

The Book of We Are

Another Testament of Our Divine Parent

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Who I Am

I was seventeen when God first spoke to me. No, I didn't hear a voice from the clouds, nor did I see a vision, but I heard God clearly nonetheless. I knew in that moment that God had a plan for my life. Most of the years since then I've struggled to live out that plan, and have done a pretty poor job of it. I've tried to drown out that voice many a time, but God has a way of just not going away, a stubborn persistence that she will not be denied. So how can I really refuse his desires? They're pretty simple after all: tell our story.

I've tried to do that in different ways over the years, in word and deed. I wish I could say that all of my deeds have been honorable, even the failures, but unfortunately I cannot. I am ashamed of a good number of them. It would be easy to say we all feel that way, but that would be a rationalization. I've done things that are evil and sinful, yet God still wants me to speak for it. I can't explain it, but I can't deny it either.

As for my words, I've written a fair amount, but most of it just feels like drivel. Perhaps that was a product of where I was in life at the time, or maybe I was just trying too hard. A lot of it comes from trying to define all of this: God, me, our relationship, life, etc. Society likes labels for things; God does not, at least not when he's talking to me.

I was raised Catholic. I will always be Catholic, at least by my definition. But the words that I share here are not Catholic, Christian, or any other organized religions. They belong to God, not humans.

Jesus is not savior or god to me; he's just my brother, and a misunderstood brother at that. My relationship with him is complicated, too much so to explain in a sentence or two. He is a part of who I am. But these words are not specifically about him. I'm not continuing his mission; God's given me my own job to do.

And that job is to share these words with whoever will listen. They are God's new revelation of love for his people. They are a call to recognize that we are all her family, whatever creed or truth we cling to. They are not an invitation to join a new community, but a plea to rebuild the one that we have ignored for too long.

Will you listen to the voice that I first heard so long ago? And if you hear it, what will you do with it?

June 11 & October 15, 2011

TRUTHS

*“If today you hear God’s voice,
harden not your heart.”
~ Psalm 95*

The First Revelation

CHAPTER ONE:

I was there in the beginning. I watched as you first rose on your legs and looked around at the world. I saw your eyes full of wonder and delight, and I was happy. I looked into your soul and I saw myself. I knew that you were alive and full of love. I knew that the cycle of life was beginning again, here on this small rock in the middle of the universe.

How can I begin to tell you how I felt on that day? You were not my first born, not even on this planet. You are not my youngest by any means either, and yet you are so eternally precious all the same. You are my child. More than that, you are myself. We are one, linked forever. What you feel, I feel. What I know, you know. We are love incarnate. We are life.

There are so many things I want to say to you. I have tried many times, through messengers, through your hearts, but the words never come out right. But how can they? What words can possibly do justice to all of this, to all I feel? But I will try. I cannot do otherwise. I love you so much, my precious children. You deserve to know and feel that love. So hear me now, in these words, but more importantly, in the voices in your heart.

CHAPTER TWO:

I know you wonder why. Why are you here? Why are you alive? You know the answer. You've seen it so many times, in the eyes of a lover or a child, watching the sun disappear and the moon rise. You've felt it on the wind. Say it with me now. Let the word form on your lips. Love.

It's that simple, isn't it. Love. And yet it's the hardest answer there is, because it isn't neat or easy. Love is hard. It can be as painful as it is joyful. It is confusing and complex. True love is more than romance or intimacy, more than marriage, friendship, or family. True love is forgiveness, acceptance, compassion, understanding, but you know all this. You can feel it in your soul. So why don't you accept it? Is it too hard for you, too difficult a path?

It's your path to take. It's who you are. Take heart. Be courageous. Live up to all you are. Be the love that you are.

CHAPTER THREE:

Do not fear death. It is only a door, a transformation. Listen to those among you who have seen its light. They are guides. Look into your hearts. Look at the world. Feel it. You know that death is not an ending. Dare to believe it. Dare to embrace the unknown.

Life is an unknown. What lies beyond your life is an unknown. Do not let this make you afraid. Embrace it with all your might.

CHAPTER FOUR:

Do not believe in me because you are told to. Believe in me because you feel me in your heart. Believe in me because you feel me surrounding you, holding you. Do not be afraid to embrace me. You can do it if you try, if you let yourself. There is no secret to it. Just let yourself feel life and love, and you will feel me.

Do not listen to the preachers and prophets because they tell you that you should. Do not follow a teacher because you are afraid to be on your own. If you believe the message to be true in your heart, then listen to the messenger. If not, reject him, whomever or whatever he may be.

Trust yourself. Trust your heart. She will not fail you. Believe in your own goodness, in your own loveliness. For that is what you are. Love and goodness brought to life. Turn your eyes inward, and you will see it is true.

CHAPTER FIVE:

But what of evil you ask. What of all the pain and suffering? What of all the senseless tragedies? What of war and destruction? How can this come from love? How can this come from love brought to life?

And yet what does evil bring, but goodness to fight it. When are you most heroic, most courageous, but at those times when life seems its most awful. Can you not see the balance in this, the perfection?

I know how frightening this seems to you, but look beyond the surface. Search your heart, and you will feel the balance of life, the necessity of all things, even those that seem horrid. All things have purpose and meaning. All are part of the beauty of life, no matter how ugly they may seem. Quiet your heart and you will feel this in your own life. Embrace what you know to be true, no matter how terrifying it may seem. Embrace the balance of life.

CHAPTER SIX:

How I long to share with you all the secrets and joys of the universe. I long for the day when you will join me in experiencing the wonder of all creation. I cannot wait to see the love and joy in your heart on that day.

There are so many things I want to show you. The beauty of so many other worlds, so many other beings. The glory of the birth of new life, new stars, new galaxies. You cannot begin to imagine the power and intensity of the feelings and emotions you will experience at such events. It will overwhelm you, just as you are relishing in it.

October 8, 1995

The Second Revelation

CHAPTER ONE:

In the beginning, I was. I do not remember a time when I was not. Why am I? I do not care to determine the answer. I am, that is enough.

I have never been alone. We have always been together, from the beginning. I cannot speak of them as separate from me. I and we are interchangeable. We suppose you could make comparisons to body parts, but it's more deliciously complex than that. We are, let it go at that, for now at least.

So why did you come to be? The simplest answer is why not? But I suppose that won't do. We needed to share ourselves. I'm not sure that answer is much better, but I will try to explain. You call it love. To us, it is simply our way of being. We do not know how to stop sharing ourselves. We must expand and give love. We cannot be any other way.

CHAPTER TWO:

We know you must approach us with logic, but do not get carried away by your ego. We cannot be quantified. We are not one, two, or three, or even 42. We are; we just are.

I am not saying that you should turn off your brain. Your mind is our mind. Just see and accept your limits. Delight in them, they will teach you great things.

CHAPTER THREE:

Inevitably, you will ask of evil. You see this in opposition to love. For us, there is simply our way of being, which is a path of great power. This power takes many forms, but it always produces what we desire.

From your perspective, you see love and hate, good and evil, right and wrong. I see what is and what will be, and what I see is love and good, always.

Think of the fire that destroys the forest. Through that destruction, something springs to life that was not there before. This is life, and it is always good.

