

Day One: Beyond the Chaos

Friday, July 27, 2018

Morning Prayer:

Lord, bless my journey today, as I go deeper into the vast territory of my soul. Just when I think I know myself, I discover a stranger living inside of me. I must accept the truth that I am an endless unknown creature, even to myself – perhaps especially to myself. With every new experience, I have to wonder, “How will I cope? How will I respond to that? What will I say?” I can never be certain what I will do next. There is so much about myself that I do not yet know or understand. Why then should chaos surprise me? I am spinning in a wind tunnel watching the fragments of my life rush by. It is not up to You to stop these fragments. There is no prayer that will move heaven to piece together the odds and ends of my life. But You have given me that authority. It is up to me to become more aware, more attentive, more focused. That is my decision. Clarity of mind and soul will change how I live my life. A chaotic life ends up tossed about by fate. But clear-mindedness leaves room for courage and bold choices. Self-knowledge is the pathway to the soul. So, take me down deep, Lord, and reveal to me my true self. Amen.

The significant question to focus on: What is truly of value to me?

Guiding Message:

Today is devoted to examining the external distractions in your life. How much of what is in our life is truly of value to us and how much is just distraction? Review your life today, returning to the question, “What is truly of value to me?” again and again. Go through this list with your inner self, not just your mind. Reflect on the answers. They should not come easily to you, as you have never asked yourself most of these questions before, if any at all.

- Noise is distraction. Having sound constantly playing in the background prevents you from going into silence, from spending any deeply reflective time with yourself. Are you more comfortable with sound – music? Television?
 - What does constant sound help you to **not** think about?
- Busy work is just that – busy work. It has to be done but how much of it is truly of value to you?
- Review your belongings with the thought in mind, “How much do I really value this?” Do you own that object or does it own you? How many things do you have that you have forgotten that you even own? Is parting with old stuff difficult for you, even when it’s no longer something you value?
- Are you a good listener or are you easily distracted?

- What do you easily remember and what do you often forget?
 - Are emotional memories easier for you than facts? Why do you think that is?
- Do you generate curious and interesting emotional narratives for yourself? That is, are you a good story teller about things that happen in your life and how often do you tell an accurate story?
- If our attention is distracted, we make distracted choices for ourselves. We miss the signs, symbols and guidance that are the markers along the way on our life path. While our attention is on the rattling of all the noise makers in our life, we fail to recognize all that is constant and meaningful. Even obstacles have meaning. We often create chaos in trying to avoid obstacles rather than face them.
- Mindless or negative habits are distractions that create unnecessary chaos. Carelessness, irresponsibility, procrastination, waiting to be rescued from foolish choices. Habits that generate a fog are habits that create chaos by choice. Heaven does not generate that chaos. We do. Observe the pattern of your choices, especially if you indulge becoming “mindless”, less aware of what you are doing, how you are living, and the quality of your thinking. Are you not of value to yourself?
- Dysfunctional relationships and bad habits create the most chaos in our lives. A healthy relationship means that your health thrives or benefits or is nurtured in a positive way because of that relationship, whether it is a partner, spouse, friend, family member, business colleague or neighbor. And likewise, each relationship you are in should thrive in some way because of you. Close relationships require time, love, energy, and support – just as we do. In difficult times – and all relationships go through difficult cycles – more is required of everyone. Distractions and chaos, however, are unnecessary, optional stresses. We cannot change other people and we cannot – and do not – want to detach from loved ones, especially when they are going through dark nights. But we can separate their chaos from our own. Not only can I not solve another person’s problems, I am not supposed to do that anymore than I was supposed to do a child’s homework just because I could. Using my knowledge to compensate for that child’s lack of knowledge would only weaken that child and diminish her survival skills. What looks like help in the moment for that child is in fact an act of supreme life sabotage. Wisdom is protection. Wise choices rooted in strong values, though often difficult, prevent the destructive power of chaos.
- Truth is the greatest of all values. Some people would say that love is. But the truth is that without truth, love and trust become two of life’s biggest challenges.

