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The Joy



February 2005

The Joy Cathedral

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A Message From Reverend Dr. Vici Derrick

Namaskar!

This time of year I become impatient for spring. I become restless and start looking for signs that spring is on the way. I notice how my camellias are deeply budded, how the day is lengthening and I am more than ready for the warmth of a different season.

When I am doing construction work on my life I find myself looking for some signs of spring there too. I look for the synchronicities that tell me I am in the flow; I have found my way back to a consciousness that brings more ease, more peace of mind.

The last few weeks have been troubled and troubling. There is so much happening in the world. Much of it is difficult to understand, hard to fathom. The appearance of suffering shows up daily in images of devastation and war. Before long I suspect we will find ourselves with a new word in our lexicon. Tsunamied. It will come to mean being overcome suddenly. When we become acutely aware of the suffering that seems to be without end on this planet we begin to ask ourselves about God. How could God let this happen? What does this say about the truth that God is Absolute Good?

At first I was going to write about such things as soul contracts and the agreement that some have to leave the planet in large numbers as a way to illustrate some point. That didn't feel like the answer to the most fundamental of the questions served up when we are faced with what seems to be monumental tragedy.

Next it occurred to me that the answer was in addressing some of the core beliefs that we have about death. For most of us, death is the end. Finito. Curtain down.

In truth we know that life is eternal. Even our science teaches that matter cannot be created nor destroyed. Death is not a door that closes, it is the door that opens to other dimensions of being.

Finally after prayer and sleep I awoke to the answer. It came from The New York Times. This is a part of the article that showed up at my desktop. For me this was answered prayer. It is as if God was answering my question.

"Just as tsunamis and earthquakes and hurricanes and tornadoes come and go they do not leave without giving us a gift. Powerful jolts like the one that sent killer waves racing across the Indian Ocean on Dec. 26 are inevitable side effects of the constant recycling of planetary crust, which produces a lush, habitable planet. Some experts refer to the regular blows - hundreds a day - as the planet's heartbeat.

Plate tectonics (after the Greek word "tekton," or builder) describes the geology. Dr. de Boer, author of recent books on earthquakes and volcanoes in human history, added that great suffering from tectonic violence was usually followed by great benefits as well.

"Nature is reborn with these kinds of terrible events," he said. "There are a lot of positive aspects even when we don't see them."

Robert S. Detrick Jr., a geophysicist at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, said "there's no question that plate tectonics rejuvenates the planet."

Taken altogether what this means to me is that the cycles of winter and spring have their corollary in natural events. After the winter of earthquakes and tsunamis there is the spring of rejuvenation for our planet. In other

words this is an opportunity to not judge by appearances, rather to judge righteously. Spring will come. There are benefits. God is still in charge.

Many of us from time to time feel tsunamied. We feel overcome by the waves of change that happen in our lives. Suddenly we find ourselves washed out to sea, without the canoe or the proverbial paddle. That's where God comes in.

We either anchor ourselves in the belief of the Goodness That Is or we flail against appearances missing the opportunity to ride the tides and be delivered to another shore, to the safety of knowing that life is eternal, nothing is ever lost, and spring will follow winter.

Ironically it is in the deepest part of the winter, when the cold keeps us somewhat barricaded in our homes that the promise of spring calls to us to remember. It is in the aftermath of earthquakes that we are also called to remember. Remember that no matter how harsh the winter, how high the waves, how difficult the images, spring will come. Life will go on even better than before.

To quote William Shakespeare from the play "As You Like It" "Sweet are the uses of adversity, which like the toad ugly and venomous wears yet a precious jewel in his head, and this our life exempt from public haunt, find tongues in trees, books in running brooks, sermons in stones and good in everything. I would not change it" Loving you,

Vici

Ask Rev. Vici.

Send your questions to:

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I Was Thank God Offended

You have heard it said that God doesn't make junk. I believe this is true. When I was first introduced to New Thought concepts one of the first beliefs I resonated with was the idea that we are made in the image and likeness of God; God is Good; and, therefore so too am I. I wondered, then, why at times I didn't feel good. If God is Good and I am also, why do I feel so crummy? The first bit of relief I experienced was through forgiving. I realized when I let go of being attached to someone or something being responsible for my well-being and turned my attention instead to the Holy Mother/Father God Within I began to experience a moment or two of relief. Over time I have come to realize that whenever my attention is on Inner Magnificence I experience peace, well-being and joy. This moment has turned into a way of living.

