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THE MARK

A Publication of The Church of Conscious Harmony - A Contemplative Christian Community



NOT AS THE WORLD GIVES

by Tim Cook

Barbara and I recently watched a series of documentaries on the 1960s that opened us up to feel some of the unprocessed pain left over in us from having lived through that tumultuous time. To see it all at once was shocking; but it was not as shocking as the day by day, mind-numbing madness that swept through our country and tore our hearts apart. Assassinations, riots, cities burning, bombings in Birmingham and beatings in Selma all accompanied the daily news coverage of the increasing body counts and “collateral damage” of the horror of the Vietnam war. But the damage went deeper yet and it was everywhere. All over our country families, including my own, endured emotional, gut-wrenching divisions between the cultural values of the baby boomers and their parents. The resulting pain was confusing and often expressed as rage and accusation. We were all polarized. Each felt perfectly right. My dad believed in the war. I believed in

peace, and although I didn’t realize it at the time, I brought none of it to our family “discussions.”

My dedication to peace moved me to our northern neighbor, Canada, and in 1967 I became a permanent resident, a “Landed Immigrant.” Living in laid-back Toronto, I hoped to forget about the difficulties back home but that proved to be impossible. Toronto was highly politicized and filled with vocal American resisters and countless Canadian supporters. Peace was our aim, peace was our purpose and the subject of peace was on the front-burner of almost every discussion.

One beautiful day there was a peace rally held at the United States Consulate on Parliament Street in Toronto. My friends and I got there early so we could be close to the speakers and we were glad we did as thousands and thousands of people continued to gather together to show our combined support for the cause of peace. The Toronto police department was there to keep order. Their mounted officers

were trained in crowd control. I’m not at all sure what started it but I saw an officer being pulled off his horse and then the mayhem began. We anti-war protesters and the police had just started a small riot—demonstrators screaming obscenities at the police; police riding their horses into the crowd; batons swinging; no hope of peace here. All sense of our prior peaceful purpose dissolved into polarized chaos in seconds. My friends and I left shaken by what we’d just witnessed.

Later, while reading Ram Dass’ culture shifting classic, *Remember Be Here Now*, I began to understand what had happened that unforgettable day. Ram Dass states the principle clearly and simply, “Police create hippies and hippies create police.” He might as well have said, “Plus creates minus and minus creates plus.” Any time we identify strongly with any positionality we automatically participate in constellating its opposite. It doesn’t matter whether we know it or intend it or not; any issue or situation

or outcome that we are strongly identified with necessarily brings its opposite along with it. This is the law on the plane of dualistic cause and effect thinking and on that level there is no escaping its influence. But the dualistic plane of this vs. that, right vs. wrong, me vs. you is not the only plane of our possible experience. Christ, the infinite Presence of The One Reality is always right here as the very screen of knowingness on which we are even aware of our attachments and aversions. Unity is always right here wherever we are deeper than all apparent division. Unity consciousness is peace.

Our Beatitude for this month calls us to be peacemakers and invites us to inherit the Kingdom of God. Please notice that the invitation is calling for peacemakers. As a protester, I was against war. I was a peace talker, a peace teller, a peace shouter; but I brought no peace and made no peace in the world that I was so intent on helping come to peace. The only peace a dualistic world of

opposition and resistance can ever give is a temporary suspension of conflict. True peace is not the absence of external conflict.

The peace Christ offers us is never outside or beyond our personal boundaries. It is an interior disposition of knowing and feeling God's abiding presence; a disposition that develops through our daily practice of Centering Prayer and our application of the tools and teachings of The Work of Inner Christianity. When we are touched by the peace of Christ we realize beyond doubt that His peace is not of this world, but it is deeper and absolutely real. *Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.* (John 14:27) In Him we become the peace we hoped to find and establish in the world.

The Heart of Understanding, Thich Naht Hanh's beautiful commentary on the Buddhist classic, The Heart Sutra, offers us a clear and simple look at that kind of peace and its impact on

the world around us.

