

DAILY SPIRIT
JOURNAL

VOL. III

Quotes & Reflections
for 365 Days

universal spirit journey pondering

JOHN P. COCK

What Readers Are Saying

. . . *about the reflections in this book –
daily sent to an e-mail list via
tranScribebooks@triad.rr.com
or read and viewed online at
www.reJourney.blogspot.com, with this heading:*

Journey Reflection

*commune with spirit . . . intercommune with good
creation . . . give thanks for being*

“Have we entered the 21st century in our spiritual lives, with the ability to apply everlasting truth that today’s world demands of us? These reflections are a powerful spiritual tool for me. I wouldn’t miss this opportunity daily.” ~*Jerome Hunter, auto manufacturing management, Georgia*

“These daily reflections are spirit eyeglasses that help me glimpse the profound dimension of life, calling me to live in forgiveness and compassion.” ~*Jean Long, continuing legal education, Colorado*

“I really have to say that your daily reflections are a regular point of dialogue for us. There must be a Native American expression for ‘one who walks with us.’ That would be our name for you.” ~*Larry Loeppeke, publishing management, Iowa*

“I really do love the the daily journey reflections each day. And the pictures* you select to accompany them are wonderful!” ~*Jean Watts, spirit methods guide, Louisiana*

“Your ‘Journey Reflection’ is the first thing I look for when I turn on my computer to begin my in-touch-with-the-world day. I always find my spirit refreshed, and I am put in touch with all that is.” ~*Charles Hahn, ecumenical order, Indiana*

“I give thanks to you for sharing the daily reflections. I look forward to them each morning. I have learned, laughed, and pondered their wisdom. Several of the journal pages in a folder remind me of my personal commitments.” ~*Juanita Graul, church layleader, South Carolina*

“So many of us look forward to this daily reflection. I am always as drawn to the images* as I am to the written word. Thanks for this great creation and this small piece of sanctuary for so many.” ~*Cheryl Hood, bank management, Missouri*

“I so appreciate your profound spirituality and your faithfulness in creating these daily reflections. They are so totally cool and awesome and have a huge impact on my daily practice.” ~*Mary Ann Wainwright, earth, creation spirituality advocate, North Carolina*

“Your reflections give me a sense of one reality. If I say, “I am Buddhist, Muslim, Hindu, Jain, Sikh, Native,” then I can be more deeply Christian. There is one Path, but many expressions. Thanks for helping me be one reality.” ~*Koshin (Bob Hanson), monk for justice, Wisconsin*

“The illustrations* with your daily reflections are uncanny, fabulous, unnerving. Together they make my day.” ~*Martha Lee Sugg, artist, Colorado*

“I shared your volume II with my aunt in Mumbai. She loved it. Now it’s back on my bedside table. I read from it as I go to bed and wake up. It reminds me to be grateful.”
~*Megha Merani, university advisor, Dubai, UAE*

“I love your reflections and read them even if I have 100+ e-mails backed up. You are speaking for our present and future and your voice is one of hope.” ~*Andrea Beacham, discipleship minister, Iowa*

“Your blog’s a little like a swim in the neighbor’s pool on a hot summer day. People like me should take a swim in a different month of the blog’s archives each day.” ~*Jim Slotta, computer management, Colorado*

“Thanks for the gift of these daily offerings – for the spirit behind each one, for all who have been part of these reflections, for your steadfastness in nurturing us.” ~*Ellie Stock, minister, Missouri*

”*Frederick*, by Leo Lionni, is a children’s book about a poet mouse. He doesn’t do all the foraging the other mice do, but on dark nights he brings sunshine into their lives through his poetry. I am grateful for the *Frederick*’s, and one in particular.” ~*Lynda Cock, teacher and caregiver, North Carolina*

* **Note:** visual images, whether photos or art, accompany each daily reflection online at www.reJourney.blogspot.com and by the daily e-mail list from tranScribebooks@triad.rr.com.

Daily Spirit Journal

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Quotes & Reflections
for 365 Days

Volume III

John P. Cock

transcribe books

Daily Spirit Journal (Volume III)
Quotes & Reflections for 365 Days

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Dedicated
to all journers
on the great spirit journey

and especially

Alec

newborn grandson
since volume II

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**

“On Taking Care of Yourself,”
Bending History, pp. 276 ff.

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Practical spirituality happens where we are – at work, with the family, in church, at the movies, at the beach, in a meeting, at school, in the shower, in bed. ***Practical spirituality happens in what we're doing***, whether seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, smelling, dialoguing, dreaming, writing, calculating, walking, swimming, making love. ***Practical spirituality happens in what we're reflecting on***, praying, cogitating, mulling, and brooding over, weighing up, deciding, contemplating, meditating. ***Practical spirituality happens in what we're being*** – confused, joyful, sorrowful, despairing, provoked, called, resistant, surrendering.

We are spiritual throughout our everyday, real lives. That's not to say we are not blind to, unaware of, or willfully closed to *spirit* more times than not, but we *are* spiritual nonetheless, whether we are saying *yes* or *no* or *don't know*. We *are* spiritual because of the always already present *spirit* in our lives that we will never get away from. Because of this fact, life is a sacramental spirit journey from dust to dust, at least.

~**John P. Cock**

Our Universal Spirit Journey, pp. 204-05

Preface

Since August 19, 2004, I have been sharing spirit reflections through a daily online blog and e-mail list, and compiling those into three volumes.

Over 1,500 daily e-mail and blog postings bring us to the publication of volume III of *Daily Spirit Journal* (the daily reflections* over thirty-six months are archived online at “Journey Reflection,” www.reJourney.blogspot.com).

Thousands of people from most every country have participated in over 55,000 reflection views online, and several hundred persons participate daily via an e-mail list and online feed. (E-mail transcribebooks@triad.rr.com and ask to join the daily e-mail list, or join the XML feed at the above web address.)

The online blog banner states the intent of the daily few-minute “Journey Reflection” is to assist us to “commune with *spirit*, intercommune with good creation, and give thanks for being.” Further, the aim is

- to provide a big context
- to reveal the depths of life
- to articulate meaning
- to catalyze eye-opening experience
- to motivate responsible action

I have been experimenting with daily meditation a long time. Now, daily, my ear is cocked, my eye is on

watch, and my interpretive juices are aflow. I see myself as a journey reporter always looking for a meaningful story – with a profound photo – to share widely.

My job is to dialouge with a local-global network of journers, making my daily solitary exercise a communal one – even if virtual. I get to do my personal reflection with others, many whose spirits I sense as I reflect.

What a great job.

*Namaste.***

August 2007

John P. Cock
Greensboro, NC
USA

* To browse the daily reflections in the three voumes, click the months on the right sidebar of www.reJourney.blogspot.com under “archives.” You can also research a word or phrase (e.g., “grace” or “Paul Tillich”) of the archives at the top-left of the web page by typing it in the slot and then clicking on “search blog” to the right, then scrolling down.

** “Namaste” is the ending of each daily reflection. For a good definition, go to p. 123, the March 3rd reflection.

Journal Guide

To help dialogue with what is written herein, you might ask such questions as

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

Grounding the reflections in your own life experiences will enhance meaningful dialogue.

On any page, around the edges and spaces in between, jot down your reflections in this daily journal – or in your regular journal.

You can even participate in the age-old practice of memorizing bits to reflect upon during the day and later.

Relish your moments of reflection.

Journey on.

~jpc (my initials, used throughout the journal)

Reflection is a decision to live in profound consciousness, with gratitude, on behalf of all.

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 . . . whatever . . . rituals . . . that will remind you to enter the day with a spirit of gratitude and devotion.

~**Sam Keen**

Hymns To An Unknown God, p. 267

September

September 1 Prayer of Communion

O *thou* –
 spirit of our spirit,
 breath of our breath,
 soul of our soul,
 heart of our heart,
 vision of our vision,
 will of our will,
 love of our love –
we would speak *thy* word,
be *thy* eyes and ears,
 thy hands and feet,
 thy sensors and force . . .
as together with *thee*
and *thy* children
we commune with
and serve creation
in *thy* holy now.

Namaste.

~jpc

September 2 Can't Read about Faith and Catch It

There is no continuous movement from an objective inquiry into the life of Jesus to a knowledge of him as the Christ. . . . Only a decision of the self, a leap of faith, a *metanoia* or revolution of the mind can lead from observation to participation. . . . ~H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Meaning of Revelation*, p. 61

Faith is more than beliefs, more than knowing about the historical Jesus, more than joining a religious body, more than memorizing holy words and praying in Jesus' name. Faith is a discontinuous conversion of the mind, heart, and will, propelling one to profound participation in life.
~jpc

O to be in faith ever and again. Namaste.

September 3 Sunday Dialogue (XVII)

Journer: What is the secret to effective action?

Nez: Real preparation.

Journer: What does that look like?

Nez: My student* said it very well as he helped revolutionize Europe and western religion: "I have so much to do [today] that I shall have to spend the first three hours in prayer."

* **Martin Luther** (watch "Luther," 2003 movie)

September 4 Family Reunion Wisdom

As the years have passed, my family has learned to graciously accept the breadth of religious faith and political practice that we bring to a reunion. Mind you, we have not grown more homogenous; quite the contrary. But we now enjoy being together. That's due in large part to our revised expectations of what a family must be. To start, we no longer aim to argue each other into our own likeness. ~David Batstone, "Finding Common Ground at Family Reunions," *sojo.net*, 7/19/06, via LLC

At the many family reunions of the summer, we talked little religion and politics and much family tree. It was refreshing to be together. ~jpc

We are thankful for our ancestors and our extended family. Namaste.

September 5 Being In Charge

From an interview with **Francis Collins**, head of the Human Genome Project and author of *The Language of God* (July 2006): "I became an atheist because, as a graduate student studying quantum physics, life seemed to be reducible to second-order differential equations. Mathematics, chemistry and physics had it all. And I didn't see any need to go beyond that. Frankly, I was at a point in my young life where it was convenient for me to not have to deal with a God. I kind of liked being in charge myself." ~Steve Paulson, "The Believer," via Ida Forbis

Naturally, most of us had rather be in charge than “deal with God” (or *spirit*). That’s not bad, just less fulfilling.
~jpc

O to be in league with spirit. Namaste.

September 6 Other Forms of Consciousness

[O]ur normal waking consciousness, rational consciousness as we call it, is but one special type of consciousness, whilst all about it, parted from it by the filmiest of screens, there lie potential forms of consciousness quite different. We may go through life without suspecting their existence; but . . . [n]o account of the universe . . . can be final which [disregards] these other forms of consciousness. . . . ~William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 378

Persons in history exhibiting a deep consciousness of *spirit* – like Jesus, and Siddhartha before him, and Teresa of Avila after him – have changed history more than most.
~jpc

Guess what the world needs now. Namaste.

September 7 Love and Perception

Love all God’s creation, the whole of it and every grain of sand. Love every leaf, every ray of God’s light! Love the animals, love the plants, love everything. If you love everything, you will perceive the divine mystery in things.

~Dostoevsky's character Father Zosima in *The Brothers Karamazov* (Penguin, vol. I, p. 375)

Maybe perceiving comes first, before the loving. ~jpc

O to see the mystery in all things. Namaste.

September 8 Our Source of Greatness

I am that I am, I am light, I am love, I am peace, I am beauty, I am joy, I am one with Mother Earth, I am one with . . . Creation, I am one with everyone within the reach of my voice. And in this togetherness, we ask the Divine . . . to eradicate all negatives from our minds, from our words, and from our actions. And so be it. Ase, ase, ase. ~Babatunde Olatunji, Nigerian drummer (1927-2003)

“Ase,” (a word of the Yoruba, pronounced ah-SHAY) besides meaning “amen” or “Happy New Year,” also means something like the intrinsic power, energy, or life force of a piece of creation. This gift of power constitutes our being. It is the source of our greatness when we're in touch with it. ~jpc

O to be the small but great “I am.” Namaste.

September 9 Satyagraha

Gandhi coined the Hindi word “Satyagraha” about a hundred years ago with this explanation: “Truth (*Satya*)

implies love, and firmness (*agraha*) engenders and therefore serves as a synonym for force . . . the Force which is born of Truth and love . . . or nonviolence.”

Let us lift up the anniversary of modern nonviolence and do what many others will be doing, watching the movie “Gandhi” – at least my twelfth time. ~jpc

O for force born of truth and love. Namaste.

Note: Read Bishop James K. Mathew’s book *Satyagraha: The Matchless Weapon* (1989).

September 10 Sunday Dialogue (XVIII)

Journer: Why do we grieve over what is lost at times like September 11?

Nez: Because it’s the nature of the heart.

Journer: When do we know we’re beyond the grieving?

Nez: When we come to rejoice in what is found, as one of my Sufi students has said.

September 11 9/11 Double Anniversary

Michael Nagler, a professor at UC Berkeley, points out that today is also the 100th anniversary of “nonviolence,” when Gandhi introduced the first campaign of nonviolent resistance at the Empire Theatre

in Johannesburg on September 11, 1906. ~cobbled from a David Rebstock e-mail, 8/17/06

These two events – 9/11/1906 and 9/11/2001 – declare an evolutionary indicative: since we will never be able to control human-to-human violence with military means, and since no nation’s inhabitants can ever be secure, it’s time to invest our resources more wisely and effectively. ~jpc

Let us honor the dead, the living, and the unborn with methods that bow to creation’s needs. Namaste.

September 12 Hardheaded Nonviolence

The strategy against terrorism requires undermining the social base of extremism by driving a wedge between militants and their potential sympathizers. The goal should be to separate militants from their support base. ~David Cortright (author of *Gandhi and Beyond*), “Nonviolence and the Strategy Against Terrorism,” *sojo.net*, 8/28/06, via LLC

This strategy would be using the terrorists’ wedge tactics against them. I’m not a “rocket scientist” on this matter, but I do know humans are bright enough to figure it out. Gandhi’s movement was a mighty blow against South African apartheid, the crowning blow for India’s freedom, and the primary force behind racial justice in the USA. ~jpc

Lasting global peace. Namaste.

September 13 Can We Humans Make It?

Determined to see through the politics of these three pieces of media, I was deeply addressed by them: “When the Levees Broke” (four hours on HBO); “The Path to 9/11” (four hours on ABC); and the article “A General’s New Plan To Battle Radical Islam” (front page of *Wall Street Journal*, 9/2/06, via Jerome Hunter). The three raised the question “Can we humans make it?” and moved me to prayers of repentance, compassion, and thanksgiving. Our human venture within the earth venture seems way out of hand. Often our human acts are full of evil, obsession with power, and sometimes heroism. What a piece of work we humans are! ~jpc

The Psalmist prays, “O Lord, come to our assistance . . . make haste to help me (us).” That assistance is always at hand. Time we use it. Namaste.

September 14 Wide-open Spirituality Structures

According to the Pew Research Center, religious use of the Internet jumped from 20 million to nearly 82 million between 2000 and 2004. . . . “Technology has allowed thousands – if not millions – of people to begin to develop spirituality outside of the traditional . . . structures,” **Tom Ferguson** [associate deputy of interfaith relations for the Episcopal Church] said. ~Lona O’Connor, “Divine Inventions: Gadgets Hot Source of Spirituality,” *Palm Beach Post*, 6/25/06

Spirit is always at hand – just is, here, now. *Spirit* does not originate in institutions and with professionals, thank goodness. ~jpc

Go wherever thou wilt to celebrate spirit's presence. Namaste.

September 15 Always Got a God

Man [sic] . . . never exists without a god or gods; some things there are to which he must cling as . . . the centers of value. As a rule men [sic] are polytheists. . . . Sometimes they live for Jesus' God, sometimes for country and sometimes for Yale. For the most part they make gods out of themselves or out of the work of their own hands. ~H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Meaning of Revelation*, pp. 56-7

The last thing we'd give up is our number-one god. But will it deliver and fulfill? ~jpc

Gods really are jealous. Namaste.

September 16 Wild Places

This collection of essays put me in the frame of mind to return to childhood experiences that have meant so much to me: the honeysuckle “jungle” hideout in the vacant lot across from our house, the sagebrush field down the street where we would crawl on our bellies to hide in the tall

grasses, the bicycle track that we cleared on another vacant vine-covered lot, the big rock in the ditch down the street where we could kneel and watch the tadpoles. As Thomas says, “It takes a universe to make [and raise] a child.” ~Lynda L. Cock, review of *The Geography of Childhood: Why Children Need Wild Places* for the quarterly *The Ecozoic Reader* www.ecozoicstudies.org

In the wilds we are often spiritized. Namaste.

September 17 Sunday Dialogue (XIX)

Journer: Is life really worth living?

Nez: When someone asked my student* that question, he answered, “It all depends on the liver.”

Journer: Does he mean it depends on my will to live?

Nez: More than that. It depends on the meaning you *see* in life. It depends on your eyes.

* William James

September 18 Just Like Human Beings

“Isn’t it ironic the way people talk about dinosaurs?” Peter said. “Today we say an organization is ‘just like a dinosaur’ when we mean it’s slow and can’t adjust to change. But you know, the dinosaurs did manage to survive over a

hundred times longer than humans have so far. Whatever being might take our place here in the future will probably say, ‘Just like humans beings – too bad they didn’t have the adaptive capabilities of dinosaurs!’” ~Peter Senge, *Presence*, p. 22, via Tim Watson

This is strong language, out to trigger evolutionary brooding. ~jpc

Pray for human species transformation. Namaste.

September 19 This Is It

*This is It
and I am It
and You are It
and so is That
and He is It
and She is It
and It is It
and That is That*

*Oh It is This
and This is Thus
and It is Them
and It is Us
and It is Now
and here It is
and here We are
so This Is It*

~**James Broughton** poem in *Graces: Prayers and Poems for Everyday Meals and Special Occasions*, p. 183, via Kelley Cock

We rejoice in the poetic word. It would be amazing to know the images this little poem spins for each of us. The meaning is in our perception. ~jpc

“And here We are.” Namaste.

September 20 Celebrate We’ve Come This Far

[G]lobal warming will become, as it is elsewhere, a political given – something like crime or low test scores that every politician is pledged to fight. Their methods will differ (and those differences will be crucial), but the essential facts will be noncontroversial. It shouldn’t have taken us twenty years to reach this point . . . , but it’s cause for celebration that we’ve come this far. ~**Bill McKibben**, “Hot and Bothered: Facing Up to Global Warming,” *christiancentury.org*, 7/11/06

Celebrate, envision, and engage the future. Namaste.

September 21 Profound Action

With a sense of true devotion within and contentment in the outward daily acts, face the challenges fully, but leave the consequences to the Great Power. ~**P.P. Swami Gagangiri**, via Roseanne Sands

*Come from the deeps,
fully engage, and
let the consequences
blow in the wind
until tomorrow
when we do it all again. ~jpc*

Inhale . . . exhale. Pray . . . engage. Namaste.

September 22 The Point of Being Here

[T]he whole point of being here is to participate fully, radically, consciously in the evolutionary process. . . . [T]he goal is not merely to transcend the world so that you can be free of it, but to embrace the world completely, to embrace the entire process . . . and [be] the creative principle incarnate. ~Andrew Cohen, *Quote of the Week*, 9/4/06

This is one articulation of the point of our being here: To creatively care for all creation for all time. Another articulation: "To love God and serve Him forever." How would you say it? ~jpc

O to get the point. Namaste.

September 23 Deep Family Life

After the baptism of his baby brother, 6-year-old Jason sobbed all the way home. His father asked him three times

what was wrong. Finally, Jason replied, “That preacher said he wanted us brought up in a Christian home, but I want to stay with you guys.”

After laughing at this e-mail, I began to reflect on what it means to be brought up in a spiritual home environment these days. What are our rituals? Is our daily prayer life as disciplined as that of the Muslims? Is our family night as intentional as the traditional weekly Jewish meal? ~jpc

O for a deeply reflective family life. Namaste.

Note: We celebrate the completed life of Marge Kloepfer. “Come, come, ye saints. . . . All is well, all is well.”

September 24 Sunday Dialogue (XX)

Journer: What can I do to be more loving?

Nez: As one of my students* said, “The important thing is not to think much but to love much and so do that which best stirs you to love.” What has stirred you to love lately?

Journer: Last week it was holding my grandchildren.

Nez: It’s good to get those love juices flowing.

* Teresa of Avila

September 25 Not a Theocracy

America wasn't founded as a theocracy [subject to religious authority]. . . . America was founded by people trying to escape theocracies. Never in history have we had a Christian theocracy where it wasn't bloody and barbaric. That's why our Constitution wisely put in a separation of church and state." ~**Gregory A. Boyd**, from Laurie Goodstein article, "Disowning Conservative Politics, Evangelical Pastor Rattles Flock," *nytimes.com*, 7/30/06

The truth is that all power, secular or religious, comes from the heart of creation. We can use that *spirit*-given power to tear asunder or to reconcile. It is within our *spirit*-given authority to do so. ~jpc

*O to reconcile the sons and daughters of Earth.
Namaste.*

September 26 Interpreted Truth

If scientists are prepared to state their hypotheses, describe how they tested them, lay out their data, explain how they analyze their data and the conclusions they draw from their analyses – then it should not matter if they pray to Zeus, Jehovah, the Tooth Fairy, or nobody. ~**Cornelia Dean**, "Faith, Reason, God and Other Imponderables," *nytimes.com*, 7/25/06, via Michael Dowd

Human truth is interpreted. Humans always add their

personal interpretation to so-called pure, objective, scientific truth. Therefore, let us have the best interpretation of the truth possible, using the best methods possible, under the best scientific community of cross-examination possible. ~jpc

And let us hold gods suspect. Namaste.

September 27 Always Sustained

*If we live
long enough
we'll give up
our car keys,
walking cane
and walker,
our wheelchair,
and even,
yes, our bed.*

*But being
sustained
is not ours
to give up.*

*We're always
sustained . . .
however,
whenever,
wherever . . .*

forever. ~jpc, 9/3/06

Always sustained. Namaste.

Note: Our Milky Way galaxy is about 14 billion years old – what I’d call being sustained.

September 28 The God of You and Me

In biblical usage . . . “the god of Israel,” “the god of Abraham,” “my god,” “your god” . . . [are clearly not referring to “god” as] a personal name, but [are] being used in a symbolic way to refer to whatever values a person or a nation regards as supreme. This implies that if you were to ask, “Where shall I find the god of Abraham?” the appropriate answer would be, “Watch how Abraham lives his life and discern what he appears to regard as being his ultimate concern; that is all you will ever know of the god of Abraham. ~Lloyd Geering, *Christianity Without God*, p. 43, via David Reese

What will they see when they see the “god of Ted” or the “god of Cindy” or “my god”? ~jpc

O not to be seen as a desecration. Namaste.

September 29 On Earth, Now

Jesus is presented in this film [“The Passion of the Christ”] as preaching a wholly other-worldly and spiritual message with a kingdom “not of this world” whereas the Gospels [and Jewish literature of the time] clearly present Jesus as

coming to usher in a very real “kingdom of God on earth.”
~James D. Tabor <http://tinyurl.com/38azor>

Jesus was “spiritual” in this world and calls followers to be the same. This to me is the point of Christianity. ~jpc

*As Ignatius used to say to his Jesuits, “On Earth, now.”
Namaste.*

September 30 The Center Is Everywhere

Let the past, the present, and the future be the dimensions of time. Let the moment be the center where past and present and future meet. Every moment then is a center, even the moment of death. The center is everywhere, the circumference nowhere. ~John S. Dunne, *The Way of All the Earth*, p. 232

We are at the center in every moment of our living and our dying. ~jpc

*O to bask in such attention and inclusiveness.
Namaste.*

October

October 1 Sunday Dialogue (XXI)

Journer: Where does the power for real life come from?

Nez: As an authentic samurai knows, “There is Life in every breath.”*

Journer: And how do I harness that life-giving power?

Nez: Really breathe every breath you are given.

* Katsumoto in “The Last Samurai”

Note: Read *The Ronin: A Novel Based on a Zen Myth*, by William Dale Jennings, to see how a boy is trained to be a samurai.

October 2 Reality?

Ed Zwick, director and co-writer of “The Last Samurai” movie of 2003, says, “It’s as important to celebrate what’s poetic and idealized as it is to understand the reality. . . . We’re inspired by the mythologizing of the samurai as heroes.” ~Stefan Lovgren, “‘The Last Samurai’: Movie Myth or History?” National Geographic News, 12/2/03

Abraham, Siddhartha, Jesus, Bonhoeffer, and Mother

Teresa are part history and part myth to us. Which part would you leave out? I'd say the "poetic" is our way of trying to articulate "reality," or reality is more than just "history." ~jpc

We celebrate the life within life. Namaste.

