

## **Grace: Love in Action Message and Meditation March 6, 2022**

I send my love over the mountains, I send my love over the sea, I send my love to the heavens... and it returns to me...

Our journey this morning will blend message and meditation, inviting us to meet every circumstance, every relationship, every aspect of ourselves, with grace and compassion. My inspiration today is from this wisdom adapted from *A Season of Grace*, by Rev Joanna Gabriel:, found in the Release and Renew booklet:

Why not... [take] up the practice of unconditional love? Love will open you up to deeper divine ideas and spiritual growth. Love will make your Lenten experience a season of God's grace.

Grace is love in action. Love purifies. Make this your work of Lent-- to allow the healing love of God to flow through you, removing the blockages of unforgiveness, guilt, anxiety, resentment...fear, doubt.

And of course, Roger found the “just right” music for this incredible group to lift us on a day when our hearts are full of desire to send our love over the mountains, over the sea... to support us on a day when at the Annual Meeting we will affirm, celebrate, and renew the ways this community IS love in action.

And so wherever you are-- here in person, or joining us by the mundane miracle of technology...we enter this time together, recognizing that in our Oneness, “it’s not far to another’s heart...to another’s eyes...to another land...”

Before we send our love across the mountains and sea, I invite you to consider: Who has been a sign of unconditional Love in your life? Who are the friends or loved ones whose laughter and tears and realness invite you to know yourself more deeply? Is there a four-legged friend who shows you unconditional love?

Where or when or how have you felt the gift of Grace holding you in times of joy or sorrow? How are these signs of Love and signs of Grace connected? Where do you feel the need for Love and Grace, right now, in your own heart and life?

And now, taking a deep breath in... and ...out...allow yourself to settle into the stillness...hold those signs gently in your heart...hold your own needs gently in your heart...Close your eyes or simply let your gaze soften in front of you...Sense your feet resting on the floor, and notice all the places where your body is supported as you sit...

Breathing in, and out... bring your awareness now to your heart center... sense the rhythm of your heart beating, and sense the physical space of your whole heart center...

Feel the warmth of your breath warming this space inside of you... Warmth gathering around your heart, warmth and light growing with a deep desire to soften and to heal...

Warmth of compassion, and self compassion expanding with each breath...

Breathe in kindness...breathe out empathy... your healing prayer expands with each breath.. Breath in, charged with love...breath out, charged with love... Heart center filled with love, softening with light....

Feel the radiant light of Love that lives in your heart, expanding and growing...with deep awareness that the Love of God enfolds you...

And now it's time to feel your Love and compassion expanding inside you, and overflowing out into the world...

With each breath, your Love expands...you send your love across mountains... across seas... across oceans of division...Your love shines on friends, and neighbors... and on strangers alike, Love-light shining with no separation, with no division...shining onto all beings, onto the whole of creation...

We hold the vision of a world transformed by Love, all beings awakened by Love...

We hold the vision of a world transformed...

Hear this wisdom, an adapted excerpt from ***By Life's Grace*** by Fran Peavey.

The mind and heart reel upon folding up the paper. Just another day of broken hearts and lives around the world. Sitting back in my blue armchair my eyes close. A dream floats across. I hold the smooth round globe in my arms like a baby. My eyes wander over the surface as if I am entering into it. Lightly my fingers explore the oceans, the beaches, the rivers, and climb the mountains. This

is my home planet, now held as a lovely child in my arms. The inner eye sees some of the faces, some of the struggles, some of the delight, the dreams of each place [*each person, each being*] on that globe. As my fingertips touch a place on the globe the troubles of each location flash into view. I wish I could give some relief for the wrinkles of pain in each land, each river, each ocean, [*each life.*]

I hold the globe close to [*me and cover it with my love*]... My fingers curl around thousands of miles, thousands of weapons, thousands of birds and fish, thousands of people longing as I do for peace...the suffering of the present... simply has to be lived and loved now in the real. My ears strain to listen deeply to the messages that I may carry the wisdom of the earth to keep going. Faithfully I rock the globe patting it softly... singing it a lullaby my grandmother taught me...

We hold the vision of a world transformed...all beings awakening into the fullness of Love's song...