Prayer and reflection time during the day:

The pursuit of self-knowledge and the examination of values can often start the wheels of change moving in a new direction. It takes enormous fortitude – true courage of the soul – to question yourself. But if you do not pursue the depths of your inner self, who will? “Lord, grant me the grace of Fortitude. I do not know myself in deep soul waters, at least not at soul depth. Still, there is no turning back. I want to discover how deeply I am able to love and what it is to be fearless about my own life.”

End of day prayer:

Lord, I am a beginner at getting to know my own soul. This is not an easy journey, but it is too late for me to step off this path. I have nowhere else to go but inward. I do not want to live such a distracted life that I miss all that is significant and important in big and small ways each day. I do not want to lose touch with my soul because I am so distracted with arguments or insignificant stuff. What I value in life becomes my life. How much love I can give is reflected in my heart. I cannot wait to be loved in order to love. So, Lord, keep a light on inside of me. Help me to grow in mindfulness, truth, and love. Let these be the values that direct my life. Amen

Day Two: A Day of Silence and Holy Listening

Saturday July 28

Morning Prayer:

Lord, today I enter in silence. Today, I listen for the sound of how You express Yourself in my life. In ancient days, You spoke through the wind, through fire, through storms and the movement of the Sun. The ancients saw You everywhere and in everything. They recognized Your presence in Nature, in the forests and in the whisper of leaves rustling to sudden breezes. Our thinking today is that they were foolish, frightened human beings, little more than cave dwellers wandering a primitive Earth. But perhaps not. Perhaps they were really filled with clarity, unencumbered by doubt. They stood on a silent Earth, a clean, pure Earth, empty of noise. Everything was fresh and unpolluted. They saw You everywhere because You were everything to them. You were alive in nature – You were nature. You were present in the cycles of Nature, in all life giving, sustaining ways. They recognized their vulnerability and were filled with the humbleness that came with dependency upon sacred power. I do not know how to listen for You in Nature as deeply as I would like. I have grown accustomed to trusting my mind for instructions. I do not know how to find You yet because of all the many distractions and noise in my mind. I do not know how to be completely silent from within. But I will begin by creating a silent world around me. With closed eyes, I imagine myself approaching a holy well deep within me. I drop a single pebble into that well and listen for the delicate sound of one pebble slipping into the softness of the holy center of my being. There, in this sacred, silent, inner place, I shall wait for You. I will listen and wait in the stillness – and wait even longer. Amen

The significant question to focus on today: What is holy within me?

Guiding Message:

Today is devoted to experiencing the power of silence and holy listening. Inner silence is not the same as being quiet. Being quiet means that you are not speaking or that you have removed yourself from external noise or that you want to get away from chaos to be alone. Entering silence is the choice to turn your attention inward with the intent to listen for the rustling of holy wind in your soul. Holy listening is listening “below” your head. Instead release the endless questioning nature of your mind and breathe your attention into your solar plexus. You will have to do this again and again during the day because out of habit, you will kick into mental gear in a micro-second. You will no doubt wonder, “What I am listening for?” Holy listening is the practice of listening without an agenda, without the expectation of hearing something special about you. Prayer is not always about problem-solving or finding ways of feeling better through a stressful situation. The greatest power of prayer is its capacity to release you from

your attachments to your problems, whatever they may be. You will always have challenges. You will always encounter loss, sorrow, betrayal – if not today, certainly sometime in life. These are the ordinary problems of life. Solving one does not stop another one from happening. The true solution and the real power of prayer is its capacity to lead you inward, away from the grit and grime of all of life's challenges, for at the end of the day all of these illusions, as Buddha referred to them, are the same thing – a manifestation of the flow of patterns of life. Prayer is power. It has the power to break the hold an illusion has over you, allowing you to see a way through that problem. Prayers do not make problems evaporate. We do not have the power to make other people change the way we want or to control outcomes. Prayer changes us, empowers us, brings clarity and courage into us. Prayer will not cause the world to change. The world is as it is. But it gives us the courage to initiate changes in the world. We are the instruments of change in our world and in the greater world. Prayer is the means through which we are sustained with grace and guidance.

