

DAILY SPIRIT
JOURNAL
VOL. IV

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**

Your blog reflection is my first ritual of the morning, literally. It is a discipline for me, if you will, a daily office. Thank you for your depth contribution to so many. ~*Jane Zammit, 'Heritage Rose' specialist, NSW, Australia*

John Cock's daily reflections rocket you to the furthest reaches of the universe and into the deepest reaches of the heart. Start the day with a jolt of creative energy and insight. His daily reflections are available on the new Center for Ecozoic Studies (CES) web site. ~*Herman Greene, lawyer and President of CES, North Carolina*

My spirit is refreshed and my worldview "tilts" toward hope and possibility after I read the reflection for the day. I especially appreciate the arresting photography and artwork,* and the profound reflection that precedes the benediction, *Namaste*. ~*Marilyn Crocker, educational consultant, Maine*

Your daily reflections are truly food for my soul. What a refreshing and hopeful way to connect with a wider and deeper perception of our world, our religions, our selves, and our potentials. ~*Gerri Davis, teacher and music therapist, Virginia*

There is a heaven for reflection known as “Journey Reflection,” a place of calming waters and a deep breath of restorative energy. The New Monk Project (NMP) gladly shares the reflections on our web site daily. ~*Tim Watson, architect and Board Pres. of NMP, North Carolina*

As I read the daily reflections, time and again one “jerks my coat” to nudge me forward on the path toward full realization of who I am called to be. ~*Karen Bueno, teacher, Colorado*

The wonderfully diverse reflections keep me aware of the many wells of consciousness that tap into the one, vast underground sea of Spirit that is the source of all true and realistic living. I grow larger and richer with each daily installment. ~*Harold Slater, minister, Michigan*

Reading the *Daily Spirit Journal* forces me to focus on that which is not me, which is outside of me. Yet when I really focus, I experience an internal connection with the spirit world, and I am grateful. ~*Diann McCabe, professor, Texas*

I read the daily reflections via RSS. It is my daily grounding exercise. It is the renewal of the screen through which I view reality. Without it I would not be able to keep a center to my being. ~*Ed Reames, innkeeper, Costa Rica*

The circulation of the daily reflections is a Mission of Love that sustains. Now is a time for new life patterns. These readings address that need in a most profound and helpful way. ~*John Patterson, global volunteer, Ontario, Canada*

What a great influence to start out each day with a meditative reading and picture* as a way to articulate the happening and the existence of spirit in our lives. Whether I feel that my own life is mundane or mountain-top, I have the daily opportunity to share in the experience of my fellow humans, fellow creatures, and mama earth herself. Your journal entries connect me and extend me, and I'm very grateful once again for all your work in putting them together. ~*Nancy Trask, librarian, Iowa*

As I check my email, the first thing I look for is the day's Journey Reflection. What a wonderful happening. Almost inevitably it exudes that Life is Good. It is inclusive. Nothing is left out. You see that life calls for balance of the opposites . . . the goods and bads, ups and downs, formlessness and form. You see that life is effervescent . . . always bubbling over with Spirit, calling us to say "Yes!" to the new moment. It offers a transformational journey into wholeness, like an alchemical gate opening a flood into our awareness of the abundance of love and gratitude, of joy and delight that are always present. And yet, there is always more. . . ! ~*Joseph Slicker, mentor, Texas*

* Note: visual images, whether photos or art, accompany each daily reflection online at www.reJourney.blogspot.com.

Daily Spirit Journal

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Quotes & Reflections
for 365 Days

Volume IV

John P. Cock

transcribe books

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

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Dedicated
to journers all
on the great spirit journey

and especially

Caleb

our newest grandson
who journeyed from
Ethiopia to become
part of our family

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 four volumes, with this publication.

1,622* blog postings (archived at “Journey Reflection” www.reJourney.blogspot.com) bring us to Volume IV of *Daily Spirit Journal*. Thousands of people from every country have participated in over 72,000 reflection views online, and several hundred persons via a daily e-mail list and online feed. (E-mail transcribebooks@triad.rr.com and ask to join the daily e-mail list, or join the RSS feed at the above web address).

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

- to provide a big context
- to reveal the depth of life
- to articulate the meaning of living and dying
- to occasion 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 profound art or 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 to have.

*Namaste.***

July 2008

John P. Cock
Greensboro, NC
USA

* To browse online (www.reJourney.blogspot.com) the 1,622 daily reflections in the four voumes, click the months on the right sidebar under “archives.” You can also research a word or phrase (e.g., “meaning” or “Thomas Berry”) of the archives at the top-left of the web page by typing in the slot, clicking “search blog” to the right, and then scrolling down.

** “**Namaste**” is the ending of each daily reflection (see January 5th reflection in this volume for its meaning).

note: “**Sunday Dialogue**” is every seventh day’s reflection, an ongoing dialogue between student (Journer) and master (Nez).

note: **Inclusive language**, be it gender or creation usage, is an ongoing task in reference to historical quotes.

note: “**TinyUrl.com**” shortens reference to long online links.

note: “**Via**” refers to those who have called a quote to my attention: personally, by e-mail, or by published piece – a special thanks to them all.

Journal Guide

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

- In what situation might I say this quote?
- What life situation does this reflection bring to mind?
- What truth is this reflection trying to communicate?
- Under what circumstances would I share this reflection? 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.

And please 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)

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 or omit whatever formal 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 Faithful Servant

[Referring to new book *Mother Teresa: Come Be My Light:*] “In my soul I feel just that terrible pain of loss,” she [**Mother Teresa**] wrote in 1959, “of God not wanting me – of God not being God – of God not existing.” According to the book, this inner turmoil, known by only a handful of her closest colleagues, lasted until her death in 1997. . . . “If I ever become a saint,” she wrote, “I will surely be one of ‘darkness.’” ~James Martin, “A Saint’s Dark Night,” *nytimes.com*, 8/29/07, via Priscilla Wilson

Knowing that she was one who served “God” and “God’s” creation out of faith rather than surety makes her faith all the more profound. ~jpc

O to be faithful, especially in darkness. Namaste.

September 2 Sunday Dialogue LXVIII

Journer: What is “grace” all about?

Nez: My student* said, “Man [*sic*] is born broken. He lives by mending. The grace of God is glue.”

Journer: What does “glue” mean here?

Nez: There is for us one creation, one universe, one galaxy, one planet. No matter how much it all feels like it's coming apart – including our own broken lives – it's all being reunited moment by moment.

* Eugene O'Neill, "The Great God Brown," *Nine Plays by Eugene O'Neill*, p. 370

September 3 Profound Facilitation

... This is what I call profound facilitation, putting persons in touch with *spirit*: "consciousness of consciousness of consciousness" is helping to facilitate the union between them and the *power* that journeys them. Is this not our vocation? ~jpc e-mail to Australian colleague

Fundamental urges of creation facilitate such union. "It's good to be a part of this dynamic" is an understatement.
~jpc

O to be thus used. Namaste.

September 4 One In Spirit

During chapel service at our last Sunday of the State Defense Force Class, most everyone was making comments on this theme: we may not all be religious, but we are certainly spiritual. The group was quite diverse – charismatic, Baptist, Methodist, Jewish, etc. Someone said, "We're not here to promote any brand of religion,

we're here to share in the Spirit." . . . And they've never heard of the daily "Spirit Journey" reflections. I think we're tapping into a universal feeling. ~**Jerome Hunter**

What Jerom reports is the trend, but miles to go before we sleep. ~jpc

We are one in spirit. Namaste.

September 5 A Full Offering

On the day when death will knock at thy door what wilt thou offer to him?

Oh, I will set before my guest the full vessel of my life – I will never let him go with empty hands. . . .

~**Rabindranath Tagore**, *Gitanjali*, "90," via LLC

Just offer the whole lot with open eyes and joyous heart. Namaste.

September 6 The Ultimate Metaphor

With **Einstein**, we always knew where he stood in relation to "God" – it was shorthand for the mystery and rationality of nature, the touchstones of the scientific experience. Cosmic mystery, Einstein said, is the most beautiful experience we can have, "the fundamental emotion that stands at the cradle of true art and true science." ~Dennis

Overbye, “What’s in a Name? Parsing the ‘God Particle,’ the Ultimate Metaphor,” *nytimes.com*, 8/7/07, via Ida Forbis

Though I’m not wowed by all of Einstein’s metaphors, I do believe he bowed to that mysterious power at the heart of creation. ~jpc

O to bow to “the unknown unknown” that makes itself known. Namaste.

September 7 It Didn’t Take . . . Yet

That picture of a lonely blue marble in the great black void seemed designed to shock us into seeing . . . [a]n oasis we should protect at all costs. Well, so much for that idea. It didn’t take, not really – we’ve done more to damage the planet in the decades since that picture appeared than in all the time beforehand. . . . ~**Bill McKibben**, “Planet Protectors,” *Orion* magazine, Jul/Aug 2007 issue <http://tinyurl.com/2dcyxa>

The image is still working on us. It’s too powerful a truth not to explode all human-centered, culture-centered, religion-centered operating images – but it will take a while, as the universe seems to mosey along. ~jpc

How can we help the blue marble out? Namaste.

September 8 Soul Size

Martin Marty: Soul is not a pilot on a ship. Soul is not a thing. Soul . . . is the integrated, vital power of any organic body open to possibility and future. ~”Bill Moyers Talks with Historian Martin E. Marty,” PBS, 8/17/07 <http://tinyurl.com/29vmou> via George Holcombe

How big is your soul, meaning how open are you to possibility and the future? Would you say your soul is bigger or smaller these days? ~jpc

O to be soulful. Namaste.

September 9 Sunday Dialogue LXIX

Journer: Do you believe God has a name?

Nez: Whatever name you give “God” is “God’s” name—for you.

Journer: What if he’s a false God?

Nez: More of them are than not. And why do you keep using the word “he”? Your “God” may be too small.

September 10 A Better Whatever

I will be a better Catholic, not if I can refute every shade of Protestantism, but if I can affirm the truth in it and still

go further. So, too, with the Muslims, the Hindus, the Buddhists, etc. . . . There is much that one cannot “affirm” and “accept,” but first one must say “yes” where one really can. ~**Thomas Merton**, *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*, quoted in *Thomas Merton: Essential Writings*, Christine M. Bochen, via Koshin

Rejecting another’s faith is hardly the way of faith. Accepting another who has a different faith can be a clue to faith. ~jpc

O to affirm the truth in it and still go further. Namaste.

September 11 A Counter Trend

[H]ow many of the world’s roughly billion Muslims are members of extremist groups[?] About 0.004 . . . but if this rose to 1 percent, it would be the world’s biggest army. ~Sinead Carew, “Small, Offbeat Trends Can Change the World,” [citing from **Malcolm Gladwell**’s book *Tipping Point*] *reuters.com*, 9/8/07

The global community is not dealing well with this trend. We surely can’t kill all 0.004 percent, much less 1 percent. How do we create a counter trend – for everybody’s good? ~jpc

. . . *As if we are all responsible for the global community. Namaste.*

September 12 Jesus' Journey of Faith

The key to Jesus' existence was his "extraordinary faith" in God. . . . We can . . . relate to [a] Jesus . . . like us in every way (Hebrews 4:15). [Jon] Sobrino traces Jesus' human journey of faith . . . [and says] the Gospels talk about the growth in Jesus' life and consciousness, his temptations, failures, "the rupture in his faith," his "self-identity crisis," his conversion, his surrender to God, his learned obedience, his agonies, his growth in faith up through his ultimate faith on the cross when he was abandoned. ~jpc, *The Transparent Event: Post-modern Christ Images*, p. 59

This is the history about Jesus of Nazareth I'm most interested in and can identify with, how he journeyed in faith in the *spirit* he called "Father." If Jesus did not struggle and glory in his faith, then he's not like us in every way – and the book of Hebrews is a lie. ~jpc

*O to journey with spirit persons in their faith.
Namaste.*

September 13 "Amazing Grace"*

*Amazing grace – eternal ground –
has touched the heart of me;
I've oft been lost but now am found,
been blind but now I see.*

*A thousand awesome turns within
I have already done;
'tis grace that makes me whole again,
and grace will lead me on.*

*Way long before the primal star,
grace joined this voice of mine
with all creation near and far
to celebrate sublime.*

*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.*

* Adapted from John Newton by jpc (adapted from poem in *By Cosmic Design: Spirit Poems*, p. 123) – best sung to “The House of the Rising Sun” tune; two stanzas were first used in the daily Journey Reflections 1/22/07); hear *The Bob Edwards Show* talk with Ted Anthony, who has written a book about the song, *Chasing the Rising Sun: The Journey of an American Song* <http://tinyurl.com/2dnryk>

September 14 All about Life

The theme of the movie “The Sea Inside” is the freedom to die with dignity. But the movie is all about “life.” Critic **Phil Villarreal**’s summary statement of the movie is spot-on: “The journey to death can be tremendously life-affirming.” Life’s funny that way, especially when we know

the way the journey ends – funny in that *spirit* sustains and even fulfills us in our insurmountable challenge. ~jpc

A death to die is a story about a life to live. Namaste.

September 15 Work of the Spirit

[I]n these periods we must not believe that the Spirit is far from us. . . . Our sighing in the depth of our souls . . . is . . . the work of the Spirit within us. . . . Just in this situation . . . where we are unable to experience any meaning in life . . . [and in] the moment where we feel separated . . . and condemned to despair, we are not left alone. . . . Spirit . . . witnesses to our spirit. . . . ~Tillich, explicating Romans 8, “Witness of the Spirit,” *Shaking of the Foundations*, pp. 139-40

So, to all who know us well, when we sigh it’s not unfaith but the work of the *spirit* bringing us closer to hearing its witness. ~jpc

And in our sighing we are also the children of spirit. Namaste.

September 16 Sunday Dialogue LXX

Journer: What do you think of metaphysics?

Nez: My student* said, “I think metaphysics is good if it improves everyday life; otherwise forget it.”

Journer: So you don't think there's another realm "out there" with a deity?

Nez: What about another realm "in here" with *spirit*?

* **Robert M. Pirsig**, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, p. 240

September 17 Ecumenical Heart Stuff

I do not believe that anyone has the exclusive franchise on the truth. What we Jews have is a good approximation, for Jews, of how to get there. . . . When it comes to what I call the "heart stuff," all approaches overlap. ~**Rabbi Zalman Schacter-Shalomi** www.havurahshirhadash.org/rebzalman.html

There is hope because all us humans have heart. Let's appeal to that inclusive truth rather than dogma that often excludes. ~jpc

Truth is ours, beating within. Namaste.

September 18 Just a Dead Leaf

*The pressed leaf in our book
from two decades ago
reminds me of our walk:*

Awe abounds as she peers

*through the leaf's filigree.
She sees a dying friend,
her own unknown disease –
all life passing away.*

*And yet the leaf's beauty
fills her eye, revealing
wonder of life in death.*

~jpc

Namaste.

September 19 Kosmocentric Perspective

This [“kosmocentric perspective”] is what brings the sacred dimension of life into everyday awareness – when you realize your own experience of consciousness . . . is potentially the leading edge of the possible. ~Andrew Cohen, from *Quote of the Week*, 7/30/07

Imagine, the cosmic journey depends on you and me, on our experience of consciousness – and what we decide – more than it depends on our DNA. ~jpc

My cosmos: then, now, and till it ends. Namaste.

September 20 Whole Journey . . . This Moment

[W]e arise out of eternity, moment after moment . . . to see into the absolute moment –Teilhard [de Chardin]

regarded this as a great mystical event in the life of an individual, as well as in the human journey. . . . The whole journey is this moment – it’s not just the year 2000 – this moment is also the birth of the universe itself. ~Brian Swimme, interview by Susan Bridle, “The Divinization of the Cosmos,” *WIE* magazine, Spring-Summer, 2001

That’s very good to know, that we and the universe are birthed moment by moment. ~jpc

Happy Birthday, all . . . over and over and over, eternally. Namaste.

September 21 What a Job

I remember sitting down in an airplane once and introducing myself to the guy in the next seat. He turned out to work for NASA as a Planetary Protection Officer. . . . His job involved making sure our spacecraft did nothing that could inadvertently alter the planets, moons, or asteroids on which they landed. ~Bill McKibben, “Planet Protectors,” *Orion* magazine, Jul/Aug 2007 issue <http://tinyurl.com/2dcyxa>

Talk about comprehensive, futuric thinking. ~jpc

We’re all called to be Planetary Protection Officers on Earth. Namaste.

September 22 Integrity

History now judges that Bonhoeffer was acting with

integrity as he helped plan the murder of Hitler and that Gandhi was acting with integrity when he disobeyed colonial law in India. Both were brave, clean, and reverent – especially reverent. But they broke “God’s” law and British law. And Gandhi’s wife thought he was irresponsible relative to the family, and he was – at least while in South Africa. Integrity is about discerning and doing “the will of God,” and nobody *finally* knows whether ‘twas done or not. ~jpc

Oh to climb a living oak rather than the tree of good and evil. Namaste.

September 23 Sunday Dialogue LXXI

Journer: How do I go about living authentically?

Nez: My student* said, “A warrior does not give up what he loves, he finds the love in what he does.”

Journer: But what if I’m trapped in some little world?

Nez: Break out and find the love in what you do.

* Socrates character (Nick Nolte) in movie “Peaceful Warrior”

September 24 Most Unsafe Spiritual Path

Safety is the most unsafe spiritual path you can take. Safety

keeps you numb and dead. People are caught by surprise when it is time to die. They have allowed themselves to live so little. ~Stephen Levine, "The Mindful Soul," *Handbook for the Soul*, p. 50

"S/he who would save life will not find it. Only the living find life." Or am I mixing up poetry here? ~jpc

Grace and peace in our unsafety. Namaste.

September 25 Part of the Big Show

[E-mail to my new grandson, Alec:] We took Thomas Berry to lunch yesterday. Remember, he's four months younger than Great Granddaddy Joe. He told us not to forget that "we live in a single, integral, and multiform universe, which is the Big Show we're all part of, no matter what." So, even though you and he are not as "productive" now, you are every bit as much a part of the Big Show as anyone or anything else. Productivity is not the ticket. Being is. Just be, baby. ~Dah Dah (jpc)

*And being includes crying and laughing and dreaming.
Namaste.*

September 26 Mysteries to Awe

Martin Marty: "The problem," says [Gabriel] Marcel, "is something that I could isolate." "Problems," he says, "have solutions or potential solutions." Mysteries don't. Mysteries have depths. Mysteries are unfathomable. . . .

Marcel . . . says, “The problem stands outside me. Mystery, I’m inside it. Mystery, I can’t get distance on myself, or it or that other person.” ~”Bill Moyers Talks with Historian Martin E. Marty” (transcript), PBS, 8/17/07 <http://tinyurl.com/29vmou> via George Holcombe

Marty and Moyers are talking about children and grandchildren and great grandchildren, whom they see not as problems to solve but mysteries to awe. ~jpc

O sweet mystery. Namaste.

September 27 A Great Marriage

The most important qualities that make a great marriage develop in the marriage itself; they arise in the joint relationship and are not present in the individuals beforehand. A marriage is a new reality created by the covenant between two people. ~C. David Grant, *A Theology of God’s Grace*, p. 43

Covenant is that without which a strong marriage will not develop. Covenant keeps us in our marriage during hard times and gives us the possibility to really fall in love. ~jpc

O to have a bond that lets it be and become. Namaste.

September 28 Gracious Memories

Taking a little poetic license, let me change the first word

of an old hymn: “*Gracious* memories, how they linger,
How they ever flood my soul.” We reflect for at least
three reasons: to notch new gracious memories, to recall
old ones, and to be awed with thanksgiving. I recall the
way my life was changed when _____ . ~jpc

“Gracious memories, how they linger.” Namaste.

September 29 Astounding Transformation

You have molten rock, and then all by itself, it transforms
into a human mother caring for her child. That’s a rather
astounding transformation. Of course, it takes four billion
years. ~**Brian Swimme**, interview by Susan Bridle, “The
Divinization of the Cosmos,” *WIE* magazine, Spring-
Summer, 2001

Sounds like most anything is possible. ~jpc

*O to be universally patient while never sitting on our
hands. Namaste.*

September 30 Sunday Dialogue LXXII

Journer: How do I start my spiritual journey in earnest?

Nez: Get up early in the morning.

Journer: Why?

Nez: My student* said, “To affect the quality of the day.”

Sleeping till the last minute will affect quite a different quality.

* **Henry David Thoreau**, *Walden: 150th Anniversary Illustrated Edition...*, p. 67

October

October 1 **Something**

Something operates us, but what? Is it not the free flow of brilliant and ancient information, an involuntary and endemic intelligence freely exchanged on the cellular and intracellular level? . . . If this enlightening, enlivening pulse is God, then may we get on our knees and give thanks night and day. If it is Allah, may we face the east five times between sunup and sundown and humble ourselves. If it is Yahweh, may we touch the Holy Wall and shed tears of gratitude. If it is biology, may science touch the sacred. I believe it is all of these, but whatever it may be to each person, and however we name it, it is not knowable. ~Paul Hawken, *Blessed Unrest: How the Largest Movement in the World Came into Being and Why No One Saw It Coming*, p. 177

The unknowable in the midst of the “something” that operates us – and allows us to operate – is what I call spirit. Namaste.

October 2 **Who Is More Righteous?**

We support and extend the ministry of the Church to those persons who conscientiously oppose all war, or any particular war, and who therefore refuse to serve in the armed forces or to cooperate with systems of military

conscription. We also support and extend the Church's ministry to those persons who conscientiously choose to serve in the armed forces or to accept alternative service. As Christians we are aware that neither the way of military action, nor the way of inaction, is always righteous before God. ~*The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church – 2004*, via Jerome Hunter

I'm sure there are millions of the some 8 million UMC members in the USA on both sides. Likewise, separated yet bound are the some 300 millions of our fellow Americans. ~jpc

Righteousness is ambiguous. Namaste.

October 3 No Problem

I remember clearly the contextual statement during . . . [a] seminar that "prayer is a problem." Indeed it was (and is) in a worldview rooted in cause-effect, Newtonian physics; that statement resonated inside me in a profound way. Things are different these days. The science of physics is not so sure of itself. ~Larry Loeppke, from *EarthRise* reflection, 9/7/07

Pray-ers may have a problem, but not prayer. It continues to hum as the deep conversation of our universe. ~jpc

Prayer accentuates our relatedness to all that is. Namaste.

October 4 Indebted, I'd Say

Am I bound with all other, out to the most universal? Yes. To myself? Yes. To the ground of being? Yes. Do I experience that union daily? Yes. Has that union overwhelmed me at times? Yes. Will it again? Yes. Is that union a fact? Yes. Will it be with me to the end? Yes. Does that union seem more powerful than separation? Yes, as it happens to me and in the memory of those happenings. Does it make a difference? All the difference. ~jpc, e-mail to a friend who was suggesting grace is more of an emotion

“O to grace how great a debtor.” Namaste.

October 5 Dependent Upon a Presence

Watching several hundred organizations rise and crumble over the years, . . . I still believe all things pass away and must either be reborn or replaced. The structure may be there but it becomes a lifeless and meatless skeleton and no matter how much you rattle it around, it no longer lives. It was . . . dependent upon a “presence,” and when the presence is gone the organization is dead. ~George Walters, *Springboard* e-mail, 9/30/07

What would the presence look like in an organization I want to help create or recreate? ~jpc

Being the presence is our birthright. Namaste.

October 6 The Big View

So what do we do? Romanticize the past as though it were without flaw? Cry over the present as though it were too flawed? Narrow our efforts to what we can easily and comfortably do? Worry about our grandkids' college funds instead of the world they will inherit? Consider ourselves "retired" when we reach eighty? What is the answer and who can supply the comprehensive, intentional and futuristic view we are no longer able to provide for ourselves? ~Nancy Grow, from *EarthRise* reflection, 9/27/07

We all are looking for who can supply the comprehensive, intentional, futuristic, and sustaining view for living. ~jpc

A community that offers these qualities of life awaits creation or re-creation. Namaste.

October 7 Sunday Dialogue LXXIII

Journer: What makes a group profound?

Nez: My student* said, "The most durable groups are those that put in place deep principles. For instance, care for the earth versus care for the environment or global warming, or even less deep, 'Let's all recycle.'"

Journer: How do they come up with "deep principles"?

Nez: Consider the need and the big context.

* **George Walters**, *Springboard* e-mail, 9/30/07

October 8 Rethink our Mission Statement

The long term goal for people and organizations is not to keep them/us alive for as long as possible, but to keep them effective relative to their stated mission for as long as they are alive. If their mission is too reduced, or otherwise less than viable, organizations will likely die sooner rather than later. ~**Randy Williams**, e-mail 10/1/07

What if the stated mission of an organization is to catalyze deep-spirited groups on missions of care? ~jpc

O to rethink our mission statements. Namaste.

