

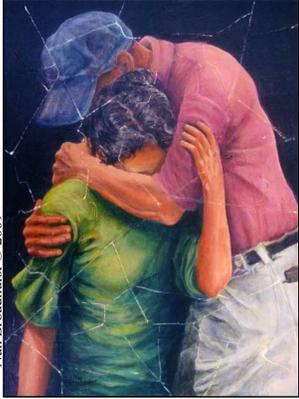
Friends of Silence

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



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Dear Friends ~ A lawyer, attempting to qualify who he ought to love as himself, asked Jesus: “Who is my neighbor?” After responding with the now well-known parable, Jesus asked in return—“Who *acted* like a neighbor?” I can still remember an incident at the end of a whole year of working to build community in my class of kindergartners. During field day, one boy refused to partner, even momentarily, with a girl who didn’t look like him or play like him. He chose to sit out the game instead, sullenly muttering, “You don’t get it. You think we’re all friends but we’re not.” I told him I knew full well that they were not all friends; that was beside the point — the point was they needed to treat each other well whether they were friends or not. Despite being the most globally connected people in history, we seem paradoxically to be retreating into smaller and smaller social, ideological, and religious bubbles or “neighborhoods,” insulating ourselves within the security of the people we can relate to. The first two people who came across the injured one in Jesus’ parable crossed the road to keep their distance. How can we treat others as our neighbors as long as our identities and our differences keep us on the other side of the road?



In what sense can individual strands be torn from the one fabric of reality and be considered complete? My well-being will come only in relationship to our well-being and the well-being of all things. We are being invited to seek a new salvation. It will come through and with one another, not in separation from one another.

~ from *CHRIST OF THE CELTS* by J. Philip Newell

True communication is communion—the realization of oneness, which is love.

~ Eckhart Tolle

Kindness softens and opens up the heart, as oil opens a rusty lock. ~ Elder Paision

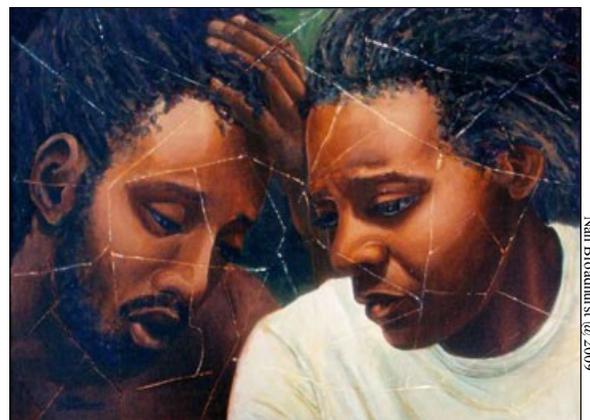
Did the two sides reach agreement... Doubtlessly not. Yet something more profound happened: They saw each other as people. This is an increasingly rare occurrence in our country; we have become skilled at avoiding practically all interaction with those with whom we disagree...we have the ingredients for a culture polarized by the perception that *we* are good and virtuous, while *they* are inhuman and evil. The law professor John A. Powell...calls this “othering” and has shown that it leads to hatred and discrimination. But on the odd occasion that people are exposed to each other *as people*... othering is hard to maintain. And that is the rare moment when human compassion and empathy can break out.

~ from “Empathize With Your Political Foe” by Arthur C. Brooks,
THE NEW YORK TIMES, Jan. 21, 2018

When we quit thinking primarily about ourselves and our own self-preservation, we undergo a truly heroic transformation of consciousness.

~ Joseph Campbell

We receive the light,
Then we impart it.
Thus we repair the world.
~ Kabbalah



Nan Broadhurst © 2009



It is not “forgive and forget” as if nothing wrong had ever happened, but “forgive and go forward,” building on the mistakes of the past and the energy generated by reconciliation to create a new future. ~Alan Paton

Friendship is a sheltering tree. ~ Coleridge

To say that it is not our fault does not relieve us of responsibility...we may not have polluted the air, but we need to take responsibility, along with others, for cleaning it up. Each of us needs to look at our own behavior. Am I perpetuating and reinforcing the negative messages so pervasive in our culture, or am I seeking to challenge them.

~ Beverly Daniel Tatum

I am not in charge of this House, and never will be. I have no say about who is in and who is out. I do not get to make the rules...I am a guest here, charged with serving other guests—even those who present themselves as my enemies. I am allowed to resist them, but as long as I trust in one God who made us all, I cannot act as if they are no kin to me. There is only one House. Human beings will either learn to live in it together or we will not survive to hear its sigh of relief when our numbered days are done... Reverence for creation comes fairly easily for most people. Reverence for other people presents more of a challenge, especially if those people’s lives happen to impinge upon your own...I have an easier time loving humankind than I do loving particular human beings...Particular human beings rarely do things the way I think they should do them, and when they prevent me from doing what I think I should be doing, then I can run short on reverence for them...

At its most basic level, the everyday practice of being with other people is the practice of loving the neighbor as the self. More intricately, it is the practice of coming face-to-face with another human being, preferably someone different enough to qualify as a capital “O” Other—and at least entertaining the possibility that this is one of the faces of God.

~ Barbara Brown Taylor in
AN ALTAR IN THE WORLD

In the name of daybreak
and the eyelids of morning
and the wayfaring moon
and the night when it departs,

| swear | will not dishonor
my soul with hatred
but offer myself humbly
as a guardian of nature,
as a healer of misery
as a messenger of wonder
as an architect of peace.

~ from “School Prayer”
by Diane Ackerman

Bring warmth again to
Where the heart has frozen
In order that beyond the walls
Of our cherished hurt
And chosen distance
We may be able to
Celebrate the gifts they brought,
Learn and grow from the pain,
And Prosper into difference,
Wishing them the peace
Where spirit can summon
Beauty from wounded space.

~ from “For Lost Friends” by John O’Donohue,