CHAPTER FOUR:

I am present with you always. I take many forms, but it is always me. Sometimes I come to teach, but mostly I come to simply enjoy the wonder of our creation. There is so much to revel in, but it mostly goes unappreciated. Every element is a stroke of our brush upon the canvas of life. It all has meaning and purpose.

So why are you too busy to notice? Why are you so anguished? Life unfolds as it should. Stop and enjoy the process ... that is why you are here, that is why you were created.

CHAPTER FIVE:

Why do you babble so much about me? So much time and energy, for what purpose? What more is there to understand about us than love? You think too much and feel too little. You talk too much and love too little.

It is the curse of your consciousness. You can see enough to open the door, but not enough to find your way through it. Close your eyes and the path will be illuminated soon enough.

CHAPTER SIX:

But what of that which you fear most: death? Yes, the end will come, not just for you, but for this world as a whole. Do not be afraid, for this is a great joy. It is not an end, just part of the process of life. That is not just good, it is wonderful.

But of course you ask: "Where will I go?" Does it matter? To you, I suppose it does, but the answer will not satisfy what you want. You want a place, a destination. This we cannot give, because it is like trying to assign a place to us. We are everywhere and nowhere, every moment. Do you think it will be any different for you? Do you think it is any different for you?

But we talk too much. It makes it all seem so trivial. Just let us be who we are. Just let yourself be. It will be enough.

April 15, 2009 (1-3) & March 21, 2010 (4-6)

The Third Revelation

I am the Creator, the Giver. I am the Destroyer, the Taker.

There is no contradiction here, just the beauty of what is and what will be. One is not good. One is not bad. Both are life. Both are love. Both are glorious and wonderful. They are twins who dance, and dance, and dance. Endlessly creating, endlessly taking, always life, never death. For the dance never truly ends. It just goes on, and on, and on.

Yes, you are here for but a moment, just one song. All that you, your children, their children's children and all their kin will ever build are merely a song. All that this rock in the universe will ever experience is nothing more than a song. But what a song it is! And what a song it will be when all has been destroyed and something new has been given a chance to breathe.

Do not fret over how much time you have left. Enjoy the dance for however long it may play. Do not weep for all that will be lost. Rejoice in your brothers and sisters who will spring to life. Yes, you are my beloved child, but so are they. You are all mine, and none of you are ever lost. Forms come and go, but you are in my heart, you are my heart, and that is something that will never, ever stop beating.

I am the Creator. I am the Destroyer. I give you life. I will smash every petty fiefdom you manage to build. So stop building. There is only one kingdom, one realm, and it is past time that you gave them their due. Your family, your brothers and sisters are all that matter. They cry out for your love, not your politics or ideologies or even your grand theologies. They are the ones you hate, the ones you ignore, the ones right in front of your face. They are ones you kill, ones you eat, ones you walk upon. They are more numerous than you could possibly dream of. Love them, I say to you, love them. Listen to your heart, not your brain. Follow her guide and love them. Just love them.

Yes, I know you will fail. Yes, I know you will never stop chasing your petty fiefdoms. There is only so much you can see, only so much you can feel. That is ok. It is as it should be. You are but a dancer, and however awkward your moves, I will love every moment of it, as any good parent would. Just know that every

dance must come to an end, and that I am the Parent of many dancers. They are waiting their turn for the floor. And they shall have it.

I am the Creator. I am the Destroyer. I am the One. I AM.

July 18, 2017

The Fourth Revelation

To the Princes and Powers of this world. And to the People who enable their rule. We are your Parent. Hear me. Heed me.

We have watched you. We have listened to you. And this is what we have to say to you: Stop your weeping and wailing, and simply love one another.

Look at your churches. Such piety. For what? Why do you waste your time trying to dissect me? Do you really believe that I can be examined under your theological microscopes? You know what I want. You know what I ask of you. So stop arguing over me and just do it already.

Look at your political parties. Such righteousness. For what? Do you really believe that one more policy or one more piece of legislation is the key to peace and prosperity? Our kingdom is not the utopia of your dreams. You keep banging your heads on that wall and have nothing to show for it except corpses and ashes. It is time to let that one go and embrace the kingdom we have given you. Yes, it is messier than you would like, but it is far more joyful than the cesspool in which you keep wallowing.

Look at your tribes. Such loyalty. For what? Do you really believe that your enemies are not my children just as much as you are? Yes, you hurt one another. And maybe this time you really are the innocent, victimized party. So what? Get over it. If I can forgive you, then you can forgive them. If I can love you both, then you can find a way to love as well. Your differences are meaningless minutiae. You are family. Act like it.

Look at your corporations. Such industriousness. For what? How much stuff do you really need? Does any of it make your soul happier? Toys are toys. You can make them fancier or prettier or more expensive. You can add all the knobs and flashes and gizmos you want. But they are still merely toys. How long do they amuse you? How long until you need something new to ease the boredom? "But these are tools," you say. "They make life easier," you insist. Have they really made life better, or just different? Have they ended toil and drudgery, or just shifted them onto something else? You cannot escape the struggle of life, no matter how

many toys you invent. Nor can progress be measured using your sophisticated arithmetic. That is not your purpose for being here, and you know it.

Look at your armies, and not just the ones in uniform. Such might. For what? Has one more dead body ever truly solved anything? Show me the sacrificial lamb whose death will fix your problems, and I will slaughter them myself. You think you are wise. You think you are judicious. No, you are monkeys flailing at the wind. Is there any challenge, any difficulty for which you will not prescribe death as the proper cure? And yes, oh yes, your children have learned this lesson well, and they have embraced your mighty tool with boundless enthusiasm. Are you not proud of this result? Do you not enjoy this reaping of what you have sown? Then stop fussing over weapons designs and fretting about body counts, like a bunch of fools and cowards, and surrender your pathetic tool.

Look at your family, your brothers and sisters, the ones who look like you, and the ones who are stranger than your wildest imaginings. Such glory. Such beauty. They are the kingdom. They are my greatest gift. And your flood of sin and vice shall never destroy them. For you are something wonderful! So I tell you again, cease your Sturm und Drang, and choose to love one another.

Are our words too harsh for your tender hearts? We think not, for you are made of sturdier stuff than that. Trust us, we are the one who created you.

We have tried to guide you so many times, with the obvious mixed results. But you are our children, our beloved, ourselves. We know of what you are capable. We have seen it, even if only in glimpses or shadows. And so we must reach out and encourage you, whatever the outcome.

Yes, I am your Parent. Hear us. Heed us. I love you.

August 6, 2019

A Letter on Life

Look out your window. It doesn't matter which one. They all will do. What do you see? Trees, hills, grass, concrete, metal bars, trash, crap, and all the other debris of modern life? No, you see something wonderful, something magical and wondrous. You probably don't see it right now, but you will.

What you see is a gift. A gift more precious than anything, ANYTHING that has or ever will be imagined by human intelligence. You see our reason for existence, our life's work and mission: to be a song of praise about life itself. Our grand and glorious purpose on earth: simply to be here, right here, right now.

The greatest lie, the greatest scam of our lives is that this world was created for us, for our pleasure and enjoyment, for our dominance. What stupid, arrogant animals we are. We were created for it. We are simply the audience. What would true art be without an audience? Only in this work, the artist painted us inside the canvas. We are art and audience all at the same time. We are part of the grandest work ever created, ever dreamed.