October 9 Hearts that Beat as One

We are Americans by accident of our births, or voluntary immigration and naturalization. You are Jewish because of your births, or voluntary conversion. I am agnostic because of choice. Muslims are Muslims because of birth or choice. Christians are Christians by birth or conversion. We can identify ourselves by so many ways: mother, father, sister, brother, son, daughter; Christian, Jew, Muslim, nothing; straight, gay; American, Iraqi, Israeli, Palestinian,

etc.; young, old, black, brown, yellow, or white; but there is one thing that we all are. We are all human and we all, whether we like it or not, have hearts that beat as one and come from the same mother and father and the same Universal Creator that loves us all equally and without condition. ~Cindy Sheehan, "Day of Atonement," *Tikkun* magazine, via Jim Rippey and Jim Slotta

The heart of the universe beats within us all. Namaste.

October 10 Really Changes Us

I said, "So how has the Serenity Prayer changed who you are?" And he gave me this kind of blank look. He said, "Well it means a lot to me." I said, "Talk is cheap, how has it changed you?" Because all spiritual practice is about is taking something from religion and working with it in a way that changes us, really alters who we are. Not just changes our attitude, but actually our DNA. That's the promise of every religion: we're supposed to change. Spiritual practice really changes us in a very cellular way. ~Bo Lazoff, "Going Deeper," sermon 3/11/07, Human Kindness Fdn.'s *A Little Good News*, Fall 2007, via LLC

Has my heart morphed today? Why not? What seems to be holding me back? ~jpc

*O to be changing daily, right down at the heart of me.
Namaste.*

October 11 Not and Totally Am

This event [the Profound Journey Dialog, Denver] reminded me that while at one level I'm NOT in charge, at all the other levels I'm totally in charge . . . of my decisions, my choice where I expend this one good life and why. ~Sunny Walker

This profound comment, of not being in charge and being totally in charge, describes the profound journey we're all on. ~jpc

O to be blown by the "fine, fine wind . . . / Like a fine, an exquisite chisel, a wedge-blade inserted; / . . . we shall come at the wonder. . . ." Namaste.

October 12 Mother Teresa Encounter

We were walking to the plane in Denver and ran into a young "Mother Teresa" from the Philippines, 20ish, a divine sparkle in her eye, munching on some chips, and in that familiar white and blue garb – a symbol of profound care. She was moving from the Bronx to Detroit, working in inner-cities. Asked about the new book, she rose an inch off the floor: "It inspires me so to know that Mother had to decide with raw courage to serve, every day, for all those years." Lynda cried for a while after that encounter. ~jpc

Presence is awesome. Namaste.

October 13 What to Do with the Gift of Life

Yes, you and I are among the privileged few who receive good treatment. When I was in Mexico following the end of my chemo I was very aware that had I been born Mexican, I would be dead. It makes you think twice about what it is you are called to do now that you've been given the gift of life. ~e-mail from colleague to LLC, 9/16/07

Life is strange that way: escape death and you're left with the vocational question, what do I do now with the gift of my life? ~jpc

When you think about it, that's our situation, moment-to-moment. Namaste.

October 14 Sunday Dialogue LXXIV

Journer: Are you religious?

Nez: My student* said, "Being religious means asking passionately the question of the meaning of our existence and being willing to receive answers, even if the answers hurt."

Journer: I don't think I want to be religious, then.

Nez: It's almost impossible not to be.

* Paul Tillich, "Invocation: The Lost Dimension of

Religion," *The Saturday Evening Post*, 230, no. 50 (June 14, 1958), p. 29

October 15 Met in All of Life

[W]e can experience this Final Reality in both life and death, security and insecurity, fulfillment and frustration, joy and tragedy, love and solitude, knowledge and ignorance, success and failure, merit and guilt. The biblical God is not met in half of life, but in all of life. ~Gene Marshall, "God and Progressive Christianity" <http://tinyurl.com/2yglzn> via Houston Markley

There is no escape from the way life is. Obi-Wan Kenobi's "The force is with us!" is the absolute truth. ~jpc

O to say "yes" to final reality. Namaste.

October 16 Mentor's Presence

One of my mentors has been dead thirty years, today.* I wrote this about him at the end of my memoir**:

Joseph Wesley Mathews (1911-1977)

*He called me
He pushed me
He trained me
He priested me
He assigned me*

*He mystified me
He motivated me
He challenged me
He emboldened me
He communes in me*

*Kaz*** says, "Enlighten the dark blood of your ancestors, shape their cries into speech, purify their will. . . ." They cry out, "Finish our work!" Namaste.*

* October 16th, *Brother Joe **Called To Be*, p. 299

*** Kazantzakis, *The Saviors of God*, pp. 71-2

October 17 All Night

The queue was long [to see the Black Madonna]. Very long. I looked down that long line of people and I wondered. "What was it they wanted to experience? Why had they all come?" . . . [F]inally I stood before her. She held a large ball in her hand and I touched it, looked into her compassionate face, and together we prayed for our earth. She was dark and earthy, so I knew she'd be praying with me. Then reluctantly I moved on. "Not fair!" I thought. St. Ignatius had all night and I, just a few minutes. ~Phyllis Hockley, from *EarthRise* reflection, 10/1/07

"On Earth, now!" said St. Ignatius. Namaste.

October 18 **There Is Hope**

“New generations have been entrusted with the future of the planet. . . . Before it is too late, courageous decisions must be made to enable us to restore the strong bond between humankind and earth. . . . A decisive ‘yes’ is needed,” said **Pope Benedict** . . . as he celebrated mass with 500,000 youth in Loreto, Italy, 9/2/07. ~<http://tinyurl.com/36xspx> via Randy Williams

When the leader of one of the largest global institutions begins to talk like that, there is hope. ~jpc

Some of the last shall be first. Namaste.

October 19 **“Not a Christian Nation”**

Andrew Jackson resisted bids in the 1820s to form a “Christian party in politics.” Abraham Lincoln buried a proposed “Christian amendment” to the Constitution to declare the nation’s fealty to Jesus. ~Jon Meacham, “A Nation of Christians Is Not a Christian Nation,” *nytimes.com*, 10/7/07

The fact that “Christian nation” is not in the Constitution, and certainly not in the Bible, makes the USA a much greater nation. ~jpc

Let us continue to be a beacon of “liberty and justice for all.” Namaste.

October 20 Two Systems

[T]he two systems in question are irreconcilable. . . . One says in effect: “Get, get, get now; all you can, as fast as you can, for yourself, and so insure security for yourself. If all will do this, then everyone will be safe.” And it depends on things, primarily.

The other said: “Give, give, give to others. Let gifts flow freely out and they will flow freely back to you again. In the universal and endless stream of giving this is bound to be so.” ~Ella Cara Deloria, *Speaking of Indians*, pp. 119-20, via Pat Druckenmiller’s *EarthRise* reflection, 10/3/07

Keep and it shall be taken from you. Give and it shall be given unto you. Namaste.

October 21 Sunday Dialogue LXXV

Journer: What is the truth?

Nez: My student* said, “Every moment is the opportunity for transformation.”

Journer: Is that all?

Nez: That’s all you need to know.

* Joe Slicker, via Nancy Trask

October 22 Goldmines of Opportunities

The documentary “Kilowatt Ours” is great in that it provides practical vision for action, represented by a phrase that simply states “most homes are goldmines of energy-saving opportunities.” I started looking at my home differently. I saw it filled with possibilities to save energy. I even see my neighborhood and my neighbors filled with possibility. ~Pamela Bergdall, from *EarthRise* reflection, 10/2/07

On and on . . . we see that creation is filled with possibility.
~jpc

O to mine the opportunities. Namaste.

October 23 For the Vocated Ones

[Our movement] has a lot to add [to contemporary gurus of transformation] that is not fully appreciated or understood: things like contradictional thinking (the gift of life is in the situation and nowhere else); maneuvers (bringing Spirit into all action); . . . transparency (means of revealing the other world in the midst of this world); profound humanness (life-giving presence. . .). There are dozens more methods we [need to transmit and demonstrate]. . . . [N]urturing the vocated ones of earth is a huge mission. ~Jack Gilles, *Springboard* e-mail

O for strategic ways to share gifts. Namaste.

October 24 Abuse and Atheism

Waves of atheism have swept the West before. One was in the mid-18th century, when the devastating Lisbon earthquake, killing some 60,000 people, shook the belief of many in the benevolence of God. Another was in the mid-19th century, when advances in geology destroyed the traditional chronology of the Old Testament, proving that Earth was much older than the 6,000-odd years the Bible allowed. A third spasm followed the First World War, when the combination of Freud's writings and Einstein's theories of relativity upset established views of the human psyche and the universe. ~Paul Johnson, "Militant Atheism and God," 10/08/07 www.forbes.com/currentevents via Priscilla Wilson

Don't forget the Black Death of the 14th century, a pandemic when c. 75 million humans were wiped out. I would add our abuse of the Earth. If all is sacred, why damn "God's" creation with our economic greed and human-centered priorities? ~jpc

*It is ungodly to commit geocide. * Namaste.*

* destroy the earth (Thomas Berry)

October 25 Evolutionary Vortex

If you are really dedicated to creating a more evolved world, the future is no longer some far-off fantasy realm, but is something you forge in and through your relationships

. . . right now. . . There is a constant vibration that is inherently creative in the we-space between committed human beings who share a passion to create the future in the present moment. Together, you become a vortex through which evolution occurs. ~**Andrew Cohen**, from *Quote of the Week*, 10/9/07

New vortexes of the spirit movement are forever coming into being. ~jpc

As long as spirit reigns. Namaste.

October 26 Voice of Mainstream Islam

A total of 138 of the world's top Muslim leaders, clerics and academics have written an open letter to the Pope, the Archbishop of Canterbury and other leaders of the Christian world. . . . [Professor Aref Ali Nayed] said: "Christians and Muslims make up more than half the world's population . . . and when you look at [our potential power for good] . . . and the violence of terrorism, it's easy to see how dangerous it is for there to be so little understanding." ~**Robert Pigott**, "Emerging Voice of Mainstream Islam," <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7040774.stm> via George Holcombe

Holcombe says, "This may be the most important piece of news of the year." Thank goodness those who better understand Islam's teachings on "one God" and "love your neighbor as yourself" are finding their voice. ~jpc

“Neighbor” includes all humans and the Earth community. Namaste.

October 27 Interior Explosion

By the end of the weekend [seminar in the ghetto], I was experiencing the truth of Paul Tillich’s teaching, that each of us is fully “accepted” just as we are. We don’t have to seek another life, another situation, or another condition; our life is perfect just as it is. Before the weekend, I had always felt shy and alienated; I now felt an interior explosion of healing and goodness and perfection. ~Robertson Work, “A Love Story,” *Life Lessons for Loving the Way You Live*, by Jennifer Read Hawthorne (“Chicken Soup for the Soul” series) October 2007

Rob shares the experience of most of us as he describes the transforming power of a grace event on the journey.
~jpc

Fully accepted just as we are. Namaste.

October 28 Sunday Dialogue LXXVI

Journer: Do all suffer?

Nez: My student* said, “We suffer if we don’t get what we want and we suffer if we get what we want.”

Journer: So, how do we deal with suffering?

Nez: Some suffering you eradicate. For deep suffering you meditate . . . till you can give thanks.

* Socrates (Nick Nolte) in "Peaceful Warrior" (2006 movie)

October 29 My Chosen Life

. . . *Sit down tonight*

*And write him about the life you can talk about
With a claim to authority, the life you've witnessed,
Which for all you know is the life you've chosen.*

~Carl Dennis, "The God Who Loves You," *Practical Gods*, Penguin Poets, 2001, writersalmanac.publicradio.org, 10/10/07

Big question: Is the life I'm living the life I've chosen? ~jpc

O to choose my life. Namaste.

October 30 Secular-Spiritual Journey

[At a class at UNC:Asheville] I asked the question Can a person be religious *and* secular? Not an either-or, but a both-and. The response from several classmates, all retirees, was unanimously NO! . . . I am here to witness not only is it possible to be secular-religious, but it is the only way for Christians and any other formal spiritual path today in the post-modern world. ~Harry Wainwright, from *EarthRise* reflection, 10/13/07

We are born secular and die secular and have profound experiences in between that could be called religious or spiritual. I agree that our journey is secular-spiritual. ~jpc

*Whatever we call it, let us journey profoundly.
Namaste.*

October 31 Ultimate Life Task

Our consciousness depends on this world, as our world depends on our consciousness. To become aware of this relationship and to help bring forth the world to the benefit of all beings is the ultimate life task of humanity. ~Michael Doorn, *The Ecozoic Reader*, Vol. 4, No. 3, p. 46

I certainly agree with Michael and would add “our consciousness” as attuned to the depth dimension of “this world” rather than silly-shallow images and communication afloat all around us. ~jpc

Let profound interdependence intensify. Namaste.

November

November 1 Enough Profundity

I never experience the reality of God without the reality of the world, nor the reality of the world without the reality of God. ~Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, p. 40, DWB ed.

Wed this with Doorn's quote yesterday, "Our consciousness depends on this world, as our world depends on our consciousness," and we have enough profundity to live on: reality, consciousness and experience of it, and saying "yes" to being driven this way and that by reality. ~jpc

Quite enough profundity, indeed. *Namaste*.

November 2 Pioneers' Vision

I saw the Omnipotent's flaming pioneers

...

*The labourers in the quarries of the gods,
The messengers of the Incommunicable,*

...

Lips chanting an unknown anthem of the soul,

...

*Their tread one day shall change the suffering earth
And justify the light on Nature's face.*

~Sri Aurobindo, *Savitri: A Legend and a Symbol*, “III: The Book of the Divine Mother,” via Becky Watson

O to fulfill the vision. Namaste.

November 3 Same God-force

I’m not into isms and asms. There isn’t a Catholic moon and a Baptist sun. I know the universal God is universal. . . . I feel that the same God-force that is the mother and father of the pope is also the mother and father of the loneliest wino on the planet. ~Dick Gregory, via Matthew Fox, *Original Blessing*, p. 67

Who would have thought that Gregory has a more profound theology than most religious leaders? ~jpc

Everything, including popes and winos, is of universal value. Namaste.

November 4 Sunday Dialogue LXXVII

Journer: Do you believe in universal salvation?

Nez: My student* said, “If being is by nature holy there is no salvation except of *everything* that exists.”

Journer: But what if Judaism, Christianity, and Islam do not agree?

Nez: Then they need to contemplate and meditate more on the power at the heart of the universe.

* Teilhard de Chardin, *Human Energy*, p. 139

November 5 All Are Marvels

When will we teach our children in school what they are? We should say to each of them: Do you know what you are? You are a marvel. . . . Yes, you are a marvel. And when you grow up, can you then harm another who is, like you, a marvel? ~Pablo Casals, *Joys and Sorrows*, p. 295

Is this not the truth when you consider the universal process that brings us all into being? ~jpc

Peace begins at an early age. Namaste.

November 6 Earth Will Take Care of Us

At Oxford, [James Lovelock] once stood up and admonished Mother Teresa for urging an audience to take care of the poor and “leave God to take care of the Earth.” As Lovelock explained to her, “If we as people do not respect and take care of the Earth, we can be sure that the Earth, in the role of Gaia, will take care of us and, if necessary, eliminate us.” ~Jeff Goodell, “The Prophet of Climate Change: James Lovelock,” *rollingstone.com*, 10/17/07, via Bill Salmon

I heard someone say, “We don’t have to worry about global warming . . . the Rapture will take care of that.”
~jpc

*Our global priorities and our theology need much work.
Namaste.*

November 7 Prayer Is Energy

[Prayer is] energy, the spiritual equivalent of a big cuppa coffee – the energy of renewed awareness of relationships, the needs and heart desires of both myself and others, communion with a magnificent Mystery, and gratitude for all that was, is and shall be. ~Sandra Conant Strachan, from *EarthRise* reflecion, 10/18/07

That’s one heck of an experience of prayer. Must be real.
~jpc

O to keep the natural energy flowing. Namaste.

November 8 Forcing Me to Relate

*. . . Yes, yellow tulip, in your place of honor
you are revolutionary,
transforming reality.
Forcing me to relate to my relationship to you,
you invite interpretation,
consciousness and
eventually a whole story of creation! . . .*

~Rod Rippel, *The Yellow Tulip & Other Poems*, p. 6

*The whole story of creation is in every finite part of it.
Namaste.*

November 9 **Universal Creativity**

[C]reativity consists in activating, expressing, and fulfilling the universe process, the earth process, the life process, and the human process within the possibilities of our historical moment. ~Thomas Berry,* “Perspectives on Creativity: Openness to a Free Future,” via Matthew Fox, *Original Blessing*, p. 178

This is the context for creative and ethical living. ~jpc

And spirit reigns in each process. Namaste.

* Happy 93rd Birthday, Thomas!

November 10 **Altruism through Technology**

“In Redmond, you don’t see 7-year-olds begging on the street,” said Sean Blagsvedt, Babajob’s founder [Babajob.com seeks to bring the social-networking revolution to people who do not even have computers – the world’s poor], referring to Microsoft’s headquarters in Washington State, where he once worked. “In India, you can’t escape the feeling that you’re really lucky. So you ask, What are you going to do about all the stuff around you? How are you going to use all these skills?”

~Anand Giridharadas, "In India, Poverty Inspires Technology Workers to Altruism," *nytimes.com*, 10/30/07

Caring for the world through your work is vocational "epititude." Namaste.

November 11 Sunday Dialogue LXXVIII

Journer: I hear the word "cosmology" a lot lately. What's that all about?

Nez: My student* said, "We are in the cosmos and the cosmos is in us."

Journer: What difference does that make to my everyday living?

Nez: All the difference if you care about the roots, meaning, and future of life.

* Matthew Fox, *Original Blessing*, p. 69

November 12 Forever Graced

[I believe] that this existence is the place of meaning and that meaning is not a supernatural reality but an extraordinarily mundane reality, transparently present in every moment to the eye of the beholder. I want people to understand that the life within is utterly crucial. . . . I want people to understand that existence is graced, and

therefore precious, and that their living life in self-conscious thanksgiving and universal dedication is its meaning. ~jpc, *Called To Be*, p. 295

Forever graced. Namaste.

November 13 Francis' Family Green

For Francis . . . sun isn't something we hope will come out so we can enjoy the ballgame; the sun is my brother. The moon isn't something to ignore most nights . . . , the moon is my sister, precious, fair. . . . We are siblings, the sun, moon, trees, animals – and God is our Father. ~James C. Howell, Myers Park United Methodist, Charlotte, NC, via LLC

Profound metaphors: all of us of creation are siblings with a common parenting *spirit*. We are to enjoy each other forever. ~jpc

Family green is forseen. Namaste.

November 14 “Freedom Writers”

[*Teacher Erin Gruwell (Hillary Swank) talking to student Andre*] I know what you're up against. We're all of us up against something. So you better make up your mind, because until you have the balls to look me straight in the eye and tell me. . . , I am not letting you fail. Even if that means coming to your house every night until you finish the work. I see who you are. Do you understand

me . . . you are not failing. ~"Freedom Writers" (2007 movie: clip <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8vOreg-VjYQ> with the real Erin, also)

Erin discovers her calling as she helps transform an at-risk, extremely diverse urban high school class. In the true story they raise money and travel to Auschwitz and Anne Frank's family hideout . . . oh, yes, and write a book. Imaginal education *par excellence*. ~jpc

Erin's father tells her, "You have been blessed with a burden." Namaste.

November 15 "Dancing on the Water"

Fiddler A.C. Bushnell two years ago received the diagnosis of liver cancer. He made a list of what he'd do if he lived one year or thirty. He said in an interview, "Life is a terminal condition for all of us. . . . Death has made the world brighter and more beautiful to me." One thing on his list was doing a solo album. "Dancing on the Water," just out, is the result. Through his experience, A.C. is "finding the faith to make music his way." Oh, and a bonus: he's cancer free. ~adapted from NPR station interview <http://wunc.org/tsot/archive/sot1101c07.mp3/view> 11/01/07

*Transforming experiences come in spirited ways.
Namaste.*

listen to "Dancing on the Water" (about the sea of tranquility) <http://tinyurl.com/379fv8>

November 16 What Matters

[Authentic] learning organizations are not about trying to be happy and work more efficiently, but about building the earth. . . . To maintain our sanity and to be effective, we all must focus, but the focus is . . . more meaningful when it flows from something much deeper. ~George Walters, *Springboard* e-mail, 9/30/07

Learning organizations, as Peter Senge writes, are crucial to what matters to the team. Walters is saying what matters to every team, in the long run, is building the earth. ~jpc

Let the big picture and depth understanding guide our work. Namaste.

November 17 Huge Benefit

[We humans are] a huge benefit to the world. We tend to think of ourselves as some sort of plague, or destructive agency. Although we are, at the same time we are something wonderful. . . . Through our eyes, the Earth has seen for the very first time, from space, what an incredibly beautiful planet she is. ~James Lovelock, interview, 2/07 <http://tinyurl.com/2xrbc5> via Jane Zammit

Don't tear us humans down. At the same time, don't think we are the earth's greatest gift. ~jpc

All have a profound role to play. Namaste.

November 18 Sunday Dialogue LXXIX

Journer: What's wrong with just having fun?

Nez: My student* said superficial living “ignores the tragic and denies the transcendent.”

Journer: Is living profoundly having fun?

Nez: Fulfillment is at the heart of fun, tragedy, transcendence – making living profound.

* Gabriel Marcel <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/marcel>

November 19 Saving Lives

Tense with the threat of discovery at a time and place when giving a Jew water was punishable by death, the zoo under the Zabinskis nonetheless remained a place alive. . . . Antonina herself, a woman who served sit-down meals [to the Jews under their care], analyzed in her diaries the emotional needs of her guests, and refused to lose her sense of connection to the world. In spite of the carnage around them, the Zabinskis saved the lives of approximately three hundred Polish Jews. ~Suzanne Antonetta's review of Diane Ackerman's, *The Zookeeper's Wife* <http://tinyurl.com/2hojvs> via Karen Bueno

There is always a way to save life. Namaste.

November 20 Good Provokes

“Good provokes and forces us to think about things we’d rather not think about,” Kidder stated, noting that we tend to push away virtuousness that exceeds our own. . . . Kidder waited six years from the time he met [Paul] Farmer before beginning work on the book. “If I started following this guy around, [I knew] he was going to disturb my peace of mind. And he did.” The time with Farmer, however, was the most exhilarating of his life. ~Tracy Kidder, author of *Mountains Beyond Mountains: The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer, A Man Who Would Cure the World*, 10/10/07 <http://candler.emory.edu/NEWS/102407.cfm>

Reminds me of “I’d rather see a sermon than hear one any day.” ~jpc

Future heroes are provoked by good now. Namaste.

November 21 “Related”

*I am forced
to relate
to being
related.*

*Consciously
I now know
we are just
related.*

*In our love
or our hate
we are now
related.*

*And in this
relation
is what we
are given.*

*Plus I must
freely choose
to be or
not to be . . .*

*who I am:
related
to you as
we now are.*

*From now on
we cannot
unrelate
to each other.*

*Spirit's now
at times like
these when we
know we are . . .*

related
as a mate . . .
a species . . .
a planet.

~jpc, 11/7/07

Namaste.

Note: Reflection on Kierkegaard's "by relating itself to its own self and by willing to be itself the self is grounded transparently in the Power which posited it" (*Fear and Trembling and Sickness Unto Death*, trans. Walter Lowrie, p. 147)

November 22 Science of Gratitude

[D]opamine is released when people are feeling good or are excited by a challenge . . . *eudaimonia*, the happiness or fulfillment that comes from the action itself, not the result of it. Any other benefits that come along – someone is grateful, your project is a success – are icing on the cake. ~Deborah Norville, from *Thank You Power: Making the Science of Gratitude Work for You* (*Reader's Digest*, pp. 150-51, Oct. 2007), via LLC

The universe, the way it is, is conspiring to make us feel good, excited, happier, and more fulfilled – among other things. ~jpc

"Thank you" for that. Namaste.

November 23 Real Happiness

As Bobby Kennedy said . . . the nation's gross national product measures everything "except that which makes life worthwhile." . . . [H]appiness seems to have little relation to economic achievement, which we have historically understood as the driver of well-being. . . . A . . . recent study found that life satisfaction in China declined between 1994 and 2007, a period in which average real incomes grew by 250 percent. ~**Eduardo Porter**, "All They Are Saying Is Give Happiness a Chance," *nytimes.com*, 11/12/07

What really makes us happy? ~jpc

Happy are the _____ . Namaste.