October 3 Complexity Abounds

Consumption of the 40 million Hispanics in the U.S. is the same as the gross national product of Mexico, and Mexico has 110 million people. Hispanics in the United States are expected to spend nearly \$800 billion this year. . . . By next year, their economic power should top \$863 billion—outpacing . . . [all] minority group[s] in the country. ~Deborah Yao, AP business writer, 9/21/06

Granted, most of the 40 million (maybe next in size to the European block) did not come in the front gate past the Statue of Liberty. Nevertheless, their staying or leaving dramatically impacts the US future, and not just economically. This present challenge reflects how rich and poor will interrelate in our planetary future. ~jpc

O for a more effective body politic to deal with such challenges. Namaste.

October 4 Great Poetry

At the Galax Book Festival we chatted with Robert Morgan, poet and fiction writer (*Gap Creek*). He said a

great poem is memorable (his key point), celebratory, and packs a surprise. Maybe what friend Cynthia interjected, an *aha!* experience. My sister said a great poem speaks to the heart. I added that it unveils mysterious reality and makes us more aware of the profound journey we're on.

By these standards, not all poetry is great. Morgan said few poems of the last twenty to thirty years are. What description of great poetry would you add? Name a great poem. ~jpc

O to be inspired by great poetry. Namaste.

October 5 Response *Par Excellence*

Without any government help, they've [Riders for Health, started by **Barry and Andrea Coleman**] sent hundreds of motor bikes to Africa's wildest places with money they've raised at bike rallies in England. They have also trained the local health workers how to drive and maintain them. [Riders for Health enabled African health workers to reach 9.79 million people in 2002-2003 <http://tinyurl.com/2kyff>] ~Christiane Amanpour, "Africa's HIV-infected Children Also Ignored," *cnn.com*, 7/19/06

It is possible to care for all. ~jpc

O to deal with fundamental contradictions. Namaste.

October 6 **The Present**

*Yesterday is history.
Tomorrow is a mystery.
And Today?
Today is a gift.
That's why we call it
The Present. ~Babatunde Olatunji*

This understanding of evolution is key to the future. ~jpc

*To live in the present, honoring the past, on behalf of
the future. Namaste.*

October 7 **Relationship to the Spirit**

I now was able to see the centrality of God (or “the Spirit,” to say the same thing) in Jesus’ own life. I began to see Jesus as one whose spirituality – his experiential awareness of Spirit – was foundational for his life. . . . Jesus’ relationship to the Spirit was the source of everything that he was. ~Marcus Borg, *Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time*, p. 15 (his parentheses)

Since we are as close to *spirit* as Jesus was, it is and can be the source of everything we are, also. ~jpc

*We give thanks for all wise ones who have brought us
to see that relationship to spirit is our primal source
and motivation. Namaste.*

October 8 Sunday Dialogue (XXII)

Journer: What is the essence of religion?

Nez: Love.

Journer: Is that all you have to say?

Nez: Except for what one* of my students says, “The mind can be a little bit flaky. Listen to your heart.”

* Rabbi Joseph Gelberman, via Gerri Davis

October 9 This Gift Has Strings Attached

Jewish wisdom holds that our children don't belong to us. They are both a loan and a gift from God, and the gift has strings attached. Our job is to raise our children to leave us. The children's job is to find their own path in life. ~Wendy Mogel, author of *The Blessing of a Skinned Knee: Using Jewish Teachings to Raise Self-Reliant Children* (article nytimes.com, 10/1/06)

The Jewish teachings and the animal kingdom know how to raise and let go of the “children.” ~jpc

The paradoxes of love are awesome. Namaste.

October 10 Authentic Spirituality

An authentic eco-spirituality must be placed squarely in the framework of both sustainability of the planet and social justice for all the human family. Both Earth and people must be present within our spiritual purview. In fact, we simply can't be spiritually alive and forgetful of the deep cleavages dividing the family of creation. ~Al Fritsch, "Towards an Authentic Eco-Spirituality" (wikipedia.org under "Thomas Berry")

Let us create demonstrations in society that care for family, persons, creatures, local community, and the planet at the same time. Namaste.

October 11 What Is Christianity?

[A]fter stripping away [that which hides] the essence of Christianity, he [Adolf Harnack in *What Is Christianity?*] . . . concluded, "The Christian religion is something simple and sublime; it means one thing and one thing only, eternal life in the midst of time. . . ." ~Lloyd Geering, *Christianity Without God*, p. 22, via David Reese, who gave me the book two years ago at Gatlinburg, Tennessee

This is why this-life resurrection is the center of Christianity: eternal life forever, always now. ~jpc

The concept of "eternal death" will hardly catalyze a religion. Namaste.

Note: We celebrate the completed life – in this form – of David Reese. For all the saints. . . .

October 12 **What Kind of People Are These?**

No, it was not the murders, not the violence, that shocked us; it was the forgiveness that followed it for which we were not prepared. It was the lack of recrimination, the dearth of vindictiveness that left us amazed. Baffled. Confounded. It was the Christianity we all profess but which they [the Amish] practiced that left us stunned. ~Joan Chittister, "What Kind of People Are These?" <http://tinyurl.com/3cpc7v> via Michael Dowd

We would learn to forgive. Namaste.

October 13 **Home**

One may be a sensitive and seasoned traveler, at ease in many places, but one must have a home. Still, . . . there is no Absolute Home. . . . ~Herbert Fingarette, *The Self in Transformation*

Which comes first, the experience of "no place is home" or "every place is home"? ~jpc

*God bless our planet Earth / Our home sweet home.
Namaste.*

October 14 **Small Is Beautiful**

"Lasting peace can not be achieved unless large population groups find ways in which to break out of poverty. . . . [Muhammad] Yunus and Grameen Bank have shown that

even the poorest of the poor can work to bring about their own development,” the Nobel [Peace Prize] Committee said. . . . [Since 1983] the bank claims to have 6.6 million borrowers, 97 percent of whom are women, and provides services in more than 70,000 villages in Bangladesh. ~*The Associated Press*, 10/13/06

One small step for woman, one giant step for humankind.
~jpc

*The poor we do not have to have with us always.
Namaste.*

Note: Read about what started this movement <http://tinyurl.com/2eo882>.

October 15 Sunday Dialogue (XXIII)

Journer: What is the essence of prayer?

Nez: Change.

Journer: What do you mean?

Nez: The world changes as a result of prayer, beginning with you. As a student* said, “To pray is to change.”

* **Richard Foster**, *Celebration of Discipline*

it renewed, refreshed, and revived Him when His human strength was exhausted. ~**Dan Hayes**, Atlanta Community Ministries

Sounds worth doing. If it was good enough for Jesus, it's good enough for me. ~jpc

We too would stay in touch with the spirit. Namaste.

October 19 Good Question

Interview with Erik Weihenmayer, the first blind climber to scale Mt. Everest <http://tinyurl.com/2kkkbh>:

Interviewer: So anything is possible?

Weihenmayer: No – there are limits. I mean, I can't drive a car. But there are good questions and bad questions in life. . . . What if I were smarter? . . . What if I could see? Those are dead-end questions. A good question is, How do I do as much as I can with what I have?

We heard Erik the other night at Guilford College and our hearts soared like eagles. ~jpc

Asking good questions. Namaste.

October 20 A Way of Life

The worship of God is not a rule of safety – it is an adventure of the spirit. ~**Alfred North Whitehead**, *Science and the Modern World*, p. 276

October 16 Prayer Is an Act of Creation

Prayer is literally creating out of nothing. . . . [T]o bring to be what never was is prayer, nothing else. . . . Prayer is creativity. To turn this around, creativity is prayer. ~Joseph Mathews, "Prayer," *Bending History*, p. 134

On this day in 1977, Joseph Wesley Mathews died. He changed history by changing the history of most he bumped into. He was a man of prayer. ~jpc

We remember those who prayed and something happened. Namaste.

October 17 Prayer as Luring

I believe that our heart's deepest desires are our prayers. . . . There is a place for trying to bring ourselves into harmony with what the divine spirit of the universe wants, and trying to unite our energy with the divine energies – so we can do our part to lure things in this direction. ~David Ray Griffin: Alan AtKisson interview, "Redefining the Divine," *In Context* quarterly, late Winter 1990

What does "the divine spirit" want from us? Namaste.

October 18 Prayer, Jesus Style

Prayer for Jesus Christ formed the brackets in which He accomplished His earthly work. It fortified Him with wisdom and power before action occurred, and

So worship is a way of life more than an hour we sit. ~jpc

We pray for the wings of worship. Namaste.

October 21 The Meeting

[Quoting Buber:] “The *Thou* meets me through grace – it is not found by seeking. . . . The *Thou* meets me. But I step into direct relation to it. Hence the relationship means being chosen and choosing. . . .” Meeting with such a Thou, the I is changed . . . [the] I which must acknowledge what it is and so accept itself. Such meetings . . . are [revelatory] events. . . . ~H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Meaning of Revelation*, p. 107

We do not presume upon the *thou*, though it is always present; and when we fumblingly step into direct relation with it, we fulfill our reason for being. ~jpc

Sometimes at “the meeting,” acceptance happens and we are changed, in a small way or big. Namaste.

October 22 Sunday Dialogue (XXIV)

Journer: Where do we go when we die?

Nez: Where do you want to go?

Journer: To be with those I love and what I love.

Nez: Eternal life is past, present, and future, including the

14-billion-year-old universe with billions to come, possibly.
So there you go.

October 23 Collective Action

No one can deny that a network (a world network) of economic and psychic [pertaining to soul] affiliations is being woven at ever increasing speed which envelops and constantly penetrates more deeply within each of us. With every day that passes it becomes a little more impossible for us to act or think otherwise than collectively. ~Teilhard de Chardin, *The Future of Man* [sic], p. 177

Teilhard had amazing vision. He saw the past and the future in depth that transformed the present. ~jpc

How do we learn to see like that? Namaste.

October 24 Maasai Creed

... We believe that God made good his promise by sending his son, Jesus Christ, a man in the flesh, a Jew by tribe, born poor in a little village, who left his home and was always on safari doing good, curing people by the power of God, teaching about God and man, showing that the meaning of religion is love. He was rejected by his people, tortured and nailed hands and feet to a cross, and died. He lay buried in the grave, but the hyenas did not touch him, and on the third day, he rose from the grave. ~from Jaroslav Pelikan, *Whose Bible Is It?* (2005), p. 215

*May poetic expression enliven fundamental thoughts.
Namaste.*

October 25 What a Requiem Scenario Offers

It took [a] shock for [that person's] life to be transformed. Maybe that's what needs to happen for all of us, for everyone who lives on Earth. That could be what a requiem scenario offers us. ~Peter Senge, *Presence*, part I, "The Requiem Scenario," p. 26

What might a requiem scenario look like and how might it present itself so we humans on planet Earth respond creatively? ~jpc

To be sensitive and responsive. Namaste.

October 26 Revolution of Consciousness

Without a global revolution in the sphere of human consciousness, nothing will change for the better . . . and the catastrophe toward which this world is headed . . . will be unavoidable. ~Vaclav Havel, President of Czechoslovakia/Czech Republic (1989-2003), via David Zollars

Strange language for a national leader. I believe this revolution in human consciousness is going strong, and hopefully strong enough. We experience ourselves as being turned inside out, the way transformed consciousness is supposed to happen, maybe. ~jpc

*We pray for deep global and planetary sustenance.
Namaste.*

October 27 Doesn't Make Any Sense

Conversation after seeing the documentary movie "In The Arms of Strangers," about 10,000 Jewish children transported out of Germany to the UK, 1939:

Grandson Nolan [8] asked, "Didn't those people who listened to Hitler realize they were his slaves? Why didn't the Jews fight back?" His sister Kaitlyn [10] asked, "Can something like this happen today?" Their father, Jeremiah, told her it is happening today, that thousands are being killed because of their religion. She said, "That's very sad. It doesn't make any sense!" ~jpc

May we be awakened and committed to what makes sense. Namaste.

October 28 All Passions Yoked

Far from being desireless – look at Gandhi, Catherine of Sienna, St. Theresa, St. Francis – the man or woman who realizes God has yoked all passions to the over-riding desire to give and love and serve. In that unification we can see not the extinction of personality but its full blossoming. ~Eknath Easwaren, Introduction to *The Bhagavad Gita*, via Mariam and Stan Gibson

This is like Wilber's *One Taste* quote: "The great yogis,

saints and sages . . . [are] great big egos, plugged into the dynamic Ground and Goal of the Kosmos itself” (9/3/05 reflection, vol. II, *Daily Spirit Journal*). ~jpc

We give thanks for whatever “personality” we are as we “give and love and serve.” Namaste.

October 29 Sunday Dialogue (XXV)

Journer: What do I have to do to change?

Nez: As a student* says, “Sometimes you just have to look reality in the eye and deny it.”

Journer: I don’t understand.

Nez: One day a little one denies he or she can’t walk and starts walking.

* Garrison Keillor

October 30 So Much Heresy

The historic battles within monotheism are legendary: Hebrews vs. Christians, Sunnis vs. Shiites, Catholics vs. Protestants, Lutherans vs. Calvinists, Church of England vs. dissenters, Puritans vs. Baptists, and so many others. Currently some Islamic extremists have a hard time deciding who they despise more: Is it the evil Christian and Jewish heretics, or is it the evil Muslims heretics? So much heresy, so little time. ~James Foley, “Enough With

the ‘One God’ Stuff,” *alternet.org*, 9/27/06, via Harry Wainwright

“Heresy” is a word that means picking and choosing from your holy writ what makes sense to you (or your tribe) for whatever good or bad reasons. I don’t count Deuteronomy a book to absolutely live by. Does that make me a heretic? Maybe we’re all heretics. ~jpc

“Thus saith the Lord!” is quite a stretch. Namaste.

October 31 Patchwork Story

We have grown accustomed to speaking of the historical Jesus as though we have a relatively full picture of an actual Galilean Jew. Let me correct that . . . by suggesting . . . we do not have the materials to construct a biography of the person [Jesus]. ~**Robert Funk**, “The Jesus Seminar as Community of Faith,” Fall 2004 Jesus Seminar paper, via David Zollars

Would a full biography have been better? ~jpc

What we have is quite enough. Namaste.

November

November 1 In a Nutshell

*Meaning is all we want.
Choices are all we make.
Relationships are all we have.*

~Sandy Schuman, ed. *IAF Journal*, via Beret Griffith

In the life journey context, let's start with the last: through our *relationships* with the human and nonhuman – and the eternal through them both – we can *choose* to bow to them as *thou*, which adds *meaning* to life. ~jpc

Life is absolutely meaningful (including meaninglessness). Namaste.

November 2 Seeing

Seeing. One could say that the whole of life lies in seeing – if not ultimately, at least essentially. To be more is to be more united. . . . But unity grows only if it is supported by an increase of consciousness, of vision. . . . See or perish. This is the situation imposed on every element of the universe by the mysterious gift of existence. And thus . . . this is the human condition. ~Teilhard de Chardin, *The Human Phenomenon*, p. 3

Seeing and not seeing makes up our condition. When we really see, reality unfolds before our eyes and we are fulfilled, even with fear and trembling. ~jpc

May we start by closing our eyes – for however long it takes – and opening them to see much more than we saw before, and be more united. Namaste.

November 3 Remembered For?

If you are fortunate, someone with moral authority will ask you that question [What do you want to be remembered for?] early enough in your life so that you will continue to ask it. ~Peter Drucker, *The Daily Drucker*, 2004, via LLC

This is like “What do you want on your tombstone?” These types of questions keep us visioning what we’re about with the one great life each of us has to give. ~jpc

We give thanks for spiritual questions. Namaste.

Note: Go to <http://www.jjchandler.com/tombstone/> to create your own epitaph in imaginal form.

November 4 Faith: An Active, Palpable Agent

I was drawn to the power of the African American religious tradition to spur social change. . . . Out of necessity, the black church rarely had the luxury of separating individual salvation from collective salvation. It had to serve as the

center of the community's political, economic, and social as well as spiritual life; it understood in an intimate way the biblical call to feed the hungry and clothe the naked and challenge powers and principalities. In the history of these struggles, I was able to see faith as more than just a comfort to the weary or a hedge against death; rather, it was an active, palpable agent in the world. ~Barack Obama, *The Audacity of Hope*, *time.com*, 10/15/06, via Randy Williams

“Works without faith” and “faith without works” are dead, *a la* St. Paul and James. ~jpc

Grace is our source of palpability. Namaste.

November 5 Sunday Dialogue (XXVI)

Journer: Have you ever been absolutely surprised?

Nez: Do you mean what one of my students* meant, “. . . He felt like a man who, chasing rainbows, has had one of them suddenly turn and bite him in the leg”?

Journer: I guess. Have you?

Nez: Yes. Have you?

* P. G. Wodehouse, *writersalmanac.publicradio.org*, 10/15/06

November 6 “Boxed In, But Not Out”

*. . . There is no box
made by God nor us
but that the top can be blown off
and the sides flattened out
to make a dance floor
on which to celebrate life.*

~Ken Caraway (our former minister), *Alive Now*
(Methodist church publication), March/April issue, 1974

The last time I celebrated life was. . . ~jpc

We give thanks for freedom in our box. Namaste.

November 7 Real Inspiration

“When we play, there is something more going on than your typical game,” linebacker **Scott Fujita** said. “It’s unspoken. It’s given. But I feel it. We all feel it. It’s become part of our subconscious. It’s with us all the time.” The [New Orleans football team] Saints are constantly referring to Hurricane Katrina without specifically mentioning it. ~Lee Jenkins, “Emotional Rescue: Coach [Payton] Inspires Saints and a City,” *nytimes.com*, 10/29/06

Real inspiration: mostly reality and part of our subconscious, but also big parts leadership and team solidarity with the ones who suffer and pay the bills. May the soon-to-be elected U.S. leaders be thus inspired. ~jpc

We pray for government of, by, and for the people and the earth. Namaste.

November 8 Grief-stricken

There is no set form for grief, and no “right” way to express it. . . . I presume that many . . . would point out that by keeping busy we avoid “healthy” grieving. To hell with that; the void left by our loss is just too deep. For now, focusing on what we do for one another is the only consolation we can find. ~Amitai Etzioni, “Good Grief,” *nytimes.com*, 10/7/06

What would we say to or do for this father who lost his wife and his 38-year-old son – a husband of an expectant wife and father of a 2-year-old? (Or what about a man who lost his wife and small child in a Baghdad bombing yesterday?) What have we learned the hard way about grieving that might help? ~jpc

O to be agents of authentic consolation. Namaste.

November 9 She Tells Us

As humans we are born of the Earth, nourished by the Earth, healed by the Earth. [She] tells us: I will feed you, I will clothe you, I will heal you. Only do not so devour me or use me that you destroy my capacity to mediate the divine and the human. For I offer you a communion with the divine, I offer you gifts that you can exchange with

each other, I offer you flowers whereby you may express your reverence for the divine and your love for each other.
~Thomas Berry, from his new book, *Evening Thoughts*, p. 139

Happy Birthday, Thomas.

*The children are called to care for their Mother.
Namaste.*

November 10 “The Daughter”

And there came a man named Jairus, who was a ruler of the synagogue; and falling at Jesus' feet he besought him to come to his house, for he had an only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she was dying. (Luke 8: 41-42)

*I don't understand.
We served, we prayed, we believed,
yet our daughter died.*

*What is the meaning?
What does Jesus save us from?
Not physical death.*

*To follow God's plan
we know our lives end in death,
whenever it comes.*

*Jesus saves us from
refusing to live our lives,*

to die before death.

*Our daughter lived life
with exhilaration and joy,
regretting nothing.*

*She also taught us
how to live through her dying.
Jesus did save her.*

*We were left behind,
crazed by our separation,
but we, too, were healed.*

~**Jenelle Dove** (the mother of Shelley, of
whom she writes)

Namaste.

Note: This is the day of Pat Stewart's memorial service. For all
the saints. . . .

November 11 Proof of God's Omnipotence

[T]hose . . . ranging from agnostics to "spiritual" types for
whom religion is not so much a metaphysical proposition
as it is a way of life . . . might take consolation in the wise
words of . . . **Peter De Vries** . . . : "It is the final proof of
God's omnipotence that he need not exist in order to save
us." ~Jim Holt, "Beyond Belief," *nytimes.com*, 10/22/06

The “mystery of God” drives us moderns crazy, but aren’t we glad mystery’s at the heart of faith? ~jpc

We give thanks for mystery. Namaste.

November 12 Sunday Dialogue (XXVII)

Journer: I don’t know how to pray.

Nez: Sure you do.

Journer: What do you mean?

Nez: As one of my students* said, “Prayer . . . is a longing of the soul.” What are you really longing for these days, Journer?

* Gandhi

November 13 Take Democracy Back

*when squirrels have holed the nuts
and all the leaves fall down
we’re glad elections are up:
we’ll see who’s who by what they do
and not by what they say and don’t
hoorah the hoopla’s over
we’ll watch – but dare not wait –
how the elected do:*

*we the people will step forward
and take democracy back*

~jpc, 11/8/06

These are the times / We are the people. Namaste.

November 14 Only Righteous Welcome

Minister at N.C. Baptist Convention on homosexuality issue: "But if we're going to start asking everybody about everything going on in their lives . . . where are we going to stop? What about divorce? Are we going to narrow it down so only the 'righteous' can come?" ~Nancy H. McLaughlin, "Baptists Could Make History with 'Sin' Policy," *news-record.com*, 11/12/06

A list of "sins"? Absurd, for "all have sinned" (Romans 3:23). What would Jesus do and say after turning over tables at the Convention in rage? ~jpc

Let us pray/work for the transformation of religious institutions. Namaste.

November 15 What Zen Is, Is

What Zen is, is . . .

Infinite gratefulness for all that is past

Infinite care for all that is present

Infinite responsibility for all that is future

~**Huston Smith**, *The Wisdom of Faith with Huston Smith* (Bill Moyers, PBS, 1996), via Carl Larsen

Hopefully this is at the heart of any curriculum being taught today, religious or secular. ~jpc

Let us listen to the sages. Namaste.

November 16 People of Faith

Religious leaders led the movement to abolish slavery, to enfranchise women, and to achieve civil rights for all Americans. This is the tradition of faith in public life. We of the Middle Church [Synagogue, Mosque, etc.] are people of faith whose traditions lead us . . . [in] mission or [we] risk the sacrifice of the poor, of peace, and of all God's creation. ~**Bob Edgar**, interview, author of *Middle Church* (9/2006) <http://tinyurl.com/37qrz9>

Who is leading which movements today? ~jpc

We would be of the middle way. Namaste.

November 17 Spirit Man

[T]he issue of spirit, and its manifestations within human beings, is what Jesus was all about. . . . Martin Luther . . . wrote that "God is a Spirit" and encouraged confirmands . . . to believe that Jesus was Spirit incarnate. ~**David J. Pope**, *Interrupting Behavioral Evolution* (October 2006), pp. 41, 46

I like this more than arguing about whether Jesus was “very God” or the “only son of God,” etc. He was honest-to-god *spirit* man, one who was so in touch with *spirit* that things changed when he was present. ~jpc

Spirit is always already present and spirit's journers prove it. Namaste.

November 18 Are We Addicts?

The greatest obstacle is simply this: the belief that we cannot change because we are dependent on what is wrong. That is the addict's excuse. ~Walter Wink, *Engaging the Powers*

How does this apply to me, my family and tribe? What “wrongs” are we addicted to? ~jpc

Freedom is ours. Namaste.

November 19 Sunday Dialogue (XXVIII)

Journer: I really struggle with the creeds and unbelievable stories of my faith.

Nez: And . . .

Journer: Sometimes I wonder why bother.

Nez: One* of my students had a good reason. He said,

“Myths and creeds are heroic struggles to comprehend the truth in the world.”

* Ansel Adams

November 20 Disillusionment Rebirths

When all things that come and go are simply seen to come and go, the everlasting appears. Disillusionment with the temporal is the grand and empty space within which Spirit birth takes place. ~Gene Marshall, 2006 sermon, “Disillusionment as the Pathway to Glory”

Spirit is strange: it appears often at the death of a false god in which we had faith. ~jpc

When the storms of life are transforming my little-faith, Namaste.

