (Who knows what he really looked like?), Joseph Mathews, Thomas Berry, Gandhi, Merton, Dalai Lama, Hogan, Iron Man, and a gnarled tree. Wouldn't you like to eavesdrop on our communing conversations?

~jpc

January 26 Good News Indeed

In the immense story of the universe, that so many of these dangerous moments [over the billions of years] have been navigated successfully is some indication that the universe is for us rather than against us. We need only summon these forces to our support in order to succeed. It is difficult to believe that the purposes of the universe or of the planet Earth will ultimately be thwarted, although the human challenge to these purposes must never be underestimated.

~Thomas Berry

*Go to <<http://www.thegreatstory.org/tb-audio.html>> to hear Thomas read this and other pieces from **The Great Work**. See also a recent drawing of Thomas.* ~jpc

January 27 Being Thankful

I am learning that 'Being Thankful' is about opening my awareness to the ever-present miraculous in the ever-present ordinary. ~Alan Kantor

January 28 Our Vocation

That's what I mean by divine love. That's all Jesus did. He opened the future, made new the past, and filled the present full of meaning. And that is our vocation.

~Joseph W. Mathews

We are sitting here in Tampa, Florida, mailing out Bending History: Talks of Joseph W. Mathews. ~jpc

January 29 Which Way Is It With Me?

He who when he has the world is as one who does not have it, then he has the world, otherwise the world has him.

~Kierkegaard

Reminds me of "in but not of the world." ~jpc

January 30 All Are Friends (I)

The moral consequence of faith in God is . . . universal love. . . . This is the requirement: that all beings, not only our friends but also our enemies, not only humans but also animals and the inanimate be met with reverence, for all are friends in the friendship of the one to whom we are reconciled in faith.

~H. Richard Niebuhr, "Faith in Gods and in God"

January 31 Permanent Revolution (II)

Faith in God involves us in a permanent revolution of the mind and of the heart, a continuous life which opens out infinitely into ever new possibilities.

~H. Richard Niebuhr, *Ibid.*

February

February 1 All Is Vanity . . . Not

Not in God's wilds will you ever hear the sad moan, "All is vanity." No, we are paid a thousand times for all our toil, and after a single day spent outdoors in their atmosphere of strength and beauty, one could still say, should death come – even without any hope of another life – "Thank you for this most glorious gift!" and pass on.

~John Muir

February 2 Four Freshmen Changed History

February 1st, 2005, marks the 45th anniversary of the day when four A&T State University freshmen changed the course of the civil right's movement by asking to be served at Greensboro's Woolworth's whites-only lunch counter. . . . [D]rive by the International Civil Rights Center and Museum (site of the former Woolworth's lunch counter), and you will see they have completed the front of the building, where they had a special unveiling today.

~Greensboro media

Our neighbor, who is a black lawyer, was jailed at age fourteen as he marched after that event. ~jpc

February 3 Happiness Is . . .

Happiness is when what you think, what you say, and what you do are in harmony.

~Gandhi

February 4 Spirit Journey

We think and act as though we're primarily on a personal journey. Yet, the journey is not so much about me as a person as about me in relation with all others. *Spirit* happens to me in the relation between what is other and me. Since creation is one big set of relations, *spirit* is always present. If I am unaware of all this, I am dispirited.

~jpc

February 5 Our Hearts

[O]ur hearts are not pure; our hearts are filled with need and greed as much as with love and grace; and we wrestle with our hearts all the time. The wrestling is who we are. How we wrestle is who we are. What we want to be is never what we are. Not yet. Maybe that's why we have these relentless engines in our chests, driving us forward toward what we might be.

~Brian Doyle, *oriononline.org*, Jan/Feb 2005

February 6 Bombs to the Moon

Even if we transported all the bombs to the moon, the roots of war and the reasons for bombs would still be here, in our hearts and minds, and sooner or later we would make new bombs.

~Thich Nhat Hanh

February 7 Blue Dot in the Cosmos

Look again at that dot. That's here. That's home. That's us. . . . Every saint and sinner lived there. . . . The Earth is a very small stage in a vast cosmic arena.

~Carl Sagan

February 8 Be It

You must be the change you wish to see in the world.

~Gandhi

February 9 Heretics

There a few of us were privileged to sit over a beer with Friedrich Gogarten, one of the three founders (along with Karl Barth) of the so-called Neo-Orthodox movement. Gogarten said that heretics are those who think the thoughts we later find it impossible to do without.

~e-mail from a friend

Princeton President John A. Mackay pointedly remarked in Bultmann's hearing that "the most important impulses in theology have always come from heretics."

~Antie Bultmann Lemke

February 10 Sing Us Back

Sing us back to who we were and what we may become again, each of our lives a splendid note in the one chord of peace and love reverberating across a universal sky.

~C. Owens

After mailing a couple of hundred JWM books in Tampa, we celebrated with a fine Indian meal and sang for over an hour – as George played the piano – from the "Songs of the Spirit Movement," some including lyrics written by the four of us. We were rediscovering who we were, who we are, and who we may be on our universal journey. ~jpc

February 11 This Darkly Beautiful Earth

[T]his darkly beautiful earth, upon whom our imagination depends for all its succor and sustenance, will continue to be physically insulted, assaulted, ever more of her wild voices falling silent, choked off in mid-howl.

~David Abram, *oriononline.org*, 11/4/2004

February 12 Imaginal Education

The greatest discovery of my generation is that human beings can alter their lives by altering their attitudes of mind.

~William James

February 13 Fulfillment Is Much More

To alert you that you have allowed yourself to be taken over by psychological time, you can use a simple criterion. Ask yourself: Is there joy, ease, and lightness in what I am doing? If there isn't, then time is covering up the present moment, and life is perceived as a burden or a struggle. . . . As soon as you honor the present moment, all unhappiness and struggle dissolve, and life begins to flow with joy and ease. When you act out of present-moment awareness, whatever you do becomes imbued with a sense of quality, care, and love – even the most simple action.

~Eckhart Tolle

After seeing the movie "Hotel Rwanda," I'd say Paul acted out of care and love, risking his life over and over, but I'm pretty sure he perceived the butchering of family and tribe as burden and struggle. All said, he was certainly in the moment . . . of decision after horrifying decision. I didn't see joy, ease, and lightness in what he was doing during the genocide of about a

million Rwandans. He honored the present moment, but unhappiness and struggle hardly dissolved. Maybe fulfillment is much more than the above quote indicates. ~jpc

February 14 People of the “Yes” Stance

Those who take a sour relationship to life we are likely to call cynics. Those who take life’s blows with a stiff upper lip we call stoics. What do we call people who relate to life as good? Maybe we could call them the people of the “Yes” stance.

~Brian Stanfield

Or we could call them _____. ~jpc

February 15 A Zen Teacher’s Understanding

Every grain of matter, every appearance is one with Eternal and Immutable Reality. Wherever your foot may fall, you are still within [the] Sanctuary for Enlightenment.

~Huang-Po <http://www.yakrider.com/Resources/books/books_zen.htm>

February 16 A Scientist’s Understanding

[E]verything, everything with no exception, is a manifestation of an eternal unity, a transcending ubiquitous

consciousness, which many label as God. When you touch that unity, you perceive and also experience the wonder within which you and all the rest of creation are embedded.

~G. L. Schroeder

February 17 Hope

Hope is an ax you break down doors with in an emergency. . . . [H]ope should shove you out the door.

~Rebecca Solnit

February 18 Our Identity

We need a forest of new images, a blizzard of new symbols of what we're about. . . . We must move beyond our identification with a particular region, culture, religion, or work. Our new identity is in terms of the planet as a whole. . . . We are [primarily a] mode of Earth. All other modes – Muslim, Republican, lawyer, etc. – are secondary. . . . Our major task is to reinvent the major forms of human presence on the planet.

~Swimme

February 19 A Photograph of Our Identity

Fred Hoyle said in 1948, "Once a photograph of Earth, taken from the outside, is available . . . a new idea as powerful

as any in history will be let loose.” ~*The Home Planet*

February 20 Only One Earth

As one astronaut said, “The first day or so we all pointed to our countries. The third or fourth day we were pointing to our continents. By the fifth day we were aware of only one Earth.”

~Kevin Kelley

February 21 Objective Value in the World

Losing [the] meaning of the human heart, losing the feeling component of knowing, science easily becomes scientism and easily leads to the belief that there is no objective value in the world. And this in turn leads to moral relativism that has become the source of despair in our culture and especially in our younger generation.

~Jacob Needleman, *earthlight.org*, #52, 2005

How do I measure “objective value in the world”? ~jpc

February 22 Threefold Reconciliation

A question that has plagued me for many years is whether Christianity can conquer meaninglessness – the feeling of emptiness, cynicism, of radical doubt. . . . It is possible for two reasons. First, in the feeling of meaninglessness

there is always an element of hostility against the world, not just against particular persons but life itself. And the reconciliation of which Paul speaks is a reconciliation with the ground of our being: thus with our world, with life universally, and with ourselves. Since Christianity has in itself this threefold reconciliation, it has one step towards overcoming, along with hostility, also the feeling of meaninglessness.

~Tillich

February 23 Happily Incompatible

When asked his secret of love, being married fifty-four years to the same person, he said, “Ruth and I are happily incompatible.”

