

Friends of Silence

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"Is there enough Silence for the Word to be heard?"



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Dear Friends ~ My window looks over the neighbors' rooftops to the poplars, box elders, oaks, pines of the woods that rim our village. The morning is gray, slashed with bitter rain. The harsh winds of a March storm toss the tree limbs hither and yon. Their tender buds must be clinging with all their tiny might. The chaotic flailing mirrors these times and the thrashing of both culture and nature. It feels, it is, dire. But the storm is not everything. Though the gusts swirl mightily, there is within each of us a holy flame that steadfastly illumines our belonging to the living world, our

place in a vast and tenacious communion of all that is Holy. In this mothering warmth, we are each wrapped in the loving embrace of the Divine. Here we find Sophia, Holy Wisdom, in which to steady ourselves against the storm. Sophia is being called forth by our collective longing, by our gathered yearning, by what we have carried in our bones all along. The poets and soul-criers know that life protects and renews itself in astonishing ways, and that fierce and buffeting winds will kindle the ember and awaken the fiery resources of the human soul. Sophia's time has come. ~ Lindsay

Dear friends, these are tumultuous and complicated times, in which "despair and possibility dance in the same holy darkness". This is when the Friends of Silence Letter becomes essential, quietly reminding you that the storm is not everything. The Letter is made possible solely by your gifts. Please keep this necessary resource coming to you and all whom you love and use the enclosed envelope to send what you can.

With gratitude, Lindsay



**Let this darkness be a bell tower and you the bell.
As you ring, what batters you
becomes your strength**

*~ Rainer Maria Rilke from "Sonnets to Orpheus II, 29"
translated by Joanna Macy in A YEAR WITH RILKE*

I now find myself asking if possibly this is the time, the age, for Sophia:....a God image capable of moving with humanity into the next evolutionary era when the universe will be experienced...as an intimate, interconnected, and diverse communion of subjects...

Divine Sophia defies the supremacy of linear logic and rational analysis, she rejects the pyramid of hierarchical dualism by resisting our dichotomies....and withstanding the compartmentalized, objective mind-set to which we have been educated. In a word, Wisdom undermines the need to control life.

...when Divine Sophia, the Beloved, the Word "awakens"...then absolutely everyone and everything in the universe is experienced as indissolubly and harmoniously interconnected and part of an emerging Mystery that binds everything together.

~ Constance Fitzgerald, "Transformation in Wisdom" in CARMEL AND CONTEMPLATION

She is Divine Wisdom. She watches over all people and all things in heaven and on earth, being of such radiance and brightness that, for the measureless splendor that shines in Her, you cannot gaze on Her face or on the garments She wears....She is like the Sun, which none can contemplate in its blazing face or in the glorious garment of its rays. For She is with all and in all, and of beauty so great in Her mystery that no one could know how sweetly She bears with people, and with what unfathomable mercy She spares them.

~ Hildegard of Bingen

Beloved Earth, ancient dreamer, keeper of bones and stories—

We, breath in your body, stardust in your veins,

Come before you with hearts both broken and burning.

In this time of the Great Turning,

When despair and possibility dance in the same holy darkness—

May we offer ourselves as imaginal cells in your metamorphosis...

May we be scattered like spores,

Each carrying a fraction of the future,

Each vital, each necessary, each aflame

With particular purpose...

May our courage rise to match the magnitude of these times.

~ Lynne MacNeil, "A Wild Prayer for the World"

Memo to Self: Stay close to nature, and to your own creaturely instincts. It's a cold, hard winter out there, but underneath the ice and snow, nature is preparing for an uprising. There's underground work to be done for and with your family and friends, your community, your country, your soul.

~ Parker Palmer



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**In every moment,
in every event of your life
Wisdom
is whispering to you
exactly what you need to hear and know.**

**Who can ever explain this miracle?
It simply is.**

**Listen
and you will discover it
every passing moment.**

**Listen
and your whole life
will become a conversation
in thought and act between you and
Wisdom,
directly,
wordlessly,
now,
and always.**

~ Rumi in *LIGHT UPON LIGHT*

Over the past centuries, the being of Sophia, or feminine Divine Wisdom, has been emerging from the mists of ancient history...to become a sign and mystery of our times.... wherever we turn, we see traces of her coming—as if tracking the fringes of her mantle as it brushed aside the tangled, sclerotic cobwebs of centuries of cerebration. As she draws near, much that was forgotten is reentering consciousness, not only as memory but also from the future, *as possibility*. It demands that we rethink who we are, whence we have come, and whither we are going.

~ Christopher Bamford in the introduction to *ISIS MARY SOPHIA*

Mystical wisdom derives from an ardent desire to abandon normal intellectual functions so that divine insight may enlighten this ardor and add to it another fire, much stronger, which lifts the burning soul towards an even deeper wisdom.

~ Hugh of Balma in *LISTENING TO SILENCE*

Love is the most universal, the most tremendous and the most mystical of cosmic forces. Love is the primal and universal psychic energy. Love is a sacred reserve of energy; it is like the blood of spiritual evolution.

~ Pierre Teilhard de Chardin in *THE SPIRIT OF THE EARTH*

At the mystical heart of each of the Abrahamic faiths lie teachings about the transformation power of fire and the identification of the Holy One with light. In Judaism, the Shekinah—the indwelling feminine presence of God—took the form of a pillar of fire at night to lead the Israelites through the desert. ...May we let ourselves down into the arms of fire and allow it to melt the armor of our hearts. The excruciating fire of our loneliness and our fear of intimacy. The sweet fire of our longing for union with the Beloved. The purifying fire of radical unknowingness, which all the great mystics assure us is the beginning of knowing God.

~ Mirabai Starr in *LIGHTING THE DARKNESS*



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**Making a home in our hearts,
You are our Companion and Friend...**

**I accompany those who love You,
that I may grow in wisdom;
I enter into the Silence, into the
Eternal Light,
and listen for your gentle Voice.**

~ Nan Merrill, from her interpretation of Psalm 101 in *PSALMS FOR PRAYING*

To all that is chaotic in you,	but will not
let there come silence.	let you rest...
Let there be a calming	Let there be
of the clamoring,	an opening
a stilling	into the quiet
of the voices that	that lies beneath the chaos,
have laid their claim on you,	where you find the peace
that have made their home in you,	you did not think possible
that go with you	and see what shimmers
even to the holy places	within the storm.

~ Jan Richardson, "Blessing in the Chaos" in *THE CURE FOR SORROW*