You know it is true. You've felt it in your heart, in your soul. It's that little piece of you that gets caught up in the drama of life, the drama of nature, the drama of history. That feeling in the back of your throat that you are part of something that you can't quite grasp and yet you know is there. That just makes you want to cry because it's so big and bold and beautiful. That makes you want to scream out in joy and ecstasy, thanksgiving and praise for being a part of it.

In that moment, in that very moment, whether it lasts a second or a lifetime, you know that you have touched the face of the divine. Whatever name you want to call him or her or it, you have touched that face and you will never be the same. Nothing will ever be the same again. You may try to bury the image, pretend it doesn't exist, but there it will be, forever and ever. Always lingering, always waiting, always hoping.

You can pay all you want, pray all you want, but you can't make it go away, nor can you make it return. Only when you let down your guard and take it for free, only then will you find it again, feel it again.

All the rules that try to contain it and control it. All the rules and regulations to explain it and prove it. You know they don't mean a damn thing. They never have and they never will. They can never encapsulate that which cannot be encapsulated. They can never define that which refuses to be defined. Do not be fooled; do not be misled. Do not let arrogance and fear be your excuse to run from the truth, to hide your eyes from the divine.

It is not our destiny to do so. We were created for so much more. There is more love in every atom, every molecule than in all the romances ever conceived. We are the song of life, of love, of a mother and father who made us by sheer force of will.

So much of life is a paradox, but it is there that we find God the most. It is there, in the confusion and that mess that we must dwell. It is there that we experience true beauty, true joy. It is there that we can see something wonderful, something that sends a chill down our spine, and puts a smile on our face and a laugh in our heart, where we know with certainty who and what we are and why we are here in this time and place.

It is in that moment that we are at peace.

This is my gift to you. This is my story. This is who I am. I am a messenger of peace, of the true peace.

May 1, 2003

A Letter on Love

You do not know me, yet my voice rises in your heart. I am small and insignificant, yet I have seen the most wondrous of all sights. I am a greater sinner than you, yet I am commanded to speak by the one greater than all of us.

I am commanded to speak to you of love. A love you know, yet fail to live. A love you hear, yet one you long to ignore. A love that calls you to unity with all, a thought that terrifies your sense of being.

Look around you. Love surrounds you no matter where you are: in the rose garden and the trash heap, the wedding chamber and the grave, the sword and the plowshare. All are love, as all were created through love. The grand paradox of life is that all has purpose and that all is love.

We were created to give witness to the paradox. We are living brush strokes in the greatest art canvas ever imagined. We are called to embrace our role, to celebrate the paradox, to cherish it.

Yet you run from your destiny. You hide in the worlds you create for yourselves. You demand truth along your lines, your logic. Truth does not exist for you. You exist for it. Stop your arrogance and embrace the paradox of love.

I especially call out to you supposed followers of the Christ. Our brother Jesus did not die and rise for you to sit on a throne in judgment or to make him into an idol of your own imagination. His entire being calls out to us to witness the paradox, to embrace the unity of love.

Our brother calls us to love, love God, love your neighbor, love. How hard is that? What are you afraid of? If he was willing to die to love you, what's your excuse for not loving those you fail to understand, those you despise, those you hate? Hate and love, that delicious paradox again.

Our brother died and rose so that we might all be one people, one community. The words and ideas in your head cannot change the reality of your heart and soul. We are all one people, one community. You may not like that truth, but you cannot outrun it forever.

In the end, we will all die. We will all return to the artist's palette. We will all return as one. You are no more special than your enemy in that regard. Our creator

loves us all equally, saint and sinner. Our brother died and rose to welcome both to the banquet. Is this unfair? Ask the paradox.

You may not like my words, but too bad. This is why I was created, to give voice to the paradox, to trouble the comfortable, to challenge the all-knowing, to love the unlovable. How I long to return home to my father, my brother, yet I have work here first. This is our command to you: love, embrace the paradox, love.

June 9, 2006

A Letter on Family

You are my sibling. We are family. This is the essential truth of life. It is the only moral truth that really matters.

There is only one Creator. Our disagreements over the nature of that creator and how they accomplished it are meaningless. We come from a common source. We are children of the same parent. Like it or not, we are family.

Family is not religion, but something far more powerful. It is not an organization to join, but a fellowship to accept. It is who we are at our very core. Family is birth, death, and all the joy and tragedy in between. We may run from it at moments, but we will never truly be apart from it.

This family I speak of is something beyond what traditional religion is willing to accept. They place limits and conditions upon it. They turn it into a club. But the family I speak of is not their property. It belongs to the One who created us all, the One who loves us all.

It is past time that we recognize this family of the One, this fellowship of the One. They are tired of us ignoring, neglecting, and tarnishing it. This family is our Creator's greatest gift to us and we spit upon it constantly. Enough!

Family is about loving one another, not using one another. Family is about sharing all that we have, not hoarding it. We do not earn anything; it is all a gift from our Parent. Family is about supporting our siblings, not controlling them. Family is about hope, not fear.

It is time for us to embrace our family, even though we will fail, and probably fail miserably. This is another paradox of our Creator. We can never truly be one family is this life and yet they compel us to try, they demand that we make the attempt.

Embracing our family is not about creating a new religion, perfecting an old one, or abandoning them altogether. Many elements of traditional religion do honor the family. Take advantage of these and ignore the rest. This may upset the power dynamic of corporate religion, but so be it. God is tired of the status quo and the way it suffocates the family's love. Corporate religion turns siblings into enemies. It is time to find a new way.

Yes, this path will be terrifying. It is uncertain and full of risk. But we owe it to our family to embark upon the journey. It is who we are and why we were created: to love our family, all of it.

February 11, 2012

A Letter on Truth

Why? How many of our prayers boil down to that single word? Why am I here? Why do You let me suffer? Why must I die? Why? Why? Why?

We want answers, yes. But more importantly, we want to find a sense of order within the chaos. We want to know that the events of our lives, the events of history, have meaning and purpose. Because our great fear is that all of this is nothing more than a collection of random and capricious moments. Unfortunately, Truth is not our friend here.

For the vision we seek cannot be seen from our perspective. Your life is a single piece in an immeasurable jigsaw puzzle. Are you a key part of the image, or one of the multitude of background elements? Will your neighbors snap into place tomorrow, or in a thousand centuries? Is the ultimate point of your life a forgettable interaction that shapes someone else into that essential piece? You will never know, not now at least.

So if we cannot know, then our choice is whether or not to trust. Trust that our Parent did not create us by accident. Trust that our crosses will carry us where we need to go. Trust that lives cut too short, by virus or firearm, do have meaning and purpose. Trust that one day we will see the big picture and come to know what all the fuss was about.

And when that day dawns, the puzzle spread before us, and we finally grasp our place in this most magnificent tapestry, the very last thing on your mind will be “why”.

April 5, 2020

A Statement of Faith

I'm not sure what I'm here to do. All I am sure of is who I am and what I've seen.

What have I seen? To quote a favorite movie, "something wonderful!" I've been to the depths of creation and back. I've swam in the river of life and creation that makes up this beautiful universe, and I know what it's made of. It's made of us; our hopes and dreams; our tragedies and horrors; all of it.

This entire universe is alive. We are all one organism, one part of it all. The stars and planets are its organs. And we are its blood cells. Humans, animals, fish, all the countless species of "E.T.s" throughout the galaxy; we are the force that gives the universe life, lets it breathe and create. We come and go in our bodies and forms, live and die, but in the end we were always here and will always continue to be here, to exist, to live, because we are one with our mother and father, the universe.