November 21 A Take on Evil

Evil does not exist, or at least it does not exist unto itself. [As darkness and cold are the absence of light and heat] evil is simply the absence of God. . . . God did not create evil. Evil is the result of what happens when man [*sic*] does not have God’s love present in his heart. ~attributed to Albert Einstein, via Ann Shafer

Operating outside the bounds of *spirit’s* love, what is evil today? ~jpc

To dedicate ourselves to transforming evil. Namaste.

November 22 The Poured-out Presence

[**Thomas Altizer's**] God began giving himself to the world at its creation and ultimately died through Jesus Christ, whose earthly demise in turn poured the spirit of God into the world. . . . [T]hrough God's death, the sacred becomes profane, and vice versa. . . . [T]he very absence of God signifies God's presence. . . . ~Paige P. Parvin, "The Revolutionary," *Emory Magazine*, Autumn 2006

I was a grad student at Emory during Altizer's announcements of the "death of God." The debates caused me to rethink my theology. The poured-out presence of God's *spirit* in the world is what it's all about. ~jpc

I am thankful for debates about the profound meaning in this world, this life. Namaste.

November 23rd Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving . . . transfers something that belongs to the secular world into the sphere of the holy. . . . Every created thing can be a bearer of holiness, an object of thanks, of consecration. There are no limits to thanksgiving. ~Paul Tillich, "In Everything Give Thanks," *The Eternal Now*, pp. 179-80

As we reflect today on "thanksgiving," let us look and see what is at hand and give hearty thanks, and remember it

will take the rest of our lives to give thanks for “every created thing.” ~jpc

“Come, ye thankful people, come.” Namaste.

November 24 Down to the Very Fingertips

What oppresses us in the hour of death is not the life that has been lived and loved, but rather the life that has not been lived and that has neglected its possibilities. Only the passion of love makes a person alive right down to the very fingertips. ~Jürgen Moltmann, *Passion for Life*, p. 26, via LLC

This solves our problems: we can't name a situation where there's not someone or something to love. ~jpc

The passion of love is always possible. Namaste.

November 25 Power in the Words We Speak

The old ideas were taught to us a long time ago, and repeated over and over. But those old ideas don't align with my current reality, so I try to stay alert. I strive to avoid jargon, pat phrases and clichés. (Still, they fall off my tongue so easily.) To the best of my ability, I use my words consciously, especially when I am speaking from a position of authority (i.e., teaching or preaching). I take full responsibility for saying what I mean, one word, one thought, one prayer at a time, and for meaning what I say. There is power in the words we speak. ~Marilyn

Muehlbach, “Saying What We Mean (And Meaning What We Say),” Fall 2006 Jesus Seminar paper, via David Zollars

To say what we mean and mean what we say. Namaste.

November 26 Sunday Dialogue (XXIX)

Journer: Why does *spirit* come and go?

Nez: It doesn't. You do. *Spirit's* always present.

Journer: It sure doesn't feel like it.

Nez: As one* of my students loved to say, “Let this presence settle into your bones.”

* St. Teresa of Avila

November 27 Not a Time for Despair

Our problems are becoming more visible every day, and with each passing day more people are waking up to the need to do something about them. . . . Ours is not a time for despair; it is a time for action. Not short-term remedial action, but action aimed at bringing about fundamental transformation. ~Ervin Laszlo, *The Chaos Point*, via Janice Ulangca

I am struck with the comprehensive strategy and honoring style of Gen. Abizaid as he field-commands U.S. forces

in the Middle-East, Asia, and Africa. He says the despair rubs off when one is in Washington talking to leaders and listening to the U.S. news 24/7 – not so being with the forces in the field. ~jpc

Transformative action is called for whether or not it transforms our despair. Namaste.

November 28 Depth Economic Contradiction

It is by the replacement of vocation with economic determinism that the exterior workings of a total economy destroy the character and culture . . . from the inside. . . . It is by way of the principle and practice of vocation that sanctity and reverence enter into the human economy. It was thus possible for traditional cultures to conceive that “to work is to pray.” ~Wendell Berry, “The Idea of a Local Economy,” *Orion Magazine*, Winter 2001 (oriononline.org, Nov-Dec 2007)

To fathom and live vocation as the deep key to prosperity. Namaste.

November 29 Result of Local Awakening

[T]here are few examples in history in which the freedom men and women crave is delivered through outside intervention. In almost every successful social movement of the last century, from Gandhi’s campaign against British rule to the Solidarity movement in Poland to the

antiapartheid movement in South Africa, democracy was the result of local awakening. ~**Barack Obama**, “The World Beyond Our Borders,” *The Audacity of Hope*, p. 316, via Randy Williams

True. Yet today there is more profound global and planetary consciousness. Thus, what we imagine and do in “River City” catalyzes local awakening in Faluga. ~jpc

We are in a new world now. Namaste.

November 30 Reality Therapy

[Cartoon with medical doctor “in the face” of an overweight patient of about 60:] “What fits your busy schedule better, exercising one hour a day or being dead 24 hours a day?” ~**Randy Glasbergen**, 1998, *glasbergen.com*

Do you think the patient got the point? Saying *yes* to reality is only right, even if you want to clobber the messenger. ~jpc

Truth can set us free. Namaste.

December

December 1 Uncontrollable Spirit

The early history of the Church was dominated by traveling “pneumatics,” those in whom “spirit was alive.” Their spirituality was based largely on direct experience, a type of Christ consciousness. . . . The Church slowly switched from pneumatics to the *ekklesia*, . . . and the governor of the *ekklesia* was the local bishop, who possessed “right dogmas,” and not the pneumatic or prophet, who might possess spirit but couldn’t be “controlled.” ~Ken Wilber, *One Taste*, p. 334

Rather have uncontrolled “*pneumatics*” or governing dogmatists? ~jpc

Spirit is moving inside, outside – through whatever responsive conduit. Namaste.

December 2 “The Announcement”

Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel (which means “God with us”). ~Matthew 1:23

*What is the meaning
Of this announcement proclaimed
To a darkened world?*

*It comes as a gift
"God with us" in a babe's form
This wonder of hope.*

*Some come as Joseph
Not believing the message
Questioning the gift.*

*Some come as Mary
Saying "yes" to all of life
Accepting her role.*

*Each one must decide
Every day anew – the gift
The wonder in us. ~Jenelle Dove*

*Gifts, wonder, attention, and decision are ours.
Namaste.*

December 3 Sunday Dialogue (XXX)

Journer: How do I learn to be a spirit person?

Nez: Commune deeply with a few colleagues on the way.

Journer: Name some.

Nez: One* of my students communed with two – “I got my message from Jesus and my method from Gandhi” – and it seemed to take. _____ * M. L. King, Jr.

December 4 Which Hand?

[**Gotthold Lessing**] prayed a simple prayer: “If God were to hold all Truth concealed in his right hand, and in his left hand only the steady and diligent drive for Truth, . . . and to offer me the choice, I would with all humility take the left hand, and say, ‘Father, I will take this – the pure Truth is for You alone.’” ~Andrew Sullivan, “When Not Seeing Is Believing,” *time.com*, 10/2/06 (e-mail, Cynthia Vance)

The steady and diligent drive for truth – and its dawning revelation – is ours, and it’s quite enough, even more than we will ever live to understand. ~jpc

*Let ancient, present, and future truth guide us.
Namaste.*

December 5 Ground and Impulse of Creation

In evolutionary enlightenment, that One refers not only to the empty ground from which the material universe sprang forth, but also to that creative impulse that initiated the developmental process and is driving it in this very moment. ~Andrew Cohen, *Quote of the Week*, 11/21/06

Not only did creation spring forth, it springs forth as powerfully today: ground of being and creative impulse are the drivers. ~jpc

We are being recreated as we are being driven to evolve. Namaste.

December 6 Real GNP

The gross national product [GNP] does not allow for the health of our children, the quality of their education, or the joy of their play. It does not include the beauty of our poetry or the strength of our marriages, the intelligence of our public debate or the integrity of our public officials. It measures neither our wit nor our courage, neither our wisdom nor our learning, neither our compassion nor our devotion to our country. It measures everything, in short, except that which makes life worthwhile. And it tells us everything about America except why we are proud that we are Americans. ~**Robert F. Kennedy**, speech given at the University of Kansas, 3/18/67, via LLC

We pray for leadership today that speaks from the deeps about who we are and are called to be. ~jpc

May economic tyranny be transformed and harnessed for creation's good. Namaste.

December 7 SPICES of Life

Quakers use the acronym "SPICES" as a way to remember all of the testimonies (simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equality, and stewardship). ~Jon Alden, *Friendly News*, Summer 2006, via LLC

We stand present to the powerful testimony of the authentic Quaker tradition of walking the walk. What is our acronym of testimony? ~jpc

Spices of life are ours this day. Namaste.

December 8 Interpretation of the Universe

The time has come for us to realize that to be satisfactory, any interpretation of the universe . . . must cover the inside as well as the outside of things – spirit as well as matter.
~Teilhard de Chardin, *The Human Phenomenon*, p. 6

And which is more important, the inside or the outside?
~jpc

*The outside is transparent to the inside, so all a piece.
Namaste.*

December 9 Nothing Is Infallible

A growing percent of Christians have been self-conscious about deliteralizing (Tillich's term) the scriptures for now onto 200 years. Muslims seem to have hardly begun, led as they are by their scripture's literalists. Likewise, too many Protestants are still thumping the infallibility of their scripture. I'm afraid Pope Benedict is still ruling out of the image of the infallibility of church and pope. Nothing is infallible. Only "God." Religious leaders are important, but neither they nor kings, queens, or leaders of state are infallible. ~jpc

*In our fallibility let us forever trust in the infallibility of that mysterious power called the **spirit of God** or **Allah** or . . . **Namaste.***

December 10 Sunday Dialogue (XXXI)

Journer: Why holidays?

Nez: Many because of their sacred meanings, therefore, “holy-days”?

Journer: So what is the meaning of this season?

Nez: My student* caught it with these words: “a sacred gift woven around the heart of wonder.”

* John O’Donohue

December 11 “I’m Not Retired”

According to the 2005 Retirement Confidence Survey (RCS), we can be confident that many people will have gruesome retirements. In fact, according to a separate survey, 31% of Americans would rather scrub a bathroom than plan for retirement. ~Selena Maranjian, *www.fool.com*, 10/14/06

There’s a real sense that we don’t plan for retirement because it’s unnatural, meaning not meant to be in this existence. Sure, we go through a marked change of engagement, but living’s not retiring any more than sleep is dying. ~jpc

“What did you do before you retired?” Answer, “I’m

not retired.” Namaste.

December 12 Survival Stories

Stories are for those late hours in the night when you can't remember how you got from where you were to where you are. Stories are for eternity, when memory is erased, when there is nothing to remember but the story. ~Tim O'Brien, *writersalmanac.publicradio.org*, 10/1/06

In this season of the story for some religions, we celebrate the truth that helps hold us together individually and collectively on the journey. ~jpc

We can't live without our stories. Namaste.

December 13 Deep Commitment

[C]ommitment is what keeps the ego in check and keeps you in the right place, no matter what you may be feeling. . . . [I]t is absolutely essential . . . [for] the creation of a stable collective. ~Andrew Cohen, *Quote of the Week*, 10/17/06

The opposite of “stable collective” is anarchy, bedlam. In this context, commitment is absolutely essential for the stability of the earth community. ~jpc

We would be covenanted to the future bursts of pluriform creativity. Namaste.

December 14 Not/Is Who I Am

You . . . no longer derive your identity, your sense of who you are, from the incessant stream of thinking that in the old consciousness you take to be yourself. What a liberation to realize that the “voice in my head” is not who I am. Who am I then? . . . The awareness that is prior to thought. ~Eckhart Tolle, *A New Earth: Awakening to Your Life's Purpose*, p. 21

Tolle points to what he means by “thought” as “mythology, ideology, belief system, emotion, or sense perception.” None of these is “who I am,” but rather they grow out of the happening of who I am. Or Tillich would have said it this way: the grace happening defines me; it is the experience out of which comes the primal feel or sense after who I am. ~jpc

We commune with that happening in this season, and always now. Namaste.

December 15 Christmas Paradox

The reason [why Luther is so interested in Christmas] is that Christ is smallest in the cradle. . . . This was Christmas for [Luther], this mystical paradox of the smallest and most helpless of all beings having in himself the center of Divinity. ~Paul Tillich, “Luther’s Christology. . .” (Lecture 34)

Divinity is manifest in Jesus’ birth – not just his, but also ours, as he is our “elder brother” (Book of Hebrews). We too are on the divine journey. ~jpc

Divinity reigns in bowing down. Namaste.

December 16 Sheer Mystery

Incarnation happens in the most unexpected places. . . . Maybe being thrown up against the unfathomable is what Christmas celebrates. In those moments of confrontation with sheer Mystery, there is sometimes a faint echo of “Gloria in excelsis deo,” as if the angels are telling you something, and you have the chance again to appreciate life as it is. ~John Epps, quote in *The Transparent Event*, by jpc, p. 143

In the incident above, a newspaper boy in Phnom Penh had encountered John and stopped his world. Sheer mystery comes as it will, when it will, and either then or later we celebrate its coming. ~jpc

Gloria in excelsis deo. Namaste.

December 17 Sunday Dialogue (XXXII)

Journer: Why has Christmas become such a big holiday?

Nez: For some deep reasons: we love to give and we long for new birth.

Journer: What do you mean “we long for new birth”?

Nez: We long for another breath, another chance, but most of all for more life. *Spirit* is in the transformation

business because we can never get enough of that abundant life.

December 18 **Universal Experience**

Our job is not to try to force 1st Century faith forms into 21st Century molds but to put the timeless Christ experience into a vocabulary that is in touch with where we live in the 21st century. . . . I believe God is real and that Jesus is my doorway into that reality. ~“Question and Answer with J. S. Spong,” 1/6/05, via Dick Kroeger

Well said. Why do we need to force 1st century faith forms into anything if the *christ experience* is universal in time and space? ~jpc

The manger scene – image and story of universal reality – is true here and now. Namaste.

December 19 **“Its Holy Cause”**

Along about 2 o'clock this morning

*I feel like a poem's ready to come forth
from the bottom of my soul on its
way to the top of the universe –*

*not because creation deserves a poem
but because its source just wants to flow,
come again, always, ready or not.*

*This is what the spirit's ever doing,
erupting out of nothing into
something for the sake of creation.*

*I am simply a useful vessel,
living between the "is" and the "not,"
being used – as everything else –*

as usual, for its holy cause.

~jpc (on my birthday)

Holy day. Namaste.

December 20 Peace Is With Us

We don't need to wish our friends "Peace be with you."
Peace is already with them. We only need to help them
cultivate the habit of touching peace in each moment.
~**Thich Nhat Hanh**, *Essential Writings*, ed. Robert
Ellsberg, p. 23

"Thây," as he's affectionately known, understands that
peace is part of the essence of creation, that its reality can
be experienced in each and any moment. ~jpc

*O to live in this awareness, of peace on Earth.
Namaste.*

Note: Search "Joy to the World" (free from BuzzPlant) to listen
to Nicholas Jonas (via Betty Pesek).

December 21 Christmas Wish

I saw more clearly than ever that the first great and primary business, to which I ought to attend every day, was to have my soul happy in the Lord. ~George Mueller of Bristol

Is this not a classic Christmas wish, to have my soul happy in the lord of all universes? Not only is this our “first great and primary business,” it is also our *bounden* business in being. ~jpc

*So, why not be happy, soul . . . this very moment!
Namaste.*

Note: Sing “Don’t Worry, Be Happy” (by Bobby McFerrin) as a carol today. Go to <http://tinyurl.com/yofh45> to listen.

December 22 “All Life Is Open”

We celebrate the birth of the *word* of the open future for all creation, that “all is good and accepted.” Sing the chorus of “All Life Is Open” (tune: “Guantanamo,” *Song Book: Ecumenical Institute*, p. 12):

*All life is open,
Embrace the future with vision.
Die your death for the living,
The Mystery has received all.*

This is our absolution and commission. Namaste.

December 23 List Your Christmas Reflections

- *early Christmas memory
- *later Christmas memory
- *what looking forward to this Christmas
- *what is quickening the Christmas spirit
- *what deeper meaning is stirring

Revitalizing reflections to all. Namaste.

December 24 Sunday Dialogue (XXXIII)

Journer: Tell me one more time the meaning of Christmas.

Nez: Just like the word says, we celebrate the Christ.

Journer: Sure, but tell me what “the christ” means.

Nez: Jesus’ journey was a *yes* to the hallowed power he called *father*. The *spirit of christ*, when it happens to you, gives birth to the same *yes* – the experience of “Merry Christmas.”

December 25 The Eternal Event

Jesus the man was born about 4 C.E. to herald. . . .
Christ the event, born “in the beginning” . . . and living eternally in every person’s experience as the event of grace and truth. . . . This life-changing event, and the deepest happening in our lives, has always been at the heart of

being. ~jpc, adapted from *Motivation for the Great Work: Forty Meaty Meditations for the Secular-Religious*, p. 112

*Angels from the realms of glory,
Wing your flight o'er all the earth;
Ye who sang creation's story
Now proclaim Messiah's birth. . . .*

Celebrate the central event of creation today, the event that transforms. Namaste.

December 26 To Make You See

[The task of the writer is] to make you hear, to make you feel – it is, before all, to make you see. That – and no more, and it is everything. ~Joseph Conrad, *writersalmanac.publicradio.org*, 12/3/06

The task of spirituality, including the task of all art, is to help us see what is always there to see *and* to help us see that there is always more there than we'll ever see – life replete with mystery. ~jpc

O to see the wonder, for it is everything. Namaste.

December 27 Our True Home

Our true home is the present moment. To live in the present moment is a miracle. The miracle is not to walk on water.

The miracle is to walk on the green Earth in the present moment, to appreciate the peace and beauty that are available now. ~**Thich Nhat Hanh**, *Essential Writings*, ed. Robert Ellsberg, p. 19

Besides the present time, “the present moment” includes our present space, present relationships, present situation. Our true home is present eternity within all eternity? ~jpc

This moment is our present. Namaste.

December 28 Care for Creation

“We’re all part of God’s creation,” Father [**Charles**] **Morris** said. “If someone like me doesn’t speak about its care, who will? The changes we’ve made here [e.g., solar panels on roof of St. Elizabeth Roman Catholic Church, Wyandotte, Michigan], that’s a form of preaching.” ~Neela Banerjee, “Citing Heavenly Injunctions to Fight Earthly Warming,” *nytimes.com*, 10/15/06

We are here to care for creation, and there are many ways to preach that message. ~jpc

*Creation, and everything in it, is sacred (Ps. 24:1).
Namaste.*

December 29 Agenda for an Urban Age

In 1950, 29 percent of the world’s population lived in cities. By 1990, the share had risen to 43 percent. Now

. . . it is slated to pass 50 percent by next year. And, by 2030, it will surpass 60 percent of the world's population. . . . If cities are the organizing units of the new global order, then a broad range of policies and practices at the city, national and supra-national levels need to be overhauled, re-ordered, and integrated around new spatial realities and paradigms. ~**Bruce Katz, Andy Altman, and Julie Wagner**, Urban Age Conference, Berlin, Germany, 11/10/06, via JPC II

I was struck by the better possibility to deal with global warming because half of the people live in the urban: human centers awaiting earth-friendly transformation. ~jpc

Time to recreate the urban glory, bottom-up, global-down and sideways. There're quite enough of us to do it. Namaste.

December 30 21st Century Security Threats

Points from November 2006 address entitled "Security Threats in the 21st Century," by **Dr. Colin S. Gray**, Chair, International Politics and Strategic Studies, The University of Reading, UK (via Jerome Hunter):

1. *Return of great power conflict* (China, India, Russia, plus)
2. *Climate change* (biggest problem, he says)
3. *Uneven development globally*

4. *Overpopulation, migration, pandemics*
5. *Resources shortages* (food, water, energy)
6. *Nuclear proliferation and wars*
7. *Religiously motivated terrorism* (minor compared with above, he says)

He finishes with, “The good news is that that future has not yet happened, and that some of it may not happen at all.” The old American Indian question: How do we secure the world for the next seven generations? ~jpc

*Anything to pray for as we begin the new year?
Namaste.*

December 31 Sunday Dialogue (XXXIV)

Journer: Do you believe in prayer?

Nez: Absolutely.

Journer: But does it change anything?

Nez: Absolutely, especially if, as one* of my students said, “You’re obligated to what you prayed for.”

* Joseph W. Mathews, “Prayer,” *Bending History*, p. 136

January

January 1 Past Year-New Year Reflection

Before starting, review your written reflections of a year ago. Next, contemplate images of last year. Using the lists below, reflect in your journal or computer file (whatever you can review next year). ~jpc

- 5 Planetary events of the past year
- 15 Events I participated in (maybe by months)
- 5 People I remember (beyond family or friends)
- 5 Places I visited, near and far
- 5 Books/poems/articles I read
- 5 Movies/TV shows/plays/sport events I saw
- Key family event of the past year
- 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 I am, going into the new year?
- 3 things I'm focused on for the new year (beyond self)

My prayer for the earth community for the new year
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" is
_____.)

*I give thanks for the year past and the come to come.
Namaste.*

January 2 Co-Creation

*God's true essence is utterly unknowable
and to assert otherwise is blasphemy;
by participating in the uncreated energies of God,
we can begin to understand.*

~Gregory of Palamos (close paraphrase)

Our leaders in the faiths were clear about the ineffable
mystery at the center of creation and about "God's
uncreated" creation. ~jpc

Participating in future creation. Namaste.

January 3 Repentance

In ethics [the Church] is the first to repent . . . on behalf of
all. When it (1) *becomes apparent* that slavery [for
example] is transgression of the divine commandment, then

the Church repents of it, (2) *turns its back upon it*, (3) *abolishes it within itself*, . . . and (4) *leads in the social act of repentance*. ~**H. Richard Niebuhr**, “The Church as Social Pioneer,” (numbers and italics added)

This four-step model of repentance is crucial to earth community transformation. Sometimes it begins in the profoundly simple way of asking forgiveness of someone or something (earth’s ozone layer). ~jpc

*Repentance is key to meaningful spiritual life.
Namaste.*

January 4 Transforming Cynicism

We have the power to make change on a global scale, to solve the problems we are facing today. . . . We have the imagination and the ability to invent new ways of sustainable living in advanced, courageous, and open societies. ~**Bruce Mau**, “Imagining the Future: Why the Cynics Are Wrong,” *The Walrus* magazine, 12/13/06

Wayne Nelson e-mailed the article above, along with this intro (adapted): “Recently I watched the old movie, the ‘Gospel According to St. Matthew’ (1964), with Jesus tossing lines over his shoulder as he walked ahead of the disciples. The line that caught me this time was, ‘I come not to judge the world, but to save it.’ It reminded me that the focus on what’s wrong is not the place I really want to be looking.” ~jpc

May our cynicism be transformed into models for sustainable living for the whole earth community. Namaste.

January 5 “Imagining World”

And in my dream
the angel shrugged
& said, If we
fail this time, it
will be a failure of
imagination.

& then she placed
the world gently in
the palm of
my hand.

~**Brian Andreas**, via Beret Griffith www.davlinswoods.com/storypeople.htm (spp0105)

January 6 Back Out Walking On Water

*When you are blown away by an event
And gaze forlornly into emptiness
Sometimes you begin to see emerging
Images of possibility calling
You forth to new decision and action
On behalf of your own situation*

*Even the situations of others.
I guess you can call it awakening
Or impossibly being born again.
Whatever you call it you are thankful
For another chance of living your life
Not as victim but as a free person
As one who's never really without hope
Who's about to walk on the waves of life.*

*What else is there when you think about it
But the boat, the water, the walk, the storm
And the great fear of drowning when someone
Reaches out to save you and you hear him
Say, "Little faith, what made you lose your nerve?"
You look him in the eye and with new hope
Begin again to test your heart and will
Glad to be back out walking on water.*

~jpc, 12/20/06 (after part of pension blew away and after found out family member has cancer)

Namaste.

January 7 Sunday Dialogue (XXXV)

Journer: I've been thinking about "knowing, doing, and being" since hanging out with you.

Nez: I like how one* of my students put it: "They say you are what you eat. Oh, I hope not. But spiritually I am what I do, pray and think" – with the emphasis on "I am."

Journer: I used to think I left out “doing.” These days I seem to be leaving out “being.”