When you produce peace and happiness in yourself, you begin to realize peace for the whole world. With the smile that you produce in yourself, with the conscious breathing you establish within yourself, you begin to work for peace in the world. To smile is not to smile only for yourself; the world will change because of your smile. When you practice sitting meditation, if you enjoy even one moment of your sitting, if you establish serenity and happiness inside yourself, you provide the world with a solid base of peace. If you do not give yourself peace, how can you share it with others? If you do not begin your peace work with yourself, where will you go to begin it? To sit, to smile, to look at things and really see them, these are the basis of peace work.

In Christ's peace there is no fear. ☸

BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS

by Barbara Cook

Jesus the Christ spoke to his disciples as he was preparing to leave this plane of earthly experience saying,

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. John 14:27


Bernadette Roberts has written that through the death, resurrection and ascension of the God Man, all human nature, what man is in his essential nature, has been eternally united to the very essence of God. We can see then that all humans, past, present and future, have already been given the peace that passes understanding as the basic core of goodness that is within the center of our being. When we change the direction we are looking for happiness, we become His disciples because we are coming under His guidance.

All of us already have that infinite peace at our center. It has been freely given to us. But we must learn to access it even

while we still tend to emotional reactions to superficial levels of life. That access to infinite peace is ours when we turn our attention toward the Bestower of that graceful gift and let go of our habitual reactions to people and events in the world. We employ traditional practices at the Church of Conscious Harmony. The tools of the Work of Inner Christianity, including self-observation of our interior workings and Self Remembering, give us a much bigger picture of reality and of ourselves in it. We also practice Centering Prayer, which is a profound gift of receptivity to the gift of the Divine Indwelling that we learned from Fr. Thomas Keating.

By sitting silently twice a day with the Ultimate Mystery, we begin to relax our over-identification with our culturally conditioned false-selves and we open to the infinite goodness at the center of our being where

peace is always fully present, just as it was promised and where it grows as we pray daily, feed on scripture and study the Tradition. Fr. Thomas reminds us that once we open to reality and get our attention below the clamor of the world, we can begin to hear the cry of the poor and perhaps be moved to render useful assistance. He also points out that as we learn to reside ever-deeper in God's true Presence, we are radiating peace into our interconnected world even as we go about our ordinary business.

By being willing to see our usual inner condition through uncritical self-observation, by "Working" on ourselves and by resting twice a day with the Beloved in silent prayer, we begin to access the gift of Christ's peace. Peace that truly surpasses the understanding of our chaotic world. And instead of being part of the unrest that is the world, we join the ranks of peacemakers—Children of Heaven. 

TRUE PEACE

Every one of us is searching for peace, but we do not always search for it where it can be found. The peace that the world hopes for is as different and as removed from the peace that comes from God, as God himself is different and removed from the world. To put it another way, the world promises peace, but it never gives it. The world does offer a few passing pleasures—but those pleasures cost far more than they are worth.

Jesus alone can give peace to mankind. He brings us into harmony with himself. He brings our passions into submission. He sets limits to our desires. He comforts us through the hope of riches that will never perish. He gives us the joy of the Holy Spirit and causes us to taste that inner joy even when we are suffering. The spring that produces peace cannot run dry, and the depths of the soul in which it resides cannot be reached by all of humanity's evil. Therefore for the righteous person it becomes a treasure that no one can take away.

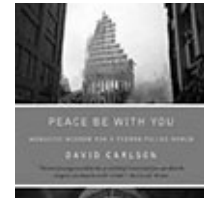
True peace can be found only in possessing God. And possessing God here in this life can be found only in submission to faith and obedience of God's law. Both of these things reflect a pure and unalloyed love in the depths of the heart.

Therefore, thrust away all forbidden things. Cut out all unlawful desires. Dismiss all your bustling about and your worrying. Desire only God, seek only God, and you will enjoy peace—in spite of the world. What is troubling you? Poverty? Ridicule? Failure? Inward and outward crosses? Look on all these things as genuine favors from the hand of God, distributed to his friends, favors that he allows you to share. Then the world will change complexion, and nothing will take away your peace. ☉

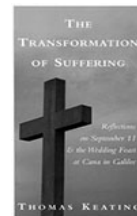
The Complete Fénelon, page 180. François Fénelon was a seventeenth-century French archbishop, controversial theologian and spiritual thinker. His writings have been translated into English and edited by Robert J. Edmonson & Hal M. Helms.