~Billy Graham on the *Oprah* show

February 24 “The Task Before Us Now” Context

[T]he only truly natural and real human Unity is the Spirit of Earth. . . . [I]n the process of gathering the elements of a new and better body [earth] . . . in this crisis of birth . . . the rapid emergence of the soul . . . can only be a “conspiracy” of individuals who associate themselves to raise to a new state the edifice of life. . . . The task before us now, if we would not perish, is to shake off our ancient prejudices, and to build the earth.

~Teilhard de Chardin – died fifty-years-ago today

February 25 The Divine in the Earth and Universe

[M]any of the authors [of *Teilhard in the 21st Century*] are shaped by Catholic Christianity and seem drawn toward a more sacramental approach to life, in which the sacred is found in the material dimensions of life itself. This leads the authors . . . to find the divine in the palpable dimensions of the earth itself and beyond that . . . in the evolving universe.

~Jay B. McDaniels, paper in preparation for Teilhard de Chardin and Alfred North Whitehead meeting, Claremont, February 2005

Is this the same as “pantheism”? What do you think?
~jpc

February 26 Humans: Part of the Natural World!

[T]he vast majority of scientists, including earth scientists, has not yet truly focused on the human phenomenon as a natural, terrestrial and cosmic, development. Even more puzzling is the fact that each of us experiences directly our own subjectivity, or what Teilhard calls our “insideness,” and yet science also leaves this datum off of its map of the natural world.

~John Haught, Teilhard de Chardin and Alfred North Whitehead meeting, Claremont, February 2005

February 27 Back To the Future

[T]he Crow [Native Americans] parallel the tendencies of both Alfred North Whitehead and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (and Thomas Berry) who situated their thought in cosmological contexts.

~John Grim, Teilhard de Chardin and Alfred North Whitehead meeting, Claremont, February 2005

Thomas Berry reminds us that St. Paul (the earliest writer of the New Testament) did the same. ~jpc

February 28 The Return

The return [from the journey to the center of being] is seeing the radiance everywhere.

~Joseph Campbell

When we have truly seen the radiance everywhere, we have been in touch with the center of being, or whatever metaphor you choose to use. ~jpc

March

March 1 Let Us Pray . . .

Let us pray for our sons, daughters, and friends in Iraq as you watch . . .

<<http://www.clermontyellow.accountsupport.com/flash/UntilThen.swf>> ~via Jerome Hunter

. . . Let them be home soon. ~jpc

March 2 Normal or Sick?

The difference between that which is considered to be sickness and that which is considered to be normal becomes apparent in the following example. If a man declared that in order to free our cities from air pollution, factories, automobiles, airplanes, etc., would have to be destroyed, nobody would doubt that he was insane. But if there is a consensus that in order to protect our life, our freedom, our culture, or that of other nations which we feel obliged to protect, thermonuclear war might be required as a last resort, such opinion appears to be perfectly sane. The difference is not at all in the kind of thinking employed but merely in that the first idea is not shared and hence appears abnormal while the second is shared by millions of people and by powerful governments

and hence appears to be normal.

~Erich Fromm

March 3 A Moral Society

The ultimate test of a moral society is the kind of world that it leaves to its children.

~Bonhoeffer

March 4 Religious Concern

[T]heir religions are so exclusively concerned with morality that they lack metaphysical depth and any interest in self-knowledge deeper than the personal and psychological level.

~Alan Watts

Obviously some religious concerns are left out in the quote, e.g., care for creation. ~jpc

March 5 How 'Bout Them Catholics?

Doing Faithjustice: An Introduction to Catholic Social Thought, by Fred Kammer, a Jesuit lawyer:

“One challenge for the future will be to move from the ‘stewardship model,’ which positions humans over-against

the rest of creation, to a more adequate and updated approach that would take seriously the solidarity that extends beyond the human species to other forms of life and their habitats.”

Seems to me this represents a giant leap in Catholic thinking – from dominion over the earth, to stewardship for the earth, to solidarity (interdependence, partnership) with all living things. This takes us beyond “subject-object” to “subject-subject” thinking. I’m not suggesting that this has become the party line for Catholics [or any other religious body], but even this glimmer of a new story is refreshing.

~Randy Williams

And of course Teilhard and Thomas were/are both in Catholic vocations. Their universe vision and story are beginning to permeate global consciousness. ~jpc

March 6 Already United

In the mystic vision, at-one-ment is not a state to be achieved but a condition to be recognized, for God has united his divine essence with our inmost being. *Tat tvan asi*; That thou art.

~Huston Smith

Therefore, “I am” is the flip side of “That thou art,” or the great “I AM.” ~jpc

March 7 The Great Joy

Our origin is mystery,
our destiny is
intimate communion
with all that is,
and
our common species aim
is to celebrate
the Great Joy
that has drawn us
into itself.

~Swimme, adapted jpc

March 8 Just Another Life-changing Event

One monsoon day [in Mumbai] I looked out of my bedroom window and started cursing the rain. That day I could not give [the old beggar the usual] leftovers. He went hungry, I'm sure. But what I saw from my window surprised me. The beggar [and his young granddaughter were playing in the street] because there was no traffic. They were laughing and clapping their hands, in joy. Hunger and rain did not matter. They were totally drenched – and totally happy. And you know, I really envied them. That incident forced me to look at my own life. I had so many comforts, none of which they had. But they [were happy and I was not]. They knew how to live life as it was. That day I decided to change. . . . The old beggar

became my role model. . . . Unfortunately, by the time I understood things, he was no more. But I sponsored his granddaughter to a boarding school as a mark of respect to him.

~a friend talking with Vinod Parekh

March 9 To Go To That Country

. . . And if you start to go to that country, remember first you must sell everything you have, pigs, pastures, pepper pickers, pitchforks, put the spot cash money in a ragbag, and go to the railroad station and ask the ticket agent for a long slick yellow leather slab ticket with a blue spatch across it. And you mustn't be surprised if the ticket agent wipes sleep from his eyes and asks, "So far? So early? So soon?"

~Carl Sandburg

March 10 Not Radical but Faithful

There's no bigger idea for the Muslim world today – and consequently for all of us – than reopening the gates of independent thinking, or "ijtihad." . . . That's the main point of my book – to show that Islam once had a pluralistic tradition of critical debate and dissent, and that we Muslims need to rediscover this tradition to update Islam for the 21st century. That's not being radical. That's being faithful.

~Irshad Manji <<http://www.muslim-refusenik.com>>

March 11 A Third Way

EI [Ecumenical Institute] was a radical approach to the gospels that was not a conservative literalism but also was not a liberal humanism either. Both the Right and the Left were left behind. The unique thing is that RS-I [Religious Studies I] opened the door to a way of being even more fundamental than the fundamentalists without a literal interpretation of scripture and at the same time more socially radical than the liberal social gospel. . . . The split into two nations between secularists and religionists is a spiritual rift between two fundamentalists. The tragedy is that true spirituality and healing is not found in either of these two approaches to viewing the world. . . . What is needed is the third way, the way of the secular-religious.

~Douglas Druckenmiller

March 12 Responsibility Squared

[R]esponsibility is a total response of the whole [person] to the whole of reality.

~Bonhoeffer

March 13 Affirmation or Rebellion

The real question of God is more like this: Is the mysterious force ultimately responsible for the tsunami – and for the blooming of flowers – and is that One my Father or not?

The question of God is a personal question about my relationship to the ultimate mystery which shows itself in the terrible and in the glorious. . . . I was thrown back to [the] . . . decision that confronts us every day about affirmation or rebellion.

~John Epps

March 14 Original Sin

Original sin is that thing about man which makes him capable of conceiving of his own perfection and incapable of achieving it.

~Reinhold Niebuhr

March 15 What Religion Is All About

If you look at what religion is all about, it's trying to understand the purpose and meaning of our universe.

~Charles Townes, physicist, NPR radio, 3/05

Notice, he didn't say the purpose and meaning of our lives as human beings. ~jpc

March 16 The Already One

[O]ur universe [is] . . . the true country of mankind. . . . [Religion's] true purpose is to sustain and spur the progress

of life. . . . The more man is man, the more he will feel the need to devote himself to something which is greater than [man]. . . . [T]he “Already One” [is the truth and the attraction].

~Teilhard de Chardin

March 17 New Vision/New Reality

Whenever such a [new castle] vision occurred, it was not a matter of imagination, of pictures in the mind merely. It did not wait upon hindsight. It was no daydream or night fantasy, no seer’s musings and no philosopher’s theorizing. Rather, it was action and always a new . . . reality: the quicksilver transformation of North Africa, the Near East, and Eastern Asia into the cohesive Muslim world of the eighth century A.D.; the fever of Maoism running through 700 million Chinese in 1949.

~Malachi Martin

Where is it happening of late – even in our lifetime – that history might look back and say there and then, “new castle”? ~jpc

March 18 All Answers Are Challenged

The witness of history is that when religion claims certainty it turns demonic. That is when you get persecution, excommunication, burning heretics at the stake, religious

wars and finally religious acts of terrorism. . . .

I commend to you . . . to see the search for meaning as a journey without end, a walk into the mystery of God. . . . It is a walk that needs to be taken in the company of fellow seekers. On that journey questions are shared and all answers are challenged. That I believe is what the future of the Church will look like.