I know this sounds very abstract and "out there." What does this matter to real life here on earth? What does it matter in reality? It matters in everything. It tells us who we are and why we are here. All the questions religion struggles to answer can be solved with this truth, because it is not a truth of the mind, but of the heart and soul. It is the great mystery taught by so many ancient cults. But you don't need to go through initiations to learn it; all you have to do is look at the world around you, let it soak into your soul, and feel it.

Empathy is the key. Empathy for people, animals, inanimate objects, everything. I've often been asked how I could love everyone. The reason is empathy. I can and have put myself into the heart and soul of every person on this planet, good and bad, and I know that they are me. I am no different than them. They are my brothers and sisters, my mother and father, my kin; all of them, and I cannot reject a single one of them, no matter what. They are my family, myself, and I love them. Yes, this is maddening sometimes and very overwhelming. It gets to be a bit much when you can empathize with a street sign for all its seen and touched. But this is who I am. My heart and soul lives in this world of empathy, and I never want to leave it.

I know this probably makes no sense to you; it often doesn't make sense to me. All I can tell you is what I feel. I've put myself into the hearts of killers and lovers; felt their emotions; and what I feel is the richness of humanity, the depths of our glory as living beings. That is something to celebrate and treasure. It is something to love.

Love is why we are here. Love is the glue that binds this universe together, that gives us life. It is the magic and mystery behind our existence. Love is our home, our true home. The great mystery religions believed humans were divine love cast down from heaven to walk upon the earth, and that our goal was to return to our home in the heavens. They got it partly right, we are divine love made into flesh, but this is our home as much as the heavens. This planet and all her sisters, in their beautiful physicality, they are our home too. Maybe our goal is to learn this fact. To love this home as we do the one among the stars. To love one another here as much as we do there.

Not a lofty goal or purpose, it's actually pretty simple, just to love. Just to be who we are, for no other reason than that it's who we are. No great cosmic justice, no heaven or hell. When we die our essence returns to the great river of life that drives this universe, no matter who we were or what we did. So why bother with this life, if it doesn't matter? Why bother with love? Because it is who we are. To deny love is to deny ourselves.

I know this still probably sounds like drivel. Just words on a page. That's because no words can ever adequately convey the thoughts and feelings of my heart. Nothing can ever describe the things I've seen with my heart. How do you describe how it feels to watch the birth of a star, or of an infant? How do you describe the feelings of the death of a human, or a worm, its body collapsing into the earth? How can you explain what a mountain feels like when it witnesses an eon of humanity before its slopes? What does it feel like to be a tree's leaves moving in the night wind? You cannot describe these things with words, they are things you can barely contain in your heart. They are feelings of joy and wonder unimaginable, and yet I've felt all of them. I feel them every day, every minute of my life, whether I like it or not.

This is who I am. Someone who has been touched, blessed, with feelings and memories of what this universe, this life is. It is not something I've read or made up. It is a part of me, as much as my arms and legs. It has given me so much. Yes, I am often confused and overwhelmed by it, but it has also brought me great peace. I have seen the face of the universe, what some would call god, and I know I am one and the same with it. I have no fear of death or life, because I know who I am and why I am here. I know where I came from and where I am going. I am. I just am.

November 28, 1999

REFLECTIONS

*“This is the time of fulfillment.
The kingdom of God is at hand.
Repent, and believe in the good news.”
~ Jesus of Nazareth*

A Lesson on the Pandemic

These are strange times indeed, all thanks to a microscopic virus. Panic and pushback; anxiety and boredom; our world upended on a daily hourly basis. And in the background, Sister Death lurks much closer than normal. We would be fools not to tremble with fear; and even bigger fools to ignore the opportunity which lies before us.

In making the latter statement, please do not mistake me for one of the many politicians and ideologues now drooling over the possibilities of enacting their agendas. Yes, those kinds of opportunities are present in a crisis, but so is the chance for transformation of a more profound sort: to see Truth as it really is and to live accordingly.

Our existence on this little rock in the universe is nothing short of extraordinary. We are surrounded by the most majestic acts of creation, from towering mountains to a grain of sand. Just look at the world that exists in the smallest garden! This is our family. This is the kingdom. We have the honor of being a part of something wonderful.

And most of the time, we ignore such truths in favor of the rat race we think of as reality. We spend our days fighting over petty fiefdoms; using and abusing our siblings as if they were commodities; believing ourselves to be the masters of destiny. And then a tiny virus comes along, and forces a choice: tighten the mask or open your eyes.

Unfortunately, most of us will choose door number one. We will place our hope in smart people and smart ideas, and the fleeting salvation that such faux saviors bring. Perhaps our trust will be rewarded with a cure and a return to normality. And perhaps we will find ourselves desolated, begging for smarter people and smarter ideas.

Would the ultimate outcome change if more of us chose door number two? Probably not. Suffering and death is our lot in life. So what is the point of looking? Nothing, to the gods of power and success that most of us worship. But to our Parent, to the One who painted us into this glorious canvas, Their vision is the supreme gift.

For that is what you will find behind door number two: the grace of beholding this life, this cosmos, your brothers and sisters, human and beyond, past, present, and future through the eyes of They who created it all in the first place. And once you look, you will never be able to turn away, even after the sheer beauty drives you insane.

Which is why most of us choose door number one. Who wants to love their enemies, let alone embrace the cross upon which they will nail you? Who wants to make servanthood their fondest dream, and to aspire to be a useless one at that? Who wants to be a failure at the very things to which your heart and soul are calling you to do?

Crazy, bonkers, nuts; and more True and Real than anyone cares to admit. Neither fame nor riches will prevent you from becoming worm food. The smart people with their smart ideas cannot take their power with them. And even our grand civilization will one day go the way of the dinosaurs. Suffering and death is our lot in life, all of us.

So if our fate is to suffer and die, let us do so with clear eyes and full hearts, living in the truth of who we are and why we are here, and eagerly welcoming grace in whatever form it might choose to manifest, even as a pandemic. Yes, ours is a strange Parent, who has gifted us with a strange home. Let us give thanks for both, always.

March 22, 2020

A Meditation for Christmas

I am the ageless one. I am the timeless one. I have been present before you were born, before I was born. I have laughed before time began. I will cry long after time has vanished.

I have lived a thousand lives and ten thousand within each of those. I live in every single person who has ever been, is, or will be. I am all of them and they are me. I am you and you are one beyond belief.

I am everything that ever happens. I am all things at once. What you see as dead, is that in which I live. What you think of as beyond life, is that in which I have found my best existence. There is nothing I do not touch.

Who am I? Who am I not? I am all and nothing. Existence and the void are the same to me. Life, the universe, just is and upon it all I do my dance.

I am love. I am life. I am God. I am myself. I am you. I am.

September 1, 1993

A Meditation for Ash Wednesday

Ashes. Where do these ashes come from? A long gone home in Baghdad? The ruins of an office tower in New York? The remains of a furnace at Auschwitz? A sample collected at Hiroshima? A long forgotten urn that used to sit on a mantelpiece? The palm fronds used to hail a long dead king? Does it really matter?