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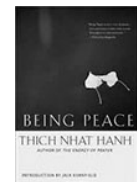
SUGGESTED TITLES FOR JULY



Peace Be With You
Monastic Wisdom for a Terror-Filled World
by David Carlson



The Transformation of Suffering
by Thomas Keating



Being Peace
by Thich Nhat Hanh



Thoughts in Solitude
by Thomas Merton

BOOKSTORE AND LIBRARY HOURS

Open Monday-Friday 9 am-4 pm
Sunday 9:30-10 am & 11:30 am-noon



Come, O you blessed of my Father! Matthew 25:34

ANNUAL AIM: BLESSED

Create for me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Psalm 51:12

INSTRUMENTS OF PEACE by Don Hale

The Guest House

This being human is a guest house
 Every morning a new arrival
 A joy, a depression, a meanness
 Some momentary awareness comes
 As an unexpected visitor.
 Welcome and entertain them all!
 Even if they're a cloud of sorrows
 Who violently sweep your house
 Empty of its furniture
 Still treat each guest honorably
 He may be clearing you out
 For some new delight.
 The dark thought, the shame, the malice
 Meet them at the door laughing
 And invite them in.
 Be grateful for whoever comes
 Because each has been sent
 As a guide from Beyond.
 Rumi, Coleman Barks, translator,
The Essential Rumi

Our Yes must not, finally,
 be protected by any No.
 We must seek to take sides with everyone
 and against no one,
 in the sense that we must seek
 to discover the implanted word
 wherever we look,
 and to declare the truth of it
 and so proclaim peace to it,
 the peace of God's unity
 and the wholeness of creation.

Simon Tugwell, *The Beatitudes:
 Soundings in Christian Traditions*

*Peace I leave you; my peace I give you.
 Not as the world gives do I give to you.
 Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid.*

John 14:27

Who is a peacemaker and who is a child of God? I believe and my experience tells me that we are all children of God. We all have the capacity to be peacemakers, but there are not many peacemakers. As I reflect on my life to find experiences and examples of peacemaking for this article, I quickly realize that I don't know what I am looking for. Granted, my work with young people seems to offer some examples of keeping the peace. Once I helped members from different gangs come together and see each other from a different perspective so the classroom could be safe from their violence. There was a truce set up on behalf of the unaffiliated classmates. This was a

positive thing, no doubt, but I do not feel that anyone was intrinsically changed by this experience beyond the fact that it happened. So, in my opinion, this was peacekeeping not peacemaking.

PEACE BEYOND UNDERSTANDING

Centering Prayer has slowly led me to a place where I can taste a peace that passes understanding. It is my hope that I can write about my work with this Beatitude in a way that can be understood. The Work of Inner Christianity tells us that if we understood one another we would not disagree and we are told in Matthew to reconcile with our brother before we do anything else.

Therefore, if you are offering

your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.

Matthew 5:23-24

I have had moments when these admonitions have happened in my life. This year I started using an idea in my classroom that I got from a curriculum called Conscious Discipline. All of the students in my classes agreed to bring in a photo or create a picture of themselves to be affixed to a poster board with a big heart in the middle. We called it the heart chart. Every day, at the beginning of class, we checked in to see if anyone was missing from class and then we put the absent student's icon in the middle of the heart and took 20 seconds of silence to send them positive, healing thoughts and energy. If everyone was there then we just spent 20 seconds silently thinking of things we were grateful for. I believe the secret to peace was the silence.

Now, not all of the 8th graders were onboard each day with this idea and some of them changed their opinion and the esteem with which they held me throughout the year, but we all still remained silent for 20 seconds each day. At least four times a day, this became a time for me to remember and feel my daily aim in all three

centers—intellectual, emotional and moving/instinctual. As I felt the healing presence of the Spirit, I also sometimes remembered the Ho'oponopono prayer and the Welcoming Prayer during these times of silence in addition to the other times throughout the day. After about six months of this practice, five days a week, it occurred to me that I was sitting and praying and self-remembering in front of a group of young people every day. I began to notice each day that different pairs of eyes were watching me. There was an experience of peace in the classroom that cannot be put into words, but its presence made this year different from the previous 25. Was this peacemaking?

