



Living in the Balance

May 2012

As we ate our deli sandwiches, my friend told the story of an ongoing upheaval in her work place. The demotions and firings had everyone looking at each other and over their shoulders. "I love this work, but not this craziness in the leadership. The turmoil keeps us all distracted from the good use of our skills and talents. The powers that be have tried to break my spirit, and I admit it has taken a beating. But no matter what happens, I will not let them steal my joy!" And this is a woman who knows joy. I've seen pictures of her with her grandchildren. She's radiant.

While outsiders might try to rain on our parades, sometimes we are the ones who bring in the storm clouds. I watched a groom and his bride steal the heart from their wedding. Running late, their long faces reflected the couple's inner storminess. They griped their way up the aisle and complained throughout the reception. They never savored their day or their cake.

The inner and outer misery makers take pleasure in sucking the joy out of life. They lie in wait like the Grinch who stole Christmas. And like a Who, I try to puzzle out why, "It could be the Grinch's head wasn't screwed on just right. It could be, perhaps, his shoes were too tight. But I think that the most likely reason of all may have been that his heart was two sizes too small." Clogged Heart-arteries choke out the sweet air of the Divine that makes us jump for joy. It's painful for the joyful to watch, but even sadder for the Grinch.

The Grinch cannot rejoice with others or even with himself because he doesn't claim his own joys. He's envious and selfish and greedy and afraid. He's a joy snatcher who wears many guises. The nitpicking neighbor. The crabby cubicle mate. The political critic. The "don't get above your raising" relative. But he is also the envious, greedy, fearful Grinch that lives within me and you. Maybe the Grinchness began with some kind of lack. Not enoughness. Or perhaps it's inward shame. Some unfilled hole. The "Why do good things happen to others and not to me?" of lament or the "I'm not good enough" of humiliation. But rather than working on myself, my inner Grinch can take that wounded, lacking nature and destroy not only my own wonder, but also the delight of others.

I've had plenty of outer Grinches beat on my door trying to snatch my joy and shrivel my heart. And they will if I turn over my own inner power to them. I cannot stretch their too small hearts or mend their wounded ones. But I can do something about my inner Grinch. I can work at awakening my own heart and keeping my inner Grinches out of the mix. I want to be a Who. I long to join their Christmas morning chorus and let no Grinch steal my joy!

Joy comes from the Divine Feminine. It is a soul-sensation, not a thought-sensation of Holy Masculine. Hers is a felt, inner knowing. I feel Her presence when I watch my husband coo at a newborn. I hear her singing in the voice of my friend about to have a piece she's labored over published. Joy is with me as I snap photos on a rain fresh morning. From Her springs the spontaneous sense of aliveness. But I cannot conjure joy or chase Her down the street. Sometimes my heart aches for joy, and I go looking for Her in the refrigerator or at the Mall. But She is not there.

I thought by the end of this piece that I'd be able to answer the question, "How does one know joy?" But She shies from explanation. Trying to describe joy is like trying to describe love. What I do know is that joy has to have a space and a place to enter into. When I think all joy is gone, I try to remember the last time She visited. Where was I when She whispered in my ear? She is still there. Waiting. Waiting to show Herself and help me, once again, be a Who.

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Every Who down
in Who-ville, the
tall and the small
was singing!

Without any
presents at all!

The Grinch
hadn't stopped
Christmas from
coming!

IT CAME!

Somehow or
other, it came just
the same!

Dr. Seuss



Calendar considerations.....

Writing the Sacred: A journaling, poetry Psalm Writing Workshop

Ray McGinnis leading
Sunday, May 6 from 2:30 until 4:30 p.m.
Offered by the Peace Congregational United Church of Christ, Clemson, SC
To register or for more information: 864-634-4205

Begin the New Year with Practices that Support Opening the Heart

Friday, May 4
Valle Crucis Conference Center, Valle Crucis, NC www.highsouth.com/vallecrucis

The Sophia Institute

The Book of Awakening with Mark Nepo May 11 – 13.
A Time of Awakening: Mindfulness Training and Heart Callings Retreat with Hank Brandt and Carolyn Rivers
May 14 – 18
The Second Half of Life: Opening the Eight Gates of Wisdom with Angeles Arrien July 6 – 8
Charleston, South Carolina
www.thesophiainstitute.org