Nez: Who for you is the *human* who has best held the three together?

* Koshin (Bob Hanson)

January 8 The Power of Story

All sorrows can be borne, if you put them into a story.
~Isak Dinesen, via Jeanette Stanfield (quote in Brian Stanfield’s *The Courage to Lead: Daily Journal* for October 15)

Brian was one who knew the power of story to transform life and community. The story of his last days, finding peace in the crashing wave of life and death, has been inspiring.
~jpc

O to be storytellers who change individual, social, and planetary life. Namaste.

January 9 “Happiness 101”

Positive psychology brings the same attention to positive emotions (happiness, pleasure, well-being [are these emotions?]) that clinical psychology has always paid to the negative ones (depression, anger, resentment). Psychoanalysis once promised to turn acute human misery into ordinary suffering; positive psychology promises to

take mild human pleasure and turn it into a profound state of well-being. . . . Thus positive psychology is not only about maximizing personal happiness but also about . . . engagement and spiritual connectedness, hope and charity. "Aristotle taught us virtue isn't virtue unless you choose it," [Martin] Seligman [one of positive psychology's founders] says. ~D.T. Max, "Happiness 101," *nytimes.com*, 1/7/07

What makes one happy, happier, happiest relative to the life journey? ~jpc

Happy year. Namaste.

January 10 Grief Makes Us Free

*. . . I, who am worn and careful,
How much do I care?
How is it I grin then, and chuckle
Over despair?*

*Grief, grief, I suppose and sufficient
Grief makes us free
To be faithless and faithful together
As we have to be.*

~D.H. Lawrence, "Hymn to Priapus," *DHL Selected Poems*, p. 62

Read the complete poem to get DHL's situation, but we know like him that grief brings home the truth that we are

both attached and detached; otherwise we'd be care-filled wrecks or uncaring slobs. ~jpc

Thankful for the mercy of grief. Namaste.

January 11

“Song of a Man Who Has Come Through”

*. . . If only I let it bear me, carry me, if only it carry me!
If only I am sensitive, subtle, oh, delicate, a winged
gift!*

*If only, most lovely of all, I yield myself and am borrowed
By the fine, fine wind that takes its course through the
chaos of the world*

*Like a fine, an exquisite chisel, a wedge-blade inserted;
If only I am keen and hard like the sheer tip of a wedge
Driven by invisible blows,
The rock will split, we shall come at the wonder, we
shall find. . . .*

~D.H. Lawrence, *DHL Selected Poems*, p. 74

At first the poem seems to be describing us as wimps. Then we become wedge-blades inserted into the chaos of the world, driven, and the chaos splits – our situation and creation are transformed – all by the wind that borrows us. ~jpc

We need only yield. Namaste.

January 12 "We Are Transmitters"

*As we live, we are transmitters of life.
And when we fail to transmit life, life fails to flow
through us. . . .*

*Give, and it shall be given unto you
is still the truth about life.
But giving life is not so easy.
It doesn't mean handing it out to some mean fool, or
letting the living dead eat you up.
It means kindling the life-quality where it was not,
even if it's only in the whiteness of a washed pocket-
handkerchief.*

~D.H. Lawrence, *DHL Selected Poems*, p. 105-06

Being transmitters is not easy until it dawns on us that it's about kindling the life-quality wherever, whenever, in small ways and large. ~jpc

January 13 "Search For Love"

*Those who go searching for love
only make manifest their own lovelessness,
and the loveless never find love,
only the loving find love,
and they never have to seek for it.*

~D.H. Lawrence, *DHL Selected Poems*, p. 118

We all search for love, we all manifest lovelessness, we all never find love, we all find love, we all never have to seek for it. ~jpc

We are loved, loveless, and loving. Namaste.

January 14 Sunday Dialogue (XXXVI)

Journer: Should I allow myself to think much about death?

Nez: My student* asked: "Have you built your ship of death . . . for you will need it."

Journer: That sounds morbid.

Nez: Hardly, just a construction job every creature's given at birth.

* D.H. Lawrence, "The Ship of Death," *DHL Poems*, p. 139

January 15 Salute the Dawn

*We flew millions of miles to be
Invited to live with the poor
Sitting at their feet to learn their
Secrets to living on the edge
Of mundane daily existence.*

*In many third world villages
They were not planning the future*

*So much as living in the now
Shooing animals and babies
While sweeping their dirt lawns till clean.*

*Though they lived many fewer years
And had much less education
Their spirits were not dependent
Upon the things of this world so
Much as the mystery of life*

*Which taught them to live the moment
To see the wonder and the gift
Of whatever they had at hand
While waiting for the sun to rise
To once again salute the dawn.*

~jpc, 1/04/07

I am hardly as wise as they. Namaste.

January 16 Miracle Word and Style

Helen Keller's father: [Miss Sullivan,] I think you ask too much of her and yourself. God may not have meant Helen to have the eyes you speak of.

Annie Sullivan: I mean her to. . . .

Helen's half-brother: Sooner or later, we all give up, don't we?

Annie Sullivan: Maybe you all do, but it's my idea of the original sin.

Half-brother: What is?

Annie Sullivan: Giving up!

~“The Miracle Worker” (1962 movie); William Gibson
(play)

Helen’s father, half-brother, and others were *not* the miracle worker. Their word and style dared miracles to happen. ~jpc

O to be servants of miraculous power. Namaste.

January 17 Evening Prayer

*. . . I pause in this moment at the beginning of my old
age
and I say a prayer of gratitude for getting to this
evening*

*a prayer for being here, today, now, alive
in this life, in this evening, under this sky.*

~David Buddbill, from “Winter: Tonight: Sunset,” 1/03/07

Gratitude for coming this far, living this long, sure, but much more: a prayer of gratitude for “being here, today, now, alive in this life, in this evening, under this sky” – a prayer for this moment in this life. ~jpc

O to be alive. Namaste.

January 18 **Nothing More Beautiful**

[M]y sense of the world as a gift, my sense of a grace operative in this world despite its terrors, propels me to allow the world to open my heart . . . even if the openness comes by breaking – for I have seen the whole world fall into a few hearts [Mother Teresa’s prayer: “May God break my heart so completely that the whole world falls in”], and nothing has ever struck me as more beautiful. ~David James Duncan, “What Fundamentalists Need for Their Salvation” www.oriononline.org/pages/om/05-4om/Duncan.html

Salvation does not come by keeping the law but maybe by such God-broken hearts that embrace creation as is . . . as good. ~jpc

Watch out praying for salvation. Namaste.

January 19 **A Humanly Divine Act**

. . . Forgiveness lets go of
our self’s (ego’s?) sense of
brokenness, separateness, and violation –
Restoring
our Self’s sense of
mystery, greatness, and depth. . . .

~Don Bushman, 12/2006

“Not only does forgiveness reunite us with ourselves,

sometimes, but also with others . . . and with divinity. Is it any wonder that forgiveness is one of our holiest acts? To err is human, to forgive, divine.”* ~jpc

We pray for the courage to forgive. Namaste.

* Alexander Pope, “Essay on Criticism,” I. 522

January 20

“One Who Has Come Through . . . Again”

. . . I watched in horror as ego-self sabotaged meditation and tried to do a flanking maneuver on Ultimate Silence.

Once again it sought a mental construct,
a world view that made sense,
that allowed it to “know good and evil,”
and to be able to pass judgment on all experiences and
encounters.

Ego-me sought a sure way to know the length of my life
and the reputation I would leave as my legacy.
When such knowledge would not come,
ego-me took refuge in despair and cynicism. . . .

I repented and embraced once again
the absolute unknowable nature of life in every NOW
that is not bound by the past or doomed to some
planned future. . . .

Even at the moment of my death,

let me embrace and be embraced by unswerving trust
that Life as it was, is, and ever shall be is good. . . .

~Harold Slater, from his meditation on Psalm 30, 1/5/07

Namaste.

January 21 Sunday Dialogue (XXXVII)

Nez: The past is approved.

Journer: How do we begin to believe that? Is the death of 6 million Jews at the hands of the Nazis approved, for goodness sake?

Nez: My student* wrote, “You will come to see that all evolves us.”

Journer: Evolution exacts an absurd price sometimes.

* Rumi, “That Lives in Us,” *Love Poems From God: Twelve Sacred Voices from the East and West*, Daniel Ladinsky

January 22 “Grace Did Much More Abound”

Just like the horizontal contains energies – the energies of physics – the vertical contains energies – the energies of shakti, grace. Any spiritual practice is about opening up to that vertical energy. ~Robert W. Godwin interview, “The Only Journey There Is,” *WIE* magazine, Jan-Mar 2007

*Amazing grace, ten thousand times,
has touched the heart of me;
I once was lost but now am found,
was blind but now I see. . . .*

*When we've been journeyed all our days
by grace till breath is gone,
we'll no less yearn to sing its praise
than when we'd first begun.*

~John Newton, adapted by jpc, *By Cosmic Design: Spirit Poems*, 2006, p. 123

Namaste.

January 23 Supernatural Election

This isn't natural selection; I call it supernatural election. That's how the vertical operates. It sort of chooses you: "I'm picking you. . . ." ~Robert W. Godwin interview, "The Only Journey There Is," *WIE* magazine, Jan-Mar 2007

Vertical grace, in the midst of our horizontal existence, lets you and me know we are chosen. ~jpc

When was the last time you were chosen, and knew it? Namaste.

January 24 Messiah's Job

The Messiah's job is to break . . . ritualized institutional containers to bring the savage immediacy of God back into reality. This is why you constantly have religious reformations. Buddha, when he came along, was clearly rebelling against a highly institutionalized Hinduism that had lost its verticality. Jesus, at the time, was rebelling against a very horizontal Judaism in which there was the law, but the spirit was gone. . . . ~Robert W. Godwin interview, "The Only Journey There Is," *WIE* magazine, Jan-Mar 2007

"Messiah" is about reuniting us with "God," – whatever you call that mysterious *power* – in spite of religious institutions, even. ~jpc

Thankful that messiah never stops coming. Namaste.

January 25 The Likes of Whom?

2008 [Presidential election] will represent a hinge moment . . . because this will be the first cycle when a whole new range of issues . . . will be front and center: Iraq, the war on terror, global warming, energy, technology and globalization. ~quote of Chris Lehane in "Shushing the Baby Boomers," John M. Broder, *nytimes.com*, 1/21/07

We need leaders who can *galvanize our nation* and whose style of leadership will *demonstrate our nation*

will serve our globe. A short list for President should have the leadership style, the deep appreciation of diversity, and the global experience of the likes of a _____ . Who heads your list and why?

~jpc

Let us start praying for/working to elect leaders our nation and our globe need and will follow. Namaste.

January 26 Sudden, Messy, Wonder-filled

After standing for nearly a century, the twenty-five-foot Saguaro cactus appeared to be history – over three tons of once vertical, lime green flesh now lies prone in our side yard. . . . Our community’s Green Team has wisely chosen to let the giant decay naturally. . . . We have been privileged to witness life, death, after life, and new life writ large in our side yard. Thanks be for continuing reminders of the sudden, messy, wonder-filled way life is.

~**Judy Lindblad**

I immediately thought of how life keeps changing forms and never going out of being. I have lived long enough to know that my death, too, will be a “sudden, messy, wonder-filled way life is” event. Hope they scatter some of my ashes in the side yard. ~jpc

Eternal life – past, present, and future. Namaste.

January 27 Bow To and Evolve

There are two principles inherent in the very nature of things, . . . the spirit of change, and the spirit of conservation. There can be nothing real without both.
~**Alfred North Whitehead**, *Science and the Modern World*, p. 201, via Herman Greene

To “bow to” what is and “to evolve” what is are two ways to be deeply human. ~jpc

We'll never run out of something to do. Namaste.

January 28 Sunday Dialogue (XXXVIII)

Journer: How can we believe “anything’s possible” when global warming, terrorism, HIV/AIDS, nuclear buildup, and poverty are confronting us daily?

Nez: My student* wrote, “I dwell in possibility.”

Journer: I wish I did.

Nez: How can the Sun come up tomorrow, Journer, if it never goes down?

* **Emily Dickinson**, “I Dwell in Possibility” (c. 1862)

January 29 Filling ‘er Up and Pouring ‘er Out

Huston Smith writes about the four stages of life

according to Hinduism (*Illustrated World's Religions*, pp. 40-1): *first*, student; *second*, focus on family-vocation-community; *third*, retirement (after first grandchild, working out one's philosophy of life); *fourth*, renunciation (can live anywhere). In the final stage, say past 60, one begins to see through knowing and doing to the good (holy) life. ~jpc

*Filling 'er up and pouring 'er out, four times over.
Namaste.*

January 30 Love Is Between

Feelings dwell in a person; but a person dwells in love. That is no metaphor, but the actual truth. Love does not cling to the *I* . . . but is *between* the *I* and *Thou* . . . Love is responsibility of an *I* for a *Thou*. ~Martin Buber, *I and Thou* (trans. Smith), p. 14-15 (adapted)

Love is more a relationship than a feeling. It is a state of being related, and where we see love we see mutuality happening—be it between humans, a human and the earth, or between any *I* and *eternal thou*. ~jpc

*If you love me you won't use me or try to possess me.
Namaste.*

January 31 Real Compassion

Last week the Dalai Lama said, "I knew a Tibetan monk

for a long time. He was taken away to a Chinese gulag and kept there for 18 years. When he was released he fled to India, along with other Tibetans, for refuge.” He continued calmly, “I met him and asked him about his experiences in prison.” The monk replied, “At times I was in great danger.” “What kind of danger?” asked the Dalai Lama. “I was in danger of losing my compassion towards my Chinese captors,” he replied. “Now, that,” spoke the Dalai Lama, “is Buddhism.” ~Sagari Chhabra, *Times of India*, 1/20/07, via Koshin

We pray for deep compassion. Namaste.

February

February 1 Deeper Connection with the Earth

[T]he deep ecology of Thomas Berry was difficult to comprehend at first because it really took me out of my “scientific” comfort zone. It required me to connect with my spiritual side and this was not something I have ever had to do before. I consider this is probably quite symptomatic of the modern western world, where the concept of spirituality is severely lacking, and desire for economic . . . growth dominates. . . . In the end, I believe it is this . . . [deeper] connection with the Earth that Berry intends for us to rediscover because somewhere in the development of civilisation it has been lost from our mindsets. ~**William Khoo**’s undergraduate paper, “Emerging Patterns of Thought, Belief and Action,” University of Bath, UK <http://staff.bath.ac.uk/mnspwr/>

Another one beckoned by Thomas to a deep relationship in the earth community. This type of conversion is what is needed for the great work of planetary care. ~jpc

*Visionary and profound action will more likely follow.
Namaste.*

February 2 The Lucky One

These are . . . the lucky ones. Most people are never

going to die because they are never going to be born. . . . Certainly those unborn ghosts include greater poets than Donne, greater scientists than Newton, greater composers than Beethoven. . . . [I]t is you and I that are privileged to be here, privileged with eyes to see where we are and brains to wonder why. ~Richard Dawkins http://www.edge.org/3rd_culture/dawkins/lecture_p1.html

Which is the greater sadness, not to be, or to be and choose not to be one's greatness? ~jpc

We would not squander the privilege. Namaste.

February 3 TWEEU

T-W-E-E-U is an acronym for "those who ever envy us." . . . [T]hese critters are little. They have to be little because they do not even exist. They are green and have extremely sad faces. And they go round crying all the time. They ever envy us because they are the ones that did not make it. . . . Sometimes they stop crying long enough to laugh at us. . . . Their laugh is a little shrill, I think. On those days when you wish you were never born – do you remember the laughter? Those were the TWEEU. Or on those days . . . you are in despair, on those days when you say, "Life is too hard – I wish I could die," then the TWEEU laugh loudest. They laugh because they understand that the glory of life is to have a life to glory in. . . . They did not have a chance for this, what they would call the wonderful pain of being alive. . . . ~Joseph Mathews, "A Call to

Sociological Love,” *Bending History*, pp. 184-6

Glorying in life. Namaste.

February 4 Sunday Dialogue (XXXIX)

Journer: What helps us focus?

Nez: Do you mean to be really present?

Journer: Okay.

Nez: One of my students* said that great art “suspends” in us “the desire to be elsewhere.”

* Ken Wilber, *The Eye of Spirit*, p. 135-136

February 5 Test Your Beliefs

Members of faith communities and individuals need to feel they can question their religious traditions and their own received beliefs. They can hold any personal position up to the light of modern understandings and evaluate its validity. It is OK to test what one believes. ~Mike Short, “A Contemporary Religious Language Project,” Fall 2006 Jesus Seminar paper, via David Zollars

Testing one’s beliefs is deeply human. That’s what the wilderness experience of Jesus was all about. ~jpc

O to believe what I really believe. Namaste.

February 6 Scaring or Calling

[As a boy growing up in Chicago] I pictured people sitting on the beach listening to this sweaty man [missionary in Fiji] all dressed in black telling them they were going to burn in hell & them thinking this was good fun, these scary stories this guy was telling them & afterwards, they'd all go home & eat mango & fish & they'd play Monopoly & laugh & laugh & they'd go to bed & wake up the next day & do it all again. ~Brian Andreas <http://tinyurl.com/3dhgfg>

Telling them they'll burn in hell doesn't get it. Siddhartha and Jesus called them with images of living in the kingdom of *spirit* here and now, eternally. ~jpc

The really real is not based on fear. Namaste.

February 7 Growing Wiser?

The saddest aspect of life right now is that science gathers knowledge faster than society gathers wisdom. ~Isaac Asimov

This brainstorm came to mind: the gas engine, pesticides, nuclear energy, TV, fast foods, hormones, the internet – at best, mixed blessings. Humanity is definitely being forced to learn what it means to live on our small planet with more wisdom. ~jpc

We would harness knowledge for the sake of the planet. Namaste.

February 8 One Longing Only

I have one longing only: to grasp what is hidden behind appearances, to ferret out that mystery which brings me to birth and then kills me, *to discover if behind the visible and unceasing stream of the world an invisible and immutable presence is hiding.* ~Nikos Kazantzakis, *The Saviors of God*, p. 51 (italics added)

Thanks, Kaz. You helped to re-discover and re-present that *presence*. ~jpc

We too would ferret out that mystery. Namaste.

February 9 Unless Indeed . . .

For the philosopher, as for the scientist, there is not holy ground – unless indeed *all* is Holy Ground. ~James Christian, *Philosophy*, p. 23

And guess what: *all is* holy ground. ~jpc

Take off your shoes and bow down today. Namaste.

February 10 Essential Freedom

The essential freedom, the ultimate and final freedom that cannot be taken from a man [*sic*], is to say No. . . .

Consciousness and freedom are . . . given together. Only if consciousness is blotted out can man [*sic*] be deprived of . . . freedom. ~William Barrett, commenting on Jean-Paul Sartre

So, even with a gun to our heads, we have the freedom to say “Yes” or “No.” There is not a conscious moment in life when we are not free, essentially. ~jpc

“O, Freedom . . . / Before I’d be a slave / I’d be buried in my grave.” Namaste.

February 11 Sunday Dialogue (XL)

Journer: Someone* said, “Spiritual maturity is a lifelong process of replacing lies with truth.”

Nez: I’d rather say spiritual maturity is a lifelong process of replacing truth with intimations of truth.

Journer: What do you mean?

Nez: We become wise, and can more likely live in peace, when we understand we have only glimmers of the truth.

* Kurt Bruner

February 12 Love Frustrated

Where hatreds exist in any persons within any society we may be sure that they . . . are due to love, for hatred is

love frustrated. Aggression is but a technique or mode of seeking love. ~Ashley Montagu

There're a lot of humans seeking love aggressively these days. ~jpc

In an age of marketing we've done a lousy job of promoting authentic love. Namaste.

February 13 To Have Known Love

To have known love is to know that love is possible and potentially “there” in every relationship. I believe that Søren Kierkegaard had something like this in mind when he wrote that if you would know any man [*sic*] – all his past disappointments, his hopes, his dreams, his fears – you would love him to death no matter who he was. ~Charles Ketcham, *A Theology of Encounter*, p. 59-60

I know love is possible in any relationship because I have known love. ~jpc

We celebrate the reality of love. Namaste.

February 14 Deeper Take on Valentine Love

[T]he Valentine whose name is oddly commemorated [this day] was apparently a Christian priest in Rome who assisted martyrs during the persecution. . . . He was eventually arrested. . . . When he refused to renounce his faith he was beaten and beheaded [d. 269]. Thus,

by offering his heart, he proved himself a true devotee of the God of Love. ~Robert Ellsberg, *All Saints*, p. 77

Let us celebrate love this day, yes, and even the deepest love. Namaste.

February 15 Accountabalism

Accountabalism assumes perfection – if anything goes wrong, it's a sign that the system is broken. . . . Accountabalism is blind to human nature. For example, it assumes that if we know we're being watched, we won't do wrong. . . . Accountabalism bureaucratizes and atomizes responsibility. . . . Accountabalism tries to squeeze centuries of thought about how to entice people toward good behavior and dissuade them from bad into simple rules by which individuals can be measured and disciplined. It would react to a car crash by putting stop signs at every corner. Bureaucratizing morality or mechanizing a complex organization gives us the sense that we can exert close control. But grown-ups prefer clarity and realism to . . . superstition. ~David Weinberger, "The Folly of Accountabalism," The HBR List: Breakthrough Ideas for 2007 <http://tinyurl.com/3bxxv3>

Unnatural and unrealistic accountability kills the spirit. ~jpc

A good dose of absolution has been known to awaken a dead body. Namaste.

Following are four quotes by Dietrich Bonhoeffer from Nazi prisons before he was hanged, naked, at age 39 (1906-1945). He blesses us who are too much caught up with the desires of this world, as though our lives depended on them. It is good to take counsel from a good man in prison, there because he helped plot to kill Hitler and stop further global carnage. We sense in reading from his letters and papers from prison that he sees the meaning of life more clearly than most. ~jpc

February 16 Community Grounded in the Word

[L]ive together in the forgiveness of your sins, for without it no human fellowship, least of all a marriage, can survive. Don't insist on your rights, don't blame each other, don't judge each other, don't find fault with each other, but take one another as you are, and forgive each other every day from the bottom of your hearts. ~Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, pp. 50-51

What are practical rituals to forgive all our relations daily from the bottom of our hearts? This is the stuff of authentic religious practice. ~jpc

O to begin forgiveness at home and to take a forgiving spirit with us on the journey. Namaste.

February 17 Real Education

[E]ducation which breaks down in face of danger is not education at all. A liberal education which will not enable

us to face danger and death does not deserve the name.
~Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, p. 126

Bonhoeffer seemed always to be meddling. Who was he to pontificate about education? One who knew that education divorced from the real-life journey was a mind game. ~jpc

We would be authentic educators. Namaste.

February 18 This Place

[I]t is the mark of a grown-up man [*sic*] . . . that he finds his centre of gravity wherever he happens to be at the moment. . . . [W]e should live in this place as though we had not desires and no future to hope for, and just be our true selves. ~Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, p. 148

He was not doing idle philosophizing, for “this place” was prison for him as he wrote the above. If we are freely covenanted to “this place,” the place we’re in, the situation we’re in, then we can talk about being “grown-up” and about being “our true selves.” ~jpc

Every place is home. Namaste.

February 19 Church Exists for Others

As a fresh start she [the church] should give away all her endowments to the poor and needy. The clergy should

live solely on the free-will offerings of their congregations, or possibly engage in some secular calling. . . . She must tell men [*sic*], whatever their calling, to exist for others.
~**Bonhoeffer**, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, p. 239

To be the church means to “exist for others.” Bonhoeffer meant what Jesus meant. ~jpc

“Others, let this my motto be.” Namaste.

February 20 The Long Emergency

The Long Emergency is going to be a tremendous trauma for the human race. . . . The survivors will have to cultivate a religion of hope, that is, a deep and comprehensive belief that humanity is worth carrying on. . . . (I don’t doubt that the hardships of the future will draw even the most secular spirits into an emerging spiritual practice of some kind.)
~**James Howard Kunstler**, *The Long Emergency*, pp 20-1, via JPC II

Kunstler is a prophet of future hard times on planet earth. Yet, in the midst of gloomy scenarios comes hopeful advice. ~jpc

Rediscovering a spirituality of hope. Namaste.