November 24 *Asking Me to Believe . . .*

Barbara and I were sitting in a pew at our local Catholic Church listening to the priest's sermon. While he was talking, it dawned on me what the Church was asking of my belief system. It wanted me to believe in a male, white, Hebrew tribal god. Even though the Hebrews refused to say the name of this god, the Church not only named it but gave it a sex. ~**Bill Alerding**, from *EarthRise* reflection, 11/5/07

Is it any wonder that our "God" is too small, encumbered with all our trappings? I don't have anything against most

human personal characteristics, but the eternal power that is mysterious and not human can hardly be described thus.
~jpc

*What about “O Thou,” or “O-YAH,” or utter silence?
Namaste.*

November 25 Sunday Dialogue LXXX

Journer: What’s it going to take to bring us together?

Nez: My student* said, “Beware of the differences that blind us to the unity that binds us.”

Journer: What is the unity between jihadists and capitalists?

Nez: Breath.

* **Huston Smith**, *The Way Things Are*, p. 36

November 26 “Transisting”

Once the external time demands of employment are gone, time changes, natural rhythms are revealed. Mine seem very slow. Once I stopped feeling guilty for not being “productive,” I realized that with the stressful pace of my work during the last four years I had lost the importance of living mindfully, in the moment. ~**Sandra True**, from *EarthRise* reflection, 11/5/07

Though “transist” is not a word in most dictionaries, it is a state we all have been in and find rather wondrous and mysterious, sometimes making us new. ~jpc

Go ahead and be, intentionally. Namaste.

November 27 Who We Really Are

Nothing can be itself without being in communion with everything else, nor can anything truly be the other without first acquiring a capacity for interior presence to itself. ~**Thomas Berry**, “Contemplation and World Order,” in *Riverdale Papers*, V, p. 2

Who are we? We are in communion with everything else, we are other, we are presence. ~jpc

O to be more fully who we are. Namaste.

November 28 Working without a Why

When we work from a deep and spiritual place we do so without an extrinsic purpose in mind. We work for the sake of working and love for the sake of loving and live for the sake of living. . . . Working without a why means letting go of all superficial enticements to our labor and working out of our innermost selves. ~**Matthew Fox**, *The Reinvention of Work*, pp. 79-80, via Randy Williams

Work is a universal thing. Like squirrels and ants, we work for the sake of working, first of all. Then we can talk

about putting food on the table. ~jpc

Work is holy. Namaste.

November 29 Yet, a New Day!

Same old story:

new life

hope

peace

. . . Yet, a new day!

~Koshin (Bob Hanson), 12/15/02

Life does go on in its petty pace, but sometimes it is revealed to us that life is new moment, new day, new life.

~jpc

So what is the truth about life? Namaste.

November 30 “Pale Blue Dot” (I)

[Carl] Sagan . . . persuaded NASA engineers to turn the Voyager I spacecraft around on Valentine’s Day in 1990, so that it could take a picture of Earth from the very edge of our solar system, about 4 billion miles away. In the photograph, Earth appears as a tiny bluish speck. Sagan later wrote of the photograph, “Look again at that dot.

That's here. That's home. That's us. On it everyone you love, everyone you know, everyone you ever heard of, every human being who ever was, lived out their lives . . . [on that] mote of dust suspended in a sunbeam." ~*Writers Almanac*, 11/9/07 [quoted from *Pale Blue Dot*, p. 6, one of Sagan's last books, 1994]

*"Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home."
Namaste.*

search image: "pale blue dot" – image of Earth (circled) taken by Voyager; others say at 3.7 billion miles away <http://tinyurl.com/2lwbnx>

December

December 1 “Pale Blue Dot” (II)

Our posturings, our imagined self-importance, the delusion that we have some privileged position in the Universe are challenged by this point of pale light [the “pale blue dot”]. Our planet is a lonely speck in the great enveloping cosmic dark. In our obscurity, in all this vastness, there is no hint that help will come from elsewhere to save us from ourselves. ~Carl Sagan, *Pale Blue Dot*, p. 7

We are on our own. Help only comes from our evolving universe, our solar system, our Earth community, our human community, ourselves, and from transforming *spirit* at the heart of it all. ~jpc

Quite enough help. Namaste.

December 2 “Pale Blue Dot” (III)

Think of the endless cruelties visited by the inhabitants of one corner of this pixel [“pale blue dot”] on the scarcely distinguishable inhabitants of some other corner, how frequent their misunderstandings, how eager they are to kill one another, how fervent their hatreds. . . . There is perhaps no better demonstration of the folly of human conceits than this distant image of our tiny world. To me, it underscores our responsibility to deal more kindly with one another, and to preserve and cherish the pale blue

dot, the only home we've ever known. ~Carl Sagan, *Pale Blue Dot*, pp. 6-7 (listen to parts I-III, and more, of *Pale Blue Dot* with earth images <http://tinyurl.com/yqo2oc> – via Jerome Hunter)

O “to deal more kindly with one another, and to preserve and cherish the pale blue dot.” Namaste.

December 3 To Die Is To Live

*Are you willing to be sponged out, erased,
cancelled,
made nothing?
Are you willing to be made nothing?
dipped into oblivion?*

If not, you will never really change. . . .

~D. H. Lawrence, “Phoenix,” *The Complete Works. . .*,
p. 728

O to be “willing to be made nothing.” Namaste.

December 4 A Mentor

I'd sum up **Joseph Mathew's** work (1911-1977) as pointing to the other world in this world. The center of his knowing, doing, and being was the transparent event that makes all things new. His key phrase was “the contentless word.” ~jpc

O to be a messenger of new life. Namaste.

December 5 Another Mentor

I'd sum up **Thomas Berry's** work (1914-20—) as telling the new story that unites and motivates the Earth community. The center of his story is a new cosmology that puts all within the context of the universe, and the numinous at its heart. His key phrase is "the great work."
~jpc

O to be a messenger of care for all. Namaste.

December 6 While We Dream . . .

No great technology push is needed to implement a program of energy conservation. No technology push is needed to provide leadership for changing the unsustainable culture of the western world. No technology push is needed to implement programs to reduce the environmental impact of coal-fired electricity and petroleum-fueled transportation. What is needed is political will and shared sacrifice. And while we dream of a technology like no other ever invented, a technology with no unanticipated consequences and no environmental impact, the temperature goes up. ~**Bruce Lierman**, comment to *dotearth.blogs.nytimes.com*, 11/17/07

*O for some leadership, but in the meantime. . . .
Namaste.*

December 7 **Big-time Recycling**

God . . . can recycle even despair into possibility, even chaos into creation, and nothingness into something wonderful. ~**Matthew Fox**, *Original Blessing*, p. 165

These are words from a priest defrocked by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, now the Pope. Fox has let loose a global movement of creation spirituality. If I were Pope I would find a way to include his understanding into the evolving wisdom of the church. What we defrock the lord of history frocks. ~jpc

Recycling is spirit business. Namaste.

December 8 **Mysterious Alluring**

Thomas is speaking to Youth: All communities of being are created in response to a prior mysterious alluring activity. . . . [L]ove is a word that points to this alluring activity in the cosmos. This primal dynamism awakens the communities of atoms, galaxies, stars, families, . . . persons. . . . Love ignites being. ~**Brian Swimme**, *The Universe Is a Green Dragon*, p. 49

Being isn't just is. It's always on a mission of love. ~jpc

Love is the answer to universal questions. Namaste.

December 9 Sunday Dialogue LXXXI

Journer: What do you think about all that's happening on Earth today?

Nez: My student* wrote, "The force that through the green fuse drives the flower / Drives my green age."

Journer: So you're an environmentalist?

Nez: I'm a member of the league, hopefully in league with the driving force.

* Dylan Thomas, via Ellen Howie

December 10 True Joy

This is the true joy in life: Being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one, being a force of nature instead of a feverish, selfish little clod of ailments and grievances, complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy. I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the whole community. . . . ~George Bernard Shaw, attributed as from a "speech at Brighton," via Jerome Hunter

I'd say we of the universe are devoted to making happiness. ~jpc

Together we have a mighty purpose. Namaste.

December 11 Pieces of Us Cannot Do

*... Our decision brought us to this place
Where all the wholeness each of us can bring
Complements, collides, creates an energy explosion
Such as pieces of us cannot do. . . .*

~Janice Ulangca, "In Praise of Face to Face," 10/7/07

Without universal effort we will not go forward toward the mighty purpose demanded of us in these times. ~jpc

By mutuality the universe works. Namaste.

December 12 Ready Or Not

A lot of us feel, "I'm not ready yet." But if we stand back a little, we see that this is actually a ludicrous position to take, because life is already happening and we're already in the middle of it. . . . [W]hen you awaken . . . and begin to experience a passionate sense of care about the evolution of consciousness and culture, . . . you find a way to bear . . . your own life, while always [sometimes] being ready now to shoulder . . . the evolutionary process forward. ~Andrew Cohen, from *Quote of the Week*, 12/4/07

Ready or not, the future is always now. Namaste.

December 13 **Genuine Revelations**

*... If you're on a mission from God, sent to rebuke
a city*

*or to redeem a nation,
where by cannon-makers you're ranked may be
inconsequential.*

*Nor is the voice within you
any less authentic for not having a distant echo.*

*Seers of the world, be heartened.
Even minor prophets can have genuine revelations.*

~Michael Lind, "The Minor Prophets," *Parallel Lives,
Writer's Almanac*, 11/9/07

Revelations to sensitive and responsive souls make the world go round. From such is the mighty "mission from God" created and sustained. ~jpc

Namaste.

December 14 **Not a Driverless Spaceship**

Gaia, [James Lovelock] added, offers an alternative to the "depressing picture of our planet as a demented spaceship, forever traveling driverless and purposeless around an inner circle of the sun." ~Jeff Goodell, "The Prophet of Climate Change: James Lovelock," *rollingstone.com*, 11/1/07 <http://tinyurl.com/2hc6nl>

"Que sera, sera" (whatever will be, will be) in this context

means if we go out of being, we go out of being. ~jpc

People of freedom say, "Best we help drive this ship in a different way." Namaste.

December 15 "I've Resolved to Keep It Simple"

This year I've resolved to keep it simple. Okay, simpler. And, if I'm brave, I might even give something that's been used. A recycled gift? That's right. Why *not* at Christmas? Why do gifts have to be brand new? The best? In vogue? Voluminous? Why is bigger and cooler and costlier the better gift on Jesus' birthday, the one who made a life of recycling, making old life new? He offered love to the unloved, home to the homeless, health to the lepers, sight to the blind, hope to the hopeless, forgiveness to all sinners. ~Ben Crocker, from talk, 12/11/07

Looks like Ben's got the spirit of it. ~jpc

May we all keep our giving simply profound this year. Namaste.

December 16 Sunday Dialogue LXXXII

Journer: What is your doctrine of God?

Nez: My student* wrote, "Jesus did not have a doctrine of God; he had only experience of God."

Journer: What's wrong with a doctrine of God?

Nez: Nothing, if it's based on your experience of reality. If it's based on what religious persons tell you to believe, be careful.

* **Robert Funk**, *Just Call Me Bob: The Wit and Wisdom of Robert W. Funk*, p. 3, via David Rebstock

December 17 Wonder and Mystery

The blocking of one's capacity for wonder and the loss of the capacity to appreciate mystery can have serious effects upon our psychological health, not to mention the health of our whole planet. ~**Rollo May**, *The Loss of Wonder*, "Dialogues: Therapeutic Applications of Existential Philosophy," 1(1), 1992, via Ed Mendelowitz, "The Mystery of Being"

What is our capacity quotient for wonder and mystery – a learned art, though always in our senses and heart? ~jpc

May this season be a big leap for us in the most essential capacity. Namaste.

December 18 A Great Light

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned (Isaiah 9:2). This is what "advent"

means, the coming into being . . . of the light that illumines all. Not just any light, but the light that reveals the darkest secret of our being, the light that transforms the living dead, the light that cannot be put out, forever dawning. ~jpc

We celebrate in darkness the coming of light. Namaste.

December 19 Christmas: Double Paradox

Tillich, citing Luther, speaks of Christmas as “this mystical paradox of the smallest and most helpless of all beings having in himself the center of Divinity.”* The double paradox: not just Jesus, but also us. We’re all virgin born to manifest divinity that shines in darkness. Christmas means to me we’re all sons and daughters on a divine mission in this divine realm. ~jpc (* “Luther’s Christology. . . ,” Lecture 34)

All are centered in divinity. Namaste.

December 20 According to Thy Word

Watching a Christmas concert last night, I came away with a few words that I reflected on till sleep: “and the soul felt its worth” (from “O Holy Night”). Christmas happens when I feel my worth deep down, when I know beyond doubt that my life is good just as it is, nothing else needed, except unending thankfulness for just being. At such moments the personal peace that Christmas promises is real. ~jpc

"Be it unto me according to thy word." Namaste.

December 21 Birth New Soul

I begin to think that my function is probably simply that . . . of John the Baptist . . . one who presages what is to come. Or perhaps what I am called on to do is simply to help in the birth of a new soul in that which already is. ~Teilhard de Chardin, via *All Saints*, p. 162

Is this not the reason we're all born, to help birth a new soul in what is? Namaste.

December 22 Sainly Witness

We can only live in faith and assurance, you out there at the front, and I in my cell. . . . May God keep the light of faith burning in our souls. ~Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, from his reflection on December 22, 1943, p. 119

This is one way the word about life comes, through the witness of saintly journers. ~jpc

"Come, come, ye Saints, no toil or labor fear; / But with joy wend your way. / Though hard to you this journey may appear, / Grace shall be [all] your day. . . . / All is well! All is well!" Namaste.

December 23 Sunday Dialogue LXXXIII

Journer: What is the real meaning of Christmas for anybody?

Nez: My student* said, "You come out of the energy that gave birth to the universe; it is your beginning."

Journer: Is that Christian doctrine?

Nez: That is the primal stuff all doctrine rises out of.

* Brian Swimme

December 24 For Unto Us A Child Is Born

*Not flesh of my flesh
Nor bone of my bone,
But still miraculously
My own.
Never forget
For a single minute:
You didn't grow under my heart
But in it.*

~Fleur Conkling Heyliger*

*All God's sons and daughters
are sent, adopted, and on loan –*

*to be loved, raised, given back
to care for all when on their own.*

~jpc

Namaste.

* via Kelley and JPC II, who are adopting baby boy Caleb, born mid to late October and found around November 1 by school girls as he lay abandoned in the Tigre region of Northern Ethiopia

December 25 “Glory Here and Now”

*Jesus is
pointing to
th'other world
in this world
us being
his foll'wers
glory bound
here and now*

*not glory
of success
nor riches
but simply
of pointing
others to
the glory
here and now*

*be present
to stardust
to caring
for the earth
all creatures
evolving
the glory
here and now*

~jpc

Namaste.

December 26 Post-Christmas Vision Statement

I want to teach people how to see God everywhere, to see Him [*sic*] in all that is most hidden, most solid, and most ultimate in the world. ~Teilhard de Chardin, via *All Saints*, p. 162

And to think Teilhard was silenced by the Roman Catholic Church for over three decades. ~jpc

Till we figure out what to teach people, Teilhard's statement will do. Namaste.

December 27 That Same Jesus

[Jesus'] words and deeds open onto [another] reality . . . that . . . encourages me to celebrate life, to suck the

marrow out of existence, to explore, and probe, and experiment, to venture into uncharted seas, without fear of a tyrannical and vindictive God. He does not set limits on my curiosity, or my drive to challenge every axiom. That same Jesus prompts me to give myself to tasks that exceed, even contradict, my own self-interest. ~Robert Funk, *Just Call Me Bob: The Wit and Wisdom of Robert W. Funk*, p. 12

Would that all were opened up by their tradition rather than enslaved in it. Namaste.

December 28 Theologize

Blog comment: From my brief exposure to _____, I would describe his work as intuitive theology. Sounds good, but I'm not sure it can be supported.

jpc: I'm not sure what you mean by "supported." Theology is a story about our meaning "under God." It's our poetry about our perceptions of reality based on our experience and all the input we've picked up on our journey. We are always asking the big questions and doing our best to articulate our big answers.

It is natural to theologize. Namaste.

December 29 Celebrate One Blue Sky

[Pete Seeger] sang . . . a 1967 song that has become

something of an anthem . . . of late. . . .

*One blue sky above us,
One ocean lapping all our shores,
One Earth so green and round,
Who could ask for more?*

~Andrew C. Revkin, "Pete Seeger and the 'One Blue Sky Above Us'" *dotearth.blogs.nytimes.com*, 12/10/2007
(www.youtube.com/watch?v=r2YqAZ0Jmfc&feature=related to listen to Seeger and children sing this song)

One Earth, one sky, one spirit. Namaste.

December 30 Sunday Dialogue LXXXIV

Journer: Where is spirit in our lives?

Nez: My student* said there is external, internal, and spirit consciousness.

Journer: How does spirit consciousness relate to the other two?

Nez: Since *spirit* is at the heart of all that is, there are only two – or maybe only one.

* David Bohm

December 31 Last Words of the Year

Aware of what I am not and what I truly am – one with *spirit* and all that is – I am released from the prison of who I thought I was and constantly tell myself I am. . . . I am left with a compassion for all those imprisoned in the illusion of false images about themselves. I yearn that they experience their true nature at the heart of this great spirit journey. ~jpc, from <http://johnpcock.homestead.com/TrueNature.html> (revised as “Self-Transcendence Practice . . . of One’s True Nature”)

It was a very good year. Namaste.

January

January 1 Past Year-New Year Reflection

Before starting, review your written reflections of a year ago. Then contemplate images of 2007.

Using the lists below, reflect in your journal or computer file, whatever you can review next year. (Some questions for 2007 come via Jim Wiegel and Jaimie Leopold.) Happy New Year! ~jpc

2007 – Where I've been . . .

- 5 planetary events of the past year
- 10 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
- 5 movies/TV shows/plays/sport events

My favorite belly laugh of 2007 . . .
Experienced hope because of . . .
Experienced darkness and despair in the midst of . . .
Shouted with rage about . . .
Wept over . . .
Danced with joy over . . .
Stood with conviction in the midst of . . .

Key personal event

Key family event of the past year

Key community event

Key personal struggle

Key personal creation

The journey of the past year has been like

What was really going on with me this past year

The meaning of 2007 is

My name for the past year:

The Great Year of _____!

2008 – What I intend . . .

Who I am going into 2008

My greatest need

3 things I'm focused on beyond self

My prayer for the earth community

3 things I intend to participate in

You must do the thing you think you cannot do.

~Eleanor Roosevelt

During the new year that “thing” is _____.

*For all that has been – Thanks! / To all that shall be –
Yes!* ~Dag Hammarskjöld, *Markings*, p. 89

Namaste.

January 2 Never Cease to Live

God does not die on the day when we cease to believe in a personal deity, but we die on the day when our lives cease to be illumined by the steady radiance, renewed daily, of a wonder, the source of which is beyond all reason.

~Dag Hammarskjöld, *Markings*, p. 56

“A personal deity” may be dead to us, but the *spirit* we discern in radiance and wonder lives. ~jpc

We need never cease to live. Namaste.

January 3 Transparent Means

You will know Life and be acknowledged by it according to your degree of transparency, your capacity, that is, to vanish as an end, and remain purely as a means. ~Dag Hammarskjöld, *Markings*, p. 156

Over the holidays, we saw the DVD movie “Mother Teresa of Calcutta” (<http://www.excerptsofinri.com/mother-teresa.html>) with our twelve- and nine-year-old grandchildren. Mother Teresa was transparent to life. Even in her long dark night, when she experienced being without faith, she was faithful, for she understood she was called only to be a means. ~jpc

Namaste.

January 4 “Infinite Eyes”

Chorus:

*I don't know what's out there
way behind the sun;
I got a feelin'
that we're not the only one.*

*I can see miracles
happnin' all the time;
I can see eternity
through infinite eyes.*

~Keb' Mo' – “Infinite Eyes” (listen <http://tinyurl.com/2jhtyp>) via Bill & Marianna Bailey

This song (often sung at Jubilee Community in Asheville, NC) tells it the way it is: miracles are happening all the time when seen through infinite eyes. ~jpc

Namaste.

January 5 Why We Say “Namaste”

In the faith which is “God’s marriage to the soul,” you are *one* in God, and God is wholly in you, just as, for you, He [*sic*] is wholly in all you meet. ~Dag Hammarskjöld, *Markings*, p. 165

Or *spirit* is in you and all you meet. This is why we bow

and say “Namaste.” ~jpc

Namaste.

January 6 Sunday Dialogue LXXXV

Journer: What motivates you to love?

Nez: That’s easy. My student* said, “Those who are the hardest to love need it the most.”

Journer: It’s easy because most people are hard to love?

Nez: Yeah, if your life is about responding to great need . . . and more than just human need. There’s a whole world to love.

* **Socrates** (Nick Nolte) in “Peaceful Warrior”

January 7 The Real Enemy

In an era that glorifies independence . . . we are shy of admitting the awful truth: that is, we are dependent on each other. . . . The enemy [of us in the city] is the absence of civic communion, . . . our inability to see cohabitation as that place where we enjoy ourselves by enjoying others. . . . [T]o reverence each other means that we will have to discover each other. ~**Pier Giorgio DiCicco**, Toronto’s Poet Laureate, speech at the Walk21 conference,

October2007 <http://spacing.ca/wire/?p=2557> via JPC II

DiCicco is talking about the ecological issue from the city perspective, but he also hits the planetary nail on the head: we as the Earth community are one and must face our fundamental challenge of practical reverence for each other and communion with each other. ~jpc

Namaste.

January 8 Present Moment Too Heavy

Jesus doesn't fire off into the ozone in his ministry. . . . One of our monks, Bonnie Spencer, speculated that [the] teaching that the kingdom of God is *now* is too heavy for us. So we fire Jesus off into the second coming. Or we make up the ascension. We may even make up the resurrection. Because the present moment is too heavy. It requires too much awareness. And monasticism, whether it's Buddhist or Christian, has always been focused on the present moment. That's what makes our life both a joy and so difficult, because it takes so much energy to remain conscious; it takes so much energy to be aware. ~**Brother Timothy**, monk of Mariya uMama, South Africa, "Then It's Just the Fireworks," *Heaven*, pp. 138-9

These monks (one is my godson, Brother John) and so many others have demonstrated that we can be more conscious and aware in the heavy, present moment. ~jpc

It is possible. Namaste.

January 9 What's Possible

The experiential recognition of what's possible – the glory of it, the significance of it, the sense of meaning and purpose – should be what's compelling us. Only there will we find the conviction and passion to catalyze the kind of transformation that is so desperately needed. ~Andrew Cohen, from *Quote of the Week*, 1/7/08

This is what is energizing 2008. For example, articulating the possibility of uniting the USA again for its great care and responsibility is energizing its election campaign. ~jpc

O to be agents of possibility. Namaste.

January 10 The Thin Veil

We have become a culture that fears the darkness. . . . In the Benedictine tradition, monks and nuns arise at about 3 a.m. for Vigils – prayer that takes place when the earth is shrouded in darkness and silence. These enduring voices in chant join with the hoot of the owls and the coyote's distant cry. It is said that in these dark and tranquil hours the veil between heaven and earth, between consciousness and unconsciousness, is thin. ~Lisa Whitlow, "Soul Tending" winter newsletter www.soultend.com via Donna Ziegenhorn

All have experienced moments when the veil is thin. I have a friend who drove a big UPS truck interstate overnight. Over the years, he experienced the thin veil as he drove

through the Blue Ridge Mountains at those hours. Now he's a poet. ~jpc

So what's behind the veil? Namaste.

January 11 We All Have a Mission

In the “Mother Teresa of Calcutta” movie, Anna, who came to India to live with the Sisters of Mercy but contacted MS, is sent home for medical care, to pray for their mission, and set up a network of prayer. Anna is distraught over having to leave. Mother reminds her that her prayers are at least as important as their work in the streets. A later scene in the movie, when things are going really “bad” for the Sisters, Mother calls Anna, who's sitting in wheelchair in London, and asks her and the network to “storm Heaven with your prayers.” ~jpc

A profound mission can be had in any situation. Namaste.

January 12 Spirit's Way

[Pope] Benedict was . . . [making] a deeper point worth hearing. In Auschwitz, his contention was that objective truth grounded in God is the only bulwark against the blind will to power; his Regensburg address was devoted to reason and faith, arguing that reason shorn of faith becomes nihilism, while faith without reason ends in fanaticism and violence; and in Brazil, he argued that since

Christ embraces all humanity, he cannot be foreign to anyone's spiritual experience. ~John L. Allen, Jr., "The Vatican's Relative Truth," *nytimes.com*, 12/19/07

If Benedict is saying 1) *spirit* power is the ultimate power in the universe, 2) reason and faith not grounded in *spirit* can go berserk, and 3) everyone experiences *spirit* . . . then a loud "Amen." ~jpc

*We live and move and have our being in spirit.
Namaste.*

January 13 Sunday Dialogue LXXXVI

Journer: What gives you hope these days?