Summer Dream Conference – God's Forgotten Language

May 27 – June 1, 2012
Offered by the Haden Institute
Held at the Kanuga Conference Center, Hendersonville, NC
www.hadeninstitute.com

Southern Dharma Retreats, Hot Springs, North Carolina

Concentration and Insight (Vipassana) May 10 – 20
Beginner's Mind for Everyone: The Undoing of Doing, May 25 – 28
For more information contact Carol Meyer at southerndharma@earthlink.net

Eight-Day Centering Prayer Intensive Retreat

Rev. Thomas Morris, leading
June 3 – 10
Offered by Contemplative Outreach of Middle Tennessee at St. Mary's Retreat Center, Sewanee, Tennessee
For more information contact: carolyngoddard@gmail.com

Introductory Centering Prayer Workshop

Saturday, June 16, 2012, 10:00 a.m. until 4:00
St. Matthew Catholic Church, Charlotte, NC
For more information contact Contemplative Outreach of Charlotte www.cpcharlotte.org

Jung and Neuroscience

The Asheville Jung Center and the International Association for the Study of Dreams (IASD) will be offering this presentation from the IASD conference.
June 28, 2012
For more information go to <http://ashevillejungcenter.org>
The Asheville Jung Center also offers CEU's and online courses and programs.





Calendar considerations.....

Anderson School of Theology for Laypersons

John Selby Spong – Saturday, August 4, at 3:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.

Dr. James Carroll – Sunday, September 30, at 3:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.

ASTL Pre-Lecture Symposium: The Future of Progressive Theology – Saturday, September 29

Dr. Carroll will be presenting a lecture on Saturday morning as part of this symposium. More details to come.

For more information www.astlonline.org

Spirituality and Practice

On-demand courses available with Cynthia Bourgeault, James Hollis, Sr. Joan Chittister, Rabbi Rami, Thomas Moore, and Sylvia Boorstein.

You'll find a variety of faith traditions represented.

Courses include Centering Prayer, The Essence of the Qur'an, Rumi and Living a Spiritual Life, Lectio Divina and The Wisdom of Muhammad.

www.spiritualityandpractice.com

Machu Picchu and Peru's Sacred Valley – A Pilgrimage

August 8 – 20, 2012

Offered by Jerry Wright, Jungian analyst, and Diana McKendree, Jungian psychotherapist.

The pilgrimage will include Peruvian teachers and guides.

For more information, contact Jerry Wright at jwright@morrisbb.net or call 770-656-3818

Welcoming Prayer Retreat

October 5 – 7

St. Francis Springs Prayer Center, Stoneville, NC

For more information 222.4thdayjourney.org

Lansing Lee Conference with Eric Metaxas

October 29 – 30

Kanuga, Hendersonville SC

For more information www.kanuga.org

2012 Lake Junaluska Peace Conference, Love in Action: The Transformative Power of Nonviolence

November 8 – 11, 2012

2011 Nobel Peace Prize winner, Ms. Leymah Gbowee will headline the conference.

www.lakejunaluska.com

Advance Centering Prayer Retreat

Becky Hannah, facilitating

Sunday, November 25 – Sunday, December 2

Valle Crucis Retreat Center, Valle Crucis, NC

www.highsouth.com/vallecrucis





About Spiritual Direction —

- Offers a space and time for you to explore, reflect upon, and deepen your relationship with God.
- Provides a haven from the daily busyness of the outer world and opens a time to be still and to reflect on your inner journey.
- Is a companioning relationship grounded in dialogue and discernment.
- Explores ways you may integrate spirituality into your daily life.
- Is not limited to any one spiritual practice or tradition.
- May involve one or two meetings or multiple meetings over time.

You may wish to consider spiritual companioning if you are —

- Longing for a deeper relationship with the Divine
- Looking for a place to dialogue about spiritual questions
- Seeking ways to connect with the Spirit in a more intentional way
- Discerning ways to live in a more integrated and whole way
- Standing at a crossroads in your life
- Exploring new or fresh ways to be in relationship with God

For more information about Spiritual Direction, please feel free to contact me by phone
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