February 21 With Attitude

“What do you do for a living?” [She answers,] “I survive.”
. . . “People get so busy getting caught up with ‘what ifs,’”

she said. “‘What if I go into debt? What if I can’t work?’ Well, all those ‘what ifs’ have happened to me, and when you take it down to the very nub, you have to ask yourself, ‘What if I’m not here tomorrow?’ . . . I’m facing it head-on. That’s my choice.” ~**Lauren Brower**, who is surviving cancer for the third time, interviewed by Jeri Rowe, *news-record.com*, 2/21/07

This 40-year-old here in Greensboro is determined to “live her life” till she dies. Rowe named the article “She’s Got Cancer with Attitude.” ~jpc

O for the attitude to live till I die. Namaste.

February 22 The Hope of the Earth

What is the insula and how could it possibly exert such profound effects on human behavior? According to neuroscientists who study it, the insula is a long-neglected brain region that has emerged as crucial to understanding what it feels like to be human. They say it is the wellspring of social emotions, things like lust and disgust, pride and humiliation, guilt and atonement. ~**Sandra Blakeslee**, “A Small Part of the Brain, and Its Profound Effects,” *nytimes.com*, 2/6/07

Is “at-one-ment” an emotion? I say it’s a universal event without which we humans experience no feeling of relatedness to the *spirit* blowing at the heart of the universe, the earth, others, and self. ~jpc

Spirit occasions a new relationship with the earth and its communities of being. Namaste.

February 23 Comprehensive Sin and Repentance

[T]he Manichean notion of sin . . . the idea that we came into this world despised, worthless, ugly, and powerless . . . [a] state of low self-esteem . . . [too] easily and too often displaced onto a scapegoat, such as racial minorities, women, or homosexuals. ~Wayne G. Boulton, *Theology Today* <http://tinyurl.com/3c5r29>

For me, Tillich, with his definition of sin as “separation,” is comprehensive in describing sin as *separation from self*, as do Manichean mystics (St. Augustine); and *separation from all others*, as do creation-centered mystics (Matthew Fox); as well as *separation from the ground of being*, as do grace-centered mystics (St. Paul). This places sin in an existential, cosmic, and ontological context – too thoroughly comprehensive for scapegoating. ~jpc

Repentance is required of all. Namaste.

February 24 “To Lie Awake All Night”

*What would it be like to lie awake all night
And reflect on the light within the dark
And the dark at the heart of light*

Seeking to come at the wonder

*Of being alive if I stared all night
With eyes shut as I strained to ponder*

*Or better to open one eye and peek
At the moon out the window and
Over head that I didn't seek?*

*I guess I fell asleep peeking at the moon
For when I woke I stretched to
Another day and it wasn't too soon*

*To fall out and stand to get up and go
And sit and chat and eat a bite and
To fall in bed again seemed a good flow –*

*At least after trying to lie awake all night
Only to grasp the quaint and quasi meaning
Of falling asleep and missing the sight.*

*But what if quaint and quasi is the whole
And taking a nap during the day
Is not such a bad idea during snow.*

~jpc, 2/10/07

Namaste.

February 25 Sunday Dialogue (XLI)

Journer: Are we any more or less fulfilled than our ancestors were or our descendants will be?

Nez: Fulfillment is eternal, meaning *now* is always as full as it ever has been, is, and ever will be.

Journer: So I can be as fulfilled as Abraham or Siddhartha or Jesus or Muhammad?

Nez: Of course. My student* said it absolutely: “If it is not seen in the present, it cannot be seen at all.”

* Paul Tillich

February 26 **Amazing Energy**

Scientists developed string theory, which proposes that everything in the universe is made of tiny, vibrating strings of energy, to encompass the physical principles of all objects from immense galaxies to subatomic particles. Though currently the front-runner to explain the framework of the cosmos, the theory remains, to date, untested. ~ University of Wisconsin news release, via Ed Reames www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2007/02/070203103355.htm

The article lays out a way to test the theory. The cosmic energy pattern of “strings” – at every point of and every time of our universe – is one description of you and me, but not nearly complete without adding the reality of *spirit* energy vibrating in-but-not-of all the strings. ~jpc

Amazing energy belongs to creation, and therefore to us. Namaste.

February 27 Doggedness and History

[Recently, it was] the 200th anniversary of the passage of a bill in the English Parliament to outlaw the slave trade in the British Empire. This reminded me that William Wilberforce is one of my heroes. . . . [H]e introduced the bill every time he could for fifteen years until it finally became law. ~Len Hockley

Len wrote this after he and his wife Phyllis had been in Washington, D.C., along with 750 others, to push for a Department of Peace – about the fiftieth time such a meeting has been held with members of Congress. Doggedness has been known to change history. ~jpc

If we give up we certainly lose. Namaste.

February 28 Celebrate Our Crisis

[A way of seeing the crisis of peak oil and global warming, for example, is remembering] . . . the Chinese word for “crisis” is ‘danger’ and ‘opportunity’. If we only see the danger then we can just get depressed and be in fear. . . . So it’s balancing the two – the danger and the opportunity. . . . A friend of mine says, “If it’s not fun, don’t do it. If you have to do it, make it fun.” . . . [L]et’s celebrate. ~Peter Russell, in an interview with Rob Hopkins, transitionculture.org, 2/5/07, via Roseanne Sands

There’s always an evolutionary way. Namaste.

March

March 1 Human Mission Statement

The main human task of the immediate future is to assist in activating the *intercommunion* of all the living and nonliving components of the earth community. ~**Thomas Berry** (“Principle 12,” *Thomas Berry and the New Cosmology*, p. 108)

Even if I am just a retired person, just a housewife, just a child, just an immigrant, just a member of Congress, or just Bill Gates, Thomas has defined our main human task for life. All career paths are called to serve under the banner of intercommunion. ~jpc

Why didn't I know this in my bones by the first grade?
Namaste.

March 2 A People Bereft

[S]o many of my people [whites] flit from Hinduism to Buddhism to Paganism like a butterfly going from flower to flower: they have no roots, no tribe, no elders, no path of their own. All were systematically destroyed by the Celts, the Romans, and then the Roman Catholics [and Protestants]. Whites in America and Europe – and Blacks who were brought to America as slaves and have since

lost their ancient ways and languages – are a people bereft.
~**Thom Hartmann**, “The Lost People,” via Gene & Joyce
Marshall http://www.thomhartmann.com/lost_people.shtml

Even without our ancient ways, we can guard against existing
aboriginal peoples losing their ancient ways – and we can
harness their wisdom in transforming our cultures. ~jpc

Let us be careful what we destroy. Namaste.

March 3 **Namaste** (pronounced *nah-mah-STAY*)

*A literal translation of **na-mah-te** is “not to me, but
to you,” a reverential salutation to inner being (from
Sanskrit). **Namaste** can mean*

- The Spirit in me meets the same Spirit in you.
- I greet that place where you and I are one. . . .
- I receive the free spirit in you.
- I recognize that within each of us is a place
where peace dwells, and when we are in that
place, we are One.
- My energy salutes your energy.
- The life in me sees and honors the life in you. . . .

In other words, it recognizes the equality of all, and pays
honor to the sacredness and interconnection of all, as well

as to the source of that interconnection. . . . <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Namaste> (adapted)

We are of the spirit way / as we bow to all: Namaste.

March 4 Sunday Dialogue (XLII)

Journeyer: Is enlightenment what my life is about?

Nez: For sure, but listen to my student*: “enlightenment is not an individual attainment; it is a collective emergence . . . [toward the] evolutionary impulse.”

Journeyer: So the emphasis is not just on individual salvation?

Nez: Right, it’s a movement of humans who are conscious of joining with the rest of the earth to transform her.

* Andrew Cohen, *Quote of the Week*, 2/26/07

March 5 Original . . . Connectedness

These days, my working definition of “sin” assumes that ontologically and naturally we are already connected with and never separated from G-O-D or creation (including humans). Therefore, “sin” is living and acting “as if” we were separated and disconnected from G-O-D and creation, the symptoms of which are those thoughts, actions, and states of being which prevent us from living

in the indicative connectedness as constructively, creatively, and compassionately as possible. ~Ellie Stock, from comment on 2/23/07 reflection

Ellie, a Presbyterian minister, articulates theology and cosmology in such a way as to help bring our planetary community together – which seems like a good thing to me. ~jpc

O that we be who we really are, connected to all that is. Namaste.

March 6 Changing the Noosphere

[T]he most important thing we can do in . . . moving into the New Civilization is to change the noosphere and we do that by changing our own consciousness. There are many learning aspects of this, such as . . . learning about biology, ecology, geology, and geography, . . . learning the story of the evolutionary development of the universe and of our place in [it], and . . . becoming aware of our inner connections with all members of the Earth community. ~Herman Greene, www.ecozoicstudies.org, “How We Get to an Ecozoic Society”

We are the emerging civilization, be it evolutionary or devolutionary. One or the other, not by default but by decision, including indecision. ~jpc

O for a leap of compassion. Namaste.

March 7 Inspire a Million Volunteers

We're an independent charity launched to champion youth volunteering in England. Our aim is to inspire a million more 16-25 year olds to volunteer and enable a lasting change in the quality, quantity and diversity of youth volunteering. ~www.wearev.com/, via Martin Gilbraith, ICA:UK

What a great vision, or strategy, or tactic – or something. “Vimagination,” very good, chum. Vluck. ~jpc

*Creativity in social and earth care is on the rise.
Namaste.*

March 8 Why Do They Think That?

Prof. Marcus Borg says that his unchurched university students, in assigned short essays on their impressions of Christians, “consistently use five adjectives: Christians are literalistic, anti-intellectual, self-righteous, judgmental, and bigoted.” (*The Emerging Christian Way*, p. 21)

Why do they think that? I'm a baptized Christian: I don't think I'm literalistic or anti-intellectual, but . . . hmmm. . . am I a self-righteous, judgmental, and bigoted Christian? ~jpc

What kind of authentic style is needed from Christians today? Namaste.

March 9 “Lost My Vision”

Toward the end of her career, as she was speaking at a midwestern college, a student asked: “Miss Keller, is there anything that could have been worse than losing your sight?” Helen Keller replied: “Yes, I could have lost my vision.” ~via Jann McGuire, 2/14/07 e-mail

If vision is a greater gift than physical sight, how to help humans use their visioning capacity? ~jpc

“Our eyes have seen a thousand years.” Namaste.

March 10 Great Voyage

Listen, we have to do some sucking-up here. OK? Though it may not seem like it in the day-to-day grind, this voyage is something great. . . . But I’ve got news for you: You don’t always gotta love it. Travelling is going to get boring. Your relationships are going to get boring. . . . But you have this: you chose to be here. You can choose to be here. . . . We have power. We are not jailed here. We can decide to stay. ~Rigel Crockett, *Fair Wind and Plenty of It*, via Dick Kroeger

Though this is from a book about a big ship adventure, it’s good for us on the big life adventure to hear. ~jpc

Fair wind and plenty of it. Namaste.

March 11 Sunday Dialogue (XLIII)

Journer: So who is the neighbor?

Nez: Without an evolving understanding of “neighbor,” we cannot begin to fulfill the truth at hand.

Journer: “Evolving,” meaning beyond traditional scriptures?

Nez: Religious understanding 2,000 – even 50 – years ago could not see who and what is the neighbor for us to love today.

March 12 “Greatest Moral Issue of Our Time”

Those days [of limiting “the definition of morality to the way humans behave among humans”] have been over ever since it became apparent that humans . . . had the power to destroy huge numbers of species, whole landscapes of habitat and, in fact, the balance of life on earth. *The greatest moral issue of our time is our responsibility to the planet and to all its inhabitants.* ~”Evangelical Environmentalism” editorial, 3/10/07, *nytimes.com*, via Randy Williams

This is not the consensus yet, especially with many Christian leaders and groups in the USA and globally, as the editorial points out, but is certainly the rapidly growing understanding of the moral issue of our time. ~jpc

All earth's people are called to the great work of "our responsibility to the planet and to all its inhabitants." Namaste.

March 13 Greening of the World's Religions

The common ground [among the world's religions] is the earth itself, along with a shared sense of . . . the interdependence of all life. This shared sensibility and the extent of the environmental crisis present themselves as a moment of enormous opportunity for cooperation around a common cause – the activation of flourishing human-earth relations. ~**Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim**, "The Greening of the World's Religions," 2/9/07 <http://chronicle.com/weekly/v53/i23/23b00901.htm>

The life mission of Mary Evelyn and John, students of Thomas Berry, is greening the world's religions. They have catalyzed some great events in this direction already. ~jpc

Let the greening accelerate. Namaste.

March 14 Man with a Plan

Warren Buffett, the world's second-richest man, wowed the world last summer when he announced that he plans to give away most of his [\$52] billion fortune [and most through the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation], and now he wants to make sure those donations are spent quickly. . . . The 76-year-old Buffett predicted that his giving plan . . . in his will should mean that all of his Berkshire shares

will be distributed for societal purposes within the next 25 years because Buffett said his expected life span is 12 more years – “though, naturally, I’m aiming for more.”
~Associated Press, 3/2/07

Buffett understands that to whom much is given all must be given away, and why wait till the end. So he keeps playing Bridge with Bill and holding the Foundation accountable. ~jpc

Making money on behalf of. Namaste.

March 15 Wellsprings of the Soul

Beyond this personal level lies the richness of the . . . symbolic layer . . . where patterns, instincts, all that is human resides, a deep core of meaning that dreams and creativity draw from. Here are the wellsprings of the soul, the spiritual instinct that directs us toward divinity in the same unconscious way that flowers turn to face the sun. Here the . . . quest for wholeness and meaning begins.
~Jean Shinoda Bolen, *Close to the Bone*, p. 16, via LLC and LiDona Wagner

This is a secular way, from an M.D., of talking about the deeps that sustain you and me, in easy times and hard, that are just part of reality for all that exists, whether we are religious or not. ~jpc

Deep sustenance is always at hand. Namaste.

March 16 Our Purpose

The underlying Reality has cloaked Itself in the ceaselessly transforming cosmos, declaring Itself without revealing Itself. . . . The purpose of each soul's sojourn on earth is to learn to see beyond the evanescence of phenomena to [this] Eternal Reality. ~Paramhansa Yogananda, via Jean Watts

“To see . . . Eternal Reality” is our life purpose – I would add, to assist others to experience Eternal Reality. ~jpc

Eternal reality is always here and now. Namaste.

March 17 A Blaze

At the center of our being is . . . a point of pure truth. . . . It is in everybody, and if we could see it we would see these billions of points of light coming together in the . . . blaze of a sun. ~Thomas Merton, *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*, p. 142, via Randy Williams <http://tinyurl.com/3yyjao>

That blaze is there whether it blazes in just a few at a time or billions, and we give thanks for however many. And the fact that it's there gives courage to dream the biggest dreams and never give up on the family of earth being family. ~jpc

At the center a blaze. Namaste.

March 18 Sunday Dialogue (XLIV)

Journer: What do you do when you're not being profound?

Nez: Sometimes look at myself from outside myself.

Journer: And what do you see?

Nez: Wonder.

March 19 "Orthodoxy"

*Orthodoxy can be a straitjacket
A labyrinth of believers' notions
A sounding gong seeking silence
A tangle in the way of the Way
A cocoon to be resurrected from
with awful pain and thanksgiving ~jpc*

"If it takes all that to bring me to where I am, so be it." Namaste.

March 20 A Credible Form

I have great hope. The Anglican Communion may be about to split up, but I believe that something more valuable will emerge. . . . [T]he Episcopal Church is beginning to be a light to this modern world, showing ourselves to be a credible form of Christianity in a time when Christianity

has become increasingly incredible. ~**Brian C. Taylor**,
“The Episcopal Church as Prophet to our Day,” 3/4/07
sermon, <http://tinyurl.com/2wvuru>, via Ida Forbis

I’m not up on all this, but I’m not really worried either,
especially after reading this sermon. This, to me, is an
appropriate Lenten message. ~jpc

Reformation is eternal. Namaste.

Note: Katharine Jefferts Schori is the new Presiding Bishop of
the Episcopal Church in the USA, the first woman elected primate
in the global Anglican Communion – a history-long victory.

March 21 Obsessing About Sex

She [Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, eldest child of Robert
and Ethel Kennedy, and author of *Failing America’s
Faithful*] suggests reforms that she believes will revitalize
. . . [the] Catholic Church and refocus the faithful on
service. The hierarchy in Rome, she says, needs to stop
obsessing about sex. It needs to rethink its position on the
ordination of women and married people, on abortion,
on gay clergy and gay unions. . . . These recommendations
will infuriate Catholic traditionalists, but [she] doesn’t care:
she loves her church and she’s not leaving. “The church,”
she says, “is full of possibilities.” ~Lisa Miller, *Newsweek*,
p. 12, 3/12/07, via LLC

Again, I’m not up on all this, but I’m not really worried
either, especially after reading this article on Kathleen’s

stand as an influential laywoman who's dedicated to reform.
This, to me, is another Lenten message. ~jpc

Reformation is eternal. Namaste.

March 22 Single Garment of Destiny

All life is interrelated. All men [*sic*] are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. . . . [T]here is a creative force in this universe that works to bring the disconnected aspects of reality into a harmonious whole. ~**Martin Luther King, Jr.**, *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches* . . . (before ellipses, p. 210; after, p. 20), via Randy Williams

We saw the movie "Babel" the other night, at my sister's recommendation. A kick in the gut it is, making shockingly clear the brokenness of life in our times. Yet, by the end of the movie we sensed a deeper oneness with all of us broken human beings. ~jpc

All is interrelated. Namaste.

March 23 Who Is Not Already Enlightened?

Aren't you already aware of existing? Don't you already feel the simple Feeling of Being . . . [the] immediate gateway to ultimate Spirit? . . . Who is not already Enlightened?
~**Ken Wilber**, *One Taste*, p. 302

Be careful you don't become a saint to boot. ~jpc

Gratitude for the way existence is. Namaste.

March 24 Culture of Violence

I teach Ancient Civilizations to 6th graders, mapping the 6,000-year journey of war and empire from Mesopotamia to . . . [the present] and molding young minds to consider alternative options to the culture of violence we are all heir to. ~Jaime Vergara, Saipan

This visionary teacher, who thinks we can evolve the culture of violence one 6th grader at a time, manifests a starting point of hope for children around the world. ~jpc

O to embody nonviolence. Namaste.

March 25 Sunday Dialogue (XLV)

Journer: Do you despair over the great lack of religious leadership today?

Nez: Yes and no and no and yes.

Journer: Please be more specific than that.

Nez: My student* says, "Peace is eternal. War is old-fashioned." That is a voice of religious leadership today.

* The Dalai Lama, via Frank Knutson

March 26 “Truth Is . . . Marching On”

*The third testament cares for the earth
(not the theme of the first two testaments),
which can save us humans from ourselves:
"she who says she loves God but does not
love creation is a goner," a la 1st John.*

*If our scriptures are human-centered
hardly do they reveal the whole truth.
Anytime we speak of "neighbor" now
we have to think beyond us humans
or truth is not served – truth is ever evolving.*

*O to discern and decide truth now,
ever bowing to past understanding.
Writers of first testaments spoke truth
as do writers millennia later,
standing on the shoulders of Moses and Jesus.*

*I give thanks for Bonhoeffer and Neibuhr,
Buber, Tillich, Mathews, and Berry.
Without them I would not have journeyed
into the heart of creation as deeply.
Truth is eternally true and is marching on.*

~jpc

Namaste.

March 27 Connectedness to the Universe

[A]nyone who does not regularly – or ever – gaze up and see the wonder and glory of a dark night sky filled with countless stars loses a sense of their fundamental connectedness to the universe. . . . [A] clear night sky . . . allows anyone to soar in mind and imagination. ~**Brian Greene**, author of *The Elegant Universe* <http://tinyurl.com/2orvbr>

One of the great things about where we now live is visible night sky, but I'll never forget how much more magnificent the night sky is down under in Australia. You're even luckier than we are, mates. ~jpc

What a universe! Namaste.

March 28 In Here/Out There of the Cosmos

The cosmos is not just “out there,” it’s “in here,” and there ultimately isn’t any difference between the two. So when you experience the spiritual impulse . . . you’re experiencing the Big Bang [that began our universe] as a surging compulsion for interior development and growth. ~**Andrew Cohen**, *Quote of the Week*, 7/24/06

When’s the last time you experienced the Big Bang, that surging compulsion that changes everything? ~jpc

At the heart of every piece of creation is potentially potent power. Namaste.

March 29 Imaginal Education

[I]n 1955, an educational specialist asked him if he would write a book to help children learn how to read. Seuss was given a list of 300 words that most first-graders would know, and he used those words to write *The Cat in the Hat* (1957). ~*writersalmanac.publicradio.org*, 3/2/07

I read it to grandchildren Lyndon and Preston recently, and their imaginations were popping out all over. When they're a little older we'll read them *The Lorax*, that little narrative Dr. Seuss wrote about the human contradiction of our times. ~jpc

Early-age memories guide us. Namaste.

March 30 *spirit* . . .

- 16. *spirit* enables us to say *yes* to life as it is.
- 24. *spirit* lets us choose to commune, yet forces it.
- 31. *spirit* pushes us to be more and more inclusive.
- 44. *spirit* reveals the infinite meaning of the finite.
- 47. *spirit* reminds the thirsty we already swim its sea.
- 49. *spirit* tells us we are what we seek to be, *spirit* filled.
- 76. *spirit* calls "spiritual development" an illusion.
- 84. *spirit* is ever present and illusive.
- 99. *spirit* is the ultimate force of creation.

~jpc, adapted from 100 statements about *spirit*, *Our Universal Spirit Journey*, 2002, pp. 66-70

Spirit is. Namaste.

March 31 Equal to Everything

[F]or a warrior there is no end to the mystery of being, whether being means being a pebble, or an ant, or oneself. That is a warrior's humbleness. One is equal to everything.
~Carlos Castaneda, *The Eagle's Gift*, p. 279

What he says seems true to me, yet I know I'm the apple of being's eye, as is everything and everyone else. ~jpc

Let the celebration of equality begin. Namaste.

April

April 1 Sunday Dialogue (XLVI)

Journer: What has Lent been about?

Nez: One* of my students wrote, “Everyone who wants to follow the . . . [*spirit*] path . . . has to rid himself [*sic*] of this fixation [on things].”

Journer: So I’m to give up things? That sounds unrealistic, even for saints.

Nez: True, but they struggle to give up obsession with things, e.g., family, relations, accomplishments, religion, money, body, self – obsession distracts from *spirit*.

* Carlos Castaneda, *The Eagle’s Gift*, p. 21-2

April 2 “God Did It”

[I]f you ask a question about the natural world – be it where lightning comes from, or why volcanoes erupt, or how planets were formed or how humans evolved – and assert that the answer is (basically) “God did it,” that puts an end to inquiry . . . not a very interesting way of proceeding. ~Sharon Begley, “Where Do We Come From,” *Newsweek*, 3/10/07 <http://tinyurl.com/38hsbn>

I say the answer is basically “The universe does it (including us humans),” which opens inquiry wide, with evolving interest. ~jpc

We bow to spirit, always and forever creative, at the heart of this and all universes. Namaste.

April 3 7-million-year Human Evolution

As ancient DNA and gray matter give up their secrets, they are adding life to the age-old quest to understand where humankind came from and how we got here. ~Sharon Begley, “Beyond Stones and Bones,” *Newsweek*, 3/19/07 <http://tinyurl.com/2mfn8k>

Amazing perspective on where we came from (see link above). It took all that time and global trekking from mid-eastern Africa to get us to where we are (e.g., all N. American humans are really African-Americans). We’d be foolish not to guard that human journey and evolve it. ~jpc

It’s a great calling being human today. Namaste.

April 4 You Still Eat Meat?

Americans and Europeans eat meat because we want to, not because we have to. And we do it at the expense of animals, people and the environment [and our own health and life-span]. We would do well to consider a dietary

change. ~Kathy Freston, "You Call Yourself a Progressive – But You Still Eat Meat?" 3/14/07 <http://tinyurl.com/2wdvln>, via Jim Rippey

Yes, I still do, but I'm repenting by joining AV (almost vegetarian). The primary reason, besides my health, is the health of the planetary community, which the above article makes too clear for comfort. ~jpc

Good news: we have so much left to give up. Namaste.