~Spong

Critique of the past and present is more the Bishop's gift than vision and strategy. But, heck, use your gifts to the hilt. ~jpc

March 19 A Last Confession

In all my years, I consciously battered no child – though my own claim much need to forgive me – and consciously misused no person. Thou knowest my air to treat no human as thing – not to hate overlong – to pass no child without his/her eye – and my innermost wish to love as Thou didst love by seeing no shade of color or class. And Thou didst long ago hear my cry to let me go from Paducah. Thou knowest my Covenant with Elizabeth in our youth and Thou knowest it has been kept better than my Covenant with Thee, and wiltst thou forgive? Indeed thou hast. . . . [A]ccept Thou this my admission of utter dependence upon Thy mercy.

~Carlyle Marney, a mentor

Let us remember this day our colleague Margaret Ennis, whose awesome journey we celebrate. ~jpc

Today is also the 2nd anniversary of the Iraq war.

March 20 Affirmation of Life

[Individually and in your family, group, community] working together with what you have, rather than wishing for something else, is a profound affirmation of life.

~Terry Bergdall

March 21 A Spirit Being

[G]iving leadership to [any great Spirit work] . . . requires a full identification with our Jesus being. It requires a full commitment to being our true being. It requires that we see ourselves as a Spirit being who has a personality rather than seeing ourselves as a personality who has Spirit experiences.

~Gene W. Marshall

March 22 Our Way Into the Future

Forming [a] single community, [Thomas Berry] says, “is the central issue of the Great Work” (115). This is so because he accepts the proposal that “no effective restoration of a viable mode of human presence on the

planet will take place until intimate human rapport with the Earth community . . . is reestablished on an extensive scale” (18). Until then, efforts, even heroic ones, to establish a more benign mode of human presence will ultimately fail.

~Herman Greene

March 23 Whose Authority

[W]hen [1988, NYC] the police dismantled a tent city in the park [next to St. Brigid’s] and roused the homeless people who had been living there, Father Kuhn led parishioners in support of them.

A contingent from the church marched to an abandoned school on East Fourth Street, to take food to protesters and homeless people who were holed up there. As they drew close, officers told the church leaders they were under orders to arrest anyone who crossed police lines. Within the parish, Father Kuhn’s response is legendary: “I said, ‘I’m working under orders, too. The order I have is to feed the hungry, and that comes from a higher authority.’”

The food was delivered, and the priest was arrested.

~*nytimes.com*, 3/20/05

March 24 Church and State

The church has three possible ways it can act against the state. First, it can ask the state if its actions are legitimate.

Second, it can aid the victims of state action. The church has an unconditional obligation to the victims of any ordering society, even if they do not belong to the Christian society. The third possibility is not just to bandage the victim under the wheel but to jam a spoke into the wheel itself.

~Bonhoeffer

March 25 Spring Flow

Much as the Church year cycles us through three short days of darkness, the real world is much less kind. Three months. All the juiciness that flowed through my garden is gone. It is bottled and canned and frozen. Oh, I can open or thaw, but it is still frozen juiciness. It is not the flow of spring blood coursing through my veins.

~Margaret Helen Aiseayew

March 26 Beware of True Believers

The people who have written the most hate-filled letters to me, and almost all of the death threats that I have received, have come from those who define themselves as “Bible based, true believers.” That should tell us something about both their fear and about the integrity of their belief system.

~Spong

March 27 Change from Death to Life

With him we passed through the dark sea of death, and with him we have been raised into a new life. . . . Hence the meaning of the resurrection . . . is concerned . . . with our change from death to life.

~Edward Hobbs, colleague of Joseph Mathews

Notice Hobbs is speaking out of a post-modern understanding of resurrection, not out of the pre-modern understanding of bodily resurrection, and not out of the modern understanding of resurrection as a myth to be debunked. He is witnessing to the power of resurrection in his own life and ours, for it happens to all humans, at least. I'm so glad resurrection is in history and at the heart of evolution, both ours and that of our universe. Happy Resurrection. ~jpc

March 28 Learn To Love Better

If you want to learn to love better, you should start with a friend who you hate.

~Nikka, age 6

March 29 What Global Warming?

An illusion is like a little universe within which we live, protected from reality. Those who boarded the *SS Titanic*

for its maiden voyage were under the illusion the ship was unsinkable. When the ship struck the iceberg, the band played on. Such is the power of illusion.

~Brian Stanfield

March 30 Is Technology Destructive

Technology is destructive only in the hands of people who do *not* realize that they are one and the same process as the universe.

~Alan Watts

March 31 Another Doctors' Report

The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment – a massive four-year study by 1,300 scientists from 95 countries – found that 60 percent of the world's resources are at critical levels or are being used up. The resources at stake are the basics of life – water, food, timber, clean air and a predictable climate.

~Seattle Post-Intelligencer Editorial Board,
March 31, 2005

***Some Responses* (BBC):**

Get on with life instead of worrying about what a load of greenies have to say.

~Dave, UK

Obviously the leaders of the United States and China are living in cloud cuckoo land and need a crash course on the importance of saving the Earth's future.

~Pancha, Belgium

The Earth's future is not in danger. Humanity may be in danger, but the Earth will get along just fine with or without us.

~Patrick, USA

What would be your response? ~jpc

April

April 1 Life Is Sacred

Life is sacred! This is a fundamental understanding of religion and spirituality. But does that only include human life? Hardly. Life is made manifest and is always living itself out in the unmanifest mystery. *Spirit* at the heart of creation anoints the life of everything in every encounter.

I admit I lose patience too easily with those vocal ones whose theology of life does not seem to go beyond unborn human babies. What about the 160 millions of all ages killed in wars during the 20th century? What about 30,000 species extinctions a year? What about the rape of the earth's resources? The totality of life is sacred.

~jpc

April 2 "Trees" (I)

... In their highest boughs the world rustles, their roots rest in infinity; but they do not lose themselves there, they struggle with all the force of their lives for one thing only: to fulfil themselves according to their own laws, to build up their own form, to represent themselves. Nothing is holier, nothing is more exemplary than a beautiful, strong tree. When a tree is cut down and reveals its naked death-wound to the sun, one can read its whole history in the

luminous, inscribed disk of its trunk: in the rings of its years, its scars, all the struggle, all the suffering, all the sickness, all the happiness and prosperity stand truly written, the narrow years and the luxurious years, the attacks withstood, the storms endured. And every young farmboy knows that the hardest and noblest wood has the narrowest rings, that high on the mountains and in continuing danger the most indestructible, the strongest, the ideal trees grow.

~Hermann Hesse, from “Hermann Hesse: Wandering” <<http://ic.ucsb.edu/~ggotts/hesse/works/trees.html>>

April 3 “Trees” (II)

. . . Trees are sanctuaries. Whoever knows how to speak to them, whoever knows how to listen to them, can learn the truth. They do not preach learning and precepts, they preach, undeterred by particulars, the ancient law of life.

~Hermann Hesse, *Ibid.*

April 4 “Trees” (III)

. . . A tree says: A kernel is hidden in me, a spark, a thought, I am life from eternal life. The attempt and the risk that the eternal mother took with me is unique, unique the form and veins of my skin, unique the smallest play of leaves in my branches and the smallest scar on my bark. I

was made to form and reveal the eternal in my smallest special detail.

A tree says: My strength is trust. I know nothing about my fathers, I know nothing about the thousand children that every year spring out of me. I live out the secret of my seed to the very end, and I care for nothing else. I trust that God is in me. I trust that my labor is holy. Out of this trust I live. . . .

~Hermann Hesse, *Ibid.*

April 5 “Trees” (IV)

. . . When we are stricken and cannot bear our lives any longer, then a tree has something to say to us: Be still! Be still! Look at me!

~Hermann Hesse, *Ibid.*

April 6 Universal Choices

[T]he biggest concerns of the new century . . . did not draw the focus of John Paul. As he proved, the church’s leader is capable of changing the course of history. But the church has to make choices.

~Laurie Goodstein, *nytimes.com*, 4/4/2005

What are the big choices the one-billion-member

Roman Catholic church has to make to be vanguard rather than rearguard? ~jpc

April 7 Under the Cloud

Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children. . . . This is not a way of life at all in any true sense. Under the cloud of threatening war, it is humanity hanging from a cross of iron.

~Dwight D. Eisenhower

April 8 Result of Awakening

Ultimately one becomes more compelled by what actually happens as a result of awakening than by the awakening itself. The ecstatic compulsion to transform the world becomes the focus of one's attention instead of merely one's own personal development.

~Andrew Cohen

April 9 Universal Tug

When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached

to the rest of the world.

~John Muir

April 10 We Found Each Other . . . Wonderful

That we could be together for twenty years. That is something which sustains me. . . . The way he treated me and the way I treated him, the way we took care of each other and our family, while he lived. That is so much more important than the idea I will see him someday. I don't think I'll ever see Carl again. But I saw him. We saw each other. We found each other in the cosmos, and that was wonderful.

~Ann Druyan, Carl Sagan's wife

<<http://www.csicop.org/si/2003-11/ann-druyan.html>>

How would you respond to Druyan? ~jpc

April 11 This Moment

This moment is a wonderful moment – empty, therefore full of everything; impermanent, therefore eternal; and full of suffering, therefore full of the possibility of perfect happiness, peace, understanding and compassion. For this I am deeply grateful.

~Rob Work

April 12 I Am Received (I)

In the light of this acceptance, I see that I am received by life just as I am. I may be big or small, Down's Syndrome or an IQ of 160, a size 2 waistline, or a size 18, but I'm still received. There is nothing in me that can be an excuse for not living my life.