- Unless absolutely necessary – and I do mean **absolutely** – please do not use your cell phones or computers until after 8:00 pm today. You may have to go to work today, in which case you will find that directive particularly challenging. If you are working today, I want you to go into a prayer this morning and seal yourself in a field of grace. (All of you can do this, of course). Put yourself in the field – or in your Inner Castle, as Teresa of Avila describes the inner soul. Seal yourself in this holy place with the prayer, “Let no negative energy enter my field. Angels, stand guard around me on this day. Help me to not hear the negativity in my world. Keep me unaware of all that does not concern me. Be my protection.”
- For those of you who are able to stay home, please limit your contact with the outside world to the best of your ability. In short, do what is **essential** but not what can wait until another day.
- Walk outside – alone. If walking is a challenge, sit outside. Listen to the sounds around you. Observe your world. Notice life you have not seen before. Slow down to the speed of ordinary movement and listen to ordinary sounds.
- Take a journal and write down any thoughts that bubble up from your inner holy well.
- If you have to engage in ordinary life activities today, as I am sure many of you do, then you have to adapt sacred silence and holy listening to your world. It is never impossible to enter inner silence or to retreat to your holy center. In fact, what could be more important than to realize you can retreat to your holy center while conducting business, shopping, or during a stressful exchange with someone. You do not have to flee to a remote place to recharge and protect yourself. Your soul is resourceful and a vessel for guidance and grace. Should you find yourself in such a circumstance today, close your eyes and repeat the prayer, “In this sacred inner space, I shall wait for You. I am waiting, Lord. I am listening.”

Prayer and Reflection time during the day:

Listening does not mean you will hear something. Holy listening is not about getting messages and problem-solving advice. Holy listening is about faith and building an inner bridge to the truth that this theater of life is a sacred undertaking. "I am listening, Lord. I have no questions. I seek no answers. I am breathing in grace in Your presence."

End of the Day Prayer:

Lord, I will return again and again to wait for You at this holy place inside of me. I will listen for You in all ways in my world for all of creation is an expression of You. What is not You? I am the one who has been blind to the truth that life is a Divine theater. Slip into the walls of my soul, Lord. It brings me profound joy and comfort to know I can listen for You anywhere, any time. All the spiritual teachers said, Go within. And so, I have. Along the way, Lord, let me add that even a hint of Quietude would be appreciated in my life. Amen.

Day Three: A Day of Fasting and Reflection

Sunday July 29

Morning Prayer:

Lord, one of the most difficult prayers to say is, 'Please grant me guidance', because I know that You will do just that. Even when I ask for guidance, for Divine counsel, I sometimes fear the response. Today I am participating in the holy ritual of fasting. My intention is to empty myself of that which is insignificant to my life journey – but how do I know what that could mean? I could be releasing everything I own – or perhaps that fear is still more evidence that I do not trust the heavens. I prefer to release things from my life on my terms, like emptying out a closet of worn out clothing. I cannot imagine turning over that task to You, Lord. Would I wake up one morning and find one boring gray dress hanging by itself in my closet or a designer wardrobe? Turning everything over to You is like that – a jump into the unknown. I fear unknown Divine space with its endless possibilities of unraveling my life, so I hold on to everything. In my own way, I have become a hoarder of stuff. I hoard negative memories I should have released a long time ago. I hoard wounds I should have forgiven a years ago. I hoard resentments out of habit, because it suits my pride. I will admit in the silence and sacred space of a prayer that hoarding is hard work – and it is psychically heavy. I can sense all the weight of the negativity that I am holding on to me. It is useless psychic matter that weighs me down. It's time to let it go, to lighten up my being, to literally let Your Light in. So, my intention in fasting today, Lord, is to feel the release of psychic weight from my body that I have accumulated by hoarding parts of my life that are long over and unnecessary to my present life. I do not want to use these rotting psychic free radicals as fodder for creating my present life. I do not want those toxins invading my imagination any more. Today I will imagine that I am cleaning out the closets of my heart, washing away wounds, freeing my inner archive of negative narratives I no longer want to hear. Hover over me as I do this, Lord. Pour Light over me and through me. Help me to release all that is a burden to my mind, my body, my heart and my soul. Amen.