April 5 "Leave No Child Inside"

A number of trends, including the recent unexpected national media attention to . . . "nature-deficit disorder," have now brought the concerns . . . before a broader audience. While some may argue that the word "movement" is hyperbole, we do seem to have reached a tipping point. State and regional campaigns, sometimes called Leave No Child Inside, have begun to form. ~Richard Louv <http://tinyurl.com/32dece>

In Galax, when I was growing up, we played in broomsage fields, dug forts on the big hill, climbed apple and cherry trees, played with toy trucks under the big maple tree in the yard, and walked the trails on the Blue Ridge Parkway. We suffered not from "nature-deficit disorder." ~jpc

*Wonder in nature is healing in most every way.
Namaste.*

April 6 **Courage In Spite Of**

To believe in love in the face of hatred, life in the face of death, day in the dark of night, good in the face of evil – to some, all of these may seem to be hopelessly naïve, wishful thinking, . . . “whistling in the dark” . . . ; but, to Tillich, all of these are manifestations of . . . the courage of confidence . . . [which] “says ‘in spite of’ even to death.”
~Peter J. Gomes, intro. to 2nd ed. of *The Courage To Be*, by Paul Tillich, p. xxiii

Whence comes such courage? Wherever it comes from, we’ve all experienced it. ~jpc

*“Courage in spite of . . .” is a mantra for today.
Namaste.*

April 7 **New Creeds**

. . . God’s seal is set forever on Jesus’ message and ministry. In him we know that God is love, and that forgiveness and acceptance are ours always. In him we are called to realize God’s kingdom in our own lives and in the lives of others. In him we are called to join with God in making all things new. We believe God has granted to us and to all humanity the same Spirit that was in Jesus, creating community and empowering us to be like him. . . . ~Tom Harpur, “New Creeds” (chapter 3), *The Emerging Christian Way*

“We believe God has granted to us and to all humanity the same Spirit that was in Jesus.” That is very good to know: the same *spirit*. ~jpc

At the heart of all is the same spirit. Namaste.

April 8 Easter Sunday Dialogue (XLVII)

Journer: What is the meaning of Easter?

Nez: One* of my students wrote, “. . . then I am here risen / accomplishing a resurrection / risen, not born again, but risen, body same as before, / new beyond knowledge of newness, alive beyond life / . . . myself same as before, but unaccountably new.”

Journer: That doesn't come from scripture, does it?

Nez: Yes, from the scripture of every person's life experience with transforming *spirit*, where all scripture comes from that's worth its salt.

* **D. H. Lawrence**, from “New Heaven and Earth,” *DHL Selected Poems*, p. 78

April 9 “I, New-risen, Resurrected”

*. . . Ha, I was a blaze leaping up!
I was a tiger bursting into sunlight.
I was greedy, I was mad for the unknown.
I, new-risen, resurrected, starved from the tomb,*

*. . . now here was I, new-awakened, with my hand
stretching out
and touching the unknown, the real unknown,
the unknown unknown.*

~D. H. Lawrence, from "New Heaven and Earth," *DHL Selected Poems*, p. 79

Persons experiencing resurrection in this life was the blaze
that started the Christian church – and restarts it now.
~jpc

*Gratitude for resurrections I've already experienced.
Namaste.*

April 10 "The Chance To See LIFE"

*. . . A wise one I admire declares this Holy Child
Not born to die, but born to live
So you and I might have the chance to see LIFE
Running on all cylinders
Extravagantly, lovingly poured out with joy. . . .*

~Janice Ulangca, "From the Silence," 2006

Here are more lines about the meaning of resurrection in
this life. ~jpc

Seeing is believing. Namaste.

April 11 **Respecting Her Seniority**

I would feel more optimistic about a bright future for man [*sic*] if he spent less time proving that he can outwit Nature and more time tasting her sweetness and respecting her seniority. ~E. B. White, "Coon Tree," *Essays of E. B. White*, p. 47

I bow to all that is / all universes, our universe, and mother earth / all species and all human beings / and *spirit's* transforming presence. ~jpc

I bow to all as *thou* this day. Namaste.

April 12 **"Spirit Is Waging Peace"**

Spirit is waging peace
when foolish rush to war.
Spirit is waging peace
amid the costly roar.

Search your holy scriptures –
is *spirit* waging peace?
It verily declares,
"You're born that war will cease."

~jpc, 3/24/07

Jesus: "spirit's children are peacemakers." Namaste.

April 13 Spirit Humor

Humor is an expression of spirit and fellowship in the midst of a descent into the underworld, it's a means of commenting on reality and getting through uncertain times of risk and pain. (Frankl described humor at Auschwitz and Dachau as among "the soul's weapons in the fight for self-preservation.") ~**Jean Shinoda Bolen**, *Close to the Bone*, p. 37, via LLC via LiDona Wagner

I am always addressed by that smile on the Buddha's face and wonder what s/he is smiling about in this grim moment? ~jpc

As Annie sings, "You're never fully dressed without a smile." Namaste.

April 14 Radical Detachment

1) If it happens that the human race doesn't make it, then the fact that we were here once will not be altered, that once upon a time we peopled this astonishing blue planet. . . . We emerged out of depthless mystery, and back into mystery we returned, and in the end the mystery is all there is. ~**James Howard Kunstler**, *The Long Emergency*, pp 20-21, via JPC II

2) Don't worry about the world coming to an end today. It's already tomorrow in Australia . ~**Charles Schultz**, via April Eckman

Two different ways of looking from outside ourselves at ourselves . . . maybe enabling some detachment to make new decisions. ~jpc

In but not of; not of but in. Namaste.

April 15 Sunday Dialogue (XLVIII)

Journer: Please explain to me how consciousness works.

Nez: I say with one* of my students that few have “explained the origins of consciousness (or even how consciousness works).”

Journer: So we don’t know?

Nez: The right question, Journer, is How do you express, share, and live the consciousness you have?

* Sharon Begley, *newsweek.com*, Letters and Live Talk, 3/10/07

April 16 Not a Pollyanna Idea

“Peace is strategy, just like war,” says [**Judi**] **Poulson** [women’s Peace Club in Fairmont, Minnesota]. “. . . This is not a Pollyanna idea. . . .” It turns out that many local-government officials across the nation agree. The city councils in nearly 20 communities – including Atlanta, Detroit, Chicago and Newark, N.J. – have passed resolutions supporting the Department of Peace [bill now

under deliberation in Congress]. ~Daniel Zwerdling, “Peace Department Proposal Rattles Small Town,” *www.npr.org*, 3/24/07, via LLC

The bill’s time has come, even though Poulson’s community passed then rescinded the resolution of support because of a backlash – calling the resolution “communist” and giving the “United Nations power over the United States” and making us “a bunch of wusses” – and even though the USA has been attempting to legislate a Dept. of Peace (and Non-Violence) for 200 years. ~jpc

More local peace and nonviolence clubs. Namaste.

April 17 More Accessible

More liberal commentators, particularly women, say . . . usual interpretation [of the Koran, for instance] reflects . . . patriarchal practices . . . [They say] the sacred texts have become encrusted with medieval traditions that need to be scraped off like a layer of barnacles. . . . [T]he Asma Society gathered Muslim women from around the world in New York last fall to explore the establishment of a female council to interpret Islamic law. ~Neil MacFarquhar, “New Translation Prompts Debate on Islamic Verse,” *nytimes.com*, 3/25/07

Post-modern women translating the Koran, such as Laleh Bakhtiar, whose translation comes out in April, can help make Islam more accessible to post-modern people, especially women. ~jpc

Reformation is eternal. Namaste.

April 18 *spirit is spirit is spirit*

The execution . . . of the simple formula that Jesus suggested requires the heavy application of an element of faith: faith that the Muslim's spirit is the same spirit Christians know; faith that the Jew's spirit is one and the same as the spirit Hindus know; faith that the spirit known in the secular world as "synergism" is the same spirit Buddhists know. ~**David J. Pope**, from a summary note of his book *Interrupting Behavioral Evolution*

Spirit is spirit is spirit, pure and simple, inside and out, up one side and down the other. ~jpc

The one spirit unites creation. Namaste.

April 19 **Wrought with Travail**

[I]n the middle of this time is the Spirit, as always, working through our confusion and conflict to bring a new thing into being. For this is the eternal work of the Spirit – to resurrect God's people when their old ways are dying. ~**Brian C. Taylor**, "The Episcopal Church as Prophet to our Day," 3/4/07 sermon <http://tinyurl.com/2wyuru> , via Ida Forbis

Old ways keep dying and bringing us new life often wrought with travail. At the time, the comfort of the *holy spirit* is not always experienced as comfort. ~jpc

Bring it on anyway. Namaste.

April 20 A Clear Picture Emerges

According to the U.S. Department of Energy . . . world oil consumption rose consistently from 77 million barrels a day in 2001 to above 85 million so far this year. A clear picture emerges: demand now exceeds world supply. ~James Kunstler, "Making Other Arrangements," Jan-Feb 2007 <http://tinyurl.com/2nj9e7> via LLC

At all human levels—global, continental, national, regional, and local – honest information, focus, individual and corporate will are called for. ~jpc

These are the times / we are the people. Namaste.

April 21 We're Now In It

[S]elf-realization is the knowing in all parts of body, mind, and soul that you are now in possession of the kingdom of God; that you do not have to pray that it come to you. ~*The Essence of Self-Realization: The Wisdom of Paramhansa Yogananda* (wikipedia.com)

This is all we need to experience and know, finally. ~jpc

*Celebrate the kingdom of spirit always at hand.
Namaste.*

April 22 Sunday Dialogue (XLIX)

Journer: What would you name the 20th century?

Nez: The century of the Great Wars.

Journer: What would you name the 21st century?

Nez: One* of my students named it the century of the Great Work.

* **Thomas Berry**, author of *The Great Work: Our Way into the Future*

April 23 Prayer and Spiritual Reality

Save we understand corporately that prayer is a spiritual task, and that the doing of it is to bring about a spiritual reality, then we're going to do far more harm than good, and should never set forth. ~**Joseph Mathews**, "Prayer," *Bending History*, p. 138

What spiritual reality are we praying into being these days? Off the top of my head, peace, care for the total earth community, and a deep sense of meaning for the human community. ~jpc

Praying hands do as praying hands pray. Namaste.

April 24 Sharing Things that Matter

[W]e all have so much to teach each other. Buddhists can teach us about the delight of contemplation and “the infinite within.” From Muslims we can learn about the nature of surrender; from Jews, the power of the prophetic conscience; from Hindus, the “realms of gold” hidden in the depths of our hearts; from Confucians the empathy necessary to sustain the fragile web of civilization. . . . [A]ll the great religious grapple with things that matter. . . . ~**Bill Moyers**, “A Time for Anger, a Call to Action,” Occidental College, 2/7/07, *commondreams.org*, 3/22/07, via Richard Kroeger

One spirit tradition. Namaste.

April 25 So We Can Do Other Great Causes

We’ve got to slow global warming. One reason is so we can go on making the world a better place. ~**Bill McKibben**, “The Crunch: Act Now to Preserve a Future Full of Human Possibility,” *www.orionmagazine.org*, Mar-Apr, 2007

I am reminded of the conversation with Thomas Berry that changed my thinking with words like, “You can go on doing your other great causes, but if the earth becomes uninhabitable for humans, then. . . .” ~jpc

*So that the earth continues to stage human possibility.
Namaste.*

April 26 Almost to Phase VI

[Harry] Bernstein began writing *The Invisible Wall* when he was 93 as a way to deal with his memories and the loneliness [after losing his wife]. . . . “So you think of the past, particularly at nighttime when you’re lying in bed. And it all came back. So I began to write. . . .” ~Rebecca Santana, AP writer, *news.yahoo.com*, 3/31/07, via LLC

Harry understands a cardinal rule for living: no retirement. His second book is almost finished. Go, Harry. ~jpc

Life is for living all the way. Namaste.

April 27 “The Healing Sun”

Taking a daily 10- to 15-minute walk in natural sunlight not only clears our head, relieves stress and increases circulation, it could also cut the risk of . . . [internal] cancer. ~*newstarget.com*, via LLC

A walking meditation would be in order . . . reflecting in gratitude on how the Sun sustains us. ~jpc

*Something to do as it rolls “around heaven all day.”
Namaste.*

April 28 Sing a Local Hero

An unsung hero is being sung, one Weldon Phipps. More than six decades he’s been working downtown, Galax,

Virginia (my hometown), and most of that time in his shoe repair shop. He's another candidate for Studs Terkel's *Working*, a book about people who love their work. Weldon has been working at least 80-hour weeks through the years – it's not unusual to find him in the shop late at night and very early into the morning. His love of his work shows in its quality. He is among millions of local persons who glue our society together. Vibrant local community is impossible without them. ~jpc

Let us sing local heroes. Namaste.

April 29 Sunday Dialogue (L)

Journer: What do you think about the two-kingdom theory: the kingdom of God and the kingdom of this world?

Nez: A big lie!

Journer: What kind of reaction is that?

Nez: The absolute truth. There is only one kingdom and *spirit* is its heart.

April 30 One, Holy, and Related

Thesis 60: All that is is holy and all that is is related, for all being in our universe began as one being just before the fireball erupted. ~**Matthew Fox**, from his 95 theses, *The*

New Reformation (2006)

*One, holy, and related –
originally, now, and forever –
from fireball to fireball.*

Amen.

~jpc

It is so. So be it. Namaste.

May

May 1 Each Choice

*As the eagle soars in the endless blue,
Its shadow races after it, far below.
Yet space does not divide: bird and shadow are linked.
So too each act – each choice
and consequence.*

~Jigme Lingpa, via LLC

Each choice, act, and consequence are linked, just as creature and shadow. We are, without ceasing, casting our shadow on creation. ~jpc

May our castings be salvific. Namaste.

May 2 Practice of Reflection

[O]rdinary thinking is now inadequate. . . . We must introduce the practice of reflection into our daily lives. . . . Discernment and reflection, however, are unfamiliar to the mainstream mind for several reasons. . . . No times more than these have . . . called for . . . a way to keep your own inner balance, to maintain the health of not just your body, but also your conscience, your integrity, your decision-making process: in short, the whole of your interior self. ~Caroline Myss, “Learn,” via Cheryl Kartes

These and much more – “my true self” and our relation to the universe – make up the whole of our interior self. ~jpc

And let us learn to reflect on behalf of. Namaste.

May 3 “It’s In the Air”

... I watched amazed when she fixed the fragile
leaf in thin air high above my head.

And when I asked about its watering,
she said, *It’s in the air all it needs
to live and grow is in the air.*

As the tendrils began to show, I had my first
theological thought at five, deciding then
I knew the most I would ever need to know
about the one they called the Holy Spirit. . . .

~from poem by **Warren L. Molton**, 3/3/07, via Donna
Ziegenhorn and Priscilla Wilson

It’s in the air, all we need to know. Namaste.

May 4 Journey with Spirit

Keep a diary, like a ship’s log. It gives you a sense of
direction . . . when you see your life as a journey. ~**John
S. Dunne**, *ND Works*, 3/26/07, via Elizabeth Mazurek

A quote from his latest little book: “Indwelling *in* my world,
in my time, *in* my body, I pray with St. Augustine, “May
I know me! / May I know thee!” – and I find the answer

to my prayer. . . . I am who I am in relationship with God, and “God is spirit,” as Jesus tells the woman at the well.”
~J.S.Dunne, *A Vision Quest*, p. 41, 2006

God is ever-present spirit. Namaste.

May 5 Priorities

True compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar; it comes to see that an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring. ~**M.L. King, Jr.**, cited by Norman Solomon and Jeff Cohen, “The Martin Luther King You Don’t See on TV,” 4/4/07 www.alternet.org/story/50101/ via Gene and Joyce Marshall

This article says the media denounced King at the last for putting forth the priorities of poverty and peace. For 2007, Solomon and Cohen put forth priorities of “poverty, education, health care, and environmental cleanup.” What is your list of priorities? ~jpc

Let us think and pray. Namaste.

May 6 Sunday Dialogue (LI)

Journer: What is the new paradigm?

Nez: My student* said, “Till now man [*sic*] has been up against Nature; from now on he will be up against his own nature.”

Journer: So what's the difference?

Nez: Our depth issue is our human relation to all that is. That's why we teach our next generation to bow and say "Namaste."

* **Dennis Gabor**, *Inventing the Future*, 1963 (same year the environmental movement began)

May 7 Feelings on the Journey

Every problem, every crisis, no matter what it may look like, is a crisis of faith. . . . I wonder whether Americans are psychologically healthy enough for the spiritual journey. It seems they must feel *good* about themselves all the time! How far can you go on the spiritual journey if you must feel *good* about yourself all the time? ~Fr. **Murray Rogers**, "The Passing of a Dear Elder," Human Kindness Foundation's *A Little Good News*, Spring 2007, via LLC

It's quite okay to feel *bad* about yourself on the journey. It's quite okay to experience the dark night of the soul. Feeling *good* about yourself is not required to have faith.
~jpc

It's very good to know we're on the journey no matter how we feel. Namaste.

May 8 Universal Evangelism

... [I commend to you] a practice for realizing your True Nature – which you can call God, Allah, Jahweh, Brahman, Tao, Ein Sof – it doesn't really matter, because the core of [this exercise] is Emptiness itself, which, having no specific content at all, can and does embrace anything. ... Spirit is fully and completely present, looking through your eyes, listening with your ears, ... right now! [This practice] works at virtually any major stage of development – whether you are at magic, mythic, rational, pluralistic, integral, or super-integral: any stage can do [it] and awaken to the ever-present, all-pervading, infinite Reality of All Being. ~Ken Wilber, from Foreword to *Big Mind/Big Heart*, forthcoming book by Genpo Roshi (via Joe Slicker)

Sounds like a universal altar call to me. Namaste.

Note: See chapter “. . . Transrational Spirituality,” a dialogue with J.W. Mathews and Ken Wilber on the same subject, in jpc's *The Transparent Event*, pp. 171-86.

May 9 Respiritualization of Society

[A] respiritualization of society is taking place, but one more experiential and non-institutionalized, less fundamental and sacerdotal than most of the historically familiar forms of religion. . . . [W]e have been oppressing ourselves with a belief system . . . which is not compatible with a viable future for human society on the planet. ~Willis Harman, “Why A World Business Academy?” via Randy Williams

“Less fundamental and sacerdotal,” less founded on “belief system,” more “compatible with viable future for human society *and* the planet”? What are other hallmarks of the respiritized society? I’ll add more ecumenical, or at least more knowledgeable of other religions and cultures? ~jpc

Our oneness is more obvious, in spite of our warring and bashing. Namaste.

May 10 Stuck

Buddha used the word *duhkha*, which is usually translated as *unsatisfactoriness* or *suffering*, but literally refers to a stuck axle that won’t turn. When we are stuck, not willing to flow with life’s changes, we suffer. ~Dennis Genpo Merzel, *24/7 Dharma*, pg. 4

Now this makes more sense than my traditional concept of Buddhist “suffering.” Could be that being stuck in this-worldliness of small mind and heart is the primary suffering, especially for us in the West. ~jpc

What better reason to retreat and meditate than to get unstuck, to begin turning and flowing again. Namaste.

May 11 “This Other Word”

*All is good . . . hardly.
My life is accepted . . . seldom.
The past is approved . . . rarely.*

The future is open . . . maybe.

This is the popular word
of diminishing returns that
guides me in my heedless hours.

But I know there's another word:
all is good . . . period . . .
my life, the past, the future.

Or any time, place, situation,
and all relationships
are right, perfect, and whole.

I confess this other word –
outlandish and strange –
doesn't make sense daily.

Yet, a crimson line of journeers
have lived off its meaning
and made its power real.

So, there you go,
and here I am,
in belief and non. ~jpc

May 12 “Whatever Happened to Wisdom?”

Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?

Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?

~T. S. Elliot, “The Rock” (1934)

Knowledge, we have plenty of, with more on the way every day. Yet our abilities to exercise our judgment seem evermore impaired as we become overwhelmed with information. We have become enthralled – and paralyzed – by the so-called “expertise” of the few and the relativism of the many. . . . Whatever happened to wisdom? ~Eric Weislogel, “Whatever Happened to Wisdom?” *The Global Spiral* (via *Metanexus* magazine, Spring 2007)

No Child Left . . . without Wisdom. Namaste.

May 13 Sunday Dialogue (LII)

Journer: How do we deeply respect each other?

Nez: My student* said, “Whenever I meet even a ‘foreigner,’ I have always the same feeling: I am meeting another member of the human family.”

Journer: But how do I learn to do that?

Nez: Walk around bowing to everything and everybody, even if you end up stooped.

* The Dalai Lama <http://www.dalailama.com/page.62.htm>

May 14 Local Demonstration Projects

It is now time for local religious communities to stand up and be counted if the poverty [or whatever deeply felt

moral issue] that is rampant in our nation and world is to be addressed. Many religious communities are strategically positioned and uniquely qualified to become signs, locally and regionally, of how its committed members, working in cooperation with other local entities, can effectively address this issue at the local level. It will take (1) a small core of committed members who will make this a priority, (2) a critical mass of other members who will work with the core to support and implement the programs, (3) the support and involvement of the group's religious leader (pastor, rabbi, imam, etc.) and staff, and (4) the endorsement and support of the local religious group's administrative body. While all of these may not be forthcoming at once, all will be critical if the effort is to have sustainable success. ~Randy Williams, Catholic layperson, Texas

Sounds like a plan, especially if the small core of committed members, and one iron person, especially, will go the distance. Namaste.

May 15 New Rituals and Rules

Rabbi Steve Greenberg said to me that the rules of living environmentally . . . could be a sort of new eco-kashrut, social rules of behavior that make life eco-kosher and which we would follow in order to be part of a larger tradition and community and to serve a common good. ~<http://noimpactman.typepad.com/blog> via Karen Synder

I like the idea of “eco-kosher” living as part of a larger community for the common good. It makes sense today and honors a great tradition. ~jpc

We long for transformed rituals and rules for the present world. Namaste.

May 16 Love What?

[I]n the pre-modern world, before about 1600, the object of belief was never a statement. It was always a person. To believe meant to “belove” a person. To “belove” Jesus means more than simply loving Jesus. It means to love what Jesus loved. That is at the heart of Christianity. ~**Marcus Borg**, “Theologian Urges a New Way of Looking at Jesus,” Nancy Haught, *usatoday.com*, 4/5/07, via Ellie Stock

What did Jesus love? Sinners, enemies, neighbors, the poor, peacemakers, children, birds and flowers, and mostly this place – the kingdom, and *spirit* at its center, that he called “Father.” ~jpc

Of such is the heart of Christianity. Namaste.

May 17 Golden Rule

I am comforted by the words of my 9 year old as he talks to his little brother. His words echo what I have said to him: “That wouldn’t be fair; you wouldn’t like that if I did that to you.” I believe that the simplest phrases may be

the most powerful teachers of all. ~Karen, Wallkill, NY,
thisibelieve.org, via Karen Snyder

How do we separate secular from religious here? Check out http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethic_of_reciprocity to see how this laddie is in league with the scores of religions of the world *a la* the “golden rule.” ~jpc

And it's not about just human rights. Namaste.

May 18 Something Earth-changing

Paul Hawken . . . in the peroration to his forthcoming book, . . . *Blessed Unrest*: “The thinking that informs the [ecological sanity and social justice] movement’s goal to create a just society conducive to life on earth will reign. It will soon suffuse and permeate most institutions, but before then it will change a sufficient number of people so as to begin the reversal of centuries of frenzied self-destruction.” He’s right – I can feel it in every bone of my body.” ~Bill McKibben, “The Crunch,” Mar-Apr, 2007, *orionmagazine.org*

Such a non-movement movement is what democracy is all about. ~jpc

Hope is alive. Namaste.

May 19 “The Meaning of Existence”

*Everything except language
knows the meaning of existence.
Trees, planets, rivers, time
know nothing else. They express it
moment by moment as the universe. . . .*

~Les Murray, from *Poems the Size of Photographs*, via
Jeanette Stanfield

And so do we humans express the meaning of existence
moment by moment as the universe. ~jpc

*So who are we? / Universe man . . . / Universe woman.
Namaste.*

May 20 Sunday Dialogue (LIII)

Journer: What's your take on humanity?

Nez: My student* said it well, “They cannot look out far.
/ They cannot look in deep.”

Journer: Interpretation, please.

Nez: If we lived for the seventh generation next and learned
to meditate a couple of hours a day, we'd be more nearly
human.