How has the grace of compassion-- love put into action-- transformed *you*? Insight Meditation teacher Christina Feldman writes:

"Compassion doesn't always call for grand or heroic gestures. It asks you to find in your heart the simple but profound willingness to be present, with a commitment to end sorrow and contribute to the well-being and ease of all beings. A word of kindness, a loving touch, a patient presence, a willingness to step beyond your fears and reactions are all gestures of compassion that can transform a moment of fear and pain."

Bring to mind again those whose simple but profound presence has shown *you* the grace of Love and compassion...and bring to mind those places *within you* that need the grace of love and compassion...

Our words of kindness, our presence, stepping beyond our fears, becoming more skillful and less reactive when our buttons get pushed-- all of these are transforming signs of love in action. Yes, there are times like now when we might feel compelled to offer grand gestures-- when we want to wrap the whole world in a blanket of our love and compassion. For some, their Holy Heartbreak may call them to step into leading the Holy Rebellion!

Yet at its simplest, compassion transforms us, because it is the language God uses to remind us that the True Self-- the capital T, capital S self-- *IS* love.

Richard Rohr talks about it this way:

“You (and every other created thing) begin with your unique Divine DNA... This is your True Self [that must be awakened]. Historically it was often called the soul. Jesus revealed and accepted a paradox in his entire being: the human and divine are not separate but one!..

Your True Self is Life and Being and Love. Love is what you were made for and love is who you are. When you live outside of love, you are not living from your true being or with full consciousness. Your True Self is a tiny flame of this universal reality that is life itself, consciousness itself, being itself, love itself, God's very self.

When we live outside of love we are not living with our full consciousness...

Breathing in...and breathing out... Can you feel what pulls you to live outside of love?... what numbs you to the depth and beauty of your fully human, fully Divine True Self? ...what limits or conditions have you put on love that you now release?

Breathe love into a relationship that needs healing... Enfold in compassion a habit, a busyness, a forgetting of your Truth that you long to lay down...surround with light the seeds of new growth, renewed purpose...feel your True Self as a flame of Life itself, of Love itself...a flame of the Divine housed in you...

Feel the flame of God-self awakening you, inviting you to embrace your Divine essence, and the Divine essence of all beings...feel the gentle flame of your prayer, your awareness centered in Oneness...feel all that pulls you to live *inside* Love, to live in service to our community... and to the world.

When Roger first reached out to me this summer , I started reading the website to learn more about you. One of my first “HOLY WOW” moments was recognizing that how I *aspire* to show up in the world is how you, my Unity family, *aspire* to show up in the world. As a community, we are pulled to live inside Love by who we say we are-- and how we live into-- those core values.

## **Core Values: “It’s All About Love”**

- We are a Spirit-centered community
- We warmly welcome all
- We embrace diversity
- We walk our talk with integrity
- We are compassionate
- We are joyful
- We practice Sacred Service
- We claim Spiritual abundance

It’s all about Love. These words from the gospel writer Matthew, chapter 22 give life and foundation to our Core Values:

<sup>22:36</sup> "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest? <sup>22:37</sup> Jesus replied, "You shall love God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' <sup>22:38</sup> This is the greatest and first commandment. <sup>22:39</sup> And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'<sup>22:40</sup> On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

With our whole hearts, souls, and minds may we awaken to, and embody, the Truth of our Love, compassion and self-compassion. May we remind each other with kindness and compassion to step back inside Love when we forget.

May we shine light into the darkness, and may fear be washed away so that all who suffer in body, mind or spirit, may rest in wholeness, peace and healing.

May the light of our love spread forth across mountains, across the seas to radiate out onto the world and every being who is a part of it.

Here in the grounding presence of this community-- whether you’ve been here for decades, or are here for the first time-- Sense the light of love in a person near you in body or in spirit, someone whose light is also shining forth..whose light is also beaming.

And see that one by one, hundreds, thousands, millions of people are around you, each radiating with their unique Divine DNA, shining Love and Light with healing and compassion out into the world.

May the Amazing Grace of Love be alive inside of me and inside of you, and inside all of us, so that we are awakened to transform the world.

May it be so. And so it is. Amen