The significant question to focus on today: What in me needs to be emptied or released?

Guiding Message:

Spiritual fasting has a long and rich history. Fasting is a ritual of cleansing, of preparation, of release. During a prolonged fast (three days or more), the deeply held belief is that the strength of a person's spirit will spiritually replenish the individual as the strength of the body declines from lack of nourishment. Like undergoing extreme rituals of initiation, such as going on a genuine walkabout in the Australian outback as a young Aborigine, the initiate can only discover the power hidden within his or her soul by being in a situation that requires soul power. Reading about the power of your soul does not make that inner power real. It just

makes you more curious about your inner holy substance. Reading about love does not make love real, either. You have to experience love to know love.

Sacred literature, in particular the Old and New Testaments, makes a point of noting that Moses, Jesus, the apostles, or others fasted and when. Even for the most enlightened human beings, fasting was a ritual essential to their spiritual life. Jesus and Moses went on 40-day fasts in the desert, a number more likely symbolic of the stamina of their souls than the actual length of time. They emptied themselves of earthly distractions in order to hear only the voice of God. They needed to feel unencumbered, unattached to any expression of physical power – even the power possessed by their own physical needs. As so many of you know, Jesus was tempted by the devil during his 40-day fast in the desert. The devil offered him the bargain: Give me the power of your soul and I will give you all the power the physical Earth/society has to offer. We know how that turned out. But the value of the power of the soul of Jesus was worth the world for the demon.

A spiritual fast puts up a type of temporary barrier between our physical senses and our spiritual senses. We become more aware of the distinction between the physical and sacred dimensions. During a fast, we are positioned to observe the power our cravings have over us and the controlling power our biology holds over our spirit. We can feel our bodies craving sugar or salt or alcohol with more intensity than usual, for instance, because we have decided not to respond to those cravings. And so those cravings increase, like a screaming two-year-old who refuses to take a nap. We can observe how impatient we can become when we are uncomfortable. Fasting is the opportunity to witness how you behave when you are vulnerable, in this case, by choice.

Focus on the Spirit, not the Fast:

We get through a spiritual fast, however, by focusing on the spiritual part of the fast and not by obsessing about what you are denying yourself for a day or two. Obsessing about the fasting part reduces this sacred ritual to nothing more than dieting for a day. Fasting is the support activity to that which is your spiritual focus: **Releasing psychic weight and debris.**

Rarely do you put time aside to reflect upon the psychic debris – or psychic free radicals, as I like to call this stuff – that you are carrying in your energy system. Rarely do you think about this psychic “weight” as the heavy stuff that builds up in your energy field as the substance responsible for energetic exhaustion or malaise or depression or lack of focus. But this is the stuff that causes those sensations or experiences. You cannot be clear-thinking or buoyant and highly energetic when you are burdened by psychic debris. And here’s something to keep in mind: We are governed by the Laws of Nature/Mystical Laws. One of these is the Law of Magnetic Attraction. Reflection on this: Your psychic debris attracts psychic debris. If that isn’t a reason to clear out your stuff, what is?