One way to describe the difference this year is that I was constantly reminded that there was nothing "they" needed to change. It was my old way of seeing and my controlling way of thinking that I knew what was best for "them" that had to change to allow harmony to flow. And, amazingly, I was called upon to set and protect some of the strictest boundaries for behavior in my classroom this year. Nothing changed externally in the way I conducted myself, I still redirected negative and disrespectful actions; but my deepening understanding of myself in relationship with others always reminded me to look and listen to ways they were

communicating their needs to me. I came to know their needs as my needs. We are all children of God. I am not the teacher or parent of God.

EVOLVING

In 2012 I went with a group of HYPED (Harmony Youth Practicing Evolving Devotion) teens from CCH to St. Benedict's Monastery for a four day retreat. At one point, we met with Fr. Thomas Keating and he spoke to us about several things. He answered a question about how to deal with difficult passages in the Bible that don't make sense or stir up negativity in us by saying, "Ignore it. Maybe you are just not ready for that passage at that time. Read on until you come to one that makes sense. Maybe that difficult passage will speak something different to you when you get a little older." This simple, yet radical, suggestion brought peace to all our minds with a directness that amazed me.

Fr. Keating went on to talk about the evolution of the human species as he had understood the great 20th century theologian, Teilhard de Chardin, describe it—from biological evolution through moral evolution to spiritual evolution of the intelligent beings that we are. It is our consciousness that is evolving and has the possibility to do so through the human species and its brain, which is recognized as the

most complicated or the greatest triumph of the material world so far and there is no evidence that it is going to stop. As the brain continues to evolve other capacities, which remains to be seen, we may find the solidarity of the human family in the reality—if anybody is suffering we are all suffering and whatever virtues that suffering has to offer are ours and theirs.

Peacemaking seems to involve sharing the feelings and experiences of everyone, seeing past the apparent differences and separateness we have been taught and trained to manifest and not trying to change them. Nothing is new here, we've heard this all many times; but, to me, it's a constant, deepening "good news!" This eternal good news in today's world of hottest news of the second, which is mostly negative, is worth looking for, remembering and sharing when it is found. Is this one way we are evolving?

BEYOND DIFFERENCES


I was raised Presbyterian and I am not hesitant to state that the youth group at First Presbyterian Church saved my life during my mid-teens. I didn't know it then, but I have come to know that I was holding, deep within, a very powerful rage at God for supposedly abandoning me when my parents divorced when I was

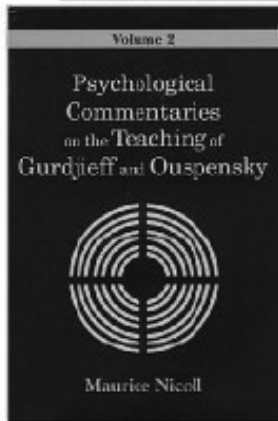
nine years old. I was pushing the envelope between positive, life-giving activities like music, theatre, and sports and death-defying acts involving alcohol, drugs, motorcycles, fire, firearms, and very often all of these at the same time.

I went with friends to their churches and their youth groups and had hands laid on me in fervent prayer, created promise pacts to do right according to the Bible and many other acts of contrition that would surely help me find God somewhere. I look back on these years and it was the assistant pastor at my church who, for whatever reason, took me aside one Sunday afternoon and told me his office door would always be open to me to come and talk to him about anything I wanted to say. This offer shocked me and I didn't believe it so I marched in there a week or so later after school and, tentatively at first, but with growing passion, I told him everything I was doing, thinking and hoping to shock him into realizing what a mistake he was making in wanting to get to know me. He listened and asked me if there was anything else. Well, there were the tears. He had Kleenex and I got up and started to leave and all he said was, "The door is always open, Don." He did not try to change me or give me advice

and this showed me the goodness and the peace of God. I was able to make my peace with God. It is that peace I seek to make as I listen to someone tell me something I disagree with. I say to myself, "I am disagreeing with this disagreeable person, we are the same," and I see the world through their eyes. I may not like what I see, but I certainly understand it; and the world becomes more like heaven, because there is less separating me from God's presence in all life.