~Brian Stanfield, *The Courage to Lead: Transform Self, Transform Society*, a book out of EI/ICA wisdom

April 13 All Is Good (II)

The external situation is never the real problem. . . . Some people live in a kind of permanent pout because their world is not the way they would have constructed it. Other people embrace life just as it is, genocide, environmental problems and the rest – just as it is. . . . able to say a big “yes” to life as it is.

~Brian Stanfield, *Ibid.*

April 14 The Past Is Approved (III)

Maya Angelou has undergone almost every crisis known to womankind. She was raped by her mother's lover at eight, became a single parent at sixteen, worked as a prostitute, waitress and singer. For five years after she was raped, she was mute. Her mother's partner was

lynched the next day and the shock robbed Maya of speech. Yet she says, “I cannot be less than the most I can be, otherwise I would be spitting at my maker.” . . . When someone asked her once how she got from her impoverished rural Arkansas background to being America’s poet laureate, she said simply, “By being grateful.” The past is approved.

~Brian Stanfield, *Ibid.*

April 15 The Future Is Open (IV)

It’s true that tomorrow I could get run over by a car, but today, nothing is blocking me. Nothing at all. I can move mountains. If the doctor tells me I have cancer with six months to live, then I have six months to live fully – with cancer.

~Brian Stanfield, *Ibid.*

April 16 What Is Vocation

To talk about calling does imply relationship with another who is calling. While many people who use the language of calling understand God to be the one inviting them into new and different opportunities to give of themselves to the world, others talk about the Universe, Love, the Ultimate, the Infinite and many other words trying to convey something very big and ultimately indefinable. . . . Having a larger story can provide metaphors for

understanding. . . . For what purpose were you born?
What is your part in this story of Life on Earth?

~Sara Beth Terrell, Guilford College

April 17 Care Is Everywhere

What struck me in all this [global giving and help after the tsunami] is that people really do care, that deep care is part of being human. There may be few and inadequate ways to act out the care, but it's there just waiting for a chance to be released. That changes my whole approach to working with people. Instead of having to convince them to "change their ways," a better and more effective approach is to provide them with ways to act out of their genuine care.

~John Epps

April 18 Two Basic Universe Freedoms

Each one of the phenomena – or beings – in this [universe] continuum is at once free to be totally itself, yet totally interwoven with all others.

~Frederick Franck

April 19 In the End

In the end, everything works out. If it hasn't worked out yet, that's because you haven't gotten to the end.

~Brazilian proverb

April 20 Nature of Faith

I began to realize that the historical truth is not the fundamental issue. The fundamental issue is the nature of faith itself. So I longed to embark on the second big phase of the [Jesus] Seminar and take up what Lane McGaughy termed the ‘Second Nicea.’

~Robert Funk, Jesus Seminar founder

April 21 Tolerance and Love

As our world becomes smaller, through a growing common culture, the true test of community will be our tolerance for our most profound differences and love for the most challenging among us.

~Wayne Teasdale

April 22 Without Traditional Prayer

[M]ost of us have been living our lives quite well without traditional prayer. Even those who pray in the old way don't depend on prayer to live authentically. Having asked God for help, they face the problems and challenges of their lives in wonderfully courageous and creative ways. They turn to their friends and families for help. They read books. They try one thing and then another. They wait for the crisis to pass. They informally meditate and contemplate in preparation for the daily actions they must decide. As

Bonhoeffer writes, they “observe, judge, weigh up, decide, and act.”

~Bill Reece

How would you respond to Bill? ~jpc

On this Earth Day, the earth is saying, “You used me.”

~Thomas Berry

April 23 Fantastic Do-ers and Infantile Be-ers

As TV genius Norman Lear quipped in *Leadership in a New Era*, “We just may be the most well-informed, yet least self-aware, people in history.” We have become fantastic “do-ers” but remain infantile “be-ers.” We seem to accept our greatness in the former arena while largely ignoring the latter – that which provides deep and lasting satisfaction.

~John Renesch, www.renesch.com, April 2005

April 24 Perfect At Every Moment

The world . . . is not imperfect or slowly evolving along a long path to perfection. No, it is perfect at every moment; every sin already carries grace within it.

~Hermann Hesse

April 25 Pendulum of Decision

In the land between forest and savannah, the Pendulum
of Decision swung.

Whether to keep walking on four paws or to start walking
on two. . . .

~Nelson Stover

What is the pendulum of decision today? Nelson answers it in his poem, but what do I say it is: whether to keep _____ or to start _____. ~jpc

April 26 Have Forgotten

When I heard about the [Nobel Peace] Prize, I was facing Mount Kenya. As I looked at her I reflected on how many generations of people had been inspired by the mountain, respected her, believed that God was there. All manner of blessings came from her, like water, rain, food, medicine and shelter. Now our people have forgotten this.

~Wangari Maathai

April 27 Mystics and Activists

Mystics must get active and equally the activists must become mystic.

~Andrew Harvey

If you don't like the word "mystic," what word would you substitute? ~jpc

April 28 Power Over Their Story

As a facilitator, you will encounter groups who are troubled, often because they are enacting an unexamined story whose course they feel powerless to alter. Helping them unravel their story will grant them power over it. In other words, until you know you're an author, you cannot change what you're writing.

~Steve David

<<http://www.masterfacilitatorjournal.com>>

April 29 Anniversary Ideas

Each year a Bald Eagle couple will renew their life-long commitment in a courtship flight. The pair engage in a crescendo of airborne acrobatics. At the finale of this dance, they lock talons and, intensely mesmerized by each other, share a dazzling and daring free fall from the sky. For hundreds of feet they tumble together at incredible speeds and then . . . just before they reach the surface of the water below, they create magic, opening their wings and breaking away. The courtship flight is at an end. The vows are renewed, and life together will continue.

~Wildlife Gallery card

April 30 Contemporary with the Holy Ones

The Holy Spirit makes Jesus our contemporary.

~Bishop James K. Mathews

As Kierkegaard articulated with "contemporaneous with Christ," the Bishop's statement also corrects much bad theology. Life-changing events (that bring us into communion with the mystery at the heart of life and call forth a new resolve to live at one with all) are the same kinds of events Jesus – and all holy ones – have experienced. We're all in the same league. ~jpc

May

May 1 Wilderness Sustenance

Jim often says to me that we are in the 40/400 year wilderness, and that this is the time to drink from whatever wells we find to sustain ourselves.

~Isobel Bishop

What wells are sustaining you these days? ~jpc

May 2 Hope Is

Hope is the thing with feathers
That perches in the soul
And sings the tune without the words
And never stops at all.

~Emily Dickinson

May 3 What We Did

I don't think God is going to ask us how he created the earth, but he will ask us what we did with what he created.

~Rev. Rich Cizik, National Assn. of Evangelicals,
nytimes.com, Jan/Feb 2005

Even though I have trouble with the way he talks about God, his point – authenticity has to do with how we relate to all of creation – is right on. ~jpc

May 4 Bluebonnets

The bluebonnets last a little over a month each year . . . , but their memory lasts all year long. They never fail to throw you into a meditative state, where memory mixes with hope.

~George Holcombe

May 5 Bucky's Question

In 1927, at the age of 32, Buckminster Fuller stood on the shores of Lake Michigan, prepared to throw himself into the freezing waters. His first child had died. He was bankrupt, discredited and jobless, and he had a wife and newborn daughter. On the verge of suicide, it suddenly struck him that his life belonged, not to himself, but to the universe. ~<www.bfi.org>

After deciding not to commit suicide, he decided “he would devote himself to asking, ‘What is it on this planet that needs doing that I know something about, that probably won’t happen unless I take responsibility for it?’”

~John Kabat Zinn

May 6 Surprising Circumstances

I was reminded of how circumstances we would not choose open up possibilities we would not have imagined.

~Laura Critchfield

May 7 A High View

The first time I saw Brother Lawrence [1666] . . . he told me that . . . at the age of eighteen . . . in the winter, seeing a tree stripped of its leaves, and considering that within a little time the leaves would be renewed, . . . he received a high view of the providence and power of God, which has never been effaced from his soul.

~Brother Lawrence: His Letters and Conversations on the Practice of the Presence of God

May 8 Function of Prayer

The function of prayer is not to influence God, but rather to change the nature of the one who prays.

~Kierkegaard

How do you respond to SK? ~jpc

May 9 Solitary Bird

... it aims its beak to the skies
... it flies to the highest point
... it doesn't suffer for company
... it does not have a definite color
... it sings very softly

~St. John of the Cross, adapted by jpc

May 10 Bending History

Bending human history bends evolution, for good or ill.

~jpc

May 11 Forcing Revelation?

None of us can force revelations into happening, but we can prepare a receptive consciousness for them.

~Gloria Karspinski

May 12 10 Percent and 90 Percent

The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude to me is more important than facts. It is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than success, than what other people think or say or do. It is more important than

appearance, gift, or skill. It will make or break a company . . . a church . . . a home. The remarkable thing is we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day. We cannot change our past . . . we cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the string we have, and that is our attitude. I am convinced that life is 10 percent what happens to me and 90 percent how I react to it. And so it is with you. . . . We are in charge of our attitudes.

~Charles Swindoll

May 13 The Basic Flaw

That human well-being could be achieved by diminishing the well-being of the Earth . . . was the basic flaw in this [time of the] Wonderland myth [of human progress].

~*The Universe Story*, Berry and Swimme

May 14 Not and Is

[G]race is not a divine emergency action which sometimes breaks into our predicament, but is the actual paradox in which we live. It is always present.