Fasting Instructions:

There are different ways to fast. In general, fasting means that you avoid the intake of all solid foods and in the extreme, even liquids. That is not what we are going to do. First, not everyone is capable of doing a 24-hour fast, especially if you are maintaining your busy ordinary life. People who undertook extreme fasts tended to do that in places where they could minimize their physical activities, such as monasteries. Or they have group support, as in the 30-day holy Ramadan fast that occurs in the ninth-month of the Muslim religious calendar. Knowing that your whole religious community is fasting helps you to maintain your fast even in your weakest moments standing alone in your kitchen. It is during those times that you draw upon the power of the collective soul force that supports you spiritually. Such support is one of the mystical power threads of religion or spiritual communities, just as mystical power threads are a part of support groups like AA that actually require a gathering of devoted souls to channel their particular healing grace. A group soul is exactly that – a group of people who thread their souls together through commitment to sacred principles, truths and beliefs in support of one another. This collective support can be drawn upon like a grace bank account in times of distress or weakness, like getting through a fast or a difficult day in which you want to reach for a drink. Recalling your commitment to a group or the strength of others in a group or the hardships others endured generates a flow of grace to you, grace their life journey earned that now flows abundantly to you, as yours does to them. Weaving your spiritual life with others is like joining a huge collective grace bank account.

- For our purposes, I recommend Sunday 6:00 am to 6:00 pm. If that is too extreme, please modify to six to eight hours.
- I am suggesting that all of us avoid solid foods for that 12-hour period of time but intake fluids all day long – all kinds of fluids except smoothies, alcohol, cappuccinos; food products that are obviously stimulants and common sense tells you that you would not see them on a fast. Just imagine a monk drinking a Starbucks on a fast.
- For fasting enthusiasts, please avoid extreme fasting. That is, maintain fluid intake. And if you are under medical care, ***you must maintain all medical protocols.***
- Sometimes it's not practical to go without food. It may also be risky to your health. So, we have to make adjustments on how to approach the ritual of spiritual fasting appropriate to the environment in which you are living and your health. While 12-hours is hardly a marathon, still if you are doing physical labor or working with a lot of people, you are going to experience hunger in a way that I, for example, sitting at my desk in the quietness of my home will not. Know your strength and your limits.
- You may also choose to avoid certain food items as your fast. For example, you may decide to release all sugar or wheat products for 12 (or even 24-hours). For some people, going without sugar for a day takes far more effort than going without food.

- So please adjust this fast with common sense. You know your health and your body. This is a spiritual fast, not penance.
- Dine after 6:00 and please eat a light meal; that is, please avoid fried, fast foods, pizza, pasta, burgers, steaks. Dine on fish, chicken, veggies, salad, etc.
- At the end of the day, take a bath or shower. Cleanse the day and close it down with the ritual of bathing.

Prayer and Reflection time during the day:

The simplest of prayers said often is like a song in the soul. Take time during this day for reflection time. Attend to the task of the day. Pay attention to what is bubbling up from your spiritual nerve center.

“Lord, take all that is unnecessary so that I may continue my life fully present in who I am now.”

End of Day Prayer:

“I am empty, Lord. I have no idea what is no longer in my soul or in my energy field. I feel lighter and Light-filled. I am aware that I am changed my life today, but I do not know how. I know that every prayer changes my life. All prayers are powerful. But tonight, I release myself to the care of your angels. Let me take flight with them tonight, Lord, into the healing realm. Let Your grace of healing pour into me release me from wounds and resentments old and new. Help me to become a stronger person, Lord. I do not want to collect more wounds, to start hording all over again. Instead I want a soul with stamina and compassion. It is wiser for me to ask for the grace of healing and compassion than to always be in need of healing because I am so easily wounded by this gift of life. Let the angels return me to my body before the morning sun rises, Lord, healed and renewed. And hover over me, Lord, all through the days and moments of my life. Amen.