Earlier in this incredible journey, I couldn't buy into the idea that emotions came in two flavors -- good and bad. God must have had something better in mind for us than to suffer and feel stuck in a "negative" state. My journey led me to a book entitled *A Path with Heart*, by Buddhist Jack Kornfield. Next to the Bible, this is my favorite guidebook. I taught a class on this book for many years and watched the shift as people were willing to accept "what is" without judgment instead of fighting it. There is a spiritual practice in the book entitled "taking the seat." This spiritual practice is literally to sit in contemplation and dialogue with your emotions. Instead of stuffing, running, leaving our bodies, or distracting ourselves, when a feeling arose I sat with it and interviewed it. This was powerful for me as I realized over time that since I can interview my emotions, they were *not* who I am. I also, over time, came to realize that each emotion serves as a guidance system to let us know when we are alignment with our Highest Good and when we are not.

While on the road as part of The National Forgiveness Tour I learned a profound, life enhancing insight. First, we forgive only when we are offended. If we aren't offended, then there is nothing to forgive or

to let go of. I also realized that not everyone in the same situation as me would be offended. This became clear while I was purchasing a car. I experienced a "lure and lie" experience. I was furious. I left the dealership greatly offended and angry. I called a friend of mine who loves to shop for cars and he laughed and in a giddy voice asked if he could shop with me over the weekend as he finds the process purely delightful. In my shoes, I was angry and miserable. In his shoes, he was playing a game and having fun. Wow.

So, I asked myself, why then did I interpret the situation in such a way that I was offended? What belief or perception was activated within me allowing me the experience of offense? This is the good news about being offended. When we can "see" the perception or pattern then we are free to be and act from choice instead of acting out of habit. I realized for me that I felt the salesman put profits before people. I felt that in the transaction I didn't matter. Once I saw this I then was able to speak the Infinite Truth. Speaking the Truth from this place was powerful and allowed complete healing to transform me. In the end I was grateful for being offended. It woke me up to a thought pattern I had that kept me limited. By speaking the Truth I was brought back to God and to my original Good. Now when I get offended I say to myself "thank God, my Good is very nearby." As I've traveled throughout the country there have been many individuals I've watched reclaiming more of their Divinity through forgiving.

I encourage you to choose 2005 as YOUR year of Good. Include one of the tour's forgiveness workshops in your plan. And, if the times don't work for you, you can take the forgiveness workshop online, anytime. I look forward to joining you in living a year of splendor.

My love to you,

Rev. Bonnie Barnard



February Affirmation Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 I am the one that I have been waiting for.	2 I move in the direction of greater love.	3 I love my life!	4. I love to forgive. I forgive with love.	5 I am the flower of God's love.
6 My heart is absolutely receptive to Love.	7 I express the love of God.	8 I love order.	9 I move today in love.	10 I serve God by loving others.	11 The secret of loving others is loving myself.	12 My love is abundant and is accessed from an unlimited source.
13 With love all things are possible.	14 God expresses love through me.	15 Love is the power that holds the world together.	16 I let surrender my heart to loving.	17 I "feel the vibes" with a loving heart.	18 I begin and end my day with loving thoughts.	19 I love my body.
20 I am inspired by the love of God.	21 I organize my thoughts into love mode.	22 Love lifts me up where I belong.	23 I view the world through loving eyes.	24 I expect love.	25 God loves me through my family and friends.	26 I accept love.
27 I emanate love.	28 I am Love and I am Loved.					

The President's Corner Of Biblical Proportions

The recent tsunami that struck Indonesia, parts of India, Africa, and the surrounding region, has wrought destruction on a scale that truly is "of biblical proportions." In ancient times, this event would surely have been interpreted as an expression of God's wrath. Indeed, even now there are TV evangelists who haven't let the opportunity escape to use the great tsunami event as an opportunity to assert a world-view in which God's will is expressed through punishment, in which He shows favor to one group or class of His children over another. We recall similar nonsense, for example, blaming homosexuals when one the hurricanes struck Florida a few years ago. Of course, we reject such notions. However, in the face of such compelling circumstances, we are drawn to examine our own world-view, and most importantly, to examine and clarify our beliefs regarding the nature of God.

What do we mean when we assert that God is only good, when one part of creation heaves up and destroys untold thousands of lives and livelihoods in a spectacle of unimaginable horror? What god would countenance such destruction? The One, the Good, the Omnipotent? What kind of omnipotent god would unleash such an event? Our loving provider, the source of all substance? What does it mean to assert belief in an "omnipotent" god, when events such as the recent great tsunami appear to demonstrate clearly that there's some kind of agenda being manifested that isn't part of a program of universal love? What do we really believe is the nature of "divine intent" in the face of such circumstances? These are important questions for which students of truth should seek clarity.