WE ARE CHILDREN OF GOD

It is taking part in the intentional community of CCH and its teachings that has helped me become aware of what has always been true but has been forgotten under the cover of my personality and its false personality: "All is well" and we are all children of God. Sitting in the silence of Centering Prayer twice a day; reading the esoteric writings of Gurdjieff, Nicoll, and others every day; and practicing what I learn in our community has brought many of the fruits of the Spirit into my everyday thoughts, words, and actions, including this year's aim on the Beatitudes. How truly blessed we are to recognize we are children of God when we are made instruments of peace. The peacemaker's door is always open. 




THE WORK OF INNER CHRISTIANITY

*My Father is still working, and
I also am working.* John 5:17

DIFFERENT 'I'S IN ONESELF

How many times, in the midst of a life row, does not a person in the Work wonder what on earth he or she is doing and saying, and yet cannot stop doing and saying it? Now any one of you can be surrounded by very bad 'I's, that are not really you, at any moment. If you are negative, if you are indulging in negative phantasies: "Oh, if only I had this or that, if only life were different for me, etc." then you will soon be in the power of these bad 'I's. Now they are really devils in the sense that their only object is to destroy all peace and happiness in you. This is the interesting point that people see with much difficulty, even after years in the Work. In this connection, I will speak of 'I's that wish this Work and 'I's that hate it from the start, because they know it means their destruction.

Yes—the point is to realize this *you* as imaginary and see what this Work is about. If men or

women, in the midst of a typical life row, begin to wonder what on earth they are doing or saying, they are, in terms of the Work-teaching, beginning to *awaken*. Awaken from what? They are awakening from their mechanical reaction to life, awakening to the 'I's that are taking possession of them at the moment—in short, awakening to the idea that it is not they themselves that are doing and speaking, but something else that is not them. To return to this idea that we harbor in ourselves 'I's that can destroy all happiness and peace—this idea is a singularly strange idea to anyone who remains in this Earth-illusion that he is one person, one unvarying individual, one permanent and real I. 

Maurice Nicoll, *Psychological Commentaries on the Teaching of Gurdjieff and Ouspensky*, pages 1272-1273. For more information and experience with these teachings, you are invited to attend the *Work of Inner Christianity* class held Thursdays at 7:30 p.m. at The Church of Conscious Harmony.



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THE GREAT SECRET OF OUR PEACE

We have not lost our peace of soul; only the surface has been troubled. But we are so accustomed to live on the surface that these superficial storms make us think that the depths are troubled too. But these things are necessary and do us good, for they reach us to live in those depths, and force us to love (and to desire and seek) the large serenity of those souls who know that God is All; that He loves our souls, and that our very sufferings and trials become a means of union with His love. We learn in these same hours the need to live united with Him, and we realize that this union does not take place in the realm of our feelings (since God is essentially a spirit), but in the depths of our spiritual will, which we neither see nor feel, and that it is none the less true and substantial love.

We must never be surprised at any 'badness' either in others or in

ourselves, but always see over and against the badness the infinite goodness of Him Who came to heal us. See all this in the divine plan. God could have willed a humanity without any failings or evil. But it is not a question of what He could have willed and done, but of what He actually has willed and done. The great secret of our peace lies in the acceptance of that Will, but we have to learn to make that acceptance just as we have to learn everything in this life. Wicked people are instruments in the hands of divine Providence: they oblige us to face trying decisions and acts of the will. Faith has not taken root until it has had to struggle to say: 'My God, I adore your hand and your love in this person who is doing me an injustice, and in that temperament which jars on me'. Faith is the light which reveals God under the veil of creatures, but it has to be a very living faith

to see Him through some of them! Yet He is always there. Jesus, on the Cross, did not say: 'How weak and evil men are', but: *Father, forgive them ...* And again: *Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.* Life is completely changed when, no matter the circumstances but especially in moments of great agony, we are able to say: *Father.* However, such faith is very rare. As a rule, we see only the suffering, its cause and instruments, the means of getting rid of it, and so on ... But when we ourselves have suffered, we begin to understand not only how much Jesus suffered (and that is already very important), but how in His suffering His gaze went far beyond the suffering and saw only the Father Whom it was glorifying. One realizes also how difficult it is to forget oneself, and to arrive at that supreme gift of self, which was our salvation. 