Day Four: Getting High on Soul Food

Monday July 30

Morning Prayer:

Lord, today I come to You an empty vessel. I have prepared myself to receive Your guidance, to dwell in holy teachings, to open myself to inspiration. Today I turn my eyes and my senses upward, away from the distractions of the physical world. If I could separate my soul from my physical form for even an instant to sense the wholeness of Divine creation, I would do that. That one thought form – that we are separate – is the source of more suffering. It is a powerful illusion. What is separate in this universe? Everything is governed by the same laws. If I truly understood that, how would I be different? Would I comprehend the language of the trees and flowers and other living creatures? Would I understand the songs of birds? Would plants reveal their full healing power? Would I see the nature spirits that wander through my garden? Wholeness is not a word, Lord. I know that. It is a level of consciousness. What changes would I experience in me if I were no longer fractured but whole? Perhaps I would no longer have any fears about being alive or empowering others or comprehending truth. It takes courage to ask for wholeness, Lord, but I am asking for the grace of courage to help me become a whole human being. I want my head and my heart to speak as one. I want my illusions to melt away so that I may embrace life with clarity. I want to cease projecting my negativity on to others. And in truth, I fear the journey of getting to wholeness but that is the journey of life. I would rather live that journey consciously, Lord, so that I am able to pray for guidance, than to pretend that life is about something else. Hover over me, Lord, now and always.

The significant question of the day: What do I need to do to become whole?

Guiding Message:

After the fast comes the meal. Today is all about inspiration and dwelling in holy writings. Today is about lifting your vibration about the fray of earthly concerns and absorbing grace and spiritual truths. You are receptive on this day, spiritual open. You have air space available inside of you, having emptied yourself of spiritual and physical toxins. You are ready for truths to come in and take root, perhaps in ways that would not have happened before.

- Sacred literature includes traditional writings such as the scriptures.
- Several authors can provide inspirational writings. Among them:
 - The writings of Thomas Merton
 - Ursula K Le Guin – Lao Tzu Tao Te Ching: A About the way and the Power of the Way
 - The writings of John O’Donohue
 - The Gift – Poems by Hafiz, the Great Sufi Master; Translations by Daniel Ladinsky
 - The Psalms: Prayers of Many Moods by Ronald Quillo
 - The Mystic Hours by Wayne Teasdale
 - Daily Kabbalah: Wisdom from the Tree of Life by Gershon Winkler
 - Entering the Castle by C. Myss
 - The poetry of Mary Oliver and Emily Dickenson

These are just a few of the numerous available inspirational texts that are available to you. You may already have your favorite writings. The task today is to utilize them. Your focus today is on the task of becoming a whole person, congruent, unable to be shattered so easily on this journey that is your life.

Let me share a sample from the Daily Kabbalah: “It is within man’s power to seek God; it is not with his power to find Him.” How rich is that? And how true? You can spend all day dwelling in the power of that one truth. We do not have the power to find God. Realizing that one truth should cause a person to stop asking questions that cannot be answered – those cosmic sized questions about why things happen as they do in our lives. We are not meant to have answers to those questions, though we are free to ask all the questions we want. Perhaps one day we will learn through endless frustration to stop wasting our time and instead invest in prayers that can be answered in ways our human mind can comprehend.

What do I need to become whole? That is the question to carry in your spiritual gut today.

Other inspirational selections:

- We are endlessly searching for God. But at some point, we need to acknowledge that this search is a substitute for something else. Perhaps we do not want to acknowledge good and evil, right and wrong, honesty and dishonesty. Perhaps we want to keep our dark side hidden for a while longer. Perhaps we find our doubts useful. Or perhaps we are under the illusion that doubt is power.
- From the Daily Kabbalah: The Hebrew word for the physical universe is o'lam, which also means "hidden" because the universe deliberately hides the Creator who can only be discovered in the marvels of the universe. Therefore, God is only sought but never found, because the wonders of this universe can never be fathomed in one lifetime by one person.
- God sometimes directs us to be holy troublemakers. Speaking the truth – not your truth, but the truth – can cause trouble. Speaking up for a person, defending someone getting attacked, standing up for human rights takes courage. But the authentic spiritual path is a journey of self-knowledge and spiritual self-esteem, developing the courage to see, understand, and live by higher truths. Inevitably you will become a holy troublemaker.
- It always takes great courage to practice spiritual reflection, to examine your conscience and inner agendas that motivate your choices and actions – the words you speak to others, or do not say. Often times, this practice leaves you feeling very good about yourself. Other times, it shines the light on the truth that you made a conscious choice to withhold grace from someone and such a choice keeps you fractured. But it is also an opportunity to examine why that choice was made, would you do it again or would you challenge yourself to draw from inner grace? Nothing is easy about looking inward with the intention of seeking the truth but keep this truth in mind at all times: Others see the truth about us all the time – just as you do about so many people. Think of how easily you spot the archetypes of other people when you are "people watching". We label people in the blink of an eye. Tossing out a label on someone is the same as picking out one of their archetypes – Geek, Hermit, Mother, Scatterbrain (kind of a subset), Networker, Busybody. You get the picture. We cannot stop ourselves from identifying archetypal patterns. It is instinctual because we intuitively sense their power field. And we are snoops, let's face it. But know this: We are open books to other people. That means you are an open book to everyone. You cannot hide your inner agendas especially in this age in which most of us have evolved our intuitive senses. We read each other like open books. It is far wiser to live by that truth and do your spiritual homework so that others do not have to do it for you.