As overwhelming as the human tragedy of the great tsunami might appear, we must remind ourselves that in many respects, it is not unique. In terms of human suffering, the genocide in Rwanda, to cite but one example, saw a loss of human life on the scale of an order of magnitude greater. The

human capacity to act inhumanely is almost boundless. Witness the Jewish holocaust, the singularly effective U.S. policy of extermination and cultural isolation of Native Americans, the killing fields of the Khmer Rouge, to name but a few examples. Natural disasters claim innocent lives every day. Disease and deprivation rob untold millions of the quality, if not the very fact of life itself every day. Injustice neither began nor ended with the Inquisition. The ultimate innocent, our brother in spirit, Jesus, the Christ, was nailed to a cross, and murdered by the religious fundamentalists of His day, for proclaiming the truth about God's kingdom. So, where is there justice? Where do we see divine intent?

Would the God I worship have His own son slain? How is it that the God to whom I turn in gratitude fails to exercise His omnipotence as his children fall victim by the millions to human violence, disaster, and disease? Who is this God from whom I seek guidance, solace, and enlightenment. If I believe that God is love, that God is all good, that God is truly omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent, how do I reconcile the appearance of an absence of loving intent in the circumstances of the world in which I live, day to day? The answer does not derive from belief in a god created in man's image.

If we seek answers from an anthropomorphic god, a god conceived in the image and after the likeness of man, we will find no satisfaction. A god who requires worldly justice has not transcended this world. A god whose nature can be contradicted by circumstance has not transcended circumstance. What Jesus demonstrated on the cross was that no injustice, no circumstance, no appearance, could separate Him from His God. He wasn't rescued; He was exalted. He demonstrated that, through love, circumstances can be changed; but, more importantly, that love can empower us to transcend circumstance. Do we, then, abandon our quest for justice in this world? Does it not matter that we seek peace? Do we not reach out to our brethren in need? No, of course not. While we live in this world, it is our sacred duty to

manifest divine intent by seeking justice, and peace, and equality, by reaching out, in love, to "the least of these." But neither do we demand God's intent be understood in human terms. Rather, we seek to meet God on His terms, transcending circumstance with unconditional love, knowing that nothing can separate us from that which we are bound in spirit. Isn't that what Jesus taught us from the cross?

Dr. Lou Saegar
President of the Board of Direct

A Joyful Noise
Feel the Vibes

Last month I wrote about making music. That joyous process is not complete until the music is heard. The spiritual act of creating music is complete when the music is not just heard but felt. The goal of the creator is to move those who experience the creation. As Lionel Hampton would say, "It's all about the vibes."

There are some deeply spiritual thinkers who believe the physical and "non-physical" universes are vibrational, that the Source is vibrational, that we are vibrational beings operating in a universe which constantly responds to those vibrations.

The quantum metaphysicians speak of the sub-atomic particles as being vibrations of light which the human eye observes and interprets as objects. They tell us that what exists at the core of existence are these vibrations and the spaces between them.

Musical sounds or tones are created by the vibrations emanating from a voice or instrument. The human ear picks up those vibrations and interprets them as notes. The musical passages are composed of the notes (the vibrations) and the spaces in between them. As such music is a creative reflection of the essence of all of creation.

I believe that is why it affects us so viscerally, so physically. It's why it moves us to join in the creation by singing and dancing along. As vibrational beings we intrinsically respond to the vibrations of music. We've all been to shows or concerts at which the music moved a great many people and created a collective mood of joy and excitement. Back in the day the expression was that you could "feel the vibes." Sometimes even before the show begins the collective sense of anticipation, the eagerness of the crowd to feel the thrill that they know the music will bring – all of this creates an atmosphere of electricity such that as soon as you enter the room you can "feel the vibes."

Well, it is important to "feel the vibes," to be tuned in to and moved by the literal vibrations of the music to the point where you yourself emanate a vibration. Those vibrations can be felt, shared and exchanged. And the word for what is achieved: harmony.

It is equally important not to stop there but to make this experience a model for all of life. The rhythms of life are all around us. The symphony of the seasons, the song of the city, the melody of the wind atop an otherwise quiet forest – and of course the blessed silence itself -- when we hear these songs and joyously join in their cadences and in their contrasting styles....we dance to the infinite variations of the rhythm of life.

The very first act in the creative process is to listen.

Listen to the song of creation. Feel the vibes.