* Robert Frost, “Neither Out Far nor In Deep”

May 21 Prejudice Tolerated

[L]isten around and become aware of the prejudice in everyday life [his example, Don Imus remarks]. We are so surrounded by expressions of intolerance that I am in shock and awe that anyone noticed. . . . Still, I'm gladdened because our no longer being deaf to them may signal their eventual eradication. . . . Prejudice tolerated is intolerance encouraged. ~**Harvey Fierstein**, "Our Prejudices, Ourselves," *nytimes.com*, 4/13/07

Knowing we are all prejudiced, how do I encourage intolerance: by how I vote? by my religion? the products I buy? my indifference to the non-human community. ~jpc

We never get beyond repenting. Namaste.

May 22 Sense of the Sacred

The difficulty is that the natural world is seen primarily for human use. . . . In our present attitude the natural world remains a commodity to be bought and sold, not a sacred reality to be venerated. . . . Eventually, only our sense of the sacred will save us. ~**Thomas Berry**, *Chrysalis*, Spring 2007, via LLC

When we see and venerate all creation, including humans, healing will occur for all, especially for those of us whose attitude is founded on "God gave us creation to use." ~jpc

All is made "in the image of God." Namaste.

May 23 **Great Lie of Our Time**

There is . . . a way out. . . . It will come from the much derided moderate Muslims, tolerant Jews and humble Christians [and 1.4 billion Hindus and Buddhists]. . . . Fundamentalism is not the only valid form of faith, and to say it is, is the great lie of our time. ~**Andrew Sullivan**, "When Not Seeing Is Believing," *Time* magazine, 10/9/06,

How do we deal with fundamentalism, an underlying contradiction to the future of the earth community? If I were Pope, I'd write and speak more about fundamentalism than about secularism. ~jpc

*O that religion brought unity and peace on earth.
Namaste.*

May 24 **"Hope Against Darkness"**

Everything stopped and . . . everything was refocused and redirected. . . . [Shifting] images force consciousness to utterly new questions and configurations. The realignments are in all directions. For a while, we are not sure what good is and what evil is, what matters, and what will last. ~**Richard Rohr**, "Hope Against Darkness," via Jack Gilles

When such happens to us *en masse* and individually, things are never the same. New life just is. Great anxiety just is. Such shifts have been happening since the beginning and mark our universe history. ~jpc

*Billions of years . . . and here we are . . . yet alive.
Namaste.*

May 25 Way of Life Buried

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change predicts that global warming . . . could raise the ocean's surface as much as 23 inches by 2100. . . . A recent study . . . at Jadavpur University found that in the last 30 years, nearly 31 square miles of the Sundarbans [islands south of Calcutta] have vanished entirely. ~Somini Sengupta, "Sea's Rise in India Buries Islands and a Way of Life," *nytimes.com*, 4/11/07

Sanctity of life comes in many shapes and forms. What about the sanctity (right to life) of future generations? ~jpc

Comprehensive love is our prayer. Namaste.

May 26 Christian Nation?

[Jon] Meacham . . . [managing editor of *Newsweek*] suggests that Americans may find reconciliation by rejecting the notion that America is a Christian nation. . . . In his book, *American Gospel* . . . , Meacham refers to a treaty during George Washington's administration [that starts] . . . : "As the Government of the United States of America is not in any sense founded on the Christian religion. . . ." ~Emory and Henry College alumni magazine, Spring 2007

The USA is a demonstration of a pluriform nation of "all

God's children," and it's our democratic and conciliatory duty to keep it so. ~jpc

Reconciliation is a godly thing. Namaste

May 27 Sunday Dialogue (LIV)

Journer: Is there such a thing as authentic religion?

Nez: My student* said, "Real religion produces the spirit of humility and repentance. It destroys moral conceit."

Journer: What does "moral conceit" mean?

Nez: You've heard of conceited, know-it-all, self-important, righteous? Those who think themselves superior in relation to other humans and the earth will be humiliated and brought to their knees.

* Reinhold Niebuhr, *Love and Justice*, p. 37.

May 28 "Have Borne the Battle"

With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with

all nations. ~**Abraham Lincoln**, second inaugural address
(with John Wilkes Booth in the audience)

This holds the essence of Memorial Day in many ways.
~jpc

*“To do all which may achieve and cherish a just and
lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.”
Namaste.*

May 29 Style of Love

“Love is stronger than death,” the canticle of Solomon sings. . . . What would a life look like that incarnated such a truth? It might look like a community of people engaging all the rest of us with a hospitality that will not quit, a respect that honors the least and the last. It might be a way of life that seeks the transformation of all that is creaturely: earth, air, water, fire, bread, fruit of the vine, and all manner of human persons, all “creatures great and small.” ~**Don Sillers**, “Crown of the Year,” *America*, 4/2/07, via Randy Williams

The style of love is changing from primarily love of self and tribe to include love for all humans and love for all creation, but it may take a few days. ~jpc

O to be a conscious part of that change. Namaste.

May 30 Cosmic Conscience

... [C]osmic conscience: the realization that “It’s up to me.” ... You realize that who you really are and what you’re here for is far greater than any of your personal concerns. ~**Andrew Cohen**, *Quote of the Week*, 8/14/06

This state of consciousness has happened to each of use.
~jpc

O the wonder of it all and my part in it. Namaste.

May 31 The Great Search

You have been searching for how long now? Well, it is time for the Great Search to end. As long as you are searching, you are looking for a future moment that will be better than this moment, but it is this moment that holds the entire key. ~**Ken Wilber**, Foreword to *Big Mind/Big Heart*, forthcoming book by Genpo Roshi (via Joe Slicker)

This moment in time is as good as it gets. It holds all the meaning there is. ~jpc

Help thou “my great search” to end. Namaste.

June

June 1 Spirit of the Law

Religious laws, in all the major traditions, have both a letter and a spirit. As I understand the words and example of Jesus, the spirit of a law is all-important, whereas the letter, while useful in conjunction with spirit, becomes lifeless and deadly without it. ~David James Duncan

<http://tinyurl.com/gcad3>

The letter of the law, religious or not, *can* kill our spirits.
The spirit of the law, religious or not, can inspire our spirits.
~jpc

Let us live by the whole, merciful law at the heart of life. Namaste.

June 2 What Did Jesus Say?

Far from being a Book full of bad news for gays and lesbians, I believe the Bible is indeed full of good news of God's love for all of creation. . . . The Bible has no clear and consistent sex ethic and only knows a love ethic, which is constantly being brought to bear on whatever sexual mores, moral codes or church teachings are dominant in any given country, culture, or period. There is also the emphasis on grace rather than on law. ~former United Methodist Bishop **Yap Kim Hao**, Singapore

Jesus said nothing about homosexuality but a lot about love. So, let's go with Jesus on this one, in as loving ways as possible, which of course include new structures of justice. ~jpc

Spirit loves us all equally well, regardless of sexual identity. Namaste.

June 3 Sunday Dialogue (LV)

Journer: What makes us joyful?

Nez: My student* says, "Be joyful though you've considered all the facts."

Journer: So what makes us joyful?

Nez: Joy is an ever-present spring, so splash around in it and be joyful.

* **Wendell Berry**, via Geri Tolman

June 4 National Will

In 1973, America imported 35 percent of the oil it used; today that figure is greater than 60 percent. . . . In a fit of frustration [over this national problem], I asked . . . what we needed to do to reawaken Congressional interest. [A Senator] asked me if I knew how to start another Arab embargo [1973]. He was right. Without a crisis, a real

national energy program could not get past normal political paralysis. The [President] Ford initiative [1975] was the last real national attempt to reduce our vulnerability. ~**Frank G. Zarb**, “How to Win the Energy War,” *nytimes.com*, 5/23/07

O for the will, national and personal, to avert war and warming. Namaste.

June 5 Movements of the Soul

Let him [*sic*] who is consoled see to humbling himself . . . , thinking how little he is able . . . in the time of desolation without . . . grace. . . . On the contrary, let him who is in desolation think that he can do much with . . . grace. ~**Ignatius of Loyola**, “For Perceiving and Knowing in Some Manner the Different Movements Which Are Caused in the Soul,” *The Spiritual Exercises*, via Randy Williams

Ignatius’ two movements of the soul – between “desolation” (unaware of grace) and “consolation” (aware of grace) – speak to everyone’s journey. ~jpc

Let us be thankful for the whole journey, giving thanks for grace and our dependence upon it. Namaste.

June 6 On-Behalf-Of Exercise

The Dalai Lama says that he does Tonglen every day, and in particular for the Chinese officials who torture and

kill Tibetans. He says: “I visualize them and draw their ignorance, prejudice, hatred and pride into myself. I do this with such strong feeling that if later I hear about atrocities, the intensity of my own negative feelings is reduced to the point of groundlessness.” <http://www.aboutmeditation.com/tonglen.html>

May our meditation birth compassion. Namaste.

June 7 “To Remake the World”

Inspiration . . . resides in humanity’s willingness to restore, redress, reform, recover, reimagine, and reconsider. Healing the wounds of the Earth and its people does not require saintliness or a political party. It is not a liberal or conservative activity. It is a sacred act. ~Paul Hawken, “To Remake the World,” *orionmagazine.org*, May-June 2007, via George Holcombe

The sacred act of healing the earth and its people is the great work that calls us. ~jpc

O to be about our great work. Namaste.

June 8 Friend I’ll Never See

One day I went to see Andrew Cohen and asked him for a word of direction. He responded to me in typical Desert fashion by saying, . . . “To let yourself be guided by the friend that you will never see is the dawning of humility.” I left my encounter with Andrew thinking, “This is what the

Christ is, a friend that I will never see.” ~Sr. Gail Worcelo,
www.greenmountainmonastery.org “Andrew Cohen and
Evolutionary Transformation”

Spirit is that friend and comes in many manifestations.
~jpc

What a friend I have in. . . Namaste.

June 9 Our Reptilian Brain

I Googled to see who came up with the “reptilian brain” concept. As the theory of the evolution of the “triune brain” <http://tinyurl.com/229gp4> indicates, each of us carries the whole, “evolved” brain with us today, including the aged, wild, reptilian part. Yet, our modern brain has been at least as dangerous (a couple of examples: nuclear munitions and “holy” wars) – evil in many respects – as our old brain. We need to examine our brains – and our morals.
~jpc

We give thanks for our brains and promise to do better with them. Namaste.

June 10 Sunday Dialogue (LVI)

Journer: Trying to figure out the meaning of “God” stupefies me.

Nez: My student* said, “‘God’ is a relational term: we either embrace the given with thanksgiving or curse it.”

Journer: You threw me a curve with the phrase “the given” relative to “God.”

Nez: Since “God’s” at the heart of “the given,” you are embracing or cursing “God” in the way you relate to what is, or as you relate to your given situation.

* Joe Pierce via Carlos Zervigon

June 11 Dialogue with God

Fred Gealy says that the spiritual life is nothing but a dialogue, a dialogue with God. You say, “Over my dead body will Being continue the way it is.” That’s what you mean when you say that a revolutionary only dies in her tactics. God never slaughtered anybody who stood up to him [*sic*], except in her tactics. ~Joseph Mathews, *Bending History*, pg. 137

Mary said, “Be it unto me according to thy word.” Obviously she and *spirit* consensed on her bearing the child. Whether or not the child was immaculately conceived, their dialogue was real, and being changed.
~jpc

O to be a handmaiden of spirit. Namaste.

June 12 To See the Abyss

The failure of *reasonable people* is appalling; they cannot

manage to see either the abyss of evil or the abyss of holiness. ~Bonhoeffer, *Ethics* (2005 translation: Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works, vol 6), p. 78

I have seen the abyss of evil and it looks something like Picasso's "Guernica." I have seen the abyss of holiness and it looks something like a scene from India of students from the poorest villages being really educated, especially the girls. We humans have seen it all. ~jpc

*O for the eyes to really see what we have seen.
Namaste.*

June 13 He's Come a Long Way

Since being literally thrown off the train as a colored man, M. K. Gandhi has come a long way in South Africa. In Durban, the city officials propose to name a major downtown street after the man who helped revolutionize the nation's colonialism and apartheid with a new weapon they called "satyagraha," or nonviolent resistance. Who knows, maybe someday nonviolence will become the global weapon of choice – mercifully more transforming than nuclear bombs. ~jpc

Let us keep evolving in spite of ourselves. Namaste.

June 14 By What Authority?

A church based on the authority of the God of theism

cannot [be the mediator of the courage to be] . . . but a church which raises itself in its message and its devotion to the God above the God of theism without sacrificing its concrete symbols can mediate a courage which takes doubt and meaninglessness into itself. ~Tillich, *The Courage to Be*, p. 188

A truly religious body does not worship its symbols – be they revered messiahs, scriptures, theologies, laws, leaders, or relics – but worships the holy *spirit*, which is always *in* but never *of* its symbols. By including and transcending its symbols, the body mediates transforming power. ~jpc

O to be true to the holy spirit. Namaste.

June 15 Truth and Conscience

“The highest aim of every legal contest is the search for truth,” [North Carolina] Wake Superior Court **Judge Paul Ridgeway** wrote in an 18-page opinion. “To require pious and faithful practitioners of religions other than Christianity to swear oaths in a form other than the form most meaningful to them would thwart the search for the truth.” . . . Ridgeway suggested that courts allow witnesses to bring their own texts, so long as the material is “calculated to awaken the witness’ conscience.” ~Eric J. S. Townsend, “Judge: Courts Can Use *Quran*,” *news-record.com*, 5/25/07

Truth and conscience are at the heart of an authentic legal

system. Thus, witnesses should be allowed to swear on the holy scripture that means most to them. ~jpc

Use any window onto truth that awakens. Namaste.

June 16 Everyday Earth Ritual

Leader: . . . We see ourselves as part of the universe, as part of all that is seen and all that is unseen. . . . Do you know your task?

People: Unless you know your task and perform it . . . you stray from the Good Red Road. . . .

Unison: Remember to pray with “all nations, all faiths, one prayer” for healing Grandmother Earth.

Namaste.

~Chief Arvol Looking Horse, 19th Generation Keeper of the Buffalo Calf Pipe www.wolakota.org via Herman Greene

Note: We remember Larry Henschen’s Memorial Service: “All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well.” ~Julian of Norwich, via Randy Williams

June 17 Sunday Dialogue (LVII)

Journer: Who knows meaning?

Nez: My student* said, “Write it on your heart / that every day is the best day in the year. / He is rich who owns the day. . . .”

Journer: So, a child, an elder, the poor and the sick can experience meaning?

Nez: Absolutely, if they live this day and not throw it away.

* **Ralph Waldo Emerson**, via Richard Galbreath

June 18 “Miracle” Demythologized

[M]iracle is the rescuing act of God that reaches in from above, beyond all historical calculations and probabilities, and creates new life out of nothingness – that is, the resurrection from the dead. ~**Dietrich Bonhoeffer**, *Ethics* (2005 translation: Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works, vol 6), p. 131

Miracle creates a new spirit manifesting new life. “I once was blind but now I see” is not talking about physical sight, in the first instance. ~jpc

*If you've experienced a new spirit, raise your hand.
Namaste.*

June 19 Whose Rights?

With gasoline prices hovering near all-time highs, the Senate on Monday began debating a sprawling energy bill that has already kicked off an epic lobbying war by huge industries, some of them in conflict with one another: car companies, oil companies, electric utilities, coal producers

and [food companies and] . . . farmers, to name a few.
~Edmund L. Andrews, "Congress Turns to Energy, and
Lobbyists Arrive," *nytimes.com*, 6/12/07

Who's protecting the rights of the total earth community
in this lobbying war? ~jpc

Protect mother, for god's sake. Namaste.

June 20 New Life

Communion (Berry), *I-Thou* (Buber), *inter-being* (Thich Nhat Hhan), *reconciliation* (St. Paul), *reunion* (Tillich), *transparency* (Mathews), and *I-ness* (Wilber) are words that describe our depth relationship with *spirit*. These words are not ideas but point to gracious moments of encounter, to "stopping our world," to major turning. After the encounter comes a new relationship with *spirit*, with all that is other, and with ourselves. New life is the consequence. ~jpc

New life, always at hand. Namaste.

June 21 Rehearsal of Life

The liturgical seasons help us rehearse the human spirit journey. *Advent* – our journey begins with the illusion that there will be something that will come along that will make life whole. *Christmastide* – what actually comes is the death of an illusion and the birth of a child which reminds

us of the ongoing reality of new life. *Epiphany* – the rehearsal of the fact that we’ve been enlightened from the beginning. *Lent* – a time to reflect and prepare for what I have decided is worth the rest of my life. *Eastertide* – the realization that my intentional movement toward death is in fact intentional life. *Pentecost* – the step in the spirit journey when we affirm the power of corporateness. *Kingdomtide* – when we re-read the stories of the Kingdom of God and remember the mysterious power in life itself. ~Mark Dove, longtime United Methodist leader in Ohio

We rehearse the great journey together. Namaste.

June 22 No Trash

“God don’t make no trash.” Cowbirds do what cowbirds do. Starlings happen to hang out in flocks and eat a lot. Cats are natural hunters. Squirrels are natural seed eaters. There is no good or bad in any of it. It’s nature. The universe doesn’t view the tufted titmouse as a worthy bird and the grackle as a pest. Now I can choose whatever attitude I want, but that’s all it is . . . my attitude. ~Shelley Hahn

“God goofed!” or “All is good!” – both are attitudes (or statements of faith). And guess what: we all operate out of our take on the way it is. ~jpc

Let us consider our attitude. Namaste.

June 23 The Point of It All

God did not become an idea, a principle, a program, a universally valid belief, or a law; God became human.
~**Dietrich Bonhoeffer**, *Ethics* (2005 translation: Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works, vol 6), p. 99

We need not believe anything more than this: *spirit* dwells among us! Other beliefs often distract us from this, the point of it all. ~jpc

This belief would unite us. Namaste.

June 24 Sunday Dialogue (LVIII)

Journer: Am I body, mind, consciousness? Who am I?

Nez: My student* said, “It is time you remember who you are: . . . a reflection of Spirit.”

Journer: So am I *spirit*?

Nez: You’re a reflection of *spirit*, so reflect it.

* Paramhansa Yogananda, via Jean Watts

June 25 Modern Heresy

Many evangelical leaders say they are still not convinced that global warming is human-induced and have argued

that the collapse of the world is inevitable and will herald the second coming of Christ. ~“Protect God’s Creation,” *guardian.co.uk*, 4/27/07, via JPC II

Salman Rushdie’s call (*washingtonpost.com*, “The Right Time for An Islamic Reformation,” 10/07/05) is apropos: “It is high time . . . that Muslims [and evangelicals] were able to study the revelation of their religion as an event inside history, not supernaturally above it.” ~jpc

O that our religious dogma inspires our care of creation. Namaste.

June 26 Saved by Giving Up

Asceticism means to renounce at least for periods of time the options that present themselves. In bygone cultures of poverty there were times for fasting, waking, withdrawing, and keeping silence. Perhaps people believed that life itself could be saved by giving up parts of it. ~**Dorothee Söelle**, *The Silent Cry: Mysticism and Resistance*, via Tim Wegner

Can life be saved by giving up parts of it, for example, our time, talents, stored up resources, and devotions? ~jpc

Let our spiritual exercises of poverty give plenty. Namaste.

June 27 “Move, Mountain!”

Over four decades ago, a frail, landless farmer got hold

of a chisel and a hammer and decided to change the face of his village nestled in the rocky hills of Gaya. Dashrath Manjhi tore open a 300-foot-high hill to create a one-km passage [long and 16 feet wide]. Manjhi knew it would be easier to move a mountain than an apathetic government. He knew writing to the powers-that-be would only leave the hill tied in red tape. Instead, Manjhi, then in his early 20s, took up a chisel and hammered at the rocks for 22 years. ~**Radhika Srivastava**, "The Man Who Moved a Mountain," 1/7/07, via JPC II, *timesofindia.indiatimes.com*

Mountains have been known to move. Namaste.

June 28 Incredible Grace

I believe in a God who does not send the tragedy but who sends the incredible grace to deal with the tragedy.
~**Harold Kushner**

Going back and forth to hospitals of late, we have been graced by listening to Rabbi Kushner's latest book-on-tape, *Overcoming Life's Disappointments*. ~jpc

*A mantra for today: "For Thou art with me."
Namaste.*

June 29 The Day of Salvation

[N]ow . . . is the "day of salvation." . . . The time of grace is the final time in the sense that one can never reckon

with a further, future word beyond the word of God that confronts me now. ~**Dietrich Bonhoeffer**, *Ethics* (Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works, vol 6, 2005), p. 151

The day of salvation, the time of grace, the final time, and the second coming are always now; therefore, time is holy.
~jpc

Every day is holy day. Namaste.

June 30 Your “_____ -ness”

[*Dialogue during movie “You, Me and Dupree”*]

Dupree (Owen Wilson): “The point is, is somewhere along the road you lost your magic. They knocked you off your game. Your Carlness went right out the window.”

Carl (Matt Dillon): “What’s with this ‘Carlness’? It’s not even a real word.”

Dupree: “Yes, it is. . . . It’s a verb. It’s a conjunction, a preposition, it’s a philosophy, a way of life. It’s your name with ‘ness’ attached to it.”

[*Monologue after the credits*]

Lance Armstrong (playing himself): “Lanceness. Lance...ness? Lancennneesss. Lance-ness.”

Recall your “_____ -ness” today. Namaste.

July

July 1 Sunday Dialogue (LIX)

Journer: My life is full of holes.

Nez: My student* says, “Those holes in your life are holy, too.”

Journer: Is anything not holy?

Nez: One thing for sure: not loving your holy life.

* jpc

July 2 Where Is Meaning?

It did not really matter what we expected from life [in the concentration camps], but rather what life expected from us. We needed to stop asking about the meaning of life, and instead to think of ourselves as those who were being questioned by life – daily and hourly. Our answer must consist, not in talk and meditation, but in right action and in right conduct. ~Victor Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*, p. 98

How would you answer the question of meaning in such evil situations? ~jpc

Meaning is always where spirit is: here. Namaste.

July 3 “Moral and Spiritual Challenge”

The climate crisis offers us the chance to experience what few generations in history have had the privilege of experiencing: a generational mission; a compelling moral purpose; a shared cause; and the thrill of being forced by circumstances to put aside the pettiness and conflict of politics and to embrace a genuine moral and spiritual challenge. ~Al Gore, “Moving Beyond Kyoto,” 7/1/07, *nytimes.com*

Earth history – plus or minus the human species – will decide how we did or didn’t do. ~jpc

Finally, we humans will meet or not meet this challenge.
Namaste.

July 4 Liberty and Freedom

Liberty . . . is the possibility of doubting, the possibility of making a mistake, the possibility of searching and experimenting, the possibility of saying ‘no’ to any authority – literary, artistic, philosophic, religious, social, and even political. ~Ignazio Silone, *The God That Failed*, p. 102

Individually, socially, and universally liberty is grounded in the gift of freedom. Liberty is a right. Freedom is built-in reality. ~jpc

Celebrate freedom that launches liberty, way up in the middle of the air. Namaste.

July 5 “Shift Happens”

Thinking we understand our world, invariably something comes along and boggles our realization. For example: <http://www.glumbert.com/media/shift>. (If you do not have a computer, think of all the boggling shifts of the last decade or two.)

What are other shifts happening we don't realize? ~jpc

O to be opened up to dream and care and act. Namaste.

July 6 On the Edge of a Knife

The universe thrives on the edge of a knife. If it increased its strength of expansion it would blow up; if it decreased its strength of expansion it would collapse. By holding itself on the edge it enables a great beauty to unfold. ~Thomas Berry and Brian Swimme, *The Universe Story*, p. 54, via Carl Larsen

Therefore, in the midst of that unbelievable balance our existence thrives on the edge. Best we give thanks and live it while the living is good. ~jpc

The living is always good. Namaste.

July 7 “Life’s a Banquet”

In today’s multi-tasking world, we all know that doing many things at once lessens the value of each encounter and experience. Every moment is a gift to be savored. When all the taste buds are engaged – the bitter, the sweet, the salty, the sour, and the pungent – the meal is most appreciated. As Auntie Mame put it: “Life’s a banquet and most poor suckers are starving to death.” ~Cheryl Hood

*O to be present, and with the third ear, eye, and voice.
Namaste.*

July 8 Sunday Dialogue (LX)

Journer: Am I on the spirit journey you keep talking about?

Nez: My student* said, “One has to go on the journey. . . . The need is deep in the soul.”

Journer: But am I on the spirit journey?

