

# Friends of Silence

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“Is there enough Silence for the Word to be heard?”

Greetings, dear friends! Long ago when I taught kindergarten, at this time of year rich with ceremony and meaning, we learned together about traditions around the world. We traced the common threads of our humanity that are woven into these diverse tapestries of story and ritual. Traditions help us to remember who we are, how we understand the world both visible and invisible, and what we cherish. Waiting, giving, rejoicing, hoping, thanking, being present to one another, sharing, feasting, lighting candles and fires, and gathering together resonate throughout the world regardless of particular beliefs. Our hearts and minds turn to thoughts on gratitude, generosity, and love as we seek to become a kinder, gentler world. Wishing you Peace, Joy, and Light!



The first step to peace is to stand still in the light.

~ George Fox

"Peace!" the angel announced. But peace is as much task as gift. Only if we become calm as earth, fluid as water, and blazing as fire will we be able to rise to the task of peacemaking, and the air will stir with the rush of wings of angels arriving to help us. This is why I wish you that great inner stillness which alone allows us to speak, even today, without irony, of "peace on earth" and, without despair, to work for it.

~ Brother David Steindl-Rast, OSB,  
thanks to Toto Rendlen



The joy that compassion brings is one of the best-kept secrets of humanity . . . a secret known to only a very few people, a secret to be rediscovered over and over again.

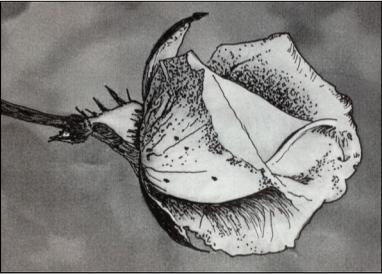
~ Henri J.M. Nouwen

FRIENDS OF SILENCE  
120 Jubilee Lane  
Harpers Ferry, WV 25425  
www.friendsofsilence.net  
304-724-1069

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Ring the bells that still can ring  
Forget your perfect offering  
There is a crack in everything  
That's how the light gets in.  
~ Leonard Cohen

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Any act of giving brings healing and joy.  
~ Tom Bender  
The fragrance always remains  
on the hand that gives the rose.  
~ Mahatma Gandhi

Friends of Silence

*My soul magnifies God.*  
Luke 1:46

What shall I do  
with this quiet joy?  
It calls forth the expanse  
of my soul, calls  
it forth to go singing  
through the world...

calls it forth  
to bear into this world  
a place  
where light will glisten  
the edge of every wing  
and blade of grass,  
shine along every hair on every head,  
gleam among the turnings of every wave,  
glorify  
the turning open of each life,  
each human hand

~excerpt from "Magnificat" by Christina Hutchins



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Perhaps the most important lesson of Ladakh has to do with happiness. Only after many years of peeling away layers of preconceptions did I begin to see the joy and laughter of the Ladakhis for what it really was: a genuine and unhindered appreciation of life itself. In Ladakh I have known a people who regard peace of mind and joie de vivre as their unquestioned birthright. I have seen that community and a close relationship to the land can enrich human life beyond all comparison with material wealth or technological sophistication.

~from ANCIENT FUTURES by Helena Norberg-Hodge

God bless to us our bread,  
And give bread to all those who are hungry  
And hunger for justice to those who are fed  
God bless to us our bread.

~lyrics to sung grace by John Bell



I stretch out the ropes from spire to spire; garlands from window to window;  
golden chains from star to star, and I dance.

~ from LES ILLUMINATIONS by Arthur Rimbaud

From the deep well of silence, joy is  
constantly bubbling up and flowing out.  
Practice reveals that we are immersed in that joy.  
Practice also reveals what is blocking the flow.

~ Gunilla Norris

I was walking down the street in New York City one day, when I heard a woman's voice saying, "I was very sick all winter." Intrigued, I turned around and saw the woman handing a street person, sitting on the sidewalk, some money. She went on talking to him. "I had pneumonia, and every time I started to get better, I'd have a relapse. Now I am finally really getting better, and I just wanted to share the joy."

~ from THE FORCE OF KINDNESS by Sharon Salzberg

Surrender to joy and experience light!  
~ Nan Merrill (*found in one of her notebooks*)



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Waiting tests our grit and faith, and anything else we have on the line. We activate every nerve in us to move, to do something—and then we wait. But if we wait a little longer with patience and endurance, we will know what to do. During this period, we can stir up the gifts that are in us, encourage ourselves to be strong and calm, to find a calm center in the midst of all the whirling debris around us. When we can wait with joy, it connects us to the right things, puts us in the right place to receive. Joy is not of the emotions but of the spirit, and it can bubble up and grow in our weakest moments.

~from A CHEROKEE FEAST OF DAYS by Joyce Sequichie Hifler

The words "wow" and "awe" are the same height and width, all *w*'s and short vowels. They could dance together. Even when, maybe especially when, we don't cooperate, this energy—the breath, the glory, the goodness of God—is *given*.

~from HELP, THANKS, WOW by Anne Lamott