~Tillich

May 15 Vocation Check

Not for my sake but for the sake of the whole. . . . This changes everything, because now our *raison d'être* is not to have and to get and to become for ourselves.

~Andrew Cohen

May 16 If It Doesn't Happen Now . . .

It is so important to me to find ways to connect our everyday “spirit happenings” and events to people in all times and places. I keep saying in my church and to all my groups, if it doesn't happen now, I'm pretty certain it didn't happen then.

~Roger Alexander

May 17 God Changes Appearance Every Second

God changes his appearance every second; blessed is the man who can recognize him in all his disguises. At one moment he is a glass of fresh water, the next your son bouncing on your knees or an enchanting woman, or perhaps merely a morning walk.

~Kazantzakis

May 18 An Atheist's Tombstone?

I hope for nothing. I fear nothing. I am free.
~on Kazantzakis' tombstone

In Report to Greco he wrote: "the man who either hopes for heaven or fears hell cannot be free"; and also wrote, "It is true that we cannot conquer death. We can however conquer the fear of death." Is he free or living out of illusion? ~jpc

May 19 Thesis 54: The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit works through all cultures and all spiritual traditions; it blows "where it wills" and is not the exclusive domain of any one tradition and never has been.

~Matthew Fox's "95 Theses"

May 20 A New Being

The work involved in loss, in grieving, leads to understanding ourselves, though changed, as whole. Each loss brings to us a new being, a new wholeness.

~Marilyn Blanchard

May 21 American Eagle

I've always thought the American eagle needed a left wing

and a right wing. The right wing would see to it that economic interests had their legitimate concerns addressed. The left wing would see to it that ordinary people were included in the bargain. Both would keep the great bird on course. But with two right wings or two left wings, it's no longer an eagle and it's going to crash.

~Bill Moyers <www.freepress.net> 5/16/2005

May 22 Love the Situation

The task is to release people to love their situation wherever they are.

~Kay Hayes

May 23 The Place is Holy

You have made me cross the good road and road of difficulties, and where they cross, the place is holy. Day in, day out, forevermore, you are the life of things.

~"Black Elk's Prayer," edited

May 24 Life Is

Life is indescribably full,
Unflinching real,
and unfailingly good.

~David Dunn

May 25 **Meaningful Salutation**

Blessings on you and may your bit of stardust continue to sparkle with unfolding mystery into the great web of being, however you discover you are called.

~Sr. Adeline Kroll (e-mail to Lynda Cock)

*We will be in Spain for son Jeremiah's marriage to Veronica from May 25-June 6. Quotes for 5/26-6/6 come from my book **Our Universal Spirit Journey: Reflections and Verse for Creation's Sake**, pp. 20-52. In it I was capitalizing "Spirit," in next books not, but italicizing [*spirit*]; trying to remind myself that *spirit* is a name for the mysterious power at the heart of creation, not an other-worldly person in our image. I italicize the word to point out it is not the same as "team spirit" or "my spirit life," for example. ~jpc*

May 26 **Unite and Build**

Teilhard says "we can progress only by uniting." These times and Teilhard's imperatives to *unite* and *build the Earth* are revealing to us the depth and power of Spirit; are compelling us to live as one community; are redefining spirituality for the 21st century; are calling forth new spirit

people and leaders. A fresh wind is blowing.

~jpc

May 27 Spirit Is . . .

Spirit is the inner dimension of everything,
the dynamic of communion within creation.
It gives foundation to but transcends religions
and cultures.

Spirit is ever sustaining the immense journey
and making all things new.

~jpc

May 28 Deep Global Unity

We must go far beyond the ecumenical and interfaith
activities of the past. We must claim our common spirit
journey for the sake of our common Earth future. . . .
Deep global unity comes as we bow to the one, same
reality in life that sustains, motivates, and unites us.

~jpc

May 29 Then, In the Beginning

Then even nothingness was not, nor existence.
There was no air then, nor the heavens beyond it.
Who covered it? Where was it? In whose keeping?

Was there then cosmic water, in depths unfathomed? . . .
But, after all, who knows, and who can say
 whence it all came, and how creation happened?
The gods themselves are later than creation,
 so who knows truly whence it has arisen? . . .

~Rig Veda, X:129

May 30 Clear and Transparent

Spirit can reveal Itself through anything, anywhere,
anytime, through a stream or even through you and me.

Like the little stream
Making its way
Through the mossy crevices
I, too, quietly
Turn clear and transparent.
~Ryokan

Is nature Spirit? Of course not, but it is transparent to Spirit. Am I Spirit? Of course not. No thing is Spirit, but everything is potentially transparent to It. And no one or no religion has the market on Spirit – It's Its own thing.

~jpc

May 31 Getting Us Unstuck

Maybe the Spirit of the universe is revealing to us that we

are stuck – evolutionarily speaking – in our human-centeredness, which is devolving the Earth community and holding it back. Spirit is about getting us unstuck.

~jpc

June

(Continued) . . . *in Spain for wedding Quotes for 5/26-6/6 come from my book **Our Universal Spirit Journey**.*

~jpc

June 1 Guided by Spirit

We are all on the immense journey together, guided by Spirit. I truly believe Spirit is the key to life, not economics, politics, education, nor religion. . . . Spirit is reconciling the world. . . . as it always comes again.

~jpc

June 2 Spiritual Revolution

[Ours is a time of] mixing, a stirring together of the “essence” of religion, namely, spirituality. . . . The Dalai Lama has observed that “the reality is that the majority of people today are unpersuaded of the need for religion.” He calls, however, for a “spiritual revolution.”

~Matthew Fox

What a wise spiritual leader. ~jpc

June 3 World Empire without Emperor

A world empire without emperor can happen only when universal order and meaning is mediated through all native soils and symbols but contained by none.

~Lonnie Kliever

Looks like we'll have empires a while longer. ~jpc

June 4 With a Plus

[W]e are a secular world – but with a plus: a consciousness of and sensitivity to Spirit. . . . Why do we sense our interior reflection in response to Spirit is at least as real as exterior events and things? . . . The consciousness of Spirit working in universal existence is emerging whether we consider ourselves religious or secular.

~jpc

June 5 We Are Experiencing Spirit

Spirit encounters us and births our acute consciousness. When something radical, total, and unconditional is demanded of us, we are experiencing Spirit. When something announces to us that we can go on, in spite of, we are experiencing Spirit. When something releases us to be slave to no thing and free for all, we are experiencing Spirit. When we see and respond to creation's suffering,

we are experiencing Spirit.

~jpc

June 6 All Things New

And Spirit cuts like water through it all
Carving out this emptiness [in me]
So inner eye can see . . .

Making, always making, all things new

~Parker Palmer

June 7 Absolutely Partial

Spirit is impartial, or better said, is absolutely partial to everything in creation. So don't muck up creation.

~jpc

June 8 Our Deep-seated Fundamentalism

Today we suffer from the division between fundamentalists on the left and fundamentalists on the right. The struggle with fundamentalism however is not a struggle between Secular and Religious fundamentalists. Fundamentalism is based in a profound human fear. We deeply fear losing the illusory "Mask of God" that we have so carefully constructed, which defines meaning in our life and to which

we desperately cling. . . . One must ultimately become aware of the deep-seated fundamentalism that is in each one of us.

~Doug Druckenmiller

June 9 A Gracious Moment

It is, I would say, a gracious moment,
a moment of entrancement. . .

As we join in this wedding
we are lifted up beyond ourselves.

We are, I say,
lifted up to that super-abundant
Joy that Heaven bestows on all . . .

Who live their lives
in the Wonder and Praise
and Resonance with that Universe
wherein the divine and the human
discover their intimate fulfillment.

~Thomas Berry . . . read at *jpc* sons' weddings

June 10 Means of Grace

III. Marriage is about **communion** (deep life in *spirit*): to keep your **covenant** and mission of **care** alive, remember "home" is a . . .

•communion place

- caring place
- forgiving place
- deep breathing place
- deep dialogue place
- fun place
- healing place
- sacramental place

... marriage and home are means of grace.

~jpc, from remarks at Spain wedding

June 11 Love Is . . .

Love is not primarily a relationship to a specific person; it is an attitude, an orientation of character which determines the relatedness of a person to the world as a whole.

~Erich Fromm

June 12 Not Your Everyday Announcement

Filled with Spirit,
 you will be one with Tao.
 One with Tao,
 you will know the eternal,
 and need never fear you will cease to exist,
 even when your body has turned to dust.

~Lao Tzu

June 13 True Listening

[The free man] listens to what is emerging from himself, to the course of being in the world; not in order to be supported by it, but in order to bring it to reality as it desires.

~Buber

Randy Williams' reflection: that which is seeking to emerge wants to emerge within me, or as Buber said, "is emerging from himself." The transformation of the world for which we strive is also the transformation of me. It will not be complete until I decide what I am able to will. We who share in and are part of creation are all subjects interacting with and upon each other to bring to fruition "what is emerging."

June 14 "Old" Jokes

Three old guys are out walking.

The first one says, "Windy, isn't it?"

The second one says, "No, it's Thursday!"

The third one says, "So am I. Let's go get a beer."

An elderly man tells his neighbor: "I just bought a new hearing aid. It cost \$400, but it's state-of-the-art."

"Really," says the neighbor. "What kind is it?"

"Twelve-thirty."

~via Ginny Reece

June 15 Guess What . . .

I walked in a desert,
And I cried,
“Ah, God, take me from this place!”
A voice said, “It is no desert.”
I cried, “Well, But—
The sand, the heat, the vacant horizon.”
A voice said, “It is no desert.”