Nez: That's easy. My student* said, "Concentrate on what you have left, not just on what you have lost."

Journer: What's the connection to hope?

Nez: "What we have left" is a portal to possibility that catalyzes creative imagination and response.

* **Harold Kushner**, *Overcoming Life's Disappointments*

January 14 Gift of Grace

Grace is something you can never get but can only be given. There's no way to earn it or deserve it or bring it

about any more than you can deserve the taste of raspberries and cream or earn good looks or bring about your own birth. . . . There's nothing you have to do. There's nothing you have to do. There's nothing you have to do. . . . [G]race can only be yours if you'll reach out and take it. ~Frederick Buechner, *Wishful Thinking: A Theological ABC*, pp. 38-9, via Lewie Pierce

Truly, grace is "that without which" life is impossible. Grace is our greatest gift. ~jpc

Awareness of grace is the beginning of thanksgiving. Namaste.

January 15 Spirit's Entrée

[T]here's a crack in everything; that's how the light gets in. ~Leonard Cohen, from interview with Robert Enright, May 2007

One of *spirit's* ways of entering our tightly wrapped-up lives is through tiny cracks that let the light peek through, break through, and flood our real situation. Then, sometimes, we realize we can bask in the light. Most times we frantically try to wrap life up again, tighter. ~jpc

Revelation is good! Namaste.

January 16 Transparent As a Lens

You can only receive, give, and possess the light as the

lens does. If you seek yourself . . . you rob the lens of its transparency. ~Dag Hammarskjöld, *Markings*, p. 155

Receiving, giving, and possessing the light as a lens suggests that *spirit* intends to use us as light uses a lens. We are here to be transparent to the power at the heart of every situation. ~jpc

Let me not in a self-centered way rob my life of its ultimate reason for being. Namaste.

January 17 Big Mind & Big Heart Speak

Big Mind: I'm the death of the limited, constricted self. When the bubble pops, there is just me. . . . The self's biggest fear is popping, in other words, dying. But it has nothing to fear, because when the self physically dies, or the ego dies, I am ever-present. I am unborn and undying. I am always here. Even if the whole world were to go up in an explosion. . . .

Big Heart: I am just as vast, just as infinite, just as eternal . . . as Big Mind. However, I feel. I care. I am heart. I love and I have compassion for all. . . . I am action. Big Mind is non-action. . . . I [yearn] to alleviate suffering and to bring unconditional love to all beings. ~Dennis Genpo Merzel, *Big Mind – Big Heart: Finding Your Way*, pp. 100-01, via Joseph Slicker

Let us listen to these ever-present guides. Namaste.

January 18 Down with Pejoratives

Conservative spokesmen ridiculed the abolitionists. . . , just as conservatives taunt liberals, progressives, dogooders, and activists today by making those four terms pejoratives. Healing the wounds of the earth and its people does not require saintliness or a political party, only gumption and persistence. ~Paul Hawken, from intro of *Blessed Unrest*

And liberals and progressives taunt conservatives. The point is gumptious, persistent, and active healing of the earth and its people. ~jpc

Pejoratives that get in the way be hushed. Namaste.

January 19 Be a Great Poem

Love the earth and sun and the animals . . . [and] the people, read these leaves in the open air every season of every year of your life, re-examine all you have been told at school or church or in any book, dismiss whatever insults your own soul; and your very flesh shall be a great poem. ~Walt Whitman, from Preface to *Leaves of Grass*, p. 8, via Beret Griffith

Regularly in your soul rehearse your love for all that is, even if that unbounded love does not jibe with your tradition. Let your soul be the arbiter. In so being, you incarnate life. ~jpc

To change a familiar line: "I'd rather be a poem than hear one any day." Namaste.

January 20 Sunday Dialogue LXXXVII

Journer: What do you think about death?

Nez: My student* said, "I will be cared for in death as I have been cared for in life. So what's the problem?"

Journer: Do you believe that?

Nez: 'Tis the stuff of problemless living.

* Thomas Berry, at lunch, 1/15/08

January 21 "What a Wonderful World"

*I see skies of blue and clouds of white,
The bright blessed day, the dark sacred night,
And I think to myself, "What a wonderful world!"*

~from "What a Wonderful World," by George David Weiss and Bob Thiele, performed by Louis Armstrong

The grandchildren love for us to sing this song to them as they prepare for dreamtime. At whatever age, it's a ritual that deserves our consciousness at the beginning and end of each day. ~jpc

Oh yeah! Namaste.

January 22 Hope that Changes Things

[C]ontemplation is what gave the monks of Burma the tranquil courage to walk out of their monasteries and temples last fall, chanting the Metta Sutta of compassion for all beings amid rows of heavily armed soldiers prepared to kill them. It was as moving, as brave, and as defiant an exercise of nonviolence and spiritual strength in action as we may ever see. . . . The ethics of their contemplative life demanded action . . . hope demands everything. ~Rebecca Solnit, "Our Storied Future," Jan-Feb 2008 issue *orionmagazine.org*

Let us contemplate and act in the hope that changes things. Namaste.

January 23 Karaniya Metta Sutta

Hymn of Universal Love . . . that Myanmar (Burmese) monks chant:

1.

*Who seeks to promote . . . welfare,
Having glimpsed . . . perfect peace,
Should be able, honest and upright,
Gentle in speech, meek and not proud. . . .*

4.

*Whatever living creatures there be,
Without exception, weak or strong,
Long, huge or middle-sized,
Or short, minute or bulky. . . .*

6.

*Let none deceive or decry
[The other] anywhere;
Let none wish others harm
In resentment or in hate. . . .*

8.

*Cultivate an all-embracing mind of love
For all throughout the universe,
In all its height, depth and breadth —
Love that is untroubled
And beyond hatred or enmity. . . .*

*Be careful what you recite: it may get you jailed,
beaten, or killed. Namaste.*

January 24 Soul Creatives

I'm talking about creativity with our own souls. . . . It means perpetually living right on the cutting edge of the life process – where the flowering of spirit as evolution is occurring in every moment. ~Andrew Cohen, from *Quote of the Week*, 1/14/08

The world needs “soul creatives” everywhere all the time, ones who consciously live in response to ever-present *spirit*. ~jpc

We've a cosmic commission to be soulful. Namaste.

January 25 Deep River

“[D]eep,” I guess, is kind of a synonym for me for true spirituality – what Eckhart calls the innermost part of the soul, the innermost part of the person. That’s deep. . . . Eckhart says God is a great “underground river [that no one can stop and no one can dam up].” So we come to this [underground] of being. This is why you have different wells of wisdom. There’s the Jewish well and the Sufi well and the Buddhist well and the Catholic and Protestant, but they sink into one deep underground river. There’s only one divine source. ~Matthew Fox in interview with Jeffrey Mishlove <http://www.intuition.org/txt/fox.htm>

This is a deep insight into what unites us. Religions that would separate us will die of their own idolatrous poison.
~jpc

Shall we all gather at the river and be refreshed and sustained. Namaste.

January 26 Ruthless Certainty

What’s dangerous about the world today is not belief in God – or secularism or unbelief – but ruthless certainty. If 2008 is the year when we can begin, in private and in public, to concede that we don’t know all the answers, then let us say amen. ~Lisa Miller, “Moderates Storm the Religious Battlefield,” *Newsweek*, p. 89, Dec. 31, 2007/ Jan. 7, 2008, via LLC

Ruthless certainty shows up especially among religious fundamentalists and radicals of all stripes. ~jpc

May we operate out of love rather than righteous certainty. Namaste.

January 27 Sunday Dialogue LXXXVIII

Journer: What will motivate us to care for the earth?

Nez: Someone who's *not* my student* said, "Me and nature are two."

Journer: Say some more.

Nez: If I am at one with the Earth, I'll more likely sacrifice myself for it.

* Woody Allen

January 28 Way the Universe Works

We have the unique opportunity to promote green-collar jobs and pathways out of poverty through targeted investments in energy efficiency, mass transit, and a Clean Energy Corps to provide Americans with jobs and service opportunities to reduce energy consumption, boost our economy, and tackle climate change . . . all while putting hundreds of thousands of Americans to work. ~Aditya Nochur, e-mail, 1 Sky petition to Congress

I was struck by the thinking here and how so much is coming together, the way the universe works . . . together.
~jpc

It takes a universe to make a labor force. Namaste.

January 29 Ultimate Seriousness

If people tell you, “I have no ultimate concern,” . . . then ask them, . . . “What, for instance, would you be ready to suffer or even die for?” ~Paul Tillich, *Ultimate Concern: Tillich in Dialogue*, D. Mackenzie Brown <http://tinyurl.com/3avfwo>

H. Richard Niebuhr and Ken Wilber, *et al.*, have shared Tillich’s understanding of “ultimate concern” as at the heart of the universal spirit journey. We all are devoted to some “god” or something that we take with ultimate seriousness.
~jpc

Best we figure it out, name it, and serve it . . . or something greater. Namaste.

January 30 As Its Center

I prefer the metaphorical language of Nicolaus Cusanos. . . . He says God is in everything as its center, and . . . the whole world is his [*sic*] periphery. ~Paul Tillich <http://tinyurl.com/3avfwo>

Ditto the preference. That's where we were coming from with the title of our book *At One with the Heart of Creation*, or, an earlier one, *Our Universal Spirit Journey*. "God" and neighbor and I are indivisible. ~jpc

"Spirit is in everything as its center." Namaste.

January 31 Move Toward It

The country isn't hungry for a religious left to replace a religious right. They don't want to go left or right. They want to go deeper. They want to go to a moral center, not a soulless center. ~Jim Wallis on "A Daily Show with Jon Stewart," 1/23/07, via LLC

With these remarks, that audience clapped and cheered. We all suspect or know there exists a deep, moral, soulful center. ~jpc

Let us move toward it. Namaste.

February

February 1 Reduce-Reuse-Recycle

The bottom line for each one of us is evaluating what we truly need. In the reduce-reuse-recycle triangle, “reduce” is number one. We can start by reducing the impact of our homes, our businesses, our travel, and our investments. Thomas Berry’s work is a great context for the actions that may follow. Think universally. Act locally. ~JPC II

My son’s words are backed up by a lot of action. He has spurred our family and many communities on to greater care for the earth. And he was the one who first put a Thomas Berry book into my hands, *Befriending the Earth*. ~jpc

*The time has come for simple, mindful living.
Namaste.*

February 2 More Spiritual

For too many of us, the spiritual path is only about the drama of the separate self—our personal hopes and fears, highs and lows, triumphs and failures. . . . [S]ooner or later, we have to realize that that’s simply not the point . . . from an impersonal, evolutionary perspective. ~Andrew Cohen, from *Quote of the Week*, 1/21/08

My spiritual path is hardly about me, in the first instance, but about all that is, was, and ever shall be. Our prayers are mostly too small. ~jpc

We would be more spiritual. Namaste.

February 3 Sunday Dialogue LXXXIX

Journer: How do you know when you've got it together?

Nez: My student* said, "I'm glad I'm Jung and not a Jungian."

Journer: What's that, a joke? What's it got to do with me?

Nez: Seriously, do you delight in not having to copy anyone but your own unique and unrepeatable self?

* **Carl Jung**, quoted by Marlan Stanton in *Tradition and Innovation in Psychoanalytic Ed.*, p.256, via Herman Greene

February 4 No Place Like Home

This is the most beautiful place on earth. There are many such places. Every man, every woman, carries in heart and mind the image of the ideal place, the right place, the one true home, known or unknown, actual or visionary. . . . [T]here's no limit to the human capacity for the homing

sentiment. ~Edward Abbey, *Desert Solitaire*, via www.writersalmanac.publicradio.org 1/29/08

On Sunday, I experienced that homing sentiment again driving north on Hwy 52 toward the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia. I know whereof you speak, Edward. My mountain, in heart and mind. ~jpc

*And sometimes home is where I am right now.
Namaste.*

Note: With his family and friends, we celebrate the completed life of Fred McGuire this day: "Grace shall be. . . All is well! All is well!"

February 5 "Go Snake Eyes . . . Like This!"

The thoughts, words and deeds of men like Einstein, Schumacher, and Teilhard make me wonder what would happen if we would-be problem-solvers focussed less exclusively on the problems coming at us. . . . What if our primary focus became the level of consciousness with which we greet the dawn, the day, our every breath, our burning, and then we turned to face the problems? ~David James Duncan, "Assailed Improvisations in the Key of Cosmology" (#4)

In "Little Big Man," Jack's (Dustin Hoffman) sister shows him how to go snake eyes and hit his target when he draws and shoots. We are going bonkers listening to all the problems and how to solve them in this Presidential

campaign. Best we change our primary focus. ~jpc

Let us turn to face the problems with a new consciousness. Namaste.

February 6 Teach Us

*. . . Teach us to care and not to care
Teach us to sit still
Even among these rocks,
Our peace in [Thy] will
And even among these rocks
Sister, mother
And spirit of the river, spirit of the sea,
Suffer me not to be separated.*

And let my cry come unto Thee.

~T. S. Eliot, "Ash-Wednesday" (VI), *Collected Poems*

*O to be still among the rocks and reflect upon reunion.
Namaste.*

February 7 In the Things Themselves

He [Jesus] intends that we should see what he sees, there, in the things themselves. . . . The sacred has come to dwell in the common and ordinary in the ongoing and repetitious acts of living. ~Robert Funk, *Just Call Me Bob*, p. 132

Does that mean waking up, seeing a loved one, sending an e-mail, working with a team, gardening, enacting one's vocational strategy, voting, going to sleep? ~jpc

*Seeing what we're looking at is deeply meaningful.
Namaste.*

February 8 That Which Is

“[T]he unchangeable was to be preferred to the changeable.” . . . [W]ith the flash of one trembling glance [I could see] it arrived at That Which Is. And then I saw. . . . ~*The Confessions of St. Augustine* (Seventh Book)

Journeys throughout the ages have been grasping after that inner poetry that matches their experiences of that *power* at the heart of their journeys. ~jpc

That Which Is, unchangeable. Namaste.

February 9 Meditation

The chime rings

The candle, incense, the breathing

The body quiets

Can't hear, but I am there

The chime rings

Three times: Buddha, Dharma, Sangha

Falling into Silence

Deepening Silence

.....
The chime rings
A knee pops, my foot's asleep
In the moment
Peace

~Koshin

Namaste.

February 10 Sunday Dialogue XC

Journer: What do you think about Jesus?

Nez: My student* said Jesus demonstrates “a blessing theology, . . . blessings . . . for all.”

Journer: Is that all I need to know?

Nez: Quite enough. Knowing you and creation are blessed will change your life.

* Matthew Fox, *Original Blessing*, pp. 124-25

February 11 Beyond-Language

When a superb reasoner like Teilhard says that “the divine assails us, penetrates us, and molds us,” he has not left his sanity behind: only his reason. He is exposing matter to

spirit. He's using Beyond-Language to do it. ~David James Duncan, "Assailed Improvisations in the Key of Cosmology," (Improvisation #6: Beyond-Language) <http://www.earthministry.org/duncan.htm>

There is so much I know and cannot articulate with language. ~jpc

Assailed, penetrated, and molded by truly Beyond-Language spirit. Namaste.

February 12 Good Day

O Grandfather. . . . It is a good day to die! Thank You for making me a Human Bein'! . . . Thank You for my victories, and for my defeats! Thank You for my vision, and the blindness in which I saw further! ~Old Lodge Skins character in "Little Big Man" (1970)

It's a good day to die – just as it's a good day to live – because it's always a good day, whether we believe it, say "yes" to it, act like it. ~jpc

O to believe it and say "Thank You." Namaste.

February 13 Traditional View

[N]o anthropocentric view does justice to the fullness of God's glory in and through the creation of the whole cosmos that was not created simply for human use. ~John Coleman, co-editor of *Globalization and Catholic Social*

Thought, p. 20, via Randy Williams

This statement not only honors “the fullness of God’s glory,” but also the Christian tradition’s original understanding of the cosmos *a la* St. Paul, for example, the earliest New Testament writer, who borrowed heavily from Jesus. ~jpc

Best we get back to our roots. Namaste.

February 14 Romantic Love

Do you think romantic love is a good thing? Do you think it’s good to express all manner of affection with your beloved – if you’re old enough? Do you give thanks for romantic love and celebrate it? ~jpc

Go ahead, be romantic for at least a day a year. Namaste.

note: We recommend “A Good Year,” a fun, romantic movie we saw twice.

February 15 Universe Home

Home means a lot to moralists, but the mystic is society’s alien and is not allowed to have a home smaller than the universe, and any time he tries to settle for less, to settle down, and to set up fences, God appears as the moving whirlwind. ~William Irwin Thompson, *The American Replacement of Nature*, p. 74

Home is nowhere. Home is everywhere. We are always centered, always home, right here and now, eternally. ~jpc

*Humbly kept in our universe home by the whirlwind.
Namaste.*

February 16 From Stardust to Stardust

Last week we again celebrated Mardi Gras at our church in Iowa, with more people than at Christmas or Easter services. We do not attempt to immerse ourselves in the pursuit of pleasure. Rather, we dance in the knowledge that we are made from stardust and to stardust we will return. We embrace life as it really is . . . the revelry and the sorrow, the joy and the suffering. It is a time to dance in faith, to sing for joy, and let the Holy Spirit inspire the body we have brought to the party! ~Larry Loeppke, from *EarthRise* reflection, 2/12/08

People respond to events that help them celebrate the way life is. Best we make any celebration of the profound journey one that touches our hearts and souls. ~jpc

Let us celebrate profoundly. Namaste.

February 17 Sunday Dialogue XCI

Journer: Are you religious or spiritual?

Nez: My student* said, "That was the end of my religion period."

Journer: So you are spiritual?

Nez: As much as any piece of creation.

* Jack Crabb character in “Little Big Man” movie

February 18 Three Profound Reasons

A reader of the daily reflections wrote me recently to say that I surely spend a lot of reflections on “*spirit* at the heart of creation,” and asked me why. I told her that, as the banner says, the *Journey Reflection(s)* emphasize “commune with *spirit*, intercommune with creation, give thanks for being.” I also said we humans are not adept at these three profound reasons for living. Daily we need to practice bowing to *spirit*, all others, and the fact of our own being. She wrote back and thanked me and said to keep it up. ~jpc

And thanks to all who view these reflections. Namaste.

February 19 Bow To All We See

If problems cannot be solved at the same level of consciousness that created them [Einstein], I suggest we contemplatives, scientists, writers, artists, teachers, activists, earth-lovers, transcend petty discomfiture, acclimatize to the new-to-physics, ancient, intuitive way of sensing things and bring a reverence for the unseen to bear on how we behave toward the seen. ~David James

Duncan, “Assailed Improvisations in the Key of Cosmology,” (Improvisation #5: Toward Living Language)
<http://www.earthministry.org/duncan.htm>

A well-said mouthful. More simply said, may we with reverence bow to all we see, saying “Namaste.”

February 20 Creating the Future

[S]ooner or later a point has to come when we realize that . . . our spiritual practice is no longer merely about trying to have more spiritual experiences; it is about acting upon what has been revealed to us in the experiences we have already had. That is when our own awakening becomes the limitless foundation that empowers us to take responsibility for creating the future – which is the whole point of evolutionary enlightenment. ~Andrew Cohen, from *Quote of the Week*, 2/11/08

Creating the future is our great work. ~jpc

True enlightenment reinvents humanity. Namaste.

February 21 Thy Kingdom

“Thy kingdom” is always at hand, “inside you and . . . outside you” (Thomas 3:4). Jesus knew his “Father” as ever-present *spirit* – the reality and mandate of “Thy kingdom come on earth. . . .” Jesus did not teach a belief system, as his tradition did before him and his followers have done after him. He just bore witness to the “lo here”

and “lo there” *spirit* in this moment, in this place, enfleshed now. *Spirit*, inside what is and outside what is, is always saving us to care for the Earth community, especially and urgently. ~jpc

Thy kingdom is on Earth now. Thy kingdom come on Earth now. Namaste.

February 22 Three Strange Angels

*. . . Oh for the wonder that bubbles into my soul,
I would be a good fountain, a good well-head,
Would blur no whisper, spoil no expression.*

*What is the knocking?
What is the knocking at the door in the night?
It is somebody wants to do us harm.*

*No, no, it is the three strange angels.
Admit them, admit them.*

~D. H. Lawrence, from “Son of a Man Who Has Come Through,” *Complete Works*. . . , p. 250

One reading: We have aspirations, meditate on ideal responses, and then . . . the Unexpected demands we move out and go to Timbuktu. What to do? ~jpc

“Admit them, admit them.” Namaste.

February 23 “Radical Equality”

*As 20th century born, I am not better,
As a male, I am not better,
As the last child of my family, I am not better,
As a small town boy, I am not better,
As an educated person, I am not better,
As a Virginian, I am not better,
As a Southerner, I am not better,
As an American, I am not better,
As a Westerner, I am not better,
As a Caucasian, I am not better,
As a Christian, I am not better,
As a rich man, I am not better,
As a human, I am not better,
As an earthling, I am not better,
As a creature of our universe,
I am not better than
any other part of creation . . .
for we're all very good.*

~jpc, adapted from *Motivation for the Great Work: Forty Meaty Meditations of the Secular-Religious*, p. 163

Namaste.

February 24 Sunday Dialogue XCII

Journer: What has awed you lately?

Nez: Reading* that “Once a second somewhere in the

universe a star explodes with the brilliance of an entire galaxy.”

Journer: What’s so awesome about that?

Nez: 86,400 stars are exploding brilliantly each day of your life, Journer, and how many days do you waddle around in an oblivious stupor?

* *National Geographic*, p. 80, 3/07

February 25 Eternal Life

“Emptiness” mean[s] the . . . transparency of each moment. . . . Didn’t even Wittgenstein . . . say: “if we take eternity to mean not infinite temporal duration but timelessness, then eternal life belongs to those who live in the present”? In other words, not something that goes on in time forever but a moment without time at all. ~Ken Wilber, *The Integral Vision*, pp. 153-54, via Joseph Slicker

Eternal life just is, now. When we are given to see that, sometimes we get it and all is transformed. ~jpc

That they might have eternal life. Namaste.

February 26 The Numinous

[S]uppose that you were told simply “There is a might spirit in the room,” and believed it. Your feelings would . . .

be . . . less the mere fear of danger: but the disturbance would be profound. You would feel wonder and a certain shrinking. . . . This feeling may be described as awe, and the object which excites it as the *Numinous*. ~C.S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*, p. 5

When's the last time you felt such profound disturbance by *spirit* presence? Lewis, quoting Otto, calls it a feeling of awe. ~jpc

Life is wonderful the way it is. Namaste.

February 27 Earthiness

Our earthiness gives us our name (humus ... human), and the creation-centered tradition embraces our simple, humble earthiness and sensuality as the most appropriate place to experience and express our spirituality. Body and soul are not at odds. Matter (mater/mother) and spirit are not opposed. ~*Theme 3* www.originallyblessed.org 2/15/08, via Randy Williams

Of the Earth earthy we are one with the Earth that is at one with all creation wherein we experience and express our spirituality. ~jpc

O to be human. Namaste.

February 28 No Fence

The moralist has fenced in the truth, calling his truth *the*

truth. The moralist pretends those outside her fence are living half-truth, if not the lie. My truth vs. your truth creates division, even war. Better we affirm that your truth and my truth are facets of the one truth that only can unite us. Ultimately, truth knocks down fences and unites us all on its open range. ~jpc

“De fence” is an illusion. Namaste.

February 29 The *Word’s* in History

St. John’s gospel says the *word* was from the beginning, whether that was about fourteen billion years ago according to current scientific consensus or about six thousand years ago according to some scripture. However we date it, the *word* of goodness, acceptance, forgiveness, and possibility has sounded and has echoed throughout creation and history. That *word* will never go away, whether a sentient being is here to experience it or not. It is a fact we humans, I know, have experienced, be we Aborigines, Buddhists, Muslims, Jews, Christians, atheists, or secularists. I’ve asked them, “Have you experienced goodness, acceptance, forgiveness, and possibility?” They have answered, “Yes, untold times.” I’ve asked, “Is it a life-changing *word*?” They’ve answered, “Yes, every time I’ve really heard it.” ~jpc

That’s very good to know. Namaste.