Nez: If you have a soul, yes.

* Osho, via Megha Merani

July 9 Event and Story

Jesus appeared to be a failure. But his followers experienced an event in the midst of his death and their gutted community that empowered them to tell a story that built new community, changed global history, and is helping redirect evolution. Theirs is a story of transformation. In the 20th century, **John Knox**, a Jesus follower, wrote, in so many words, *event creates story and story creates event . . . unendingly*, because that's the way of the journey. ~jpc

What events and stories are transforming journeers today? Namaste.

July 10 “The Greatest of These”

*God is not a person but the presence.
Jesus is a person and Christ is the presence.
Spirit is no-thing but the presence.*

*Heaven is not a place but the presence.
Eternity is not a time but the presence.
Salvation is always now in the presence.*

*The Way is not a religion but the presence . . .
not a set of beliefs but the presence . . .
not a body of people but the presence.*

Faith is communing with the presence.

*Hope is trusting the presence.
Love is demonstrating the presence.*

The greatest of these is the presence.

~jpc, 6/29/07

Namaste.

July 11 Righteous and Human

“Since late February, during the time you [son **Jonah Taub**, in wheelchair, with cerebral palsy and challenged to communicate verbally] were preparing for this [Bar Mitzvah], you had to deal with two major seizures, three visits to the emergency room, one outpatient EEG, a few courses of different anti-seizure meds, and culminating with three nights at UNC Hospital in Chapel Hill for an EEG and MRI on top of regular schoolwork and EOG tests,” **Steve Taub** [father] said [during his son’s Bar Mitzvah service]. “That you managed to prepare anything under circumstances like that is quite an accomplishment. You really impressed your father. . . . My biggest job in this world is to raise a *tzaddik* (a righteous person) and a *mentsch* (a true human being), someone both righteous and a kind human being. You’re making that job easy.” ~Rabbi Andy Koren, “A Bar Mitzvah and Tzaddik that Won’t Be Forgotten,” *news-record.com*, 6/30/06

*We celebrate the human spirit in dialogue with spirit.
Namaste.*

July 12 Make the World Better

From where I stand, the model of Jesus is a clear one: A religious life is defined by more than personal moral choices. It demands actions designed to make the world better for everyone. Those who claim to be Christian might want to remember that when they start choosing presidents on the basis of their “Christian principles.” ~Joan Chittister, “From Where I Stand,” 6/7/07, via Jann McGuire

Who will make the world better for everyone and everything, even the poorest of the poor and the going-extinct honey bees? ~jpc

Globally, let us consider a new kind of leadership, grounded in authentic principles. Namaste.

July 13 Are Suburbs Killing the Soul?

[David L. Goetz says in *Death by Suburb: How to Keep the Suburbs from Killing Your Soul*:] “How do you view the world in a deeper, more mystical way when you’re living in an environment that sucks you in with more shallow goals – bigger house, better body, perfect kids?” ~Annie Gowen, “Breaking Free of Suburbia’s Stranglehold,” *washingtonpost.com*, 6/3/07, via JPC II

Glad to hear secular types reporting on deep journey issues that cripple our spirits if we let them. ~jpc

*O to build our foundations on rock rather than sand.
Namaste.*

July 14 Do It Right

[A]ny religion, if you do it wrong, will leave people feeling condemned and dismissed and unworthy; and any religion, if you do it right, will leave people feeling cleansed and affirmed. ~Harold Kushner <http://tinyurl.com/ypb8mn>

We choose “cleansed and affirmed.” Rejoicing in the power of grace we go forth to serve mother earth and all her children. ~jpc

Right religion lifts up all. Namaste.

July 15 Sunday Dialogue (LXI)

Journer: Is it wrong to want?

Nez: My student* said, there comes “the startling recognition that the very thing you [really want] . . . wants everything from you.”

Journer: That seems unfair.

Nez: What’s fairness got to do with it?

* Andrew Cohen, *Quote of the Week*, 1/15/07

July 16 Lawn Dialogue

** after talking about paying to kill weeds, grow and maintain grass, rake and throw away grass and leaves, the story ends . . .*

God: And where do they get this mulch?

St. Francis: They cut down trees and grind them up to make the mulch.

God: Enough! I don't want to think about this anymore. St. Catherine, you're in charge of the arts. What movie have you scheduled for us tonight?

St. Catherine: "Dumb and Dumber," Lord. It's a story about . . .

God: Never mind, I think I just heard the whole story from St. Francis.

* Read the whole story <http://www.comptechdoc.org/humor/garden/> via David Zahrt.

*Who said the lawn is more sacred than wild flowers?
Namaste.*

July 17 The Last Freedom

We who lived in concentration camps can remember the men who walked through the huts comforting others, giving away their last piece of bread. . . . [T]hey offer sufficient proof that everything can be taken from a man [*sic*] but one thing: the last of the human freedoms – to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances. ~Victor

Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*, p.86

One can build a psychology of life around this “last freedom,” and Frankl did and called it *logotherapy*, assuming meaning in life under any and all circumstances.
~jpc

O to see through everything to the center. Namaste.

July 18 “Psalming”

Thou art ever calling me to be.
Without *thee* I die in spirit –
A listless ship a-sail with no wind.
With *thee*, inspired to live again. ~jpc

“I am I . . . onward to glory we go.” Namaste.

July 19 Main Street Spirituality

To live on Main Street is, if one lives in the right spirit, to inhabit the Holy City. ~J.N. Findlay, interpreting Hegel, in Ken Wilber's *A Brief History of Everything*, p. 305

“Main street spirituality” is being aware that the other world is in this world – the essence of the spirit journey. ~jpc

O to be really aware. Namaste.

July 20 Something New and Stunning

In each moment the universe is about something new, something that had been but a dream until this moment . . . when the necessary conditions have been created for a new and stunning transformation. ~**Brian Swimme**, Foreword to *The Human Phenomenon*, by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, p. xvi

As well as all the other forces of the universe, we're also talking about us humans helping to create the new and stunning. ~jpc

The creativity of the universe working together is beyond belief. Namaste.

July 21 “This Understanding of Life”

*. . . I keep reminding myself –
lest I devalue the way life is
and relapse again into humanism,
thinking that I-we-it is all there is –
that everything has its context,
even the universe.*

*And that the ultimate context is
the numinous, eternal spirit,
which alone has no referent
and is the heart of all.*

~jpc, *By Cosmic Design*, p. 20 (adapted)

July 22 Sunday Dialogue (LXII)

Journer: Do you trust all religious people?

Nez: My student* said, “You may be as orthodox as the devil and as wicked.”

Journer: So you don’t trust all religious people?

Nez: Maybe a smidgen more or less than I trust all people.

* attributed to John Wesley, *wikipedia.com*

July 23 “The Cost of My Care”

*Given the chance to do life in the deeps,
To serve humankind is the gift that I be.
To care for the world is the burden I bear,
Invent with my life, 'tis the cost of my care.*

*Strange awe-full power is dancing through me,
Buoyantly forging impossible be.
With all my heart I'm poured out endlessly;
I'm burdened eternally.*

~tune: “Anniversary Waltz” (first stanza and chorus); words by **Kay Lush** (1936-1995), via LLC

Note: We remember Sue Ann Broadrick Emmett: “All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well.”

July 24 A-vocation

Whatever career you may choose for yourself – doctor, lawyer, teacher – let me propose an avocation to be pursued along with it. Become a dedicated fighter for civil rights [and care for the earth]. . . . It will give you that rare sense of nobility that can only spring from love and selflessly helping your fellow man [and the earth community]. Make a career of humanity [and universe mutuality]. Commit yourself to the noble struggle for human [and earth] rights. ~Martin Luther King, Jr., 4/8/59 (adapted by jpc)

Our circumference of care keeps expanding and intensifying. Namaste.

July 25 Just Glimpse It

Don't seek *spirit*, just glimpse it and commune with it. It meets us in every situation and every bit of creation. Sometimes we unite with it. Often we don't see it and act like we've never seen it, but we all know its manifestations. ~jpc

Happy is she who sees spirit and responds. Namaste.

July 26 It Is Our Home

The planet Earth has been the one home for all of its processes and all of its myriad inhabitants since the beginning of time, from hydrogen to men. . . . Our

phenomenal world contains our origins, our history, our milieu; it is our home. ~summation by **Ian McHarg** of his *Design with Nature* (1969)

McHarg described some local land planners' work: "the expression of the inalienable right to create ugliness and disorder for private greed." www.planetizen.com/node/10

O to treat our home as a thing of beauty. Namaste.

July 27 Fireball Alive in Me

Every morning when we gather to pray in my monastery in Vermont we each wrap a colored shawl over our shoulders to connect us to a particular moment of grace in the universe story. My shawl is the color red depicting the fireball at the beginning of time. This morning on my final day of retreat I drape myself with the cosmic red shawl and feel the stupendous activity of the fireball alive in me. ~**Gail Worlesco**, Green Mountain Monastery, VT, via LLC

O to reflect that moment of grace of fourteen billion years ago. Namaste.

July 28 Thy Will Be Done

If your opponent has a conscience, then follow Gandhi and nonviolence. But if your enemy has no conscience, like Hitler, then follow Bonhoeffer. ~attributed to **Martin Luther King, Jr.**

“Observe, weigh up, decide and act”: those words, written by Bonhoeffer relative to discerning God’s will, led to his execution, because he “acted” by joining the plot on Hitler’s life. ~jpc

*“Thy will be done” can be a dangerous prayer.
Namaste.*

July 29 Sunday Dialogue (LXIII)

Journer: Where do religious truths come from?

Nez: My student* said, “Life, Death and Resurrection . . . [are] happening on a cosmic scale as well as a personal one.”

Journer: So, might we say religious truths come from the way life is?

Nez: Exactly, from the heart of being at the heart of creation.

* Matthew Fox, *Thesis 63*

July 30 A Working Theology

I believe that all Christians must have a *working theology*, one that can actually function in their personal, professional, and public lives. . . . [T]here is nothing special about theology – every Christian has one. The question is how

good, appropriate, and functional is it? ~Sallie McFague,
*Life Abundant: Rethinking Theology and Economy for
a Planet in Peril*, p. xii

A good, working spirituality sends us forth to live on behalf
of our universe, planet, culture, region, local community,
family, and even ourselves. ~jpc

O to more fully intercommune. Namaste.

July 31 “What’s Your Name?”

Who are you, anyway?

I am with thee.

But, what’s your name?

I am with thee.

What do you mean?

I am with thee.

You’re not making sense!

Remember “For Thou art with me”?

I’ve heard it, but just tell me your name.

For the eternal time, “I am with thee.”

~jpc

Namaste.

August

August 1 Finger on the Spiritual Dimension

Even when my happiness isn't at a rolling boil, I tend to know that there is a spiritual dimension to all things.

~**Huston Smith**, *The Way Things Are: Conversations with Huston Smith on the Spiritual Life* <http://www.ucpress.edu/books/pages/9996/9996.ch16.html>

How do we “tend to know there is a spiritual dimension”? At the very least, when we are stopped, or when we stop to think about it. Maybe I'll tattoo a “S” on my finger.
~jpc

*O to be conscious of the spirit presence in my life.
Namaste.*

August 2 Crumbling Citadels

And when, in touch with that all-pervasiveness, I hear that the citadel of dearest Huston [Smith] is crumbling, it is simply as it is, just so, and all is still right, and all is still well, and all is still good, and all still radiates the unending glory that we all are. ~**Ken Wilber**, *One Taste*, p. 22

Since this 1996 entry by Wilber, Huston has done many lectures and writings, even with a crumbling citadel (he was born in 1919). Though the citadels of

all are crumbling, what Wilber says is true for all, all the time. ~jpc

Here's to the unending glory. Namaste.

August 3 20th Cy Theological Revolution

The real question is whether this [New Testament] understanding of existence is true. Faith claims that it is, and faith ought not to be tied down to the imagery of New Testament mythology. ~Rudolf Bultmann, *Kerygma and Myth* (1948), p. 11

A few pages earlier (p. 4), Bultmann writes: “. . . it is no longer possible for anyone seriously to hold the New Testament view of the world – in fact, there is no one who does.” And a mighty howl went up back in ‘48. ~jpc

O to hear the truth in the midst of our chosen mythology. Namaste.

August 4 Water within Waves

When we touch [the treasure of happiness], even once, we know that we have the capacity of letting go of everything else. That treasure of happiness, the Kingdom of Heaven, may be called the ultimate dimension of reality. When you see only waves, you might miss the water. ~Thich Nhat Hanh, *Living Buddha, Living Christ*, “Touching the Water within the Waves,” p. 157

The waves are there, but the water is that without which there are no waves. ~jpc

*We are sustained by water and can surf its waves.
Namaste.*

August 5 Sunday Dialogue (LXIV)

Journer: What is a concise philosophy of the universe?

Nez: My student* said, “All are but parts of one stupendous whole, / Whose body Nature is, and God the soul.”

Journer: Do you think God is the soul of the universe?

Nez: What do you think?

* Alexander Pope, “*An Essay on Man*” (Epistle I: X, 267-68)

August 6 Living Spirit

Faith is not about historical events in the past or eschatological events in the future but is about our lives here and now and the way we see our lives in the ultimate context of God. What is religiously significant is not who Jesus *was*, but who Jesus *is* as a living spirit. . . . ~David Grant, *Thinking Through Our Faith*, p. 85

The past and future do help, but our relationship to the living *spirit* is the thing. ~jpc

*The spirit of taking a new relationship is ours this day.
Namaste.*

August 7 I Am with Thee

[**Martin Buber's**] funeral took place [June 14, 1965] . . . at the Hill of Rest in Jerusalem. . . . On his tombstone is a phrase from the 73rd Psalm – “I am continually with thee.” ~Stephen Panko, *Martin Buber*, p. 43

The “I” is the Psalmist: “I am continually with Thee; / Thou hast held me by my right hand” (v. 23/KJ21). The “Thou” is “Lord God.” Even his last testament speaks of *I-Thou*, what his life was about. ~jpc

Doesn't get any better than that. Namaste.

August 8 Originative Impulse

I have abandoned the quest for the historical Jesus, conceived as an objective, value-free endeavor. Instead, I am in quest of the originative impulse released by Jesus. ~**Walter Wink**, “Write What You See: An Odyssey” (1994) <http://tinyurl.com/yo8v53>

“Originative impulse released by Jesus”: I think he means that Jesus was about nothing less than relating to that primal and mysterious power he called “Our Father” – which transcends any written testament and research. ~jpc

What an impulse he released. Namaste.

August 9 The Eternal

There is one power that surpasses the all-consuming power of time – the eternal: . . . Who was and is and is to come, the beginning and the end, . . . [who] gives us forgiveness for what has passed, . . . courage for what is to come . . . [and] rest in . . . eternal Presence. ~Tillich, *The Eternal Now*, p. 132 (*sans* gender reference)

The eternal we abide in. Namaste.

August 10 Journey On

*The tree the tempest with a crash of wood
Throws down in front of us is not to bar
Our passage to our journey's end for good
But just to ask us who we think we are. . . .*

~Robert Frost, "A Tree Fallen Across the Road"

The journey is our friend, come what may. Sometimes it stops us, addresses us, and commissions us to live another day. Namaste.

August 11 The Broken Is Holy

In the **Babylonian Talmud**, . . . there is a teaching from Rav Yosef as follows: When Moses came down from Sinai and saw the Israelites rejoicing over the Golden Calf, he smashed the two tablets of stone. . . . Then he returned to the top of Sinai and received another set. What happened

to the broken set? Rav Yosef teaches that Moses put the pieces of the broken tablets in the Ark next to the unbroken second set. He did this to teach that even that which is broken is holy and remains with that which is whole.
~Steven A. Chester, Temple Sinai, Oakland, California

Wholeness is full of brokenness. Namaste.

August 12 Sunday Dialogue (LXV)

Journer: What role does civilization play in evolution?

Nez: My student* said, “The ultimate work of civilization is the unfolding of ever-deeper spiritual understanding.”

Journer: How do you think we’re doing?

Nez: We’ve had some detours, for example, modernism and fundamentalism, but we’re getting back on course.

* Arnold Toynbee, via Peter Russell <http://tinyurl.com/2h9mnh>

August 13 Absolutely Transparent World

We are living in a world that is absolutely transparent, and God is shining through it all the time. . . . God shows himself [*sic*] everywhere, in everything – in people and in things and in nature and in events. ~Thomas Merton, *The Hidden Ground of Love*, via Marcus Borg

“Transparency” is my favorite image of spirituality, of seeing and dialoguing with “God.” ~jpc

“See that I am God.” Namaste.

August 14 Boils Down to Grace

For Christians, the ultimate mystery that stands as the very source and being of the universe and all within it finally boils down to grace. We live in God’s grace. That’s the essential meaning and message of Christian faith. ~David Grant, *Thinking Through Our Faith*, p. 119

Paul, Luther, Wesley, Newton, Tillich, Mathews, and I agree. ~jpc

“. . . was blind but now I see.” Namaste.

August 15 Different Direction

If we remember those times and places – and there are so many – where people have behaved magnificently, this gives us the energy to act, and at least the possibility of sending this spinning top of a world in a different direction. ~Howard Zinn, “The Optimism of Uncertainty” <http://www.thenation.com/doc/20040920/zinn>

The message: look more carefully when you succumb to the impossibility our world throws at us, especially the media. ~jpc

*We give thanks for the pioneers of a different direction.
Namaste.*

August 16 Myth Worth Thinking About

The only myth that's going to be worth thinking about in the immediate future is one talking about the planet – not this city, not these people, but the planet and everybody on it. ~**Joseph Campbell**, with Bill Moyers, *The Power of Myth*, p. 32

Planet earth – everybody on it and everything on it, in it, and encircling it – is the only story worth thinking about now. ~jpc

All of it is under the big tent of salvation. Namaste.

August 17 Shared Experience and Meaning

Joe Campbell said that life is in the experience, but I also think that life is in the meaning we give that experience. He and I differed on that. ~**Bill Moyers**, “Your Mythic Journey,” with Sam Keen

Both Campbell and Moyers are right, and I'd add one more thing, the sharing of the meaning of the experience, or “witnessing” to others of that truth – for their sakes and your own. ~jpc

*Shared experience and meaning are empowering.
Namaste.*

August 18 “The More”

[W]e are in God, we live in God, we move and have our being in God. God is a nonmaterial layer of reality all around us, “right here” as well as “more than right here.”

~**Marcus Borg**, *The Heart of Christianity*, p. 155

Borg uses the phrase “the More” synonymously with “God.” ~jpc

Spirit is present and more than present. Namaste.

August 19 Sunday Dialogue (LXVI)

Journer: What unites religions?

Nez: My student* said, “The lamps are different but the Light is the same: it comes from Beyond.”

Journer: What real difference does “one Light” make?

Nez: How can we harm and not help those who bow to the same divine reality?

* **Rumi**, *Poet and Mystic*, trans. R.A. Nicholson, p. 166

August 20 Dance Matter Into Spirit

Boss: “[F]inally there are those who aim at living the life of the entire universe – everything, men, animals, trees,

stars, we are all one, we are all one substance involved in the same terrible struggle. What struggle? . . . Turning matter into spirit.”

Zorba [scratching his head]: “I’ve got a thick skull, boss, I don’t grasp these things easily. . . . Ah, if only you could dance all that you’ve just said, then I’d understand.”

~**Nikos Kazantzakis**, *Zorba the Greek*, p. 278

O to dance it. Namaste.

August 21 Life Amidst the Sacred

Eliade in his many writings is reminding us of past man’s [sic] vision of life amidst the sacred that present man must regain if there is to be future man. ~Philip H. Ashby *Theology Today* Vol. 27, No. 2 (July 1970) (via *wikipedia.com*)

What does our “vision of life amidst the sacred” look like today and in the future? That is the guiding question of our vocation. ~jpc

O to witness to the sacred in our midst. Namaste.

August 22 Ultimate Aim of the Quest

The ultimate aim of the quest must be neither release nor ecstasy for oneself, but the wisdom and power to serve others. ~**Joseph Campbell**, a lecture, quoted by Bill Moyers in the introduction to *The Power of Myth*, p. xv

Tell our civilization that our ultimate aim is *not* to seek personal release and ecstasy and listen for the response, “You’re crazy!” and various expletives. ~jpc

*We pray for wisdom and power to serve others.
Namaste.*

August 23 Believing In Jesus

Believing in Jesus . . . means to give . . . one’s self at the deepest level . . . to the post-Easter Jesus who is the living Lord, . . . the face of God, the Lord who is also the Spirit . . . a figure of the present. ~Marcus Borg, *Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time*, p. 137

I say, believing in Jesus is authentically relating to *spirit* as we experience it. For example, if *spirit* inspires us to really care for any part of creation, we believe in “Jesus” and all the rest of the pantheon of names for *spirit*. ~jpc

Spirit is the spirit of . . . God, Christ, Allah, Buddha, Vishnu, etc. Namaste.

August 24 Essence of Civilization’s Growth

George Gerbner . . . says that to control a nation, you don’t have to control its laws or its military, all you have to do is control who tells the nation its stories. Television tells most of the nation most of its stories most of the time. If television is our social brain, then American television

currently has the highest level of intelligence that beer and car commercials can buy. And this dumbing down of the U.S. public is happening at the very time when we face unprecedented social upheaval and change. . . . The essence of a civilization's growth is its ability to transfer increasing increments of energy and attention from the material side of life to the psychological, spiritual, cultural, and aesthetic. ~**Duane Elgin**, "Upshifters: Pioneers of an Awakening," interviewed in *Yes!* magazine, Spring/Summer 1996 (Issue Beta 1)

O to see through the material dimension. Namaste.

August 25 "I'm the Greatest"

When I say "I am," I do not mean a separate entity with a body at its nucleus. I mean the totality of being, the ocean of consciousness, the entire universe of all that is and knows. ~**Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj** <http://tinyurl.com/2aa3zf>

In this context, Muhammad Ali was correct in saying, "I'm the greatest." ~jpc

"I AM." Namaste.

August 26 Sunday Dialogue (LXVII)

Journer: What is most awesome to you?

Nez: My student* said, "The moment one gives close

attention to anything, even a blade of grass, it becomes a mysterious, awesome, indescribably magnificent world in itself.”

Journer: I asked “most awesome”?

Nez: You are, right now.

* attributed to **Henry Miller**

August 27 Pay Attention

The “burning bush” was not a miracle. It was a test. God wanted to find out if Moses could pay attention to something for more than a few minutes. When Moses did, God spoke. The trick is to pay attention to what is going on around you long enough to behold the miracle without falling asleep. There is another world, right here within this one, whenever we pay attention. ~**Lawrence Kushner**, *God Was in this Place and I, I Didn't Know*

O to pay attention for at least five minutes today, standing before one bush. Namaste.

August 28 Not a Condition of Salvation

[Paul's] question whether circumcision is a condition of justification is today, I consider, the question whether religion is a condition of salvation. Freedom from circumcision is at the same time freedom from religion.

~Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, pp. 164-65

He also uses the phrase “religionless Christianity” (p. 163). We don’t know practically what he meant, since he was never out of prison to be a “practicing” Christian again.
~jpc

Thankfully we do not have to be “religious” to be “saved.” Namaste.

August 29 Sap of the Spirit

It is easy to say *no*. To say *yes* you have to sweat and roll up your sleeves and plunge both hands into life up to the elbows. It is easy to say *no*. . . . *No* is one of your man-made words. Can you imagine a world in which trees say *no* to the sap? ~Jean Anouilh, “Antigone,” via Brian Stanfield’s *The Courage to Lead*, p. 237

O to say yes to the sap of the spirit. Namaste.

August 30 Human Development

We will not fulfill humanity by fixating on humanity any more than we will fulfill the self by fixating on the self. . . . We are living in deep illusion if we think human development, in and of itself, is the primary purpose of creation. ~jpc, . . . *The Heart of Creation*, p. 152

We all live in the “developing world” of care for creation. Namaste.

August 31 Live Your Depth

Your life is much deeper and broader than you conceive it to be. . . . What you are living is but a fractional inkling of what is really within you, what gives you life, breadth, and depth. But you can live in terms of your depth. And when you can experience it, you suddenly see that all the religions are talking of that. ~**Joseph Campbell**, with Bill Moyers, *The Power of Myth*, p. 58

O to journey our depth, religiously. Namaste.

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[109] *Spirit Poems* (1974-2006)

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•***Brother Joe:***

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