

Reflection for Earth Day

offered by Catherin Chandler

Think of me as in my garden. It is early spring and the garden is very rough. I have had little heart for flower gardening for several years but this year, I have a plan.

To be more accurate, I feel like I am part of a plan, a larger plan.

I haven't planted this garden in 2 years. It has lain fallow and a good crop of grass has grown up between the persistent irises on the east end and the, "Snow-On-the-Mountain," on the west and around the oriental poppy in the middle, already quite a mound of beautiful, furry and deeply cut leaves- so hardy!

To get the good of the fallow years, I am cutting the sod deeply and flipping it over. A hundred worms are suffering vertigo. The flowers that I will plant are called, Wild Flowers, and I expect them to be tough enough to thrive in this rough ground.

So, spade under foot, the mind drifts... or focuses. I have never lived through a time like this. Who has? We are in the midst of a great Pandemic. The entire world is under threat as a virus spreads, in advance of the medical science that might control it to keep us safe. When this pandemic is done, and it will one day be behind us, we will be different.

I am not one who believes that God visits great events upon us for punishment or reward. To me, God seems to be saying, "Way back in The Garden, you chose, against My Advice I might add, the Path of Knowledge, my dear children. What will you learn from this?"

So, in another little garden, I think of how things are going now. As we Social Distance, we think of our own safety but also- or even more- we think to keep our neighbours, our friends, our family members, safe. I'll bet we all have in mind people who we care about and that we feel are particularly vulnerable. These are the faces that inspire patience when we suffer the inconvenience, difficulty, tedium, loneliness of social isolation.

The truth is, we are all making a difference for each other. No one can make a positive difference in this pandemic on their own. We can only put this behind us if we all do this social distancing thing together. And we are!

So, "What will we learn from this?"

Maybe we learn that, with all of the good will in the world, there are certain big problems that we can only solve ...together. That we each need to step up to the task in small ways and big, but it can be pointless if we are working alone.

Is Love the glue that makes our small efforts into one great, effective effort?

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I can tell you, most humbly and by way of confession, that there are a couple or three politicians for whom I had no time before this world of hurt and fear descended upon us, our country, whom I now see very differently. Their concern for their people, their constituents, is genuine, heart felt, and they are doing their best to co-operate together, party lines put aside, for our common good, to get us safely beyond this crisis. When the dust settles, it may be, "Ways and Means," on which we continue to differ, but I will trust that their motives are for the good of their people.

So, I'm standing in my little flower bed, my thoughts wandering so that I am glad *not* to be paying me by the hour. I am planting flower seeds that bees and butterflies are said to find attractive on this gift of a spring day.

Last spring there were so few bees around our fruit trees that I noticed the lack and started to watch for them. They were slow to appear and not numerous when they did show up. In the end, we had very little fruit set in our pear trees. This is concerning and a broad problem occurring in many areas around the Earth. I was very, very saddened and worried.

You see, years ago I studied biology. So I understand that some small things are vitally important and some important things are not obviously so. Bees are very important. Most of the fruit and berry crops that we eat rely on pollinating insects for fruit and berries to be produced. And the vegetable crops would mostly not produce seeds for the next year without insects. It is that simple.

We have left The (metaphorical but important) Garden and what are we learning?

I propose that we may learn that Love is the glue that forms our small efforts together to allow us to achieve great ends. As we, "Stay the Blazes Home!", "Socially Distance," "Wash our Hands," and think of those we love and want to protect, it helps us to stay patient with the effort, we will come through this terrible pandemic. We will be ready to appreciate all the little things that we will know that we missed. We may see their importance.

And about the bees? If we plant flowers that sustain them, respect their necessary habitat, value them for the resource that they are for us- together many hands, many little gardens, can be the beginning of a great healing of Earth, our Garden home.