March

March 1 Spiritual Glaucoma

I run the risk of spiritual glaucoma. Things get busy. Before I know it, pressure builds up. I may not notice until symptoms surface and by then I'm already wrapped around the axle and taking it out on the ones closest to me. To deal with the pressure, it's my temptation to develop tunnel vision, narrow my focus until gradually, without realizing it, I lose sight. . . . Spiritual tunnel vision shrinks our image of God and our place in God's world. ~Cindy Higgins, sermon "Blessed Are the Pure in Heart," 2/17/08, via LLC

Tunnel vision, narrowing focus, losing sight, shrinking images set us up for new vision, bigger context, really seeing. Watch out! ~jpc

Enlightenment is at hand. Namaste.

March 2 Sunday Dialogue XCIII

Journer: What is your role among journers?

Nez: As my student* said, I stand "for all those who think they are hemmed in by the false, by archaic assumptions, by fabricated boundaries that insulate from the real."

Journer: So your role is to put us in touch with reality?

Nez: Well said, Journer.

* Robert Funk, *Just Call Me Bob*, p. 154

March 3 Why We're Here

*Do not be daunted by the enormity of the world's
grief.*

*Do justly now. Love mercy now. Walk humbly now.
You are not obligated to complete the work,
but neither are you free to abandon it.*

~Rabbi Rami Shapiro's interpretive translation in *Wisdom
of the Jewish Sages* of Rabbi Tarfon, Pirke Avot 2:20 of
the Talmud, via Charles Lingo

The great work of our time is to care for our Earth
community. ~jpc

*Key to that care is bringing us humans together.
Namaste.*

March 4 Immense Journey

Living in a time of immense change, we are called and
forced to take the next evolutionary step, if not a leap.
We do well not to forget our 300-million-years-old
ancestor, shaking off its Snout-centeredness and saying,
"Why is everything drying up? It's not fair. I'm tired. I'm

old. I don't want to go downstream, I don't even know how to walk . . . but be damned if I'm going to lie here and die." So it starts hobbling to a new pond on his fins, grunting and grumbling. Let us keep our ancestral Snout in mind as the paradigm for how the universe process has worked and continues to work into the future – slowly but surely, and usually under immense protest. ~jpc, adapted from *At One with the Heart of Creation*, p. 160-61, via Loren Eiseley's *The Immense Journey*, pp. 50-51

Snout on! Namaste.

March 5 The Meaning of God

God is a metaphor for the oncoming future, for the fund of possibilities. . . . God is also the metaphor for a revisionist past . . . the second chance. . . . God is the metaphor for the Beyond of the beyond . . . the ultimate limit, the final horizon. . . . God is also a metaphor for immanence . . . the idea that, in spite of God's transcendence, the divine is nevertheless intimately related to the world. ~Robert Funk, *Just Call Me Bob*, p. 175

The word "God" is too rich to drop, even though it is a red flag for many who have been turned off by traditional and fundamentalist views of "God." Let us use the word with reverence, humility, and faith. Or create your own word for this reality of mystery or mystery of reality. ~jpc

"God" is the heart of all. Namaste.

March 6 **Meaning of Jesus**

We now know that Jesus is not literally God. Yet Jesus allegedly represents the way God is related to the world. . . . Jesus' vision of the world as God's domain is global in its reach . . . transcends self-interest . . . advocates love of the enemy . . . no longer sponsors the male patriarch . . . embraces all genders and ages [and races] . . . [is] transhuman since it includes the birds and the flowers . . . transbiblical, transchristian, and even transreligious. ~**Robert Funk**, *Just Call Me Bob*, p. 176

Funk and his Jesus Seminar colleagues have rediscovered this authentic child of "God," Jesus, and given him back to us as "elder brother" (Hebrews) of the way – one to look up to and follow. ~jpc

I too am "God's" child. Namaste.

March 7 **Greatest Discovery**

The greatest discovery in the history of humanity is that of the birth and development of the universe. Four hundred years of modern science has culminated in our understanding of cosmic, biological, terrestrial, and human evolution. We can summarize this by saying that 13.7 billion years ago the universe began with a great explosion of light and elementary particles that, over time, complexified into giraffes, rosebuds, and humans. ~**Brian Swimme & Mary Evelyn Tucker**, *Kosmos*, Vol V

<http://tinyurl.com/2w5yn8>

The greatest discovery is not the Earth, religion, the nation state, economy, nor the computer – not even consciousness – though they all are part of the greatest discovery. ~jpc

We bow to our universe. Namaste.

March 8 Inter-Are

*Even while blooming, the flower is already in the
compost,
and the compost is already in the flower.
Flower and compost are not two,
Delusion and enlightenment inter-are.*

~Thich Nhat Hanh, *Understanding Our Mind*, p. 207,
via Diane/Dick Galbreath

We are not separate, really, though we experience separation profoundly. All is inter-are, one, not two. ~jpc

We are a uni-verse. Namaste.

March 9 Sunday Dialogue XCIV

Journer: What is sacred?

Nez: As my student* said, “the *sacred* . . . transcends this world but manifests itself in this world, thereby sanctifying

it and making it real.”

Journer: Does that mean everything is sacred?

Nez: Museums of the Nazis’ defiling and desecrating the lives of 6 million Jews remind us paradoxically of the sacredness of life.

* Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, p. 202

March 10 Let Go and Get Hold

What is the meaning of Lent for Christians? Simply, but not in their special language, it is about creating a balance in one’s life between what is crucial – what matters most – and what is perfunctory in one’s life, e.g., watching television. One gives up time-consuming activity to become aware of the heart of the matter, which is usually not to do with what commercials and TV programs lift up as important. Thus, meditation that leads to a deeper awareness is a fitting Lenten activity. ~jpc

What do we let go of in order to get hold of that which matters most? Namaste.

March 11 Single Mode of Being

[T]he inner spirit and the outer form . . . are two distinctive aspects of a single mode of being. In considering the soul of the future, I am concerned with the inner vision that we

need if we are to make the intellectual, social, economic, and religious adjustments required for a viable future.
~Thomas Berry, *The Great Work*, p. 115

We ask, “What can we do?” and end up doing things related to the outer forms, not the inner spirit. Or we decide to do things in the realm of the inner spirit and they come off separated from the outer form (i.e., care of the Earth). We need to discuss how to keep these two distinctive aspects a single mode of being. ~Elaine Stover*

To will one thing. Namaste.

*note: one of many group leaders of the study of *The Great Work* going on in a dozen churches in Greensboro, NC, primarily designed by Nelson and Elaine Stover in collaboration with Berry and Random House, his publisher

March 12 Real Spirit

Real Spirit . . . [is] prior to concepts and feelings and thoughts and images. . . . It is “eternal” . . . something that is ever-present. ~Ken Wilber, *The Integral Vision*, p. 152-53

Saying *spirit* is prior to all else, Wilber declares *spirit* as primal, eternal, and always present . . . real. Our connection with *spirit* on the great journey is awareness of and reaction to its eventfulness. ~jpc

O to be sensitive and responsive. Namaste.

March 13 Authentic Story

[W]e are beginning to glimpse . . . the depth and breadth of the evolving human story, of the evolving Earth story, and of the still richer cosmic story. . . . In this postmodern cosmology, the universe is now seen as relationally holistic, artistically creative, and immersed in mystery. . . . [T]he new planetary civilization is called to be ecologically sustainable, economically just, politically democratic, and culturally holistic. ~**Joe Holland**, chapter in *Globalization and Catholic Social Thought*, p. 124, via Randy Williams

Such a story from religious thinkers bodes well for the Earth community – and the future of religions. ~jpc

New story, new future. Namaste.

March 14 Spirit Energy

When you smile at a stranger, there is already a minute outflow of energy. You become a giver. ~**Eckhart Tolle**, *A New Earth: Awakening to Your Life's Purpose*, p. 191, via Karen Bueno

There are myriad ways to re-energize others and in so doing find new energy ourselves. Make a list of ten ways – starting with a smile – and evolve a giver-style of living. ~jpc

Spirit motivation is crucial to evolution. Namaste.

March 15 “Our Way Into the Future”

Our enormously productive economy . . . demands that we make consumption our way of life, that we convert the buying and use of goods into rituals, that we seek our spiritual satisfaction, our ego satisfaction, in consumption. . . . We need things consumed, burned up, worn out, replaced, and discarded at an ever increasing rate. ~Victor Lebow, retail analyst (1955) <http://tinyurl.com/g241>

Lebow’s radical demand for our way of life has become sacrosanct: a consumer society we are! Does consumption satisfy deeply? No! Is it good for our Earth community? No! Should consumption be our reason for being? Absolutely not! ~jpc

Reason for being . . . care of creation. Namaste.

March 16 Sunday Dialogue XCV

Journer: What’s a good name for our time?

Nez: My student* said, “The Age of Nations is past. The task before us now, if we would not perish, is to shake off our ancient prejudices, and to build the earth.”

Journer: So this is the “Age of the Earth”?

Nez: Right. Over 200 nations pulling together on behalf of their primary community is not only a good idea but an

absolute necessity. And our primary patriotism is due the Earth community.

* Teilhard de Chardin, "The Spirit of Earth" (written 1929), printed in *Building the Earth* (1969), p. 67

March 17 Unity Messages

I think that all poets are sending religious messages, because poetry is, in such great part, the comparison of one thing to another . . . and to insist, as all poets do, that all things are related to each other . . . is to go toward making an assertion of the unity of all things. ~Richard Wilbur, *Writer's Almanac*, 3/1/08

Whether we call them religious or spiritual messages, the language of relatedness and unity has never been more urgently needed. ~jpc

*Defy that which divides and praise that which unites.
Namaste.*

March 18 Transparent Consciousness

[P]anentheism is not pantheism . . . [which] robs God of transcendence [stating] that "everything is God and God is everything." Panentheism, on the other hand, . . . means "God is in everything and everything is in God." . . . The sacramental consciousness of panentheism develops into

a transparent and diaphanous consciousness. ~**Matthew Fox**, “Panentheism: Experiencing the Diaphanous and Transparent God,” *Original Blessing*, p. 90

Transparent consciousness is about seeing through and being seen through relative to the deep meaning of existence in this universe. Revelation is the souvenir. ~jpc

In short, meaning is everywhere. Namaste.

March 19 Final Reality

The lack of finality of scientific theories would be a very serious limitation of our argument, if we had staked much on their permanence. The religious reader may well be content that I have not offered him a God revealed by the quantum theory, and therefore liable to be swept away in the next scientific revolution. ~**A.S. Eddington** (1928), quoted by Timothy Eastman, “Cosmic Agnosticism,” 10/5/06, via Herman Greene

Best we read the tea leaves of science but not present their theorems as final reality any more than we would the spiritual poetry of Isaiah, St. Paul, or Ken Wilber. “Cosmic agnosticism” is good poetry. ~jpc

We give thanks for guides as we journey on in the domain of final reality. Namaste.

March 20 Spirit Process

[T]he “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*, p. 22 (part of an earlier daily reflection, 12/14/06)

Tolle says that “thought” is related to mythology, ideology, belief system, emotion, and sense perception (p. 21f.). I agree and would therefore say that *awareness, thought, dialogue, intention, and enactment* suggest our authentic response to the process of *spirit*. ~jpc

For us, it begins with awareness. Namaste.

March 21 Authentic Religion

[W]ith the collapse of the dualistic paradigm, a Christian appropriation of the postmodern cosmology begins to see all of creation as holistic and sacred. . . . [T]he fundamental human tasks of work, family, and citizenship are not simply areas of ethical responsibility. They represent, more profoundly, sacred experiences of mystical communion. . . . There is no longer a valid cosmological distinction between spiritual and temporal, sacred and secular, or clerical and lay. ~Joe Holland, chapter in *Globalization and Catholic Social Thought*, p. 126, via Randy Williams

Authentic religion throughout history has understood, articulated, and enacted creational communion as its

reason for being. ~jpc

Commune, for creation's sake! Namaste.

March 22 Made Bright by Darkness

They did more spiritual practices than most, yet in their rounds with the holy presence of death they were knocked down for the count. They lost all hope many times and turned to self-pity and alcohol, and even contemplated suicide. Their love for each other seemed to die as they were consumed by the overpowering reality of her death by cancer. But when all appears dark and dead, sometimes new life emerges. Their love was reborn, more authentic than before, made bright by darkness. Her new name “Treya” – star – was most fitting. ~jpc, 1994, reflecting on Ken Wilber and wife Treya’s story in their book *Grace and Grit*

Spirit illumines all. Namaste.

March 23 Easter Word

Those who hear the word of grace as a word addressed to them know the meaning of the cross. For just as Jesus invested everything, including . . . his life, in the certainty of that word of grace, so they who hear the word will know what it requires of them. By hearing, they have been claimed as a vessel of grace. ~Robert Funk, *Just Call Me Bob*, p. 132

We thrill at hearing that part of the grace *word* that we are absolutely accepted, but we're not so thrilled with the part about living sacrificially on behalf of our Earth community. ~jpc

The grace word fulfills. Namaste.

March 24 Pre-modern or Contemporary?

[T]he God experience in Jesus must be understood in the light of the knowledge available to each new generation. The Pope's call in his book *Jesus of Nazareth* [2007] is to look at a pre-modern Jesus . . . the way the Church has always presented him. My call in my book *Jesus for the Non-Religious* [2007] is to look at Jesus through the lens of our contemporary knowledge. . . . Jesus is bigger and far more profound than . . . [_____ (fill in the blank)]. ~J.S. Spong, weekly column, 2/13/08, via Dick Kroeger

Spirit is always fully present. We do not need a "high priest" (Luther) or a "broker" (Bultmann). ~jpc

Religious or non-religious, I can follow spirit as did Jesus or Siddhartha or Muhammad. Namaste.

March 25 "The Table of Our Lives"

. . . *Hope unbounded,*
Love unconditional,

*Joy and Thanksgiving unceasing,
Peace surpassing*

*HERE around the table –
the table of our lives –
the greeting table,
the meeting table,
the eating table,
every table of our endeavor –*

Mystery's Agape endures forever!

~Ellie Stock, 1/08

*May the tables of our lives be transparent to the
mystery. Namaste.*

March 26 We Live in Two Worlds

I experience my life to be like the ever exploding and expanding universe I live in. I seem to be going off in all directions at once. At the same time I feel as static and unmoving as that same universe appears when I gaze into a dark un-moonlit sky on a clear summer night. The awareness that I am consciousness of consciousness of consciousness leads me to say I am part of a world of spirit . . . just as real as our Solar System, Galaxy, and Universe. In fact, it is existentially more real. ~Charles Hahn, *EarthRise* reflection, 3/13/08

We all experience these two worlds, but when reflection

happens, we know they are one. ~jpc

What an awesome world. Namaste.

March 27 “Farewell”

*I came to your shore as a stranger,
I lived in your house as a guest,
I leave your door as a friend, my earth.*

~**Rabindranath Tagore**, *Stray Birds* (#272) <http://tinyurl.com/2yxvwd>

*On our gracious journey with the Earth community,
from birth to death, may this be our farewell of
thanksgiving. Namaste.*

March 28 The Mystery

One day a person is driven . . . into the consciousness that s/he must die. . . [H]anging helplessly, swirling in emptiness, engulfed in awe, it dawns at long last, like the rising of a black sun, that exactly here is the finally real before which s/he is fated. . . This is the great encounter with the awe-full Mystery. ~**Joseph Mathews**, “The Recovery of the Other World,” *Bending History*, p. 170

Mathews says that after such an encounter, “Now, when someone asks you what life is all about, you have something to bear witness to. . . You are beginning here to define again what you mean when you talk about . . . a

person of Spirit in this world” (*Ibid.*, pp. 170-71).

We all have experienced the mystery. Namaste.

March 29 What Is Needed

What kneeling by the bed and reading the Bible daily once did, *meditation* . . . [now satisfies] me most. . . . Sitting, walking, standing, eating, lying down in silence are ways to train our hearts, minds, bodies, spirits and souls to be mindful and sensitive to how the Great Spirit is moving through our lives. . . . When I have a strong meditative life, then I know how to study . . . worship . . . [and serve]. ~David McCleskey writes in “Change for the People of God,” *Open Arms Theologies: Reflections on Becoming the Church that Is Needed*, pp. 105-06

A relatively new local church in Oklahoma City, the Church of the Open Arms (UCC) wrote this book. They and tens of thousands of other local religious/spiritual groups globally are trying to create the spiritual forms that make sense in this age. ~jpc

Religious/spiritual reform is intense, deep, and eternal. Namaste.

March 30 Sunday Dialogue XCVI

Journer: What’s the meaning of life?

Nez: My student* said, “The meaning of life is to find out

what the meaning of life is.”

Journer: How do I find out?

Nez: Stop asking that question. Look around, give thanks, bow – in the truth that all is 100 per cent meaningful deep down.

* **Walter D. Pullen** <http://www.astrolog.org/home.htm>

March 31 Love-starved Lonely Horse

We are not saints, we are not angels; we are embryonic souls immersed in a badly educated body being pulled along by a love-starved lonely horse called the emotions.

~**Jacob Needleman**, *A Little Book on Love*, p. 84

“Emotion” is not a bad horse, for goodness sake, just one that we best not let control our lives, any more than the other horses trying to pull us along on this wondrous journey. ~jpc

“Hold your horses.” Namaste.

April

April 1 **Hallowed Be**

Existence will remain meaningless for you if you yourself do not penetrate into it with active love. . . . Everything is waiting to be hallowed by you. . . . Meet the world with the fullness of your being and you shall meet God. If you wish to believe, love! They who love bring God and the world together. ~Martin Buber, *At the Turning*, p. 44

Being in the situation, in the world – loving the situation – is key to the realization of meaning, to “meeting God.” In so doing, bridge “God” and the world. ~jpc

Hallowed be. . . . Namaste.

April 2 **Unity Dance**

[We need to get] over the notion that left and right are useful. . . . We must also talk about class again, loudly and clearly, without backing down or forgetting about race. . . . [We need] stronger coalitions, genuine justice, a healthier environment, and maybe even a music that everyone can dance to. ~Rebecca Solnit, “One Nation Under Elvis,” *orionmagazine.org*, Mar/Apr 2008

Dance partners: rich/poor, left/right, race/majority, consumer/environment, nation/globe, rural/urban, religion/

secular, human/non-human. ~jpc

“Poor bows and Rich bows under . . . Couple up tight and swing like thunder . . . Do-si-do.” Namaste.

April 3 New Metaphysics

In our day we are building a *new metaphysics*. You grasp yourself as living on one plane, but you have experienced the *transparency* of that plane. I like to think of it as holding a match underneath a paper and first seeing little streaks come out. Then it turns brown, and then it breaks through and pops into flame. That goes through my mind when I think of transparency. ~Joseph Mathews, *Bending History*, p. 165

Discovering meaning in the mundane is what our religious forebears meant when they talked about experiencing *spirit* . . . meaning in this world. ~jpc

Our eyes have seen the glory. Namaste.

April 4 “In the Silence”

*In the silence,
I notice my own heartbeat.
Thank you, heart, for serving me so well
All these years.
In the silence, I notice my own breath.
Thank you, lungs, for your good service. . . .*

*And my noticing
Is not insignificant.
For its strange and silent power
Makes me thankful.*

~Pat Webb, *Open Arms Theologies*, p. 102

Let us take the silence with us this day. Namaste.

April 5 Our Next Step

A bold or even heroic man or woman, a rare individual, will find a way to evolve, but as long as the individual does this on his or her own terms, by him- or herself, WE aren't going to get anywhere. . . . It's when we can move forward together that something big starts happening. . . . [T]his is . . . our next step. ~Andrew Cohen, from *Quote of the Week*, 3/17/08

Family, organization, locale, region, nation, globe . . . Earth community. We're already together, so why not move forward together? Makes sense. ~jpc

Let something big start happening. Namaste.

April 6 Sunday Dialogue XCVII

Journer: Whose side is God on?

Nez: My student* said, "God is a lot of things to a lot of

people. Everybody says God is on their side. But nobody has the ultimate say on that.”

Journer: What about all the “our God” and “God’s chosen people” language in scriptures?

Nez: That *power* that we call “God” is on everybody’s and everything’s side the most.

* Robert de Niro, in “The Making of ‘Good Shepherd’” movie

April 7 MLK’s Legacy

The lesson beneath any theology is that we must act toward all creation in the spirit of equal souls and equal votes. . . . Dr. King . . . challenges everyone to find a Lazarus somewhere, from our teeming prisons to the bleeding earth. That quest in common becomes the spark of social movements, and is therefore the engine of hope. ~Taylor Branch, “The Last Wish of Martin Luther King,” *nytimes.com*, 3/6/08

The ground of MLK’s theology was the resurrection of all imprisoned – whether racial (black/white), economic (poor/rich), political (liberal/conservative), religious (pious/activist), philosophical (inferior/superior), ecological (non-human/human) – to free captives from the death caused by such worldviews, be they victims to their rut of hopelessness or rut of supremacy, both of which are spiritual illusions. ~jpc

We celebrate liberation. Namaste.

April 8 “Speciesism”

At one point in Darwin’s voyage to South America, [James] Moore [Darwin’s biographer] told me the naturalist stopped in Brazil, where his blood ran cold to see slaves in manacles being tortured by Catholic traders. Darwin was enraged as a Christian, but also as a scientist, because he recognized that the slave trade relied on the false notion that slaves were a different, inferior and exploitable species. Upon his return to England, Darwin extended the idea to the way people treated animals, an early precursor to [Richard] Dawkins’s argument about speciesism.* “To say man is the pinnacle of creation and all things were created for him . . . Darwin says that is the same arrogance we see in the slave master,” said Moore. ~Shankar Vedantam, “Eden and Evolution,” *washingtonpost.com*, 2/5/06, via Jerome Hunter

Liberate us from speciesism. Namaste.

***Speciesism:** the assumption of superiority of humans over other species, especially to justify their exploitation.
~www.wordsmith.org

April 9 Look at the Stone

Tracey Lind, dean of Trinity Episcopal Cathedral in Cleveland, Ohio: “I’m going to talk about the stones that need to be rolled away from the tombs of lives, that are

holding us in places of death and away from God. . . . I will ask our congregation to look at the stones in our lives.”
~Laurie Goodstein and Neela Banerjee, *nytimes.com*, 3/23/08

Are not all stones relationships of separation? She lists the stone of racism. What about religion? What about personal stones of separation? ~jpc

If reunion is not possible, spirituality is a trick and deludes. Namaste.

April 10 Earth Month Must-See

After being in the Andes in Bolivia for six weeks, Paul and I observed and heard about the loss of snow and glaciers there that supply the water for all the major cities. We know researchers are predicting the Andes countries will have only 20 more years of water for millions of people . . . maybe sooner. We, in this country, need to consider the hard work needed to save life on the planet by stopping our massive carbon emissions. We are now the only major country that has not signed the Kyoto Treaty to reduce our emissions; however, over 700 cities in the US (including Greensboro) have moved forward without the federal government. If we are not empowering ourselves and others (like our politicians) to confront this crisis – we are the problem! ~Val Vickers, posted on *Environmental Stewardship: Greensboro*, Apr 8, 2008

Local-regional governments are stepping up. Namaste.

April 11 As If Tomorrow

Use your eyes as if tomorrow you would be stricken blind. And the same method can be applied to the other senses. Hear . . . as if you would be stricken deaf tomorrow. . . . Touch . . . as if tomorrow your tactile sense would fail. . . . Smell . . . taste . . . as if tomorrow you could never smell and taste again. ~Helen Keller, from "Three Days to See"

This is an imaginary yet plausible exercise that relates us with our essential gifts, all a part of the gift of life. ~jpc

Thankfulness is the natural result. Namaste.

April 12 Meaningful Journey

I talk about communion with *spirit*, out of my present experience of it, my memory of it, and my longing for it. The spirit journey is about meaning. If we have had meaning in our lives, we have communed with *spirit*. Vice versa, if we have communed with *spirit*, we have had meaning in our lives. Even the meaning of a meaningless time, as we look back, is proof of our meaningful journey called life. ~jpc

Name something you saw as especially meaningful over the last day. Namaste.

April 13 Sunday Dialogue XCVIII

Journer: What is eternal life?

Nez: My student* said, "In three words I can sum up everything I've learned about life: it goes on."

Journer: Does that mean with or without us?

Nez: More than that, it means life has no beginning and no end.

* Robert Frost, *writersalmanac.org*, 3/26/08

April 14 Truth Journey

We have come a long way . . . and we are up to the challenges of our time, one of which is to build alliances based not on race, ethnicity, color, nationality, sexual preference or gender, but on Truth. ~letter from Alice Walker <http://tinyurl.com/48vrwe> 3/27/08, via Lee Early

We are all part of the truth journey, including the human alliances. We can't be too inclusive. ~jpc

On the truth journey, let us bow to and include all, even Ahmadinejad and ringworm. Namaste.