~Stephen Crane

June 16 Myth Is the DNA

Myth is the DNA, the software, the unconscious information, the program that governs the way we see reality and behave.

~Sam Keen

June 17 Stories Not Atoms

The universe is made of stories, not of atoms.

~Muriel Rukeyser

June 18 Religious Fanaticism

The tendency to claim God as an ally for our partisan values and ends is the source of all religious fanaticism.

~Reinhold Niebuhr

June 19 Spirit re Relationship

Spirituality has to do primarily with relationship: *spirit* reveals itself in relationship through grace and in disrelationship through judgment – both of which are finally gracious.

~jpc

June 20 To Hope Is to Gamble

To hope is to gamble. It's to bet on the future, on your desires, on the possibility that an open heart and uncertainty is better than gloom and safety. To hope is dangerous, and yet it is the opposite of fear.

~Rebecca Solnit

June 21 That's What's Lovable

The umbilical point, the humanity, the thing that makes you human and not supernatural and immortal – that's what's lovable.

~Joseph Campbell

Therefore, what makes you and me lovable is not pretty, usually, until seen through. ~jpc

June 22 Forewearers

Where else will our feet land but in the shoes of our forewearers? Maybe, if even by the smallest chance, we can march them into a brighter twilight.

~EW (*When he wrote this, he was in prison, praying for parole.*)

June 23 True Faith

True faith comes from how the path you are taking can bring you life and love and happiness everyday.

~Thich Nhat Hanh

And true faith manifests itself in service, a la Jesus and Buddha. ~jpc

June 24 Hardest Years

The hardest years in life are those between ten and seventy.

~Helen Hayes

A few more years and I'm home free. ~jpc

June 25 Who's Next?

One comeback I can take, but two? Who's next? Lazarus?

~*Seabiscuit* movie . . . when radio guy is announcing that Red, who had broken his leg, would ride Seabiscuit, also back from a near-fatal leg injury

June 26 Life Only Has to Make “Awe”

Life . . . does not have to make sense, it only has to make “Awe” – that is, be “holy” in openness to the “Holiness” that is always “Present.”

~Gene W. Marshall

June 27 Resurrectional Time

All time begins
in a moment
then comes the end

The moment dead
after dying
starts up again

~jpc

The illustrations of resurrection in this life are as numerous as hairs on the head. ~jpc

June 28 From an Art Perspective

Look at that brick. It’s different from all the other bricks.

Everything's a piece of art.

~NPR radio

So it follows: Look at that tree. It's different from all the other trees. Every tree's a piece of art. Look at that cat . . . and that child. . . . Look at that HIV/AIDS person. She's different from all the other. . . .

But none of these pieces of art will bring anything close to the price of a piece of art at a Sotheby's Auction. ~jpc

June 29 Will the Circle Be Unbroken

“The universe is the primary referent,” as Thomas Berry said again Saturday. I began to scribble in my notes, “Yes, and *spirit* is that at the heart of the universe that intercommunes us—that authentically relates all its members to each other in the universe. It is *spirit* that gives each of us chance after chance to choose to relate to (to commune with and be on behalf of) more and more members of the universe each time, and in a heart to heart way. *Spirit* leads us all to believe and act like the universe circle is unbroken.”

~jpc

June 30 Unfulfilled Martyrs

[W]ho will die for consumerism, secularism, or the smorgasbord of causes that drive what passes for

intellectual and cultural thought in our society?

~Ian T. Douglas, review of *New Christendom*,
book by Philip Jenkins

*I'm reminded of the saying that everyone lays down
his/her life for something. ~jpc*

July

July 1 To Mourn and To Celebrate

To mourn is to sing with the dying
and to be healed by the song
and by the death.

(To mourn is to move forward and to look back.
To mourn is to say “Yes!”)

~from Macrina Wiederkehr,
added to by Patrick Del Zoppo

Let us remember Jay Zahrt today. ~jpc

July 2 Freedom Demanded

Freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it
must be demanded by the oppressed.

~MLK, Jr.

*Where is freedom demanded today, and freedom from
what oppression or oppressor? ~jpc*

July 3 Democracy Is a Conversation

Democracy is a conversation, and how we talk to one

another is as important as what we talk about and what conclusions we reach.

~Bill Moyers

July 4 Happy Fact

Ray Charles changed the Fourth of July with his “America the Beautiful,” he also changed the song. “God done shed His grace on thee! He crowned thy good, yes he did, in a brotherhood.” The shift isn’t merely from Katharine Lee Bates’s elegant lyric to the black vernacular; it is a shift in meaning. As Kenneth Moynihan noted . . . , Bates penned a prayer: “[May] God shed his grace on thee and crown thy good with brotherhood.” Ray made it a *fait accompli*. As Moynihan put it, “A fervent hope for the future has been turned into a happy fact of the present.”

~Wm. Raspberry, *washingtonpost.com*, 7/5/04

I don't think Ray was nationalistic in his playing with the words, but sensed the truth Tillich articulated: grace is the all-determining fact of everything's existence. ~jpc

July 5 Accepting Our Independence

If we are deadly serious, we take responsibility for our own liberation. That doesn't mean that we don't receive all the help that the universe has to give, but a big part of

authentically receiving the help that the universe has to give is accepting our independence. We say, "Yes, now I am willing, I will do this." Too often, we are given all the help we could ever need, but because we are not serious, we drop it.

~Andrew Cohen

July 6 Impeccable Living

To be impeccable means to put your life on the line in order to back up your decisions. . . . When you are not deciding anything, you are merely playing roulette with your life.

~Don Juan via Carlos Castaneda

July 7 The Most Important Thing

You pick up a sea shell not just because it is pretty, but because its twirled perfection and the way the light comes through its walls remind you of the most important thing you have ever forgotten.

~Alan Watts

July 8 But Is It Real?

Though formless and intangible
It gives rise to form

Though vague and elusive
It gives rise to shapes
Though dark and obscure
It is the spirit, the essence,
the life-breath of all things
"But is it real?" you ask –
I say its evidence is all of creation!

~from Lao Tzu's *Tao Te Ching*

July 9 Good Religion

All good religion is merely a method for helping us make this journey back to our true essence, to come home again after having been away in the far countries of delusion, malice, and bondage.

~Gene W. Marshall

July 10 Carbonated Holiness

One secret of life is that the reason life works at all is that not everyone in your tribe is nuts on the same day. Another secret is that laughter is carbonated holiness.

~Anne Lamott

July 11 Real Love of God

Let everyone understand that the real love of God . . .

[consists] in serving God by serving those around us in justice, fortitude of soul, and humility.

~Teresa of Avila

July 12 Our Authentic Past

Sorcerers [spirit persons] are vitally concerned with their past. . . . But I don't mean their personal past. . . . Their past is what other sorcerers in bygone days have done . . . battling to understand the spirit.

~Don Juan via Carlos Castaneda

July 13 Conduit for the Spirit

. . . [O]nce upon a time there was a man, an average man without any special attributes. He was, like everyone, the conduit for the spirit. And by virtue of that, like everyone else, he was part of the spirit. . . . But he didn't know it. The world kept him so busy that he had neither the time nor the inclination really to examine the matter.

The spirit tried, uselessly, to reveal the connection. Using an inner voice, the spirit disclosed its secrets, but the man was incapable of understanding the revelations. Naturally, he heard the inner voice, but he believed it to be his own feelings he was feeling and his own thoughts he was thinking.

~Don Juan via Carlos Castaneda

July 14 Birthday Every Day

This old rock planet gets the present for a present on its birthday every day.

~Annie Dillard

July 15 True Evangelism

True evangelism, based on the example of Jesus, does not suggest the “missionary zeal” of self-righteous proselytizers. It implies, on the contrary, the kind of all-embracing universality evident in Mother Teresa’s prayer: “May God break my heart so completely that the whole world falls in.” Not just fellow nuns, Catholics, Calcuttans, Indians. The whole world. It gives me pause to realize that, were such a prayer said by me and answered by God, I would afterward possess a heart so open that even hate-driven zealots would fall inside. . . . I have seen the whole world fall into a few hearts, and nothing has ever struck me as more beautiful. The whole world, for example, seemed to fall into the heart of Mahatma Gandhi, not only on the day he said, “I am a Christian, I am a Hindu, I am a Muslim, I am a Jew,” but on the day he proved the depth of his declaration when, after receiving two fatal bullets from a fundamentalist zealot, he blessed that zealot with a namasté before dying.

~David James Duncan

July 16 Happening of Resurrection

The resurrection, wrote Schleiermacher, was what happened to the followers of Jesus when their faltering faith was revived.

~Davidson Loehr

July 17 When It's Over

When it's over, I want to say: all my life
I was a bride married to amazement.
I was the bridegroom, taking the world into my arms.

~Mary Oliver

July 18 Still Arriving

Don't say that I will depart tomorrow –
even today I am still arriving.
Look deeply: every second I am arriving. . . .

~Thich Nhat Hanh

July 19 Family Reunion Reflections

Christopher Schlosser (now Slusher) came to Floyd County, VA, about 1795. Summer reunions have been going on since. Nearly a hundred were present at our branch of the Slusher reunion Sunday. George Slusher

– four generations removed from Christopher – with his wife, Clementine, had fourteen children, who had only forty-three children – the cousins. None of the fourteen are alive. I am one of twenty-five living cousins. I drove back to Carolina thinking about where I came from and where I’m headed.