Prayer and reflection time during the day:

Lord, what is wholeness for me? Where is my life without balance? I breathe in the grace of tranquility in this moment and sense its power radiate through my life like a guide. What is not tranquil? Like a guiding beam, I will follow the Light of this grace to all that needs my attention.

End of the Day Prayer:

Lord, make me a still place of light and love. Let me radiate enough grace that others may dwell and rest in that grace for a while. Help me to become whole enough to allow Your healing grace to flow through me to others. Images fall into my mind while I am in prayer sometimes. When I feel the calming influence of grace come upon me, I can once again breathe my way backwards, away from this moment, Lord, and into that place of subtle origin. I can feel myself melting into the vast expanse of the cosmos. Sometimes I can see the endless, living universe for a tiny micro second, but only with the eyes of my soul. My physical eyes cannot even open, my body nothing but lead. But I am never more alive than when I am free in that tiny molecule of a second, the mystical micro-blink of contact with all that is sacred and holy. This whole universe is a living theater of grace. It is all that You are. It is all that we are. Why do we fear that truth so much? It is such a powerful truth that in a micro-second would heal everything. Hover over me, Lord. Let the grace of Clarity come into me. I must be able to see myself clearly for the choices to become whole are mine and mine alone. Amen.

Day Five: Holy Choices and Divine Intimacy

Tuesday July 31

Morning Prayer:

Lord, today I turn to You for counsel. I open myself to holy listening, to receiving guidance about what I need to hear from You. What is it that I believe to be true about You, Lord? Why do I not just pray about that? Do I believe in miracles? Would I want a miracle to happen in my life? Would I want direct contact with You? I wonder, Lord, I wonder. Could I go back to living an ordinary life if You came to call through a miracle? Nothing in my life would be the same. I would know You are observing my every move, hearing my every prayer. I am as awestruck by that thought as I am terrified as I am electrified. That a prayer could result in a miracle is awe-inspiring because it truly does mean You are everywhere and we really do live under the watchful eye of heaven. How that can be the truth baffles me. I so often wonder why this person or that is not receiving help right now, this instant, from heaven. Or how a tragedy can happen to an innocent child. But I do not know the workings of karma, or Divine order. I do not know why I am not starving and others are. I could question that as well, but I hesitate to wonder about why heaven distributes in benevolence in my direction. Yet, the question is no different than asking about why others are denied. It is only that I fear the answer to pursuing matters of benevolence. What, then, Lord, do you want from me this day? What do you want me to know or to understand or to do? It is obvious that I can only understand this life in small particles. Today I will not be distracted from listening. I will not tell myself that I did not hear You. And I will not pursue cosmic-sized questions that cannot be answered. Today I am here, Lord. And I am listening. Amen.

The significant question of the day: What does my soul tell me are Divine truths and am I living in harmony with all that I know to be holy truths?