April 15 “Yoga Challenge for the Pope”

[T]he yoga students [are] . . . less interested in creeds and more interested in feelings and physical health. They're less tuned into the metaphysics of heaven and hell and more focused on finding joy and reducing fear. They might not accept concepts like the Trinity, but they're eager to belong to communities of compassion and trust. . . . If [Pope] Benedict [on his U.S. visit] could establish a connection with the seekers, he'd be able to challenge them not to let an inward search turn into a search only about self. He'd be able to remind them that love's search always invites a turn to the transcendent. . . . [W]e'll see whether Benedict can make religion relevant to the spiritual age. ~Timothy Shriver, “Yoga Challenge for the Pope,” *washingtonpost.com*, 4/7/08

Let the religious and spiritual enhance each other's living on behalf of the Earth community. Namaste.

April 16 “With God on Our Side”

*Now as I'm leavin'
I'm weary as Hell.
The confusion I'm feelin'
Ain't no tongue can tell.
The words fill my head
And fall to the floor;
And if God is on our side,
He'll stop the next war.*

~**Bob Dylan**, “With God on Our Side” (1963; last stanza),
via Jerome Hunter

Dylan’s last two lines lift up a minority report on the relationship of “God” to “war.” Some spiritual leaders have been against war, unlike many followers who have used with-God-on-our-side sentiment to sanction war, as earlier stanzas of the song reflect. ~jpc

How does my spirituality and war mix? Namaste.

April 17 Depth Language

. . . that we might once again recognize each other as embodiments of God or Spirit (or however you want to talk about the force-field of goodness, generosity, kindness, justice, peace, nonviolence, and care for each other and nature and the entirety of all that is). . . this striving to create a transcendent experience of connection. . . all human beings participate in the soul of the universe, which is the God of the universe. ~**Michael Lerner**, *tikkun.org*, Mar-Apr 2008, via Richard Kroeger

Interesting how so many are trying to articulate meaning, depth, and inclusiveness through language: a better thing than thinking we can be fitted into one traditional religious box that works for all creation. ~jpc

Language is symbolic of our intent. Namaste.

April 18 The Point

When I got on stage [before an audience of 500 Evangelical Christians], I asked a simple question: “Am I, a Muslim, part of that Beloved Community [MLK spoke about]? Are the 4 + billion people on Earth who are not Christians part of the Beloved Community?” I went through the litany of relationships King had with people of different faiths. Learning from Gandhi, a Hindu. . . ; marching in Selma with Heschel, a Jew; nominating Thich Nhat Hanh, a Buddhist, for the Nobel Peace Prize. Did these respectful interfaith relationships make King less of a Christian? My message: Muslims and Christians might not fully agree on worldview, but we share a world. ~**Eboo Patel**, “A Muslim among the Evangelicals,” *washingtonpost.com*, 4/11/08

The point: “we share a world.” Namaste.

April 19 Profound Journey

*. . . Thanks for the fullness of your grace
and for each step and every breath
that lead me to a blessed death.
May you all be blessed abundantly
as I have been blessed.*

~**Mutiso wa Kalai** (John-Rupert Barnes), written a week before his death (4/9/08), via his son Daudi Malcolm Xavier Barnes

His was a life of radical faith and service to the poor, especially in the villages of Kenya, where he died his blessed death. ~jpc

We celebrate the profound journey. Namaste.

April 20 Sunday Dialogue XCIX

Journer: Why is it we long for long life, even never-ending life?

Nez: My student* said, “We yearn for continued existence after death, though we don’t know what to do with ourselves on a rainy Sunday afternoon.”

Journer: But isn’t it because we long to be with the ones we love forever?

Nez: Well, Journer, how’ve you been loving them lately?

* Robert Funk, *Just Call Me Bob*, p. 176

April 21 You Are That Person

[O]ur Earth is somehow like a small boat. Yes, compared to other big things in the cosmos, it is a very small boat, and it is in danger of sinking. We need . . . a person to inspire us with calm confidence, to tell us what to do. And who is that person? The Mahayana Buddhist Sutras tell

you one thing: *you are that person*. If you are yourself, if you are your best, then you are that person. And it is only with such a person, calm, lucid, aware, solid, that our situation could be avoided. ~Thich Nhat Hanh, *Call Me By My True Names*, via Tracy Longacre

Absurd and impossible to believe that *I am that person*. “You are that person!” is the offense of our true name and calling. ~jpc

All are called to stand up. . . . Namaste.

April 22 Real Power

Your command to “Preach Mightily!” leaves me sitting here in tears. . . . It feels like I am taking a BB gun to the side of the Titanic week after week. Thank God for icebergs. ~e-mail from a female preacher colleague

Reality has a big vote, sure, but that’s no less reason for us to cast ours – as part of reality. ~jpc

Power is ours. Namaste.

April 23 Common Wealth

John F. Kennedy reminded us that peace will come by recognizing our common wealth. “If we can not end now our differences, at least we can help make the world safe for diversity. For, in the final analysis, our most basic

common link is that we all inhabit this small planet. We all breathe the same air. We all cherish our children's future. And we are all mortal." ~Jeffrey D. Sachs, "10 Ideas that are Changing the World: #1 Common Wealth," *Time*, March 24, 2008, p. 40

The common wealth is a gift to all the Earth community. It is not the possession of any one species or this or that nation. ~jpc

*Who are we? Keepers of the common wealth.
Namaste.*

April 24 Development Is Envelopment

[A]ll development is envelopment, or a series of whole/parts or holons that transcend and include all previous development. ~Ken Wilber, *The Integral Vision*, p. 154, via Joe Slicker

Let us transcend and include all that has brought us to this point on the universal journey . . . ~jpc

. . . and thus praise the very good creation, and mystery at its heart. Namaste.

April 25 Responsible Freedom

"Learn to obey. Only he who obeys a rhythm superior to his own is free. . . .

“Love responsibility. Say: ‘It is my duty, and mine alone, to save the earth. If it is not saved, then I alone am to blame.’”

~Nikos Kazantzakis, *The Saviors of God*, p. 68

Who would say such things to humans bound for the promised land, both here and beyond? ~jpc

Lead, superior rhythm. Namaste.

April 26 Eye to Eye

The most important insight of the [international] Peace Corps [proposed by Prime Minister Brown of the UK] . . . was that meaningful change can only happen when people form relationships rooted in respect and equality. Peace Corps volunteers are fundamentally different from other relief and aid workers because they live in villages . . . and share the lives of those with whom they serve. This common-ground experience was once referred to as going “eye to eye” with others. . . . The greatest challenge . . . [is] learning how we can get along on this increasingly small planet. . . . If you’re not eye to eye, you can’t be heart to heart or mind to mind. In fact, if you’re not eye to eye, you can’t do much good for anyone. ~Timothy Shriver (son of Sargent Shriver), “Gordon Brown’s Immodest Proposal,” *washingtonpost.com*, 4/21/08

Let’s send millions of international Peace Corps volunteers. Namaste.

April 27 Sunday Dialogue C

Journer: Are metaphors true?

Nez: My student* said, “God has fallen out of the sky, but . . . [has emerged] as the creative impulse.”

Journer: So, the “God in the sky” metaphor is not as good?

Nez: “God as the creative impulse” is truer, deeper, and ever life-giving.

* Andrew Cohen, *Quote of the Week*, 8/14/07

April 28 Dawn Chorus

No child should grow up unaware of the dawn chorus of the birds in spring. [S/he] will never forget the experience of a specially planned early rising and going out in the predawn darkness. . . . In that dawn chorus one hears the throb of life itself. ~Rachel Carson, *The Sense of Wonder*, p. 60

What an utter delight to hear them this spring and how tragic it would to have a silent spring. ~jpc

*May we forever be awed by the chorus of the dawn.
Namaste.*

April 29 “If Only”

God [or whatever name suits you] does not look at you and say you could live your life if only something were added. . . . *God* does not say, “If only you did not have that malignancy, you could live your life” . . . “If only you had not lost your job” . . . “If only your wife had not left you” . . . “If only you did not have a . . . blotched complexion, a dull personality, or were not 80 years old, you could live your life.” . . . We are always enabled to live the life we have as the good life we have left. . . . My life has always been a good gift of *God*, who has not goofed or messed up on creation yet. What is, *is*, and *is* possible. ~jpc, *The Transparent Event*, p. 249 (adapted)

*Let's swap “if only” for a phrase of possibility.
Namaste.*

April 30 Breath Superior

It is a breath superior to all. . . . It is the spirit, the breathing of *God* on earth. . . . In these hours of crisis *God* struggles to knead flesh and brains together in the trough of earth. . . . At every moment of crisis an array of [humans] risk their lives in the front ranks as standard-bearers of *God* to fight and take upon themselves the whole responsibility of the battle. ~Nikos Kazantzakis, *The Saviors of God*, pp. 111-12

Breath superior is the plus. Namaste.

May

May 1 What Time Is It?

*There is a time for putting together
And another time for taking apart.*

~Chuang Tzu, "Metamorphosis," *The Way of Chuang Tzu*, by Thomas Merton

I am appalled at the vicious "taking apart" of the USA Presidential candidates by individuals and groups, especially on the Internet (a worldwide instrument for putting together or taking apart). All three candidates are made out to be poor choices, hardly worthy of leading our country. ~jpc

*This is the time for affirming and putting together.
Namaste.*

May 2 Colliding Galaxies

Astronomers observe only one out of a million galaxies in the nearby universe in the act of colliding. ~"Hubble Telescope Captures Crashing Galaxies," *reuters.com*, 4/25/08

There are hundreds of millions of galaxies in our universe alone and each galaxy has upward to a trillion stars,

including one very special to us: our Sun. There's a lot more going on in our universe than human activity and emotions on our small planet. ~jpc

Hubble, thanks for giving us some perspective down here. Namaste.

May 3 Primal Image of Wonder

If I had influence with the good fairy who is supposed to preside over the christening of all children I should ask that her gift to each child in the world be a sense of wonder so indestructible that it would last throughout life. ~Rachel Carson, *A Sense of Wonder*, p. 54

Thomas Berry's "meadow experience" was his indestructible gift of wonder as a boy that has guided his life journey. ~jpc

Primal images of wonder are crucial to our journeys. Namaste.

May 4 Sunday Dialogue CI

Journer. My dictionary says "destiny" is "a predetermined course of events."

Nez. My student* said, "Destiny is not a matter of chance, it is a matter of choice."

Journer: But choice is not really predetermined.

Nez: Right, not if it's free.

* **William Jennings Bryan**, from speech "America's Mission,"
Washington, D.C., 2/22/1899

May 5 "In the Beginning Was the Word"

St. Augustine once made a rather strong statement (which he later qualifies), saying "That which is called the Christian religion existed among the ancients and never did not exist from the beginning of the human race . . . (*De Vera Religione* [*One True Religion*], 10). ~**Thomas Merton**, "A Note to the Reader," *The Way of Chuang Tzu*, p. 10

What difference would it make to believe that the crux of religion has always "existed and never did *not* exist"? Chuang Tzu* seems to say it makes all the difference.
~jpc

Eternal truth: we are all one in spirit. Namaste.

* note: "Chuang Tzu" (4th-3rd centuries, BCE) also being printed "Zhuangzi"

May 6 Beloved Earth Community

The concept of a "Beloved Community" was developed by American pragmatic philosopher Charles Peirce, and further by Hegelian Idealist Josiah Royce. It was also

employed by radical social critic Randolph Bourne and black Civil Rights leader, the Reverend Martin Luther King. ~http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beloved_community

I would add Thomas Berry to the list, and though he did not use the phrase “Beloved Earth Community” as a play on the others above, his vocation and entire works express it, making him one of the most spiritual persons I know. ~jpc

S/he who says s/he loves spirit and does not love the whole Earth community has a way to go on the spiritual journey. Namaste.

May 7 The Great Adventure

Yikes! Who wants to be in a state of uninterrupted bliss when children are starving? . . . [T]he passionately engaged part of us and the calm, unruffled [sage-self] both have their place. . . . Our warrior-self must keep the action moving, must do what is right, take a stand, get involved . . . while our deeper self stays still. . . . The warrior acts responsibly, while the sage remembers life is a great mystery, a great adventure story, not just an endless burdensome battle. ~Bo Lazoff, “A Little Good News,” Spring 2008, p. 2, via LLC

The great adventure demands we be our warrior-self and sage-self at the same time, lest we be blown away by this-worldly battle or other-worldly bliss. ~jpc

Bliss only happens in the great adventure. Namaste.

May 8 Meaning of the Resurrection

The miracle of Resurrection calls for an openness to confess the reality of the darkness within us and around us, admitting our role and responsibility in refusing to eradicate the suffering in our world. Then, when we stand honestly before the reality of our evil . . . [o]nly then are we able to apprehend the relationship between the Resurrection and the presence of war, racism, global warming and terrorism in our world. For then, we shall also be able to discern the light of the Resurrection in our hearts and in our world. ~Ecumenical Patriarch **Bartholomew**, spiritual leader of 300 million Orthodox Christians, “Another Way of Living,” 4/27/08, *washingtonpost.com*

Patriarch Bartholomew talks about the meaning of resurrection for each human child of the Earth community, not just those in the Christian community. ~jpc

May we all see the light, over and over. Namaste.

May 9 My Country First

Is this a time of real hope and change? . . . [W]e used to say in Canada, when I was a youth, something like this: “My country first, not in things economic or material, but in the service of humankind, in the ways of the spirit. Someday, if there is ever to be peace and goodwill and

equality around the world, some country must show the way, take the initiative, and I would claim that honor for my country: the honor of paying the cost, of showing the care, of forgetting itself to build a New Earth.” ~Nancy Grow,* *EarthRise* reflection, 4/22/08

Idealism is not just for youth. Namaste.

* **note:** “As I remember, something like this statement came from a magazine published by the Canadian Girls in Training (CGIT), a teenage group in all the Protestant churches in Canada.” ~N.G.

May 10 Interiority

Is there nothing but physical stuff in the universe? Or is there some sort of interiority? We’re not talking about ghosts and goblins and souls and all that kind of stuff. Just: Is there interiority? Is there an inside to the universe? And if there is interiority, then that is where consciousness resides. You can’t see it, but it’s real. . . . [C]onsciousness can’t be reduced to matter. . . . I don’t talk about consciousness. I talk about interiority. . . . There is a degree of non-determined interiority. It’s simply there. You can’t dismiss it. ~Ken Wilber from “You Are the River: An Interview with Ken Wilber,” by Steve Paulson, *salon.com*, 4/28/08, via George Holcombe

Interiority is the heart of the universe and consciousness.
~jpc

It’s real. You can’t dismiss it. Live out of it. Namaste.

May 11 Sunday Dialogue CII

Journer: Is the eternal real?

Nez: My student* said, “There is only one proof that the Eternal exists: faith in it.”

Journer: What does “faith in it” look like?

Nez: Believing the *eternal* lives in your heart, and loving along with it as a mother does.

* Kierkegaard, *Purity of Heart Is to Will One Thing*, p. 84

May 12 Presence of God

When young people today are appalled upon learning the young women and children are being “trafficked” in modern sexual and economic slavery, or that death has become a social disease in this world because of grotesquely unequal access to health care and life-saving drugs, or that their favorite shoes and outfits were made in oppressive sweatshops, or that the equivalent of the Asian tsunami death toll happens in Africa every month, or that class and race and gender still determine one’s share of life even in America – when they learn of these things and are appalled, it shows that God is still alive in them. ~Jim Wallis, *The Great Awakening*, p. 60, via Karen Bueno

The strange presence of “God” often appears when we cry over the injustice in our world. ~jpc

Injustice is always calling. Namaste.

May 13 At Least One Adult

If a child is to keep alive his [*sic*] inborn sense of wonder. . . , he needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, excitement, and mystery of the world we live in. . . . [I]t is not half so important to know as to feel. If facts are the seed that later produce knowledge and wisdom, then the emotions and the impressions of the senses are the fertile soil in which the seeds must grow. ~Rachel Carson, *A Sense of Wonder*, pp. 55-6

What child am I really keeping alive? Namaste.

May 14 Me Is We

One can accurately speak of the “autonomy” of an individual only by incorporating a sense of the dynamic web of relationships that are constitutive for that being at a given moment. ~Charlene Spretnak <http://tinyurl.com/6zg3sd> (meaty), via Bill Salmon

The “Lone Cowboy” sense of autonomy is out, according to Spretnak. We are a “dynamic web of relationships.” We are our relationships. “Me” is “We.” ~jpc

“We” is not only the emerging trend but is eternal reality. Namaste.

May 15 Strong as Its Spirit

[This dug up Torah from a grave at Auschwitz] is a very concrete, tactile . . . remembrance – of what people, some of whom [Nazis] did it in the name of Christ, did to people who were Jewish. . . . [This restored holy book] enables us to be prepared to prevent that from happening again. . . . The Nazis really thought they had wiped Jews off the face of the earth, and Judaism. Here we are taking the ultimate symbol of hope and of Judaism and rededicating it. . . . And we’ll take it to Auschwitz. You can’t beat that. ~a **Lutheran Pastor and Jewish Rabbi** speaking in “From Auschwitz, a Torah as Strong as Its Spirit,” by James Barron, *nytimes.com*, 4/30/08

Symbols for a new future, born out of evil from a tragic past, lead us to new consciousness. ~jpc

Let us never forget. We rededicate ourselves to living and let live. Namaste.

May 16 Beyond the Symbols

Joseph [Campbell] taught me to see beyond the symbols to the riches they represent. Those who cannot see beyond the symbols, he remarked, are “like diners going into a restaurant and eating the menu,” rather than the meal it

describes. ~Diane K. Osbon, introduction to *Reflections on the Art of Living: A Joseph Campbell Companion*, p. 9

My mentor threw the Bible on the chapel floor to make his point: that book is a symbol, not the feast. ~jpc

We cherish the symbols, but, ever so much more, the truth they point to. Namaste.

May 17 Emerging Paradigm

There is a way of seeing Christianity that makes persuasive and compelling sense of life in the broadest sense – a way of seeing reality and our lives in relationship to what is real. . . . [This] “emerging paradigm” has been developing for over a hundred years. ~**Marcus Borg**, *The Heart of Christianity*, pp. xi-xii

Borg and a host of others have been on a mission to present the heart of reality in our worldview so that we can respond with our full being, including our intellect. ~jpc

We no longer have any excuses. Namaste.

May 18 Sunday Dialogue CIII

Journer: Do you think we need a new Reformation?

Nez: My student* said, “reformation is a permanent movement.”

Journer: But why not a new set of 95 theses on a symbolic church door somewhere, like in Vatican City?

Nez: Reforming *spirit* is hammering on every door of creation every day.

* H. Richard Niebuhr, "Reformation: Continuing Imperative," *Christian Century* 77 (1960): 250, via Lonnie Kliever

May 19 The Heart of Matter

Within every being and every event there was a progressive expansion of a mysterious inner clarity which transfigured them. . . . The Diaphany of the heart of a glowing Universe as I have experienced it through contact with the Earth – the Divine radiating from the depths of a blazing Matter. ~Teilhard de Chardin, *The Heart of Matter*, p. 16

This is the witness of one who was at one with the heart of creation in his mundane living, in this same universe we live in. ~jpc

It does have a heart. Namaste.

May 20 Contemplative and Activist

[Bonhoeffer] was both a contemplative and an activist. . . , who showed, as Thomas Merton later did, that you really can't be one without becoming the other. ~Jim Wallis, Foreword, *A Year with Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, p. vii

Contemplation without action . . . action without contemplation: either way, like a cart with one of its two wheels off. ~jpc

What will it take to grow up many more effective humans? Namaste.

May 21 When I Rise and Fall

*When I rise up
let me rise up joyful
like a bird*

*When I fall
let me fall without regret
like a leaf*

~Wendell Berry, in *Earth Prayers*, p. 367

Nature takes care of and grows up humans. ~jpc

We are part of nature. Namaste.

May 22 Purpose of Human Existence

As far as we can discern, the sole purpose of human existence is to kindle a light in the darkness of mere being. It may even be assumed that just as the unconscious affects us, so the increase in our consciousness affects the unconscious. ~Carl Jung, *Memories, Dreams,*

Reflections, p. 326

When was the last time you kindled a light in the darkness and affected the unconscious? A host of religious and evolutionists have. ~jpc

Turn matter into spirit. Namaste.

May 23 Voice Under All

*being to timelessness as it's to time,
love did no more begin than love will end:
where nothing is to breathe to stroll to swim
love is the air the ocean and the land. . . .*

love is the voice under all silences. . . .

~e.e. cummings, *Selected Poems*, p. 71

The poet is one who “pulls us into the very complex center of life.”* Not even silence is that center, but the voice of love. ~jpc

Long live love! Namaste.

* note: Kierkegaard, *Purity of Heart. . .*, p. 115

May 24 Liberation of All

[Y]ou cannot be reconciled with one who has his boot on your neck to keep you in the gutter. To be reconciled you

must stand up right to look the other in the eye. Black theology and religion seek the liberation of all, oppressor and oppressed, black and white together – as we accomplished it in South Africa . . . for freedom is indivisible. ~Desmond Tutu, “Black Theology Seeks the Liberation of All,” *washingtonpost.com*, 5/6/08

All good theology, philosophy, and ethics seek the liberation of all. I deeply respect the way Gandhi, MLK, and Tutu have gone about it: resolute, their bodies on the line, but with a genuine bow toward the oppressor. They catalyzed historical change. ~jpc

Liberation is holistic. Namaste.

May 25 Sunday Dialogue CIV

Journer: What is the place of pleasure in our lives?

Nez: My student* said, “We are born for meaning, not pleasure, unless it is pleasure that is steeped in meaning.”

Journer: So real pleasure is more than pleasure as advertised?

Nez: Real pleasure flows out of meaning, like seeing a scan of your newest grandson before you meet him.

* Jacob Needleman, *A Little Book on Love*

May 26 We Are Sustained

*In constant evolution,
everything appearing permanent
proves temporary,
waxing and waning,
morphing into some fresh mien of providence.*

*Such high and ultimate truth we cannot control
but only ride at its will and refrain from ego-lust
to confine such a wild and magnificent beast
within the corral of any religion or philosophy.*

~Harold Slater, musing on Psalm 97

Especially during these hectic times, when we are more confounded than usual on this wild and magnificent journey, we sometimes get a glimpse of truth that comes as providence. ~jpc

We are sustained . . . and give hardy thanks. Namaste.

May 27 Inborn Thou

[T]he inborn Thou is realised in each relation and consummated in none. It is consummated only in the direct relation with the Thou that by its nature cannot become It. ~Martin Buber, quoted in Cohn-Sherbok, *The Jewish Heritage*, Oxford, 1988, p. 177

An “it” can become for us a “thou” in any relation we

have: with a person, a dog, a mountain, or the numinous. *Thou* is inborn in all. Neither “I” nor “it,” *Thou* is related to all – in a way we are absolutely sure of but know little about. ~jpc

Inborn Thou is here, now. Namaste.

May 28 Three Possibilities

In the presence of their relativities men [*sic*] seem to have three possibilities: they can become nihilists and consistent skeptics, who affirm that nothing can be relied upon; or they can flee to the authority of some relative position, affirming that a church or philosophy or a value like that of life for the self, is absolute; or they can accept their relativities with faith in the infinite Absolute to whom all their relative views, values and duties are subject . . . [whereby] they will not become dogmatists unwilling to seek out what other men have seen and heard of that same . . . [infinite Absolute] they have fragmentarily known. ~H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, p. 238

Whether nihilists (and skeptics), absolutists, or faithfuls, we live in the relativities of the infinite Absolute, equally. ~jpc

Turning fragmentary knowledge to faith. Namaste.

May 29 She's Telling Us

*I have come to terms with the future.
From this day onward I will walk
easy on the earth. Plant trees. Kill
no living things. Live in harmony with
all creatures. I will restore the earth
where I am. Use no more of its resources
than I need. And listen, listen to what
it is telling me.*

~M.J. Slim Hooey, in *Earth Prayers*, p. 109

What Earth's telling us is bigger than her mass, deeper than her resources, and wiser than her humans. Most of all, Earth is telling us to stick with her 'cause she's got universe and numinous connections. ~jpc

Listening time. Namaste.

May 30 Strange Joy

[This joy of God] does not deny the distress where it is, but finds God in the midst of it, indeed precisely there; . . . it looks death in the face, yet finds life in death itself. We are concerned with this joy which has overcome. ~D. Bonhoeffer, *A Testament to Freedom*, p. 458

This strange joy "alone is worth believing," Dietrich further wrote. He seems to have been found by it and made

witness to it, even as he was hanged. ~jpc

Joy comes in the morning . . . noon or night. Namaste.

