

Sunday, January 3, 2021

CNY Inspirations: Love, a four-letter verb!

This feature is coordinated by The Post-Standard/Syracuse.com and InterFaith Works of CNY. Follow this theme and author posted Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday.

There was a man who passionately desired to know the nature of love. He decided to go deep into the woods to meditate on love. He declared that he would not leave his solitude until he fully understood love. After many years, he emerged from the forest and entered the village, satisfied he knew the secret of true love. As he entered the crowded market, a woman accidentally bumped his arm. The man turned and yelled, "You stupid idiot!" In that moment, he realized he knew nothing about love.

What the man came to realize is that love is not a noun. It is a verb! So many inspiring words have been written about love, yet such words must be expressed in actions. Love can only be known through our relationships with one another, by truly seeing our neighbor as ourselves.

Many say that God is love. If God is love, then love must be God in action! Understanding love requires expression as loving deeds. The scriptures of many world religions tell us how to be God in action. "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink...I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me." (Matt. 25:35-36)

I am blessed to have a safe, warm place to live and food to eat. If you and your family are likewise blessed, please consider donating some or all of your Covid Relief funds to organizations that feed, house, clothe and comfort those who are not as richly blessed. Love expressed as charity is needed now more than ever.

"And now abideth faith, hope and charity...but the greatest of these is charity." (King James; 1 Cor. 13:13)

The Rev. Roberta Yackel is a retired Unity minister and former director of the Spiritual Care program (now Interfaith Initiatives) at InterFaith Works.

Tuesday, January 5, 2021

CNY Inspirations: The epiphany moment

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As many Christians do, I leave my nativity scene out through Jan. 6, the day of Epiphany. Symbolically, Epiphany is the day the Wise Men arrive at the birthplace of the Christ Child. Some say, if they had been Wise Women, they would have brought practical gifts like diapers and casseroles! However, the gifts of the Magi are gifts appropriate for a king, gifts that recognize a great light has come into the world.

The word epiphany, from the Greek, means to reveal. This is why we say, "I've had an epiphany" when blessed with an idea or insight that seems heaven-sent! To have an epiphany moment, we must "be still and know" that God as wisdom is within us. If we stop and listen to our inner wisdom before reacting to a challenging situation, higher wisdom will bring us its gifts of guidance, forgiveness and peace.

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Thursday, January 7, 2021

CNY Inspirations: I resolve to forgive

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Many people have rituals associated with the coming of a new year. One of the most common rituals is making New Year's resolutions. We spend the final days of December working up the determination to establish a healthy habit or letting go of an unhealthy one. Will you to join me in making a New Year's resolution that brings healing and peace?

This year, I resolve to forgive! To truly forgive, I must recognize the "other" as myself. There is no separation in spirit as we are all the beloved offspring of the one Creator. As I forgive others their trespasses (behavior) toward me, I am forgiven my trespasses (behavior) toward them.

"And forgive us our trespasses as we also forgive those who trespass against us." (Matt. 7:12)
As I choose to forgive, I see past behavior to honor the divinity within all of my sisters and brothers.

Namaste!

The Rev. Roberta Yackel is a retired Unity minister and former director of the Spiritual Care program (now Interfaith Initiatives) at InterFaith Works.