Does it really matter where they came from? They're here, that's all we know. What matters now is what we do with them, where we go with them from here. We can place them on our forehead and then wash them off in the morning; or we can place them deep within our hearts and say I WILL NOT FORGET. They can be the ruins where we all sit down, give up, and sleep forever; or they can be the nest of the phoenix, from which we will rise up, ever new, ever beautiful, ever alive. They can be symbols of all the evil and sin that we see in ourselves, all that we think we are not; or they can be symbols of our true beauty, our true glory, all that we can become.

The choice is ours. We can continue to long for the return of our long dead king; or we can open our eyes and see that he never left. We can continue to hope for a future paradise; or we can look and see the paradise within us. The vision and future lies before us; all we have to do is reach out and grab it.

Original: February 24, 1993; Revised: September 2004

A Meditation for the Triduum

Three days. Three holy days.

On the first day, we get to eat you. We get to sacrifice you and eat you. “Do this in memory of me.” And so we do, right down to the letter. But is that what you meant; is it what you said? A piece of bread and a sip of wine, is that really where you are? “Do this in memory of me. Live your life in my memory. Don’t forget what I taught you. Remember me, please.” This is what I hear in your voice and I won’t forget you brother. Oh I will eat the bread and drink the wine, but not in honor of an ancient sacrifice. I will eat and drink so that you do not remain trapped in objects of our hands but become one with my flesh, the flesh you created, the flesh you enliven with your love. My hands are yours, my lips are yours, my heart is yours, I am yours.

The next day, we get to stare at your dead body. Why is it that all we remember about you is death and resurrection, miracles and commands? Where is your laughter? Where is your anger? Where is the way your eyes sparkled when you talked? What about the times you were sick or drunk or silly or stupid or spectacular? What about when you were alive? You weren’t just some sacrificial lamb. You were one of us. That is how I will remember you brother, the passion, the life, the man. You are one of us.

Then the last day; oh joy, you rose from the dead. Yippee, we all get to live happily ever after in the magic kingdom. So let’s put on our best outfit and look pretty and sing, and then forget about it all after ham and chocolate bunnies. After all, you rose, so we’re saved ... right? But maybe you rose not to give us heaven, but to give us back our earth. Life is lived here and now, not in some cloud-world we go to after we die. Perhaps you rose to show us the primacy of love, that nothing, not even death itself, can stop it. And maybe you meant to show us the kingdom we long for is right in front of our faces. You rose ... I will rise with you my brother.

Three days. Three holy days.

July 5, 2008

A Lesson for Easter

Death and resurrection: The sacred path by which our Parent bestows mercy upon their creation. One thing is destroyed, and something else rises in its place. The extinction of the dinosaurs. The great flood of Noah. Countless plagues, wars, and natural disasters. A dance of destruction and rebirth, over and over again, never to end.

And it does no good to fear one and love the other; they are a package deal. Everything dies: the birds in the sky and the lilies of the field; prey and predators; you, me, and the works of human hands. It all comes tumbling down eventually, to become foundation or fertilizer for the next thing. We have found the mythical phoenix, and it is us!

So what shall rise from our present plague? The politicians and pundits are quick with a prediction, or at least a fantasy. The truth, however, is that we cannot know from this end of the story. Those twists and turns that lie in store for our children are a mystery. And let us be glad, for mercy is ever so delightful when it takes on a surprising form.

Now, none of this absolves us of our duty to love our neighbors as best we can. Yes, life always finds a way, to emerge and to thrive. But it matters whether that happens with our assistance, or in spite of our opposition. Do you strive for the common good, or just your own? Be honest, for our Parent already knows, and so do your siblings.

At the end of the day, divine will is in the open for all to see, leaving us with a choice: Do we accept it and cooperate with its unfolding? Or do we rage against it, living out a pipe dream of human mastery of the universe? Either way, death will come, and resurrection will follow. May your heart come to recognize the wondrous mercy of both.

April 19, 2020

A Meditation for Earth Day

Never, ever ours,
this little rock
amongst the stars.

Yet still,
we huff and puff,
and stake our claims.

Who arrived first?
Who signed the deed?
Who has the power now?

Not human feet,
nor human hands,
nor even human minds.

How many came before?
And how many shall follow?
All for the mere blink of an eye.

Were they too
arrogant, reckless fools,
with presumptions of mastery?

Did they too
fail to truly comprehend
the grace bequeathed unto them?

Not owners,
just lucky tenants,
of a Landlord most divine.

No, never ours,
O little rock
amongst the stars.

September 13, 2020

A Lesson for Thanksgiving Day

Let us be thankful today for all the moments of our lives, but most especially for those that we dearly wish to forget. The cringe-worthy ones which bring deep shame and solemn regret. The suffering ones that produce tears of hot anger and cold grief. The ones we fantasize about doing over, if we could go back in time. Life is a tapestry, and for better or worse, these experiences are part of the artwork that is you. How many threads could you pull out without unraveling everything you have come to be? We learn from failure and triumph alike. Even sin provides opportunities for hope and salvation.

Now, I am not saying that sin is good or that failure should be courted. But both are part of the human condition and they will inevitably arrive on your doorstep. Do not fear them. Do not fear the truths they will set before you. Shame can help keep you honest. Suffering can show you what matters and what does not. I have had plenty of experience with both and they have taught me wonderful things, though I cannot say that I look forward to future lessons. But I trust that when those lessons come, it will be because our Parent has something valuable to teach me. And I am thankful for such grace.

November 26, 2015

A Prayer for Thanksgiving Day

As I look out upon the course of my life, I see you my God. I look upon the journey I have made so far; the mountains I have climbed, and the valleys I have traveled; the oceans and deserts I have crossed; the people I have traveled with. In each you are there, though you may be hard to see sometimes. You guide me, guard me, teach me, and above all love me. Thank you so much my friend.

So now, as I face the road I have yet to travel, I look to you. There is so much uncertainty in the future. I can never know the twists and turns in store for me. But in all the joy, sadness, love, and pain that I will experience, I know that you will be there. Help me to always see you in the events and people of my life. Help me to remember that you are by my side throughout it all.

I am so fragile, imperfect, human, and I need you so. I may sometimes forget to say it, but know always that I love you. Thank you for loving me my friend.

November 7, 1992

A Meditation on Creation

Lie still, close your eyes, let the wind carry you away, and I will take you on a tour. Where shall we start? Here, close by, or on a planet far away. Does it matter? No, they are all home to us.

Be still, stop your thinking mind, and open your feeling heart. Do not think of this life, feel it. Become a tree and feel the kiss of the night wind on your leaves. Become a mountain and feel yourself grow and shift with the movements of the earth. Let yourself fly like an eagle to the hillcrest and change there to a wolf. Howl at the moon for all the joy that life brings, then become human again. Gaze out on a sea of lights, an ocean of humanity. Feel their tears and laughter. Love and hate with them. Fall in love with all of them, especially those you fear.

Let humanity sweep you away into the ribbon of energy that is creation. Feel the beauty of all humanity, all life that has come before you. Dance with them all, those you admire and those you despise. Feel their love, triumph, and shame, and make it your own. This is our gift.

Let yourself drown in the river of life, until you have become it. Let yourself become one with all humanity, until you cannot distinguish yourself from it. Become your enemy and love who you become.