Billy Mac
Music Director

Love and Romance

Recently I decided to ask people about their ideas about romance. The results of my survey were predictably that women long for more of it in their lives and most (not all) men fear it. Nobody that I asked could define it. I know that fear stems from ignorance so I looked up romance in several dictionaries. Here are some of the definitions that

I found:

Romance – enchantment, passion, fascination, adventure, fanciful, chivalrous, romance does not bind itself to verisimilitude (that which resembles truth) or reality but gives scope to the imagination and idealization, a tendency or disposition to delight in what is mysterious or adventurous. In no definition did I find romance limited to our conjugal relationships.

Many people associate the month February with Love and Romance. Not a few people say that they resist romance in February because they feel Valentine's Day is a holiday created by Halmark. I would like to suggest that Life on Earth is a holiday created by God and intended to be filled with romance (as defined above)!

This month let's all go out and commit random acts of Romance!

You can start small at first if you need to. A kind word, an extra hug, a small note tucked in someone's pocket, a compliment to a stranger. Then you can work up to larger random acts of romance, adventure, chivalry and passion!

Years ago I had the good fortune to have dinner with Leo Buscaglia who wrote books and pioneered college courses on the subject of Love. We discussed the idea that a prerequisite of romance is

one's ability to put their attention on something other than themselves. When one feels self-conscious about being romantic, one's attention is not on the "other".

One of the things he said that really stuck with me was that Love is something that we can give freely without ever diminishing our own supply. The following was inspired by our conversation.

Remember Always

At the start they may not see
What a shining star you are
They are not heartless
It just takes time for light to travel
Through the darkness

And you must not forget
For lack of recognition....
If you'll just remain a witness
One by one they'll ask and listen

Only then will you begin
To share the things you know
In return they will teach you
And together you will grow

So do not fret
Do not frenzy
Don't take seriously their envy
Be a humble strong example
Remain centered....
Let them sample who you are
Let shine your star

Allow each one to taste
Of a love that has no limit
For love cannot be wasted
Unless you forget to give it

Andrea von Botefuhr

Church of the Wildflowers

The Big Bloom

We all exist within a field of dreams, an invisible power that lifts our heads off the pillow and urges us out into the light of day to open our arms to the heavens and synchronize our hearts with the Divine. Even in times of grief, joy is possible. The ego is the only part of us that knows surrender, is the part of us that discovers we are already surrendered. Joy, and the cultivation of joy, is egoless. Joy surges and bubbles up from the Divine Root. Joy has little to do with the psychological, the personality, nor even with the fulfillment of wishes and dreams. It is feedback, a wink, a hug, a contact point between us and God, the field of dreams inviting us to play.

A new view of what it means to be human is brewing in all fields of scientific study, and the most exciting to me involves legitimizing the human heart and its authentic power to create. Our troubled world is about to undergo a revolution in collective and individual identity, as we learn the power of the human heart, which, according to researchers, is magnetically about 5000 times stronger than the brain's magnetic field, and can be detected several feet away from the body. It is the heart that creates coherence in the field, in our lives, and in the Garden. We are waking up to the fact that all causes are interior and that the material world is all effect. We are realizing we're all connected 'in here' where heaven births earth. As a species, we are getting ready to bloom, and it is going to be glorious! Blooming happens from the deep center.

Try putting on a new world view when you wake up tomorrow morning. Instead of living in a Universe of random cause and effect generated by an impersonal Big Bang, as we have all been told, trying realizing you live in the garden of God's miraculous becoming, and that you and

your neighbors are a vital presence of The Big Bloom. The Universe isn't merely expanding, it is blooming. The design is inherently perfect, and the center of all influence, the heart, is Divine.

Thoughts and feelings give rise to form. Culturally, societally, educationally, economically and spiritually, as long as we believe in the Big Bang, a phrase loaded with violence and raw force, we will cultivate aggression, competition, judgement, manipulation, separation and isolation. All lies granted legitimacy by an ill-informed group mind. We wage war, hoard resources, and suffer confusion and a sickness of the soul. But, make the shift to the Big Bloom, and you can't help but discover a global heart, a cosmic heart, and therein, the heart of God beating within you. From there, you realize the divinity of all life, the interiority of all life. Brothers and sisters, we are awash in love growing and do not know it. Rumi called it an 'open secret.' Shift your concept of the Universe and your fundamental identity as a human being also shifts. You are first, last and always, Love Growing. You are powerful beyond measure, and the ecosystem that sustains you is spiritual, sacred, holy, infinite and eternal in nature. We sustain one another as surely as God sustains us. This is the mystical, hidden genius of the Golden Rule.

As a member of the Church of the Wildflowers, I affirm my presence, and yours, in the Holy of Holies, It is winter, so keep warm and rest well. Align yourself with the natural order of things. Pray that we will all learn to be the Love. Spring is coming!

Sandra Leicester