May 31 Add a Glisten

*When the ripe fruit falls
its sweetness distils and trickles away into
the veins of the earth.*

*When fulfilled people die
the essential oil of their experience enters
the veins of living space, and adds a glisten
to the atom, to the body of immortal chaos. . . .*

~D.H. Lawrence, from "When the Ripe Fruit Falls," *The Complete Poems*. . . , pp. 504-05

This poem was read at the last rites of our colleague *Iris Boivin* many years ago and is fitting to be read at the passing rites of any fulfilled part of creation: especially now for *Zachary May*, who lived his 26 years to the hilt and blessed others with his iron courage and joyous heart.

~jpc

O to add a glisten to creation. Namaste.

June

June 1 Sunday Dialogue CV

Journer: Are humans the pinnacle of creation?

Nez: My student* said, “You are a child of the universe / no less than the trees and the stars; / you have a right to be here.”

Journer: Does that mean humans are less valuable than trees and stars?

Nez: It means we all have a right to be here, as creations of the universe.

* Max Ehrmann, from “*Desiderata*” (in the 1920s)

June 2 Deep Change

In unexpected ways, science and mysticism are joining hands and reinforcing each other. . . . [This revolution is] going to have big cultural effects. . . . First, the self is not a fixed entity but a dynamic process of relationships. Second, underneath the patina of different religions, people around the world have common moral intuitions. Third, people are equipped to experience the sacred, to have moments of elevated experience when they transcend

boundaries. . . . Fourth, God can best be conceived as the nature one experiences at those moments, the unknowable total of all there is. ~David Brooks, "The Neural Buddhists," *newyorktimes.com*, 5/13/08

I'm surprised a solid conservative journalist in a daily global medium is giving voice to such a revolution that can "have big cultural effects." ~jpc

Deep human change is happening. Namaste.

June 3 Four Seasons

Spring: time of rebirthing

Summer: time of ripening

Autumn: time of fulfilling

Winter: time of reposing

We learn this cycle of life and death by reflecting on our universal nature. Choose your poetry as you savor the journey. ~jpc

'Tis very good. Namaste.

June 4 Universal Community

Judge every social device, every proposed reform, every national and every local enterprise by the one test: *Does this help towards the coming of the universal community.* ~Josiah Royce (1855-1916), *The Problem*

of Christianity, pp. 404-05

In 1913, Royce meant mostly human community by his phrase “universal community.” But now, almost 100 years later, let’s take him at his word, at least the “beloved community” (his phrase) of the whole Earth. ~jpc

Think at least 100 years ahead. Namaste.

June 5 Deep Breathing

Spirit.

Breath.

The animating principle.

The prime mover.

Breathing out. Breathing in.

Expiration. Inspiration.

Dying and birthing again.

In every cycle of breath . . . there is a moment of absolute calm, an instant when history comes to an end . . . the lungs praying to be filled . . . longing to be animated by spirit.

~Sam Keen, *Hymns to an Unknown God*, p. xv

Let our breathing guide us. Namaste.

June 6 Decisive Event

Athanasius, in his essay on the Incarnation [chp. 20], offers a “proof” of the resurrection of Jesus. . . [:] the freedom of Christians, their liberation from the bondage of superstition and wasted lives, their freedom to love even their enemies and to face death unafraid [p. 184]. . . . The decisive event was one which they felt had happened to them, and which alone made it possible for them to “decide” [p. 170]. ~Paul Van Buren, *The Secular Meaning of the Gospel*

They made big decisions after the transforming grace event for works of freedom. ~jpc

Resurrected living. Namaste.

June 7 Holy Ones

It will not do simply to translate the difficult word “God” into some highly or subtly qualified phrase such as “our ultimate concern.” . . . [Such] expressions are masquerading as empirical name tags, and they are used as though they referred to something. . . . [T]hey put us in the worse situation of speaking a meaningless language. ~Paul Van Buren, *The Secular Meaning of the Gospel*, p. 170

In the reflection yesterday, Van Buren was talking about the “objective” Jesus, and his followers’ experience with

him. That was the “something” that helped them to understand the word “God.” Similarly, followers’ experience with Siddhartha Gautama helped them to understand the word “Buddha.” ~jpc

Holy ones embody spirit’s presence. Namaste.

June 8 Sunday Dialogue CVI

Journer: Do you think God “changeth not”?

Nez: My student* said, “There is no end to the birth of God.”

Journer: That’s an unsettling thought.

Nez: Creation never stops changing, thank “God.”

* D.H. Lawrence, “God Is Born,” *The Complete Poems* . . . , p. 683

June 9 Strange Emancipation

It is, after all, frightfully easy to be emancipated from “the world” or to become one with a deity or ontological absolute and leave all the world’s grossly unjust social structures and practices (racism, gender injustice, homophobia, religious bigotry, colonialism, caste, class division, environmental degradation, etc.) comfortably in place. ~J. Kripal, *Tikkun* magazine

www.realitysandwich.com/next_buddha_will_be_a_collective
via Bill Salmon

We dread to read the litany of “all the world’s grossly unjust social structures and practices” one more time. We will not be emancipated from them, but can be emancipated to deal with and care for them. ~jpc

Emancipation, not as the world gives. Namaste.

June 10 Beyond Boomeritis

I have taken the call of the spirit . . . [to step] out of the confines of my particular life to see it in the light of our collective evolution. . . . To act from this [truth] holds a revolutionary possibility that takes us beyond boomeritis into what may, in fact, end up being a truly paradigm-busting transformation for all of humanity. And that would make any boomer’s heart truly sing. ~Elizabeth Debold, “Boomeritis & Me: Not Just a Book Review,” *WIE* magazine, Fall-Winter 2002 <http://www.wie.org/j22/debold.asp?page=1>

If we’re caught in the depression of “boomeritis,” absorbed in me-self and shirking our destiny, there is a way out. That’s what Ken Wilber’s book *Boomeritis* is about. ~jpc

May my boomer heart sing. Namaste.

June 11 Heroic First Step

I have found that you do have only to take that one step toward the gods and they will then take ten steps toward you. That step, the heroic first step of . . . [t]he hero's journey has been compared to a birth: it starts with being warm and snug in a safe place, then comes a signal, growing more insistent, that it is time to leave. To stay beyond your time is to putrefy. Without the blood and tearing and pain, there is no new life. ~**Diane K. Osbon**, introduction to *Reflections on the Art of Living: A Joseph Campbell Companion*, p. 10

*New life is stepping-out-of-the-womb awesome.
Namaste.*

June 12 Unconditional Acceptance

[W]hen a man [*sic*] goes in quest of a fully meaningful life he is in quest of unconditional acceptance . . . that one cannot give to oneself. ~**John S. Dunne**, *A Search for God in Time and Memory*, p. 37

Dunne helps us “cross over” into the spiritual journeys of Paul, Augustine, Luther, and Nietzsche to ground his point of acceptance from beyond ourselves. In this fundamental sense, we are not masters of our fate or masters of our souls. ~jpc

Acceptance comes or does not come, and certainly it does not come if I do not accept my acceptance by

that grace beyond myself. Namaste.

June 13 Spatial Nomenclature

As we push the envelope of spatial words, I'm experimenting with which ones to capitalize:

Cosmos: one (in my mind, bigger than *Multiverse* or *universe*)

Multiverse: one

universe: more than one (?)

galaxy: many

solar system: many

planet: many (*Earth*, one)

How far do we go? Much farther down than *ant hole*.

Who decides these things? Just a model, never finished, always evolving, and all in the process of creation. (Should we capitalize the word *Creation*? Is it bigger than *Cosmos*?) ~jpc

What a wonderful world. (World?) Namaste.

June 14 Until . . .

I arrive in rain and gloom and fog to see where in me is God. Or why God is not in me. . . . When asked, I say I was raised neither Christian nor anything else. I say I was raised by wolves. I have never prayed in a way that most devout people would consider praying. Yet I yearn to be

tethered to a presence beyond myself. I could use that in my life. I need that. ~Ethan Gilsdorf, "Silence and Solitude," *boston.com*, 5/18/08

Gilsdorf was attracted to several days of retreat at a Trappist monastery. There's something about intentional silence and solitude that raises the question of why we yearn to be tethered to a presence beyond ourselves. ~jpc

Restless until we find true rest. Namaste.

June 15 Sunday Dialogue CVII

Journer: What must I do to be a whole human being?

Nez: My student* said, "You are already a masterpiece. You cannot be improved. You have only to come to it, to know it, to realize it."

Journer: But don't I have to do something heroic?

Nez: Accept your masterpiece-ness, then be it, even heroically, as you bow to the masterpiece of creation.

* Osho, *Ah, This!* chap. 1

June 16 Death, Where Is Thy . . .

Morrie: [K]now you're going to die, and . . . be *prepared* for it at any time. . . . That way you can actually be *more*

involved in your life while you're living. . . . Do what the Buddhists do. Every day, have a little bird on your shoulder that asks, 'Is today the day? Am I ready? Am I doing all I need to do? Am I being the person I want to be?' ~*Tuesdays with Morrie*, by Mitch Albom, p. 81, via Diann McCabe

What is the message, right now, Little Bird? Go ahead, you can whisper it in my good ear. . . . Thank you, I needed that. ~jpc

Death, where is thy sting? Namaste.

June 17 Great Debate

A letter [Albert Einstein] wrote in 1954. . . , in which he described the Bible as "pretty childish" and scoffed at the notion that the Jews could be a "chosen people," sold for \$404,000 at an auction in London [this week]. . . . [His famous quote in the science and religion debate is] "Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind." ~Dennis Overbye, "Einstein Letter on God Sells for \$404,000," *nytimes.com*, 5/17/08

Science is lame if it thinks it is all-knowing, and religion and science are blind if they do not see "God" at the heart of creation. ~jpc

The science and religion debate is critical. Namaste.

June 18 Truly

Richard Dawkins: “If there is a God, it’s going to be a whole lot bigger and a whole lot more incomprehensible than anything that any theologian of any religion has ever proposed.” ~David Van Biema, “God vs. Science,” *time.com*, 11/5/06

Truly, and “it” – that mysterious *power* some call “God” – is absolutely “incomprehensible,” yet absolutely “experienced.” ~jpc

*That we might learn to reflect on what we experience.
Namaste.*

June 19 Whose Pecking Order

Peter responded, “Do you think Jesus believed in a pecking order? If he did, it was ‘the last shall be first.’” ~jpc, *Journer*, novelette, p. 34

Thomas Berry talks a lot about a just pecking order of creation through legal rights, raising all kinds of questions: notably, why do our constitutions just address human rights? ~jpc

Whose guidelines are we to go by? Namaste.

June 20 Build the Future

Something good was happening in the Presidential

Primaries in the USA: folks were participating as never before, as evident in the photo of an estimated 75,000 at Portland, Oregon, on May 19. Why pick it to death? Why are we surprised? Can we give thanks for our less than perfect system of democracy? Can we rejoice in the new interest? ~jpc

Let us celebrate the new urge to build the future of our country. Namaste.

June 21 Spiritual Paradox

Be broken to be whole.

Twist to be straight.

Be empty to be full.

Wear out to be renewed.

Have little and gain much.

Have much and get confused.

~Lao Tzu (6th cy. BCE), via Brian Stanfield, *The Courage to Lead Daily Journal*, June 26

*Wisdom is much more than it appears to the eye.
Namaste.*

June 22 Sunday Dialogue CVIII

Journer: I just seem to be meandering through life.

Nez: My student* said, "Have you made up your own

mind that your occupation is your real calling?"

Journer: What is my real calling?

Nez: To love creation – including yourself – and *spirit* at its heart.

* Kierkegaard, *Purity of Heart Is To Will One Thing*, p. 199

June 23 Spiritual Evolution

Michael Roach [Buddhist monk] and Christie McNally [who would be, except it violates the tradition] vowed to be both celibate and never apart by more than 15 feet or so. . . . The couple did a three-year silent retreat in [their tent] from 2000 to 2003. ~Leslie Kaufman, "Making Their Own Limits in a Spiritual Partnership," *nytimes.com*, 5/15/08

It's at least interesting to see how the religious the world over, be they Buddhist, Catholic, Orthodox, Baptist, etc., are having to struggle with the role of women in real spiritual leadership. ~jpc

"Rise up, O [women] of God." Namaste.

June 24 Ever-present Meaning

It is said that the ruler of Portugal, after Lisbon was devastated [1755], asked what was to be done? And the

answer came, “Bury the dead, and feed the living.” If nature is indifferent to human suffering, humans are not. In this way, meaning is rescued, for humans, too, are part of nature. ~James Carroll, “Humanizing Nature’s Fury,” *boston.com*, 5/19/08

Tsunamis, hurricanes, cyclones, floods, and earthquakes have taken hundreds of thousands of lives and left millions displaced in recent years, leading us to contemplate the tragedies of nature – not to mention nature’s ongoing sustenance over eons that we take for granted. ~jpc

*Meaning never goes away, in tragedy or thanksgiving.
Namaste.*

June 25 Decision and Solidarity

“Strike” tells the story of a tough, resilient working woman who refuses to back down from her . . . Communist bureaucrats. . . of Poland’s Solidarity movement. . . The central figure is Agnieszka [played by Katharina Thalbach], a character based on Anna Walentynowicz, who worked in the Gdansk shipyards for many years and was a catalyst of the strike in August 1980 that foretold the end of Communism. . . The key to the film, though, is Agnieszka’s own stubbornness, a quality that makes her both ordinary and heroic. ~A. O. Scott, review, *nytimes.com*, 6/15/07

Interview with movie’s director, Volker Schlöndorff:

“[A]nyone can have some influence. Agnieszka was like a grain of sand, and somehow the whole train of history derails because she was the way she was. It’s a bit like evolution.” ~Jeff Reichert, “Solidarity” <http://tinyurl.com/3rtdnl>

Evolution happens . . . on the back of decision and solidarity. Namaste.

June 26 From – To

*I would feel more at home
with religion if it moved
from absolute truth to evolving story,
from magic to mystery,
from institution building to service.*

~Randy Williams, *EarthRise* reflection

This is a treatise in a sentence that articulates spot-on what many feel about their religious or spiritual journeys.
~jpc

Let us pray for religions. Namaste.

June 27 Love Your Fate

Nietzsche was the one who did the job for me. At a certain moment in his life, the idea came to him of what he called “the love of your fate.” Whatever your fate is, whatever the hell happens, you say, “This is what I need.” . . .If you

bring love to that moment . . . you will find the strength is there. ~*A Joseph Campbell Companion*, p. 38

Love your fate! Sounds good, but there is so much about my fate I cannot love yet: for example, the fateful fact that I will die. The possibility is there for me to take a relationship of love, I know, but I admit I don't love all my fate yet. ~jpc

To find the strength of love that is there. Namaste.

June 28 “Taoism”

There is a being, wonderful, perfect;

It existed before heaven and earth.

How quiet it is!

How spiritual it is!

It stands alone and it does not change.

It moves around and around,

but does not on this account suffer.

All life comes from it.

It wraps everything with its love as in a garment,

and yet it claims no honor, for it does not demand to be Lord.

*I do not know its name, and so I call it Tao, the Way,
and I rejoice in its power.*

~**Huston Smith**, *Illustrated World's Religions*, p. 123

We rejoice in its power. Namaste.

June 29 Sunday Dialogue CIX

Journer: How do I know God?

Nez: My student* said, “God cannot be defined, described, or proven. God can only be ‘met.’”

Journer: Then how do I meet God?

Nez: Through communion with anything and no thing. And sometimes you’ll know.

* commentary on **Martin Buber** by Rifat Sonsino and Daniel B. Syme, *Finding God: Selected Responses*

June 30 Life Is Really Good!

[I]f you know your true nature of no coming, no going; no being, no nonbeing; no birth, no death, then you will have no fear and can dwell in the ultimate dimension, nirvana, right here and now. You don’t have to die to reach nirvana. When you dwell in your true nature, you are already dwelling in nirvana. We have our historical dimension, but we also have our ultimate dimension, just as Buddha does. ~**Thich Nhat Hanh**, *Opening the Heart of the Cosmos*, p. 22

I am reminded of a chorus of the song “I Am Dwelling” (ICA, 1972):

*I am dwelling on the tranquil sea, peace is swelling
tides of victory;
And waves of joy are crashing on the shoreline of
life's unending sea.*

Life is really good! Namaste.

July

July 1 Spiritual Defiance

Only one, endlessly self-repeating . . . story accompanies spiritual defiance: I can't, I won't, I shouldn't, and you can't make me. . . . Spiritual defiance is like pornography: it sucks the spirit out of a human soul in a tyranny of disrelationship. ~David Dunn, from *EarthRise* reflection

“No’ to life” defiantly jumps off our tongues, manifesting our being under “a tyranny of disrelationship.” But, as Tillich reminds us, one has to have been related before being disrelated, which says we’re never off the spirit journey. ~jpc

“Have you been faithful to the journey lately?” “No and Yes!” or “Yes and No!” are the only answers. Namaste.

July 2 Immense Beings

I suppose that in the forty-five years of my existence every atom, every molecule that composes me has changed its position or danced away and beyond to become part of other things. New molecules have come from the grass and the bodies of animals to be part of me a little while, yet in this spinning, light and airy as a midge swarm in a shaft of sunlight, my memories hold, and a loved face of

twenty years ago is before me still. ~Loren Eiseley, *The Immense Journey*, p. 207

Think anything is happening in our lives? Unfathomable what is going on, and sometimes we think we're so nothing. No! We're immense beings on the immense journey. ~jpc

O to reflect on and imagine. Namaste.

July 3 Gift of Poetry

I write to a young man in prison and would like to send him a copy of your poetry, especially "From Our Own Cells Comes Freedom." His father, a walking wounded Vietnam vet, was our colleague. We recently learned of the death of another colleague's son from cancer after returning from Iraq. I read your poem "Never in Our Name" and ached with all families who've lost loved ones in war. "Refuge" ("the Katrina's in our lives") reminds me of my own trip to storm-ravaged Mississippi. ~LLC, from note to Koshin (Bob Hanson) upon reading his book of poems, *Chasing Windmills. . . . Why Not?*

O for poetry that helps connect us to our profound journeys in thankfulness. Namaste.

July 4 Oh, Freedom!

[M]ay I, in self-satisfied security, let the evil world run its course. . . ? What is the place and what are the limits of

my responsibility? ~**Dietrich Bonhoeffer**, “Freedom,”
Ethics (D. B. Works, vol. 6), p. 289

He answers his rhetorical question: “Those who act responsibly do so while bound to God and neighbor . . . in relativity . . . in the midst of the countless perspectives . . . not justified by any law . . . [without] self-justification . . . [by relinquishing the] knowledge of good and evil . . . [and] by surrendering to God the deed that has become necessary and is nevertheless (or because of it!) free.” [pp. 283-84, DB’s parentheses]

“Oh, freedom, Oh, freedom, Oh, freedom [given] me!” Namaste.

July 5 Little More than Idolatry

The Gospel of Thomas and other Gnostic gospels offer us a new angle on Jesus and I think we honor that. When orthodox defenders of traditional religious formulas attack alternative understandings, it is because they have assumed that their view has captured truth. That is little more than idolatry. ~**J. S. Spong**, weekly Q&A, 5/21/08, via Dick Kroeger

Therefore, “idolatry” is restricting our understanding of truth to what someone in authority said, to what’s in some book, or to what my own cherished viewpoint is. ~jpc

Over time, idolatry has caused the fall. Namaste.

July 6 Sunday Dialogue CX

Journer: What is the 4th of July celebration really about?

Nez: My student* said, from a human perspective, at least, “Survival is the second law of life. The first is that we are all one.”

Journer: What does “we are all one” have to do with the 4th?

Nez: Read the *U.S. Declaration of Independence*: in the “Introduction” – *equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature’s God entitle [the people]*; in the “Preamble” – *with liberty and justice for all*; and in the “Conclusion” – *we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor*.

* *A Joseph Campbell Companion*, p. 54

July 7 “Distinction between Humans and Nature is Collapsing”

Our rigid, narrow self/other distinction is coming to an end. . . . We have maintained it a long time, and built a civilization upon it that seeks the conquest of nature and human nature. The present convergence of crises . . . is a birth crisis, propelling us from an old world, an old self, into a new. ~**Charles Eisenstein**, “Down with Descartes:

For Better or Worse, the Distinction between Humans and Nature is Collapsing,” *orionmagazine.com*, May/June 2008 <http://www.orionmagazine.org/index.php/articles/article/2968/> (good, short article)

Descartes’ self/other, separate-self understanding has led us to see ourselves as separate from and in reign over what we would use as an “it” rather than honor as a “thou,” e.g., the non-human or so-thought inferior humans. ~jpc

The old world is changing. Namaste.

July 8 Do We Matter?

I don’t agree with the idea that it would not matter if humanity became extinct as long as life went on. I think of the Earth as one life, worded by humanity, its voice. If humanity became extinct there would be no one to articulate the songs and poems of the Earth. ~*Sofia: The Sea of Faith* (UK) magazine, editorial #87, “All Change” <http://tinyurl.com/3m8ha>

Along with Teilhard de Chardin and Thomas Berry, let us lift up the reflective and symbolic role of humans on behalf of the future of the whole Earth community. ~jpc

Yes, we matter. Namaste.

July 9 Blows as It Will

Donald Bloesch maintains that “Understanding happens

when God's Word speaks to us anew as we submit ourselves to his authority and direction mediated through Scripture. We begin to know when the text becomes transparent to its transcendent meaning through the action of the Spirit in the biblical words and the human heart.”
~*Holy Scripture*, p. 178, via <http://www.luthersem.edu/ctrf/jctr/Vol01/Colyer.htm>

I simply say, we are awakened to meaning transparently – through any medium, anytime, anywhere. ~jpc

Spirit is unbounded. Namaste.

July 10 Passion for Justice

When young people have to leave the church to pursue social justice, as I did as a teenager, it is a tragedy. But when their passion for justice can reenergize the life of the church, it is a blessing. ~Jim Wallis, *The Great Awakening*, p. 60, via Karen Bueno

Let the justice dialogue go on in religious groups, even if it is controversial. I can't imagine Jesus, for example, would have chased such out of the temple. ~jpc

*But let us deeply bow to each other as we dialogue.
Namaste.*

July 11 The Biggest Story

Any journalist worth his or her salt knows the real story is

to define what it means to be spiritual. This is the biggest story – not only of the decade but of the century. ~**Bill Moyers**, quoted in Sam Keen’s *Hymns to an Unknown God*, p. xv

“What it means to be spiritual” is more and more being interpreted by economic, political, and cultural interests in society. Reason: there’s nothing without spirituality. Better said, spirituality – or its defilement – is at the heart of everything. ~jpc

The biggest story of life. Namaste.

July 12 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/5gwsfo> via Jim Rippey

I used to think going vegetarian was a personal thing. Even though we’ve sworn off red meat, pretty much, we’ll die remiss in our CRQ (comprehensive responsibility quotient). ~jpc

Let us pray it through. Namaste.

July 13 Sunday Dialogue CXI

Journer: What is true love?

Nez: My student* said, “True love is an acceptance of all that is, has been, will be . . . and will not be.”

Journer: That doesn’t sound very passionate.

Nez: Passion is what you bring to it, Journer.

* anonymous

July 14 Power of Connectivity

David Singh Grewal writes. . . : “Everything is being globalized except politics. . . . We live in a world in which our relations of sociability – our commerce, culture, ideas, manners – are increasingly shared, coordinated by newly global conversations in these domains, but in which our politics remains inescapably . . . centered in the nation states.” ~Roger Cohen, op-ed, *nytimes.com*, 5/26/08

Sociability exists on the power of connectivity, not the power of division, competition, or superiority. ~jpc

We exist for union. Namaste.

July 15 The Moment

[W]e have here assumed a new organ: Faith; a new presupposition: the consciousness of Sin; a new decision: the Moment; and a new Teacher: the God in Time. ~Kierkegaard's moral to close *Philosophical Fragments*, chp. 5 <http://tinyurl.com/549yv2> (link to 4 complete SK books)

Throughout the five chapters, Kierkegaard spins on “the Moment” as when the eternal trembles our consciousness and demands an “either/or” decision. It is a profound moment when *spirit* is real. ~jpc

*The transforming moment awaits my “Yes” of faith.
Namaste.*

July 16 Other Arrangements

[We have the] desperate wish to keep our “Happy Motoring” utopia running by means other than oil and its byproducts. But the truth is that no combination of solar, wind and nuclear power, ethanol, biodiesel, tar sands and used French-fry oil will allow us to power . . . the future. We have to make other arrangements. ~James Howard Kunstler, “Wake Up, America. We’re Driving Toward Disaster,” *washingtonpost.com*, 5/25/08, via JPC II

Winning planning is never built on illusion. ~jpc

Let us act appropriately. Namaste.

July 17 Truth

... "Truth," said a traveller,
"Is a breath, a wind,
A shadow, a phantom;
Long have I pursued it,
But never have I touched
The hem of its garment." . . .