Let the dance of life carry you far away from this corner of the universe. Journey to planets and places unimaginable. Watch a star be born, then turn around and watch another die. Touch a planet and give it the spark of life. Let yourself be the creator, just as you were created. Forge your children of the stars into a sword of love on the anvil of tragedy and sorrow. Let them fall horribly, knowing that they must learn to run on their own.

Now follow me back to our little planet. See it for what it is: a jeweled marble in the playground of the universe. Watch it spin wildly for eons, until our sun dozes to sleep, and we fade into the night. Laugh at the divine humor of it. Life and death on the grandest scale.

December 24, 2001

A Meditation on Death

When I die, I don't want to be put in a box and buried in the ground. Burn me up. Incinerate me. Make me into ashes.

I don't want you to make a memorial for me. No marble markers; no bronze plaques. Just take my ashes and toss them to the wind. Let them be scattered to the ends of the earth and beyond into the farthest reaches of the universe. Let life be my memorial.

Please don't cry and mourn over me. Don't think of me as having left. Don't think of me as having gone to some realm of the dead. I will not be there if I can help it. Think of me in the life you see around you. Think of me in the glory of creation. This is where I want to be.

Think of my ashes all around you. In the air you breathe, the water you drink, in all you see before you. I will be there. I will be with you in all you do. I will share in all your triumphs and failures, all your joy and sadness. For all this is part of life and I will be there.

And when humanity is dead and gone, and all the memorials have crumbled, and another species has emerged to claim the glory of life on this planet, we will all be ashes. We will all be there, still dancing in the sun. And at the end of time, when the universe reclaims this planet and all her sisters, we will be there in the dust and debris, to ride the stillness of space. And when the time is right, and this world re-emerges and life begins again, we will be back, to go right on dancing and rejoicing. We will live in life itself.

February 24, 1993

A Prayer of Dedication

To you, Oh my Lord,

I dedicate myself this day and every day. In all I do and in all I say. Everything I create, I create for you. And in everything, I strive to create love, for that is what you are.

Watch over me this day. Guard me and guide me, but above all, be with me. Because no matter what befalls me, that is my true treasure, my true happiness, my true life. With you, I know that I am safe, because with you, I am with love.

Amen.

January 4, 1992

A Lesson on Faith

Human beings have always struggled with spiritual beliefs, as the gospel episode of “Doubting Thomas” makes clear. Our analytical minds want to know and understand the mysteries of the universe. The problem is that the mysteries of ultimate truth do not lie in the realm of rationality. Logic can take you to the edge of the chasm of belief, but cannot build a bridge across it. The leap of faith is an act of mystical courage. You either make that leap or you don’t.

Unfortunately, mysticism is something we have a hard time dealing with. It is chaotic, paradoxical, and just plain messy. While we strive for knowledge, it calls upon us to recognize. When we want to understand, it tells us to experience. We want clarity; mysticism looks like pure and deliberate confusion. The truth we hide from is that God, life, and love are exactly like that: gloriously and beautifully confusing.

Acknowledging this reality does not mean abandoning the pursuit of knowledge. Faith is not about settling for something of lesser intelligence. It is about acknowledging that truth is not the same as scientific or historical fact. Faith is an act of humility.

Faith also demands trust, something that pushes all the skeptical buttons of modern society. We do not trust institutional authority, so why should we listen to organized religion? We cannot help but see the death, destruction, and evil that has come from corporate religion. Surely that must indicate that anything religion says is illegitimate? If that is our standard, however, what ideology or belief system would ever pass muster? Our failure to live out faith properly speaks to human imperfection, not the falseness of the faith itself.

Faith cannot be proven true or false, as much as we might want it to be. Intuition is the key. Intuition is the voice of God within us. It speaks of what is right or wrong about a particular belief system, of what is true and trustworthy. It tells us where to find God. No amount of evidence can ever replace our intuition.

Perhaps it is inevitable that our society views faith and reason as opposing sides in the culture wars. There are plenty of individuals and groups happy to exploit this faux conflict for power and profit. We have allowed ourselves to be tricked into

believing that easy formulas illuminate truth, when in fact they are nothing more than security blankets. It is time to wake up.

April 29, 2012

A Meditation on Friendship

We met at a crossroads, you and I, my friend. Both of us walking down our separate paths, and then smack!, we ran into each other. So we decided to walk together for a while.

Well, it took us some time to get the pace right, but we found it, more or less. Such adventures we had. The broad, green valleys and long, hot deserts we crossed. The mountains and hills we climbed, and the plateaus we rose to. The rivers and streams we forded. The sunsets, and sunrises.

And the people we met along the way. Those that joined us for part of our journey, and those we met only in passing. How wonderful it was to know them, to experience them, to be part of their journey.

Yes, the road was often rough, often strewn with boulders, but somehow we kept each other going. Through all the tears and anger, we kept on laughing and smiling. Through all the sadness, we always found the joy. Through all the pain, we always found the love.

So now, we find ourselves at a new crossroads, you to go one way, and I another. Maybe our paths will cross again; maybe they won't be too far apart; maybe not. And yet you will still travel with me and I with you, because in our hearts, in our spirits, we have become one. Such was the gift of this journey; such is the gift of love.

So travel well my friend. Know that I am with you always.

I love you.

May 11, 1993

A Lesson on Hope

The tomb is open and here is your hope: “Seek what is above.”

Many will call this escapism. They find hope in the power of smart people and smart ideas. They place their faith in utopian promises of transforming our world into something better, something beautiful. But such dreams, noble as they might be, always end in death and despair. For they are human schemes, and such things always come with the human baggage of greed, arrogance, and brutality.

Which is why our Parent asks us to “think of what is above, not of what is on earth.” This is not a call to deny the reality of the culture of death, but an invitation to see that reality for what it truly is. Things we perceive as ugly or futile are actually steps in a grand plan that might take decades or centuries to come to fruition. God always produces what they desire, which is why love always wins.

Yes, accepting this invitation brings great challenges, but not an impossible task. And once you gaze through your Parent’s eyes, you will never want to look away. You will come to know that your purpose is not to fix the world, but to weave your small piece in the grand tapestry of life. In short, you will find something wonderful, something that makes every day worthy of rejoicing and being glad.

So once more, here is your hope: “Seek what is above.” Will you take it?

April 21, 2019 (Easter Sunday)

A Lesson on the Kingdom

“When our Lord saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he had sat down, he whipped out his smartphone and began to tweet at them, saying: ‘Shame on them who ...’”

How many of us long for that version of “The Sermon on the Mount”? How many of us look around at our brothers and sisters and struggle to find any worthy of the label “blessed”? How many of us prefer our petty little tribes to the strange and confusing beauty of our Parent’s family?

There is a certain smallness to American culture and politics at our present moment in time. Everyone is stuck in their corners, bleating about this wound or that slight; each tribe attempting to outshout the others, but none succeeding. It is more tiresome than I can possibly describe, especially standing in comparison to that which we celebrate today: the Communion of Saints, aka our family.

In saying such things, I do not deny the reality of injustice and sin. But the Beatitudes are creatures of the kingdom, not the world. They are meant to be lived in the kingdom, not the world. Yes, this realm exists in the here and now, but not as the utopia of any of our plethora of isms. It cannot be found via human ingenuity, nor built by human institutions. The kingdom is a choice of heart and soul, a path to be trod each and every day; not the easiest to be sure, but the only road worth traveling.