Guiding Message:

What do you actually believe to be true about the Divine? If ever there was a question that has parts to it, that's it. Most people answer that question by first telling me what they do not believe. But I am not asking you what you do not believe. And I am not asking about moral, political or social issues with the Catholic Church, for those of you who share that particular history.

This question is specifically about what you believe to be true about the nature of God – that which you believe in right now. What do you base your spiritual life on? What do you base your values on, your moral and ethical behavior? Do you have a sense of good and evil, right and wrong? If you believe in reincarnation, for example, then it goes without saying that you

believe in retribution passed on from one lifetime to another. Another way to say that is that you acknowledge the existence of sin and just consequences for living a sinful life.

Acknowledging what you know to be a holy truth is part one. It doesn't matter what you know to be a holy truth, however; what matters is that you live that truth fully. In other words, you can admit you know it's wrong to steal but if you're stealing, it obviously doesn't matter that you know it's wrong.

Today is devoted to what it means to make a holy choice; that is, a choice that you know is the result of inner guidance.

- You receive guidance all the time, not just on major life issues
- You are guided about what to eat. Your health depends upon what you eat and therefore our intuitive system – think of that as the “organic divinity system – is always sending signal as to whether we should eat this or not.
- You receive guidance about what to say or not say to people, whether what you are saying is of service to someone or harmful.
- You receive guidance are pressing issues of personal betrayal and spiritual self-care. Your soul is relentless about alerting you to violations of your integrity.
- Your soul is also relentless about pushing you to develop your gifts. You will experience deep spiritual depressions when you choose to sabotage the gifts of your soul.
- Observe the way guidance comes to you. It enters your life physically, emotionally, inwardly. Holy guidance always moves you toward inner balance and it always contains a grain of truth. Holy guidance always directs toward small and great acts of personal transformation – from eating better for your health to releasing dark thoughts that torment you because they are toxic to pursuing your creativity. Be still and feel, listen, sense – open every passageway in your being. Ask yourself where you are not in a state of balance and why? Your answer could be, “Because I am always angry,” or “Because I don't know what to do next” or “Because I am in financial stress.” Then listen, feel, sense for direction – not an entire map of solution – but a direction. A choice – one choice. And make that choice. That choice could be as simple as, “Have hope” or “Be patient” or “Call X” or “Forgive and let go of X”. Every one of those responses has more power than you can measure, as each one of those choices frees your psyche and soul to be receptive to guidance that otherwise cannot penetrate your energy field. It does not take much to get the wheels of change moving in another direction. But it often takes a great deal to be willing to move in that direction.

Holy choices can often require courage. You are never given a guarantee of an outcome. You are given the guidance to act. Not acting on sacred guidance is often the source of self-loathing, though people do not recognize that cause because they do not think in terms of soul reasons.

Prayer and reflection during the day:

All choices are holy, Lord, for every choice changes my life. No choice is insignificant. I realize that now. There is no such thing as a small choice, Lord, and no such thing as a powerless word. No and yes – two of the most powerful words I can say. What am I saying no or yes to right now? Grant me the grace of Counsel, Lord. Even the power of these small words has brought me to silence.

End of the Day Prayer:

Take me down deep, Lord, and meet me at my inner well. I am listening for You in the stillness of my being. I seek a path of wholeness in which the choices I make bring me greater clarity in life. I will no longer search for You but for ways to develop my gifts and serve others. I will no longer deny the many ways that You speak to me, Lord. Grant me the courage to act on Your guidance. I so often feel that I am alone, standing in the midst of choices I am afraid to make. I am unsure of outcomes. I need to remind myself again and again that not making a choice creates an outcome of uncertainty as well. Your guidance may change my life – it often does. But change will happen with or without my eyes wide open. I do know that Your guidance always contains a grain of truth – that is Your signature. And so, I ask for the courage to embrace the truth, however difficult that may be. Hover over me, Lord. The deeper I pursue my spiritual life, the more I realize that it liberates me from the burden of illusions and the more I need courage to let those illusions evaporate. Amen.