~jpc

July 20 Profound Effect on Our Quality of Life

The MA [Millennium Ecosystem Assessment] finds that Planet Earth has now entered the Anthropocene Era, a new geological era in which humans are the dominant force affecting radical changes in ecosystems. . . . We are belatedly coming to realize that humans are deeply embedded in the natural world, and the health of natural systems has a profound effect on our quality of life.

~Harry Petrequin, *citizen-times.com*, Asheville, NC, July 17, 2005

July 21 Every Person’s Opus

In movie, “Mr. Holland’s Opus,” Mr. Holland has lost his music teaching job, after thirty-five years, along with the other fine arts teachers in the high school. Gertrude Lang, once his student and now Governor of the State, makes a speech at Mr. Holland’s surprise high school gathering [jpc]:

Mr. Holland isn't rich and he isn't famous, at least not outside of our little town. So it might be easy for him to think himself a failure. But he would be wrong, because I think that he's achieved a success far beyond riches and fame. Look around you. There is not a life in this room [packed auditorium] that you have not touched, and each of us is a better person because of you. We are your symphony, Mr. Holland. We are the melodies and the notes of your opus. We are the music of your life.

July 22 Ordinary Saint

_____ is my candidate for the title "ordinary saint," and "ordinary hero." . . . Perhaps if each of us could touch the world we inhabit the way _____ has touched her world, . . . God might become visible in the tiny and humble human acts of graciousness, kindness, caring and love.

~Spong

July 23 A Deeper Meaning

The way in which a man accepts his fate and all the suffering it entails, the way in which he takes up his cross, gives him ample opportunity . . . to add [to find] a deeper meaning to his life.

~Viktor Frankl

Many folks I know come to mind, persons who are

demonstrating the meaning of the whole journey, including through the valley of suffering. I especially lift up Ruthe, George, Brian, and David. ~jpc

July 24 “To Serve”

The intent of “to serve” is to provide the opportunity for that which is being served to become fully itself, and eventually a servant in its own right and on its own terms.

~Randy Williams

July 25 We’re Fanatics

In 5, 10, 15, 20 years, we’ll see what the legacy is. But I think we did come along and revolutionize the cycling part, the training part, the equipment part. We’re fanatics.

~Lance Armstrong, upon winning the 7th straight Tour de France

A winner’s spirit is manifest in fanatical prep. ~jpc

July 26 Stewards of Holy Words

Holy words need stewardship as surely as do gardens, orchards or ecosystems. When lovingly tended, such words surround us with spaciousness and mystery the way a sacred grove surrounds us with peace and oxygenated air. But when we abandon our holy words

and fail to replace them, we end up living in a spiritual clearcut. . . . To allow televangelists or pulpit neocons to claim exclusive ownership of Jesus is to hand that incomparable lover of enemies, prostitutes, foreigners, field lilies, children and fishermen over to those who evince no such love.

~David James Duncan

July 27 Slogans that Touch the Contradiction

A familiar slogan: All the world belongs to all the people. I like something like “The world belongs to its people (and birds and dogs and cats and elephants and wildflowers and microbes).” Slogans are important, but they best touch society’s contradictions and the spirit.

~Doris Hahn

July 28 Out of This Darkness

This is a dark time. . . . don’t be afraid of the anguish you feel, or the anger or fear, for these responses arise from the depth of your caring and the truth of your interconnectedness with all beings. . . . Dare to vision. Out of this darkness a new world can arise, not to be constructed by our minds so much as to emerge from our dreams.

~Joanna Macy

July 29 Spirit Journey Dynamics 101

Bagger Vance [Bhagavan, from the Hindu Bhagavad-Gita] (Will Smith, actor): *Time for you to come on out the shadows, Junuh. Time for you to choose.*

Junuh [Arjuna, from the Bhagavad-Gita] (Matt Damon, actor): *I can't.*

Bagger: *Yes, you can. But you ain't alone. I'm right here with ya. I been here all along. Now, play the game.*

~The Legend of Bagger Vance movie

And Junuh took his stance, seemingly at one with being, zoning in and swinging his swing and really hitting his shots. What spirit journey dynamics would you list from this dialogue? ~jpc

July 30 The Spiritual Drama

[T]he Absolute never hears the ego's pleas. Its constant demand is always, "Now!" and the ego insists, yet again, "No, I'm not ready." . . . This is what the spiritual drama is all about – the dynamic tension between the ego's endless excuses and the call for unconditional submission from the Absolute.

~Andrew Cohen

July 31 The Great Truth

... you are a center of the universe ...
... accept all things ... as part of your infinite body ...
... [therefore] an act done to another is done to yourself
[understand this and] you have understood the great truth

~*Hua Hu Ching* of Lao Tzu

The first two-line context ("you are a center") makes all the difference for perceiving the rest of the great truth. ~jpc

August

August 1 To Be

We mostly spend [our] lives conjugating three verbs: *to want, to have, to do*. Craving, clutching, and fussing on the material, political, social, emotional, intellectual – even on the religious – plane, we are kept in perpetual unrest: forgetting that none of these verbs has any ultimate significance, except so far as they are transcended by and included in the fundamental verb, *to be*.

~Evelyn Underhill

Joseph Mathews said that in the intensification of our knowing and doing we discover being; therefore, being is discovered in our “material, political, social, emotional, intellectual, and religious” living. We have one life, and being is at the heart of it all. ~jpc

August 2 I’m Watching *Green Acres*

[Angelina] Jolie, [Billy Bob] Thornton says, is “so brave. She’s braver than I could ever be. I always feel like such a loser next to her. She’s saving people’s lives and I’m watching *Green Acres*.”

~ Donna Freydkin, *usatoday.com*, 7/21/05

What is “I’m watching Green Acres” for you these days? ~jpc

August 3 Your Name for It

The Diaphany of the Divine at the heart of a glowing Universe, as I have experienced it through contact with the Earth – the Divine radiating from the depths of blazing Matter. . . .

*This is what Teilhard de Chardin says he wants to write about in **The Heart of Matter**. “The Diaphany of the Divine” [literally, “the divine shows through”] talks of creation being transparent to the divine, when spiritual eventfulness enlightens consciousness. Maybe we all are mystics in this sense. We all, from time to time, are given to see meaning in life in creation. What creates the meaning? More than mind or consciousness. But what? You name it. We all name it something, and what we name it indicates much about our relationship to creation. “[T]he Divine radiating from the depths of blazing Matter” is one of Teilhard’s many names for it. ~jpc*

August 4 Deep Faith

Without risk, there is no faith. . . . If I wish to preserve myself in faith I must constantly be intent upon holding fast the objective uncertainty [of God], so as to remain out upon the deep, over seventy fathoms of water, still

preserving my faith.

~Kierkegaard

*Kierkegaard is saying one cannot know about God objectively, but one can know God subjectively through the risk of faith out over the deep. In his **Concluding Unscientific Postscript**, Kierkegaard plays the absurd with his character Johannes Climacus: by law in Denmark at that time everyone had to be a Christian; in reality, Climacus was saying he could not be a Christian, meaning he could not stand the risk. Do you reckon they put all the Climacus-like Christians in jail? No, but Kierkegaard makes his ironic point. ~jpc*

August 5 O, Wonder

Wonder is my second favorite condition to be in, after love. . . . Wonder is like grace in that it's not a condition that we can grasp. . . . Till wonder descends, truth is unable to reveal itself. . . . Wonder may be the aura of truth. . . . [W]onder is the letter "O" our eyes and mouths make when the state itself descends. . . . Wonder is anything taken for granted suddenly filling with mystery. . . . I believe it is wonder, not just fidelity, that keeps marriages alive. I believe it is wonder, not just courage, that conquers fear of death.

~ David James Duncan

August 6 The Relationship

[W]e can only grow in our relationship with God by cooperating with other members of the human family in caring for each other and for creation itself.

~Ignatius of Loyola (paraphrased and adapted by Jesuit retreatants)

I would like to help retreatants ground this statement during a retreat. ~jpc

August 7 Saintliness

God creates out of nothing. Wonderful you say. Yes, to be sure, but he does what is still more wonderful: he makes saints out of sinners.

~Kierkegaard

In spite of this old language, consider the point: only broken, separated people are made whole and are reunited, therefore saintly. Further, they are sacred because creation is sacred, ever created by that mysterious power many call "God." ~jpc

August 8 To the Illumined Mind

To the dull mind nature is leaden [dictionary: "dull gray; lacking spirit or animation"]. To the illumined mind the

whole world burns and sparkles with light.

~Ralph Waldo Emerson

And how does “the illumined mind” come about? And what does “the whole world” not include? ~jpc

August 9 The Proof Is In the Pearl

Where did the name for the band “Pearl Jam” come from? This is Ed’s take:

“[A] pearl comes from . . . taking excrement or waste and turning it into something beautiful. This is how our band began, taking emotions that we wrestled with personally and letting them evolve into songs. In this way the songs became vehicles . . . to deal with it all. . . . [I]t wasn’t just shit anymore. It was kind of beautiful, powerful, ‘uncultured.’ . . . The proof is in the pearl.”

The power of our life experiences expressed in transforming story is the bottom-line of culture. We can’t really live without story or symbol. It is pure gospel to say, “Your life is a pearl.” If nobody says it to you, then you say “My Life is a Pearl” at least once on your holy day and three times every other day. ~jpc

August 10 One Song

... All religions, all this singing,
one song.