Page 104, *They Speak by Silences*, by a Carthusian

GUIDELINES FOR CHRISTIAN LIFE, GROWTH AND TRANSFORMATION

Fr. Thomas Keating, in his seminal work
Open Mind, Open Heart,
lists 42 principles underlying the Christian spiritual journey.
Fr. Keating asks that these principles be read according
to the method of Lectio Divina.
One principle will appear in these pages each month.

24TH GUIDELINE



Spiritual friendship involving genuine self-disclosure
is an essential ingredient for happiness
both in marriage and in the celibate lifestyle.
The experience of intimacy with another
or several persons expands and deepens our capacity
to relate to God and to everyone else.
Under the influence of divine love the sexual energy
is gradually transformed into universal compassion.

SEEDS

The hope of the Christian must be,
like the hope of a child, pure and full of trust.
The child is totally available in the present
because he has relatively little to remember,
his experience of evil is as yet brief,
and his anticipation of the future does not extend far.
The Christian, in his humility and faith, must be as totally available
to his brother, to his world, in the present, as the child is.
But he cannot see the world with childlike innocence and simplicity
unless his memory is cleared of past evils by forgiveness,
and his anticipation of the future
is hopefully free of craft and calculation.
For this reason, the humility of Christian nonviolence
is at once patient and uncalculating.
The chief difference between nonviolence and violence
is that the latter depends entirely on its own calculations.
The former depends entirely on God and on His word.

Thomas Merton, *Seeds*, page 152.

JULY CALENDAR

Visit consciouharmony.org
for a complete listing of events

SPECIAL EVENTS

Intro to Centering Prayer
July 16 8:30 am-3:30 pm
+ 6 consecutive Thursday evenings
\$75 Lunch is included.

Half-Day Centering Prayer Retreat
July 23 8:30 am-12:30 pm
\$10 No need to pre-register.

MONTHLY

1st Sunday of month
Bring non-perishables for Caritas

Community Workday
July 9, 9-noon

Gurdjieff Music
July 19 7:30-8:30 pm

WEEKLY

Sundays
Lectio Divina 8-9 am
Worship Service 10-11:30 am
Youth Program 10-11:30 am
Fellowship 11:30 am

Wednesdays
Prayer Circle 10:15-10:45 am
Contemplative Lunch noon-1 pm
Contemplative Communion Service 6-7 pm

Thursdays 7:30-9 pm
Work of Inner Christianity Class

Fridays 7:30-8:45 pm
Devotional Service

DAILY

Mondays-Fridays 7-7:35 am
Centering Prayer Service in Theosis Chapel

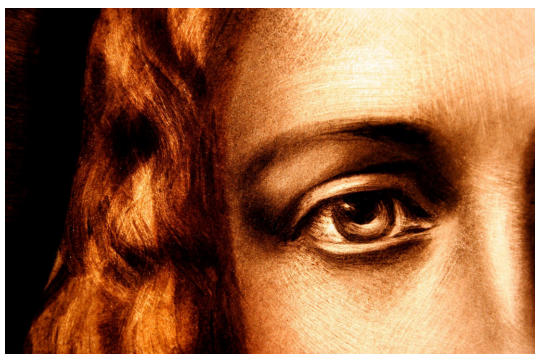
Recordings of services are available
through the Bookstore and online at
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*Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.*
Matthew 5:9

BLESSED

Peace is the great gift of Jesus on the day of His resurrection.

The peace that Jesus offers is not sentimental.

This peace transcends joy and sorrow, hope and despair.

This peace is rooted in a way of being that transcends the emotions.

We are no longer blown away by the winds of persecution,
not washed away by the floods of tribulation.

Our house is built on rock, and the rock is Christ.

That rock is strength against every storm.

Divine union has become an invincible conviction,
a way of being, a fourth dimension to all reality

... If one has special gifts, these are exercised in dependence
on God. One is completely free of the results
and does not draw one's identity from any
glamorous role, but is simply,
like God, the servant of creation.

Thomas Keating, *Invitation to Love*