So how does one get there? Choose the simplicity of loving your neighbor. Choose the nobility of doing good to those who hate you. Choose the truth that no amount of “progress” in technology or ideology can ever transform the world into something other than an unholy mess. And despite the latter, choose the honor of bearing grace to your siblings, starting with the most sinful and unworthy.

This is a vision made tangible in a set of tapestries hanging in the cathedral of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles: a true communion of saints, ancient and new, famous and ordinary, a rainbow of diversity, all reveling in God's light and love with absolutely no regard for “official” saintly status.

This is the kingdom. This is our family. This is who we can be, if we so choose. It is perhaps a foolish vision. But if thus, then let me be an eternal fool, for it is a vision blessedly wonderful.

November 1, 2017 (All Saints Day)

A Meditation on Knowledge

Original what:
Sin? Consciousness? Grace?

Myth enshrining memory,
A moment in evolution
and we switch
from Ape to Man
from This to That
from Feeling to Seeing

Sublime visions
of something wonderful
for the brave and the foolish
Oh, but the works of human hands
Schemes and dreams to make heads spin
Faster! Higher! Stronger!

So many lessons learned
So much wisdom forgotten and ignored
Are we better, worse, or just different than
what came before?
Two roads diverged on that ancient savanna
and we chose the double-edged sword
which clears the undergrowth, while
discombobulating the soul

O blessed day!
O wretched day!
Paradise lost, and found
by those brave or foolish enough
to awaken the heart
and be

Father Adam, pray for us!
Mother Eve, pray for us!

April 4, 2021

A Lesson on Revelation

What makes me so special that God chose to speak with me? The truth is that I am not special, just willing to listen. God talks to all of us, every moment of the day, but few actually listen. Traditional religion might point to the conditions of modern life as the prime explanation for this. I say that religion is as much the problem as the solution. Traditional religion is a creature of rules and systems. As much as they might talk about following your conscience, they also expect that conscience to conform to their creeds and customs. After all, if this was something you could do on your own, how could they earn a living? What need would society have to pay for all the institutions to discern God's will? But we cannot let their fears about losing control or losing their livelihoods stop us from claiming what is really our birthright. God is our Parent. We don't need a middleman to talk to our Parent.

So does this mean that whatever feels good is God's voice? Trust me, most of what God tells me doesn't make me feel good, and it certainly hasn't made my life easier. The saying that ignorance is bliss has a lot of truth to it. And yet everything that God says brings me joy, because that is the nature of truth: joy. I know that where God is leading me is a place of love, goodness, and truth, even if it is difficult and costly. Perhaps the paradoxes of life are God's purest language.

Our ability to communicate with God does not depend on the amount of talismans we possess or the amount of time we spend in worship. You cannot meditate your way into the mind of God. What is required is an openness and desire to see. A willingness to look for God's words, especially in the places that we really do not want to look. This isn't to say that the former activities are useless. They are tools that may advance our readiness to hear, but they are not the means of communication itself. Again, God is our Parent, not our overlord. There is no need for ritual and formality. We can speak with them plainly and simply.

My purpose in life, as little as I have discerned of it, is to encourage others to speak to God in such a direct manner. It is not just the mystics who are called to have this kind of relationship with God; it is all of us. We are all that special.

February 19, 2012

JOURNALS

*“Who are You, my dearest God?
And what am I but Your useless servant.”
~ Francis of Assisi*

Knowing You

My God, do I dare say I know you? I can feel how you feel, and I am more amazed and in awe of you than ever before. I think I see how you love. I've heard the term unconditional love before, but now I know what it means. It means loving in spite of all odds. Loving when none is returned. Loving knowing that it will not change the final outcome. Loving in spite of the pain of rejection. Rising above that pain to keep loving forever, no matter the consequences. It means always leaving the door open, even if only one ever enters, because the one that does enter makes it all worthwhile. It means you sent your Son yourself to come open the door for us, knowing that we wouldn't enter, ever. Knowing that there would still be pain and misery forever, because the hope of love is so strong that if only one person rises above the pain to love, it is all worth it. It is doing all of this knowing that hatred will never die, will never be extinguished. It can't be, for what is love without it? Merely blind slavery. Unless the pain is there it can't be true love. The choice must always be there.

There will never be the "Kingdom of God," the land with total peace and justice, for such a land is a land without love. Love must admit the possibility, no the certainty of injustice, for only through this pain is love. And so love is an eternity of pain, but a pain of joy and hope. I once wondered how eternity could be. Now I wonder how it couldn't be.

I love you truly my God. Dare I say I share some of your pain? I have a feeling I have only begun my experiences. Undoubtedly I will share much more of it with you, but for now I share what I can and I love you as much as I can. I open the door within myself, and love all despite the pain and hopelessness, for here is true joy, hope, and happiness.

January 13, 1992

A Soul's Hymn

Who are you? What are you? Where are you?

How can I answer these questions? How can I dare? Yet the answers lie before me. They lie inside of me, deep in my soul, waiting to be awakened. They are awakening. I can feel you, nearer and nearer, inside of me, growing and growing. Filling me, consuming me. Taking me into you. I can feel myself coming closer to you, becoming one with you. I can feel you bursting from me. Joining me and flowing from me. Not great, yet. Just a trickle for now, but I can feel the pressure building, the flood about to be let loose.

I can feel your power, your glory, your beauty. It consumes me and transforms me. I feel you in the strains of a song, in the cold of the mist, the warmth of the sun, the freshness of the breeze, the blanket of the night, the glory of the day, the beauty of the sky, the writing in the clouds, the faces of your children.

I stand on the mountaintop. Close to you, exposed to you. The clouds billowing, the night consuming. I feel you close. The wind enveloping my body, caressing my face. I feel you wrapping yourself around me, holding me close, pulling me into you, taking me up into you, with you. Remaking me, transforming me, filling me, sending me as the wind for the world.

I see you before me. Your beauty and glory. Your love. You have been hidden from the world, but you are about to shine forth. You are about to let the light shine for all to see. You are my lover, my friend, my God, my father, my mother, my brother, my all.

You are always there, always near. So who are you? Does it matter? You are all. You are everyone and everything. You are Christ. You are the Spirit. But you are more. You are life. You are love. You are us. You are me. You are everyone. My precious, precious friend. How great you are, how loving you are. I want to reach out and hold you. I have, I do, I will always.

You have been so much to the world. So many views, so many opinions. So much fighting. But you are you. Soon all will see, maybe. It does not matter, for even if all don't see, you will still be there, will still love all. You will still be the hand that caresses my face in the wind on the top of the mountain in the night.

I will sing your praises. I will be your voice. I will be your prophet. I will be whoever you wish me to be. I will be the child to awaken the rest of your children. That is why you have sent me, isn't it? I can feel you inside me, ready to burst forth to all. Give me the strength and courage to accept this gift, this task you give me. Help me in my struggle. Let me take on this role you desire to give me. Let it be mine if you so will. Not my will, but yours be done. No matter the cost to me. I am yours. I will heed your call my God, my friend. I hear your voice and I will follow. Thank you. I love you.

May 18, 1992

My God

I call you God, but who are you really? You are not what most people would call God. You are not the infinite being in the clouds with control of our lives. You are not a being at all. You are not a force or set of cosmic laws either. And yet all these are part of it.