The differences are just illusion and vanity. Sunlight

looks slightly different

on this wall than it does on that wall and a lot different
on this other one, but

it is still one light. . . .

~Rumi

August 11 Globalization 3.0

Globalization 1.0 (1492 to 1800) shrank the world from a size large to a size medium, and the dynamic force in that era was countries globalizing for resources and imperial conquest. Globalization 2.0 (1800 to 2000) shrank the world from a size medium to a size small, and it was spearheaded by companies globalizing for markets and labor. Globalization 3.0 (which started around 2000) is shrinking the world from a size small to a size tiny and flattening the playing field at the same time. . . . In Globalization 3.0, you are going to see every color of the human rainbow take part.

~Thomas Friedman, *nytimes.com*, 4/3/2005

August 12 Despair Is . . . and Is Rooted Out

[D]espair is: despair at not willing to be oneself; or still lower, despair at not willing to be a self; or lowest of all, despair at willing to be another than oneself, wishing for a new self. . . .

The formula that describes the state of self when despair is completely rooted out is this: by relating itself to its own self and by willing to be itself, the self is grounded transparently in the Power which established it.

~Kierkegaard

I combined a couple of translations. ~jpc

August 13 “Thoroughly Used Up” Is Living

I want to be thoroughly used up when I die, for the harder I work, the more I live. I rejoice in life for its own sake.

~George Bernard Shaw

August 14 Life Animates both Science and Faith

After close on two centuries of passionate struggles, neither science nor faith has succeeded in discrediting its adversary. On the contrary, it becomes obvious that neither can develop normally without the other. And the reason is simple: the same life animates both. Neither in its impetus nor its achievements can science go to its limits without

becoming tinged with mysticism and charged with faith.

~Teilhard de Chardin

August 15 The Twilight of the Gods (I)

[T]he private faith by which we live is likely to be a multifarious thing with many objects of devotion . . . sons and daughters, . . . home . . . , sex . . . , our country, our ideologies, our democracies, civilizations, churches, our art . . . , our truth . . . , our moral values, our ideas, and the social forces. . . . [W]e practice a kind of successive polygamy, being married now to this and now to that object of devotion. . . . The tragedy of our religious lives is that it not only divides us within ourselves and from each other. There is a greater tragedy – the twilight of the gods. . . . All our cases, all our ideas, all the beings on which we relied to save us from worthlessness are doomed to pass.

~H. Richard Niebuhr, “Faith in Gods and in God” (I-IV)

August 16 Secular Good News (II)

[The secular good news is] reality . . . abides when all else passes. It is the source of all things and the end of all. It surrounds our life. . . . What it is we do not know save that it is and that it is the supreme reality with which we must reckon. . . . The strange thing has happened that we have been enabled to say of this reality, this last power in which we live and move and have our being, “Though it

slay us yet will we trust it.” . . . To have hope in this One is to have hope that is eternal. This being cannot pass away.

~H. Richard Niebuhr, *Ibid.*

August 17 Christian Good News (III)

[W]e confront in the event of Jesus Christ the presence of that last power which brings to apparent nothingness the life of the most loyal man. Here we confront the slayer, and here we become aware that this slayer is the life-giver. . . . Here the great reconciliation with the divine enemy [who has become “companion”] has occurred. And since it has occurred, there is no way of getting rid of it. It is in human history. ~H. Richard Niebuhr

~H. Richard Niebuhr, *Ibid.*

August 18 Faith in the Last Power (IV)

We do not say now that . . . faith in the last power is something men ought to have. . . . We say that it is given, that it has been given, that it is being given, and that when it is received very profound consequences follow. . . . The moral consequences of this faith is that it makes relative all those values which polytheism makes absolute. . . . A new sacredness attaches to the relative goods [and gods, I-III, above] . . . [Faith’s “requirement”]: all beings . . . be met with reverence, for all are friends in the friendship of the one to whom

we are reconciled in faith.

~H. Richard Niebuhr, *Ibid.*

August 19 A Terrible Thing to Waste

A crisis is a terrible thing to waste.

~Paul Romer

August 20 A Credit to the Species

I am a **credit** to my **species**. Doesn't matter if I am a poor old man who's never had a day of school, or if I am in a wheelchair, have a cleft lip, or am brain damaged.

It does matters if I see myself on behalf of all my species. I will cheer anyone who *be's* a credit to my species, whether s/he's on my side or not. "Way to go, Russian Sputnik astronaut!" If the label says made in Bangedesh, I will cheer my species.

~jpc

August 21 A Credit to Creation

I am a **credit to creation**, not just the human species – I will to be a credit to all the species and non-species, e.g., air and water.

~jpc

August 22 A Credit to *Spirit*

I am a **credit to *spirit*** at the heart of creation, not just to

creation and humanity. The old catechism says that the chief aim of a person is to “love God and glorify him forever.” My chief aim as a member of the species and creation is to bow to *spirit* at the heart of all, thereby honoring all that *spirit* sacralizes. If you see me bowing to anything or anyone authentically as a *thou*, you will see me bowing to the *eternal thou*, to *spirit*.

~jpc

August 23 Cosmic Neutrinos

[S]pace [is] flooded with cosmic neutrinos. Nuclear reactions in the Sun alone send 65 billion neutrinos a second through every square inch of Earth. . . . The nuclear reactions that produce the neutrinos also cause the Sun to shine.

~Dr. John Bahcall

August 24 Common Destiny of Creation

“We humans are really beginning to care for creation again – as did our ancestors – even as you trees and eagles and aborigines have never stopped doing. All of us are about one thing. . . . Only within the common destiny of creation are we unique beings, but each with the same purpose. Our history is the history of creation. Our future is the future of creation.”

~Peter – aka Journner – in *Journner*, a new novel
by jpc

***NOTE:** the preceding quotes of August date to 2005;
the remainder of the quotes of August date to 2004,
when I began this quote/reflection journal. ~jpc*

August 25 The Dance of Yes to Life

. . . to Zorba
with bread and wine
and feast of lamb
as dream and plan
back-breaking work
came tumbling down the mountainside;

to Zorba
who, as others fled,
taught you and me
and Boss at last
to dance
the Dance of Yes to Life
with arms outstretched
and intertwined.

~Lucille Tessier Chagnon

August 26 Savor the Universe

The universe is happening. Each day we stand naked on the raw edge of the universe and participate in the creation of the next expression of the universe. . . . The challenge

is to bring as much self-consciousness to this creative process as possible, and to savor it.

~Basil Sharp

August 27 Heaven on Earth

How can we live in harmony? First we need to know we are all madly in love with the same God.

~Thomas Aquinas

Heaven on earth is when all expressions of religion and spirituality are united rather than divided by their images of the ultimate. ~jpc

August 28 “How Can I Keep from Singing?”

My life flows on in endless song, above earth's
lamentation.

I hear the real though far-off hymn that hails a new
creation.

No storm can shake my inmost calm . . . I hear the
music ringing.

It sounds an echo in my soul. How can I keep from
singing!

~version of Quaker hymn . . . appropriate for
Abe's memorial service

August 29 Ridding Self of Illusions

Prayer, love, spirituality, and religion are about ridding yourself of illusions. When religion brings that about, that's wonderful, wonderful! When it deviates from that, it is an illness, a plague to be avoided. Once illusions have been abandoned, the heart is unobstructed, and love takes hold. That's when happiness occurs. That's when change takes place. And only then will you know who God is.

~Anthony De Mello

August 30 Negativism to Life

Negativism to the pain and ferocity of life is negativism to life. We are not there until we can say 'yea' to it all. As you proceed through life, following your own path, birds will shit on you. Don't bother to brush it off.

~Joseph Campbell

August 31 The Tranquil Sea

[T]he religious condition: simultaneously to be out on 70,000 fathoms of water and yet be joyful. . . . [T]he heart, like the sea] must lie calm, transparent to its depths.

~Kierkegaard (adapted from two of his books)

Joy and calm out over 70,000 fathoms is an impossibly possible image for such times. Grace is yours. ~jpc

Communion Meditation

Pick one of the following phrases that attracts you:

- *spirit's present*
- *here and now*
- *all is one*
- *I and thou*

Sit comfortably, close your eyes, and several times, as you take deep breaths, tighten your body muscles and release them. Do this till you feel relaxed.

Start to repeat the chosen phrase to yourself aloud if you are alone, or silently if you are in a group, moving your lips. Repeat it deliberately for three to five minutes.

You will have many thoughts, feelings, and diversions. Simply acknowledge them by name. For example, if you start thinking about a person, name that person and refocus on repeating the phrase; if you start to cry, say to yourself, "I am crying," and refocus on repeating the phrase. If you hear a sound, say to yourself, "I heard thunder," and refocus on repeating the phrase.

At the end of the chosen time, stand up, with eyes open and with your hands together touching your heart, bow in four directions, saying or moving your lips, "I bow to thee."

Reflect on your diversions, your feelings, your experience of this experience, and a metaphor from the meditation to take with you. Write a paragraph on "Communion Is. . . ."

~jpc, from . . . *Heart of Creation* (adapted)

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About the Author

John Cock, a native of southeastern USA, is author/editor of eight books. He is a weblogger, retreat guide, and a program facilitator with the Center for Ecozoic Studies, a group inspired by Thomas Berry. He employs the methods of the Order: Ecumenical, a group inspired by Joseph Mathews.

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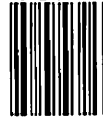


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