~Stephen Crane, from "XXVIII," *Crane: Prose and Poetry*, p. 1308

My reason for being is not to find the truth but to live out
the truth I've found. ~jpc

Namaste.

July 18 Communion

Nothing on Earth was a mere "thing." Every being had its own divine, numinous, subjectivity, its self, its center, its unique identity. Every being was a presence to every other being. ~Thomas Berry, "The Spirituality of Earth," *Riverdale Papers*

Berry was spinning on communion that was the "primitive genius of humans. For in earlier years humans experienced both the intimacy and the destiny of their relation with Earth." ~jpc

Communion is our essential nature. Namaste.

July 19 In Sleepy Land

The hero's journey always begins with the call. . . . [A] guide must come to say, "Look, you're in Sleepy Land. Wake. Come on a trip. . . . So you're at home here? Well, there's not enough of you there." ~*A Joseph Campbell Companion*, 77

The profound journey is a dialogue between guide—event or person – and journeyer. We can name those seminal calling moments as well as the ongoing wakeup calls. ~jpc

Sleep is not our calling. Namaste.

July 20 Sunday Dialogue CXII

Journeyer: How do you define God?

Nez: My student* said, "God retreats in the face of definition."

Journeyer: Even when I call his . . . or her . . . or its name?

Nez: Just as the Hebrews would not even pronounce the name "God," I fudge with finger quotes when I speak the word, and I write it within quote marks or italics.

* John Bowker, *The Sense of God*, p. 115

July 21 “Ecumenical”

Along with his ecumenical heritage (African-American, Thai and Chinese with strains of Caucasian and American Indian), [Tiger] Woods brought a gift for drama and a prodigious talent. ~Chip Brown, “It’s Good to Be Immortal,” *nytimes.com*, 6/1/08

This sportswriter got it right: “ecumenical” is not a religious word per se. It has an Earth-centered meaning, from the Greek, to care for the big house and all its inhabitants.
~jpc

Plenty of room to grow ecumenically. Namaste.

July 22 Joy to Be a Child

We believe that a child’s true nature is to be free, have freedom, and not to be tied to a schedule, a seat, a classroom, a building – especially when there is so much outside to learn and explore. Especially through to age seven. Why should a child have to sit still and be quiet? It’s a joy to be a child with all that energy, wonder, curiosity!
www.thoughtoffering.blogs.com/ice_seeds/

I believe this, yet I also believe that freedom is not just about spontaneity. ~jpc

What think ye? Namaste.

July 23 To Contact the Divine

The spiritual formation of humans in the third millennium will undoubtedly include . . . an immersion into the deep creative powers of the universe . . . [as] the most direct contact a human can have of the divine. ~Brian Swimme, Foreward to *The Human Phenomenon*, p. xv

This assumes that the divine is in our midst, at the heart of “the deep creative powers of the universe.” ~jpc

Go deep: breathe, look, listen, feel, decide, and love deeply. Namaste.

July 24 Virgin Born

St. John demythologizes “virgin birth”: we are all born of a virgin, all children of the *spirit*. Let us deliteralize the scriptures and live their message of truth. ~jpc, *Our Universal Spirit Journey*, p. 228

How do I know? Often it comes to me that I am . . . good, whole, accepted, loved, forgiven, and perfect just as I am – one in a zillion – as seen through *spirit’s* lens. ~jpc

Eternally thankful to be spirit’s child. Namaste.

July 25 Great Faith

[W]hat is most vitally necessary to the thinking earth is a

faith – and a great faith – and ever more faith . . . that if we are not to perish smothered in the very stuff of our being, is what we must at all costs secure. And it is there that we find what I may well be so bold as to call the evolutionary role of religions. ~Teilhard de Chardin, *Activation of Energy*, p. 238

What is smothering us? A planetary anxiety due to natural and human-caused crises. What will save us? Teilhard says Earth needs a great faith. ~jpc

Religions, pick up your evolutionary role. Namaste.

July 26 Looking for Me?

*. . . you will not find me . . . in Indian shrine
rooms, nor in synagogues, nor in cathedrals. . . .
When you really look for me, you will see me
instantly. . . .*

[I am] the breath inside the breath.

~Kabir, from “Are you Looking for Me?” *The Kabir Book*,
p. 33 (adapted)

Kabir was a religious reformer of India’s religions [15th century], yet he was still religious, even sainted. Are you in tune with religion, out to reform religion, or indifferent to religion? ~jpc

*Doesn’t matter, says spirit, “If you look for me, I’m
present, instantly.” Namaste.*

July 27 Sunday Dialogue CXIII

Journer: Which peoples claim to be the chosen these days?

Nez: My student* said, "Every people is a chosen people in its own mind."

Journer: Is that a good thing?

Nez: Yes, if we all believe ALL are chosen.

* Joseph Campbell, *The Power of Myth*, p. 105

July 28 Those Who Care

Joe [Mathews] talked about the one vocation that all people are called to. . . . He says all people care; therefore, all people understand this calling, at least a little bit. He lays out *the* vocation we are assigned to: for example, if a lawyer, the legal division of *those who care*. This, our primal vocation, is at the heart of the understanding of the new religious. ~*Bending History*, jpc commentary on "The New Forms of the Religious," p. 243 (adapted)

We don't have to be covenanted, ordained, or baptized to be among the league of those who care for all. ~jpc

What is your division? Namaste.

July 29 Exclamations

Surprise, I brought my Mom flowers.

She exclaimed, "Oh, for goodness sake!" . . .

The Twins lost, "Oh, for goodness sake!" . . .

Yes, Norwegians and Swedes don't say "Oh, shit!"

They say, "Oh, for goodness sake!"

~Koshin (Bob Hanson), *Chasing Windmills. Why Not?*
p. 10

Global Exclamations:

crikey [Brit], gosh, golly, my my my [Slicker], holy cow, holy mackerel, holy smoke, holy moley, goodness me, gracious, god, my lord, my word, oh, O, ah, jeez, yikes, holy-dooly [Austral], heck, jeepers creepers, well, I never, good heavens www.wordwebonline.com (What is your favorite?) ~jpc

Maybe we humans are secular-religious by nature.
Namaste.

July 30 Respond with Passion

We shall awaken from our dullness and rise vigorously toward justice. If we fall in love with creation deeper and deeper, we will respond to its endangerment with passion.
~Hildegard von Bingen (cf. "The Life and Works of . . ."
at <http://tinyurl.com/661q54>) via Dick Kroeger

Two ways to respond to creation's endangerment with passion: out of deep love or out of deep fear. ~jpc

Either way, let us response to creation's endangerment with passion. Namaste.

July 31 Let Me into the Darkness . . .

*I was in the darkness;
I could not see my words
Nor the wishes of my heart.
Then suddenly there was a great light –*

“Let me into the darkness again.”

~Stephen Crane, “XLIV,” *Crane: Prose and Poetry*, p. 1314

Why is the light alarming? What does Crane mean by “could not see my words” nor “the wishes of my heart”? Is it that in the dark I'm driven to live by faith rather than sight and reason? Or is it that in the light I cannot avoid the fact of life, and I am afraid my selfish wishes will be exposed? ~jpc

Is it “Lead, kindly Light” or “Lead kindly, Light”?
Namaste.

August

August 1 Our Deepest Fear

*Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate,
... [But] that we are powerful beyond measure;
It is our light, not our darkness, that frightens us. . .*

Your playing small doesn't serve the world.

*And as we let our own light shine,
We . . . give other people permission. . . .
As we are liberated from our fears,
Our presence . . . liberates others.*

~Nelson Mandela, from Inauguration Speech, 1994
(adapted), via Karen Snyder

This is one reflection on Crane's poetry of yesterday's
reflection, "Let Me into the Darkness. . . ." ~jpc

We would be people of the light? Namaste.

August 2 We Are Made For . . .

We are made for goodness. We are made for love. We
are made for friendliness. We are made for togetherness.
. . . We are made to tell the world that there are no
outsiders. All are welcome: black, red, yellow, rich, poor,

educated, not educated, male, female, gay, straight, all, all, all. We are all meant to belong to this human family, God's family. ~Desmond Tutu, quoted in Jim Winkler's, "Living a Just Life," <http://www.umc-gbcs.org> 5/23/08, via LLC

"We belong to the human family, God's family," and therefore we're also made to care for the non-human family of air, rivers, and turtles, also "God's" family and our family.
~jpc

"We are family." Namaste.

August 3 Sunday Dialogue CXIV

Journer: What's my reason for being?

Nez: My student* said, "Our job, as humans, is to be a part of the great hymn of praise that is existence."

Journer: That's about as sanctimonious as a catechism.

Nez: Journer, your chief end—along with all others—is to give thanks for showing up, moment by moment. . . . Is that better?

* Thomas Berry, "Singing to the Dawn," *The Sun*, May 2002

August 4 Bodhisattva Vow

You were allowed to see the truth under the agreement that you would communicate it to others. . . . And therefore, if you have seen, you simply must speak out. . . . [Only by speaking what you have seen] with passion, can the truth . . . finally penetrate the reluctance of the world. . . . [I]t is your duty to speak your truth with whatever passion and courage you can find in your heart. ~Ken Wilber, *One Taste*, pp. 33-34

Wilber reminds us of the ancient Indian vow of spirituality, the authentic life response to ever-present *spirit*. ~jpc

First Great Bodhisattva Vow: "I vow to liberate all beings." Namaste.

August 5 Family Intercession

Let us read the names of Earth's countries – about 250 [<http://tinyurl.com/3d2djr>] – just to remind ourselves of the habitat of our Earth family, imaging all in our care and all in the fellowship of our planetary responsibility. It is good if we as a family know each other's names, so we can more and more keep each other in mind [recite names]. . . . These are the countries of our extended family of natural habitats, animals, plants, humans, etc. They all are in the union of our care. ~jpc, *Our Universal Spirit Journey*, pp. 215-16 (adapted)

*The family that prays together stays together.
Namaste.*

August 6 Authenticity

I could not very well begin my lectures in Bonn with the salutation to Hitler, and because I could not very well swear an unconditioned oath of allegiance to the Führer, as I should have to do as the holder of a state office, I lost my position in the service of this state and was forced to quit Germany. ~Karl Barth, "How My Mind Changed. . . – Part II," <http://tinyurl.com/4gbfhl>

Such decisions indicate why Barth became the leader of the vanguard of the Christian movement in Germany and Europe that resisted and helped bring down Nazism. ~jpc

Barth's authenticity had to do with awakening pastors like Bonhoeffer and the laity to bend history. Namaste.

August 7 Cosmic Stories

Stories, though made of language, can honor matter via an implicit cosmology portable enough to carry around in our hearts and heads. Just as a jazz pianist can pull trained instincts from his fingers and abstract knowledge from his head, then improvise an interaction with a keyboard to make music unique to time and place, so (I hope!) can a workable cosmology be extemporaneously produced to guide our interactions with creation, moment to moment,

place to place. ~David James Duncan, “Assailed: Improvisations in the Key of Cosmology” <http://www.earthministry.org/duncan.htm>

Part of my implicit and portable cosmology is the indelible image of my Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia and North Carolina I carry around in my heart and mind. They guide me, especially as I remember their features and my journey living 4000 feet up. ~jpc

Always at one with the mountain. Namaste.

August 8 Mystery

I remember wonderful hours in Marburg . . . when Rudolph Otto and I walked together through the hills and woods and talked. . . . The first thing he said in his analysis of the meaning of the term “holy” was that “the holy” is “mystery,” . . . the ground of all the absolutes we [humans] have discovered in . . . encounter with reality. It cannot be . . . grasped in its essence by finite minds. . . . Nevertheless, we can be related to and know we are related to that which is mystery. ~Paul Tillich, *My Search for Absolutes* (chp. 4) <http://tinyurl.com/6jkvxo>

No one can deny mystery in life. Of all reality it’s the most real. We know we are related to mystery and that it is the ground of our “ultimate meaning.” ~jpc

Our journey with holy mystery is awesome. Namaste.

August 9 Enough!

A critique of radicalism is building within the heart of the Muslim world. . . . Bin Laden's prescription for change . . . has led to nothing but death and destruction. . . . As a result, they've found themselves isolated. . . . Bin Laden has a problem, and it is Islam. ~**Christopher Dickey** and **Owen Matthews**, *Newsweek*, 6/9/08, pp. 30-32

Moderate Muslims, radical Jihadists, liberal Muslim thinkers, heads of state in the Middle East, Iraqi towns are all attacking Al Qaeda's vision, which is obviously counter to Islam and humane living. ~jpc

Islam is reforming. Namaste.

August 10 Sunday Dialogue CXV

Journer: What is the key to change?

Nez: My student* said, "How wonderful it is that no one has to wait, but can start right now to gradually change the world!"

Journer: I wasn't exactly going for the world.

Nez: Every change changes the world, even a girl's diary.

* **Anne Frank**, *The Diary of . . . : The Revised Critical Edition*, p. 795

August 11 Thank God . . .

*. . . Thank God our time is now, when wrong
Comes up to face us everywhere,
Never to leave us till we take
The longest stride of soul men [sic] ever took.
Affairs are now soul size.*

~Christopher Fry, "A Sleep of Prisoners," *Selected Plays*

This is a favorite quote. Do you think our contemporary "soul size" affairs – global warming, terrorism, poverty, etc. – are more "soul size" than in other times? Not really, when we consider the crises of human history, much less the last 14 billion years of universe crises. ~jpc

*We're moving closer to the "longest stride" in history.
Namaste.*

August 12 The Numinous

The main interest of my work is not concerned with the treatment of neurosis but rather with the approach to the numinous . . . [which] is the real therapy and inasmuch as you attain to the numinous experiences you are released from the curse of pathology. ~C. G. Jung *Letters*, Vol. I, p. 377

Numinous *spirit* is the deepest thing we experience in this life and is key to healing. ~jpc

Always there. Namaste.

August 13 Sin Against Life

[I]f there is a sin against life, it consists perhaps not so much in despairing of life as in hoping for another life and in eluding the implacable grandeur of this life. ~Albert Camus, “Summer in Algiers,” *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays*, p. 153

We “sin against life” when we can’t wait to grow up, when we deny our death, and every time in between when we curse our present situation: moment by moment grandeur of this life. ~jpc

List what you’re thankful for about your life, right now. Namaste.

August 14 Waking Up In Time

We are facing an evolutionary exam – a cosmic intelligence test. We have prodigious powers at our disposal – enough to harm a planet – and before we can continue our evolutionary journey we must prove that we have the wisdom to use these powers for the benefit of all. . . . Can its [our species’] inner evolution keep pace with its material development? ~Peter Russell, “The End – Or the Beginning?” <http://www.peterrussell.com/WUIT/End.php>

The “inner evolution” is the name of the game as we contemplate the estimated \$45 trillion to halve global warming by 2050. ~jpc

“Affairs are now soul size.” Namaste.

August 15 Spirituality for All

The meaning of life is at the center of living it. Simply,

*if we see in the chewing of food the wonder of taste
if we see in our associations the wonder of being
together*

*if we see in our grandchildren the wonder of their
wonder*

*if we see in 9/11 events the wonder of our precious
finitude*

if we see in dreaming the wonder of imagination

*if we see in sexuality the wonder of attraction and
union*

if we see in crises the wonder of our freedom to respond

if we see in birth and death the wonder of life

then we begin to get it, this thing called spirituality, the way of life that is intercommunion for all created subjects seeing to the heart of what is. ~jpc, *Our Universal Spirit Journey*, p. 81 (adapted)

Spirituality is for everyone. Namaste.

August 16 Creation-centered Exercises

Self-focused

1. (Knowing) *Meditation*
2. (Doing) *Life-Lining*

3. (Being) *Personal Montage*

Tribe-focused

4. (K) *Storytelling*

5. (D) *Care Beads*

6. (B) *Spirit Conversation*

Human-focused

7. (K) *250 Countries Intercession*

8. (D) *As Leader of the Earth, I Will . . .*

9. (B) *Inner Council*

Creation-Focused

10. (K) *Universe Walk*

11. (D) *Ecozoic Circle*

12. (B) *Creation Vigil*

~jpc, *Our Universal Spirit Journey* (adapted), pp. 208-10 [detailed description of the 12 exercises]

Spirit exercises: more important than what we eat and how we exercise the body. Namaste.

August 17 Sunday Dialogue CXVI

Journer: What does awe have to do with history?

Nez: My student* said, "Awe, you see, is what moves us forward."

Journer: If awe "moves us," maybe we could say awe starts movements?

Nez: There's a dissertation topic for you, Journeyer.

* **Joseph Campbell**, via Rich Heffern, "The Hero Is Us," *National Catholic Reporter*. 38:12, 1/25/02, 6.

August 18 The "Yes"

In uttering "yes" to my relationship [with life and death], at that moment I have eternal life. My being is not what happens to me, including my not breathing ever again. My being is a transformed spirit that comes by virtue of the "yes." ~**Joseph Slicker**, "The Eternal Life," 1972 conference in Chicago

What is usually my first response to my life situation: "yes" or "no"? This is of course an indication of my relationship with life and death. ~jpc

Sometimes "yes" is a sheer decision, sometimes spontaneous. Namaste.

August 19 Little Christs

As he [Jesus-Christ] lived his life as the meaning of his life, and announced the cosmic permission for all . . . thus to live, so the church understands that she can and must go and do likewise. As Luther said, the Christians are to be little Christs. ~**Joseph Mathews**, *The Christ of History*, in jpc's *The Transparent Event*, p. 122

Some have talked about the faith of the early church this way, understanding they were followers of Jesus. Today, it would cause problems but also take care of major contradictions in the church. ~jpc

A Christ event in my history calls me to the faith of Jesus. Namaste.

August 20 “Mysterium Tremendum”

[We] are dealing with something for which there is only one appropriate expression, “mysterium tremendum”. The feeling of it may at times come sweeping like a gentle tide. . . . It may burst in sudden eruption up from the depths of the soul. . . . It may become the hushed, trembling, and speechless humility of the creature in the presence of—whom or what? ~Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, chp. IV, pp. 12-13

This is another description of the happening of *spirit*, an every-person encounter. Such an experience often awes and changes us. ~jpc

Amazing grace. Namaste.

August 21 “The One”

[A]ll beings, not only our friends but also our enemies, not only humans but also animals and the inanimate [are to] be met with reverence, for all are friends in the friendship

of the One. ~H. Richard Niebuhr, *Radical Monotheism*, p. 126

There are many names for “the One.” This name especially appeals to my deeper senses. It moves us all to a new place of communion with “the One” and intercommunion with all that is. ~jpc

Our language has a lot to do with our faith expression. Namaste.

August 22 Bearing the Weight of the World

At the cleaners today, the young female clerk wore a t-shirt saying “Choose to Suffer.” I asked her if she was suffering much. “No, it’s the name of my brother’s band, now on tour in California.” She finished by saying, “You know, guys are into suffering and stuff.”

I let that go and reflected on the way home. We all do or will suffer. We can choose to suffer on behalf of something worth suffering for. The Atlas story needs a little work and would be a more meaningful award ceremony annually – who’s best caring for the Earth community – than best movies, music, and other popular award ceremonies. ~jpc

Who should get an Atlas Award next? Namaste.

August 23 Encounter and Decision

[E]ncounters can be brutal – Auschwitz, the assassinations

in America – or they can be gentle – love of a mother, the making of a friend. They can be from the past – the challenge of the self-understanding revealed in the teaching of Jesus or the deeds and words of Abraham Lincoln – or they can come from the future – the necessity of providing for retirement or of facing loneliness after the loss of a loved one. The one thing they all have in common is that necessity for decision which will further shape that self-understanding which makes a man [sic] what he is. ~Norman Perrin, *The Promise of Bultmann*, p. 29

This professor of mine has helped to form my articulation of who I am – encountered by *spirit* throughout my life journey, joyfully and painfully. ~jpc

Thankful for spirit. Namaste.

August 24 Sunday Dialogue CXVII

Journer: What is the goal of living?

Nez: My student* said, “If I stake my life on one field, one wild force, one sentence issuing from Sinai it is this one: *There is no goal beyond love.*”

Journer: So love is what it’s all about?

Nez: Ultimately, yes.

* David James Duncan, “Assailed: Improvisations in the Key of Cosmology” <http://www.earthministry.org/duncan.htm>

August 25 Spirit Journey Dynamics*

Most of us humans most of the time do not live the human journey profoundly. Yet occasionally we all do. The *spirit journey dynamics* are 1) communion, 2) awakening, 3) formation, 4) engagement, and 5) sustenance. . . . *Spirit* is the origin, center, and omega point for our great journey. ~jpc, *Our Universal Spirit Journey*, p. 191 (adapted)

“Journey on, Journey on, all humankind, / Spirit is waiting for you.” Namaste.

* **note:** This is the context for the next five daily reflections. We will ground the five dynamics in our personal journeys.

August 26 I. Community: The Great Communion

We are creatures made for the *great communion*. We experienced it after September 11 as we reached out to care for each other in heroic and small ways. We experienced that deep urge within to be in community, to be connected, to be family, to be at one. The great communion is with *spirit* that meets us in creation. I have experienced the dynamic of profound *community* throughout my life. Some examples are . . .

- being raised in a loving family in a small town
- living in Muslim and Hindu villages and US ghettos
- living in a pluriform, secular-religious family Order

Reflect upon your own communion examples:

~jpc, *Our Universal Spirit Journey*, p. 191-92 (adapted)

Journey on. Namaste.

August 27 II. Awakening: The Great Event

We all experience the *great event*. . . . We are awakened to the glory of the profound human journey we are on; we do not achieve it. *Awakening* is a gift. . . . I have experienced the dynamic of profound awakening throughout my life. Some examples are . . .

- getting the wake-up call of my life when JFK was assassinated
- experiencing awesome freedom at a clergy colloquy
- reading Thomas Berry's *Befriending the Earth*

Reflect upon your own awakening examples:

~jpc, *Our Universal Spirit Journey*, p. 193-94 (adapted)

Journey on. Namaste.

August 28 III. Formation: The Great Preparation

Between the vocational call and the great work is the dynamic of *formation*, or getting "formed," getting prepared. I have experienced the dynamic of spirit formation throughout my life. Some examples are . . .

- reading about my saints: *e.g.*, Bonhoeffer and Gandhi
- being journeyed by mentors Joseph and Lyn Mathews
- participating in an intensive eight-week formation program

Reflect upon your own formation examples:

~jpc, *Our Universal Spirit Journey*, p. 194-95 (adapted)

Journey on. Namaste.

August 29 IV. Engagement: The Great Work

We are commandeered for *engagement* in *the great work* as we elicit humanity for creation-centered living. I have experienced the dynamic of spirit engagement throughout my life. Some examples are . . .

- helping to put in place a global network of local integral development
- helping revitalize my hometown community
- engaging in the movement with Thomas Berry to care for the Earth community

Reflect upon your own engagement examples:

~jpc, *Our Universal Spirit Journey*, p. 196-97 (adapted)

Journey on. Namaste.

August 30 V. Nurture: The Great Sustenance

To summarize our great spirit journey: in the midst of *community* one is *awakened* to, *formed* for, and *engaged* in *the great work*. What sustains one for the dark night of the soul and the long march of love? In spite of all, we experience that we are sustained, received, united, and loved by *spirit*. I have experienced the

dynamic of deep *sustenance* throughout my life. Some examples are . . .

- *meditating*: breathing, journaling, writing, blogging
- *contemplating* creation and *praying* prayers of thanksgiving
- writing my memoir became therapeutic for a big vocational transition

Reflect upon your own sustenance examples:

~jpc, *Our Universal Spirit Journey*, p. 197-99 (adapted)

“Journey on, Journey on, all humankind, / Future is waiting for you.” Namaste.

August 31 Sunday Dialogue CXVIII

Journer: What is the mark of true greatness?

Nez: My student* gave “a new definition of greatness . . . everybody can be great, because everybody can serve.”

Journer: So the greater one’s service the greater one is?

Nez: If that includes the widow’s pennies, for she gave all she had.

* **Martin L. King, Jr.**, “The Drum Major Instinct” sermon, 2/4/68, Atlanta, two months before his assassination

Books by the Author

•*Daily Spirit Journal: Quotes and Reflections for 365 Days* (vol. I, 2005; vol. II, 2006; vol. III, 2007; vol. IV, 2008)

•*By Cosmic Design: [109] Spirit Poems* (1974-2006)

•*Journer* – a contemporary spirit journey in the style of Herman Hesse's novelette *Siddhartha* (2005)

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comments by Wanda Urbanska and James Dodson

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•*Bending History:*

Selected Talks of Joseph W. Mathews (2005)

•*Brother Joe:*

A 20th Century Apostle by James K. Mathews (2006)

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