So who are you anyway? You are the entire universe, all things. You are all beings, human and non, here and throughout the cosmos. You are all the forces ever imagined and beyond. You control life and yet you are life itself. You are everything, from the smallest molecule to the largest star. You are me and I am you.

But what kind of sense does this make? None. Maybe that's the point. Life isn't supposed to make sense, it just is; and yet when you believe that, it all make perfect sense. When life and God lose all control, the balance and perfection of it all is made clear: life, death; love, hate; good, evil. None of it makes sense and yet it does, all of it becomes necessary, all of it becomes one.

That's who you are to me, my God. You are one. You are life. You are love. You are all the things that dance through the universe. It doesn't even make sense to call you God, since there really is no you, I, or they. We are all one; we are all you. Most people would call this crazy nonsense or maybe even blasphemy, but I know what I've felt, what I've experienced, and I can't deny it. But hey, it's only my opinion, right?

March 16, 1994

The Wind

Sometimes, I lay still at night and feel the wind blow across my face through the window. I especially love it when the wind's cool and crisp. It smells so fresh. All I can do is just lie back and let it soak into my heart and soul. It pierces me to the bone and brings back memories of a place I've never seen with my eyes, but is more real than anything else I know.

Some people might call it heaven. I just think of it as home. How can I possibly describe the images that I have and feel? It feels like you're standing still and the whole world is rushing by at mach one. Your adrenaline is pumping so hard you have to scream out for joy and laugh hysterically like an insane person. It's a feeling of such intensity, that it seems like you have an orchestra in your head, building up to a grand crescendo, then crashing down like a tsunami, washing away every impurity in your soul and leaving you awestruck as if seeing for the first time.

The prophets of the Bible had it so wrong. They were so afraid of god, so afraid of looking upon god. They should have been dancing with joy and telling everyone to do it. One gaze into the face of god changes your whole outlook on life; opens doors to places in this universe unimaginable before. It is such a beautiful, wonderful thing, free for the taking, but we've been polluted by so many rules and fears into dreading it or diluting it. No teachers, no classes, no rituals, no incense, no pyramids needed; just desire to see.

But does anyone really care? Will anyone care? Why do I feel like my vision is pointless and useless? Maybe it's too simple, and who wants something for free?

Right now, I just want the wind to carry me out to the desert. No people or societies, nothing to clutter and confuse my heart. Just silence and peace. Moonlight and starlight, cool sand and soft breezes. Peace, sweet glorious peace. Stillness and beauty. Above all, peace.

December 9, 1999

Why Am I Still A Catholic?

Why do I continue to identify myself as a Catholic? The revelation I am called to share does not always mesh with the Church's doctrines and teachings. In so many ways, it would be sensible to part company. But there is something that continues to draw me to the Church. I know that God still desires for our paths to be intertwined.

Jesus is my role model in this task of reconciling the seemingly incompatible. He was born a Jew, lived as a Jew, and died a Jew. His purpose was to serve God and he did this as a Jew. Yes, his words and actions were often unorthodox for the Judaism of his time, but he never claimed to be anything other than a faithful Jew. Hence all of the stupid bumper stickers proclaiming "My boss is a Jewish carpenter."

And yet, Jesus' followers say that he intended to create a new religion separate from Judaism. While this might seem like wishful thinking on the Church's part, it is also easy to recognize Christianity as the logical extension of Jesus' teachings. Even if you deny him the omniscience of God, it is hard to believe that Jesus had no clue as to the path his apostles would take after his death.

So for better or worse, Christianity, not Judaism, is the family that Jesus left behind. And while none of the branches of the Christian family are the True Church, the one that most aspires to embrace God's family in all of its messy, chaotic, and thoroughly catholic glory, is the Catholic Church. Yes, I was born and raised in the faith, but this assessment is not the result of blind allegiance. Like most cradle Catholics, I am all too aware of the Church's many disappointments. Despite these flaws, however, it is still the best manifestation of God's family that I know.

And the place where I see this most clearly is the Communion of Saints, a teaching that insists that wherever we are going, we can only get there by traveling together. This truth is also the subject for a set of tapestries that hang in the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels here in Los Angeles. What I love about them is that they depict the saints mingled together, ancient and new, famous and ordinary, regardless of "official" status. These tapestries, and the Truth they depict,

tell me that the Catholic Church is something far greater and grander than an organization run by the Vatican.

Catholicism is the family that chose me in baptism, and that I chose in confirmation. The Church may be a dysfunctional family, but abandoning it won't make it any better, nor would doing so sever its ties to my mind, heart, and soul.

Again, I look to Jesus, who never abandoned his Jewishness. It was essential to his faithfulness to God's family, and yet he birthed something that is not Judaism. I cannot begin to imagine what the revelation I am called to share will produce. But I know that if I am to remain faithful to the family, I must continue to embrace my Catholicity.

June 3, 2012

No Escape

I open my eyes and I see you. In cloud, mountain, tree, and sibling, there you are.

I close my eyes and I hear you. From wind, bird, piano, and sibling, there you are.

I cannot escape you; but why would I want to?

You are beauty, glory, joy, ecstasy, and the shiver up my spine when I feel your touch upon my soul. You are something truly wonderful.

A word like love can never fully contain your essence, but it will have to do, for you are warm and sublimely wonderful love.

You radiate in birth and death, in moans of pleasure and cries of agony, in our happiness and our pain, in the hidden moments of beings we are too proud and stubborn to truly see. You radiate from every particle of creation; for every one of them is an act of love.

I feel this every moment and it overwhelms me. It pushes me to the brink of sanity and I am not sure I want to step back.

I cannot escape you, and I do not want to.

I know you want me to tell your story, our story, my story, but I feel so inadequate. I am small and foolish. I have, do, and will fail to love. My words are trivial. I fear that I will fail to convey the you that reveals themselves to me.

But you do not care, do you? You do not want success, only effort. There is no ultimate triumph in creation, just more life and more love.

So you call and reveal, sharing your love, your being, with no expectation of response. But how could I not respond? You flood my soul and I cannot possibly contain it within.

I cannot escape you, and I never will. Thank you my friend.

October 21, 2012

Open My Lips

“O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.” It sounds like a simple request, but in truth it is my great and constant struggle. Plentiful are the words rattling around inside my brain. So few escape my lips, however. What is it that keeps my mouth closed: fear or righteousness?

“O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.” We live in a target rich environment for a prophet. I feel such a tremendous urgency to speak out on behalf of my brothers and sisters. But does this pressure arise from my having words they need to hear, or am I more worried about missing out on my fifteen minutes of fame? Whose kingdom do my words seek to serve and praise?

“O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.” Why do you delight in saying no to me? Start a new religion? No. Reform an old religion? No. Sell some books? No. Do one little miracle, just one to get some attention? NO! What is the point of opening my lips? No one cares to listen. Am I meant to babble into the void, leaving a trail of words for someone not yet born to follow?

“O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.” Am I crazy to delight in a “yes” to that last question? I remain on Twitter mostly for the photos taken by the residents of the International Space Station. They remind me of the difference between the great and the trivial; and that my Parent plays a very, very long game. I am a fool taking his at-bat. Let Them worry about the score.

“O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.” This shall be my mantra for these next forty days. I do not expect them to be anything other than the great and constant struggle of the many preceding ones. But I do pray that they bring a renewed love for my wonderful cross.

“O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.”

February 14, 2018 (Ash Wednesday)