

***Day of the Dead: Remember, Grieve, Love*      10-29-23**

Will you pray with me and for me, affirming that all Spirit wants to express through me will come from my heart and my words.

***Meditation on The Five Principles, ch 5: Expressing God*** (adapted)

*Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me— put into practice. and the God of Peace will be with you.~ Philippians 4:9.*

What is mine to do?

How am I to serve?

I have come to this human experience not just for myself

but for all I encounter,

and I stand ready—

Ready to share God's love in every moment.

That divine love expresses through me and as me.

I make myself ready.

I listen, I align with divine mind, divine heart

I ask for *my* perfect place, means and heart for sacred service.

I live the truth,

knowing that God is all,

that I am of god,

that together we are co-creators,

and I am never separate from divine radiance.

I let my God-light shine to illuminate those in darkness.

I let my heart expand for those who need love.

I give as it has been given to me,

and I am grateful for us all

**Message: Remember. Grieve. Love.**

Today's message is a 3 strand plait, like the braids I used to weave for my sister Gen, and then for my daughters.

**Strand One: Remember      *What is Day of the Dead?***

Many of our most loved holiday traditions have evolved over time from their ancient, indigenous origins and the Christian holy days superimposed on them, often forcibly. So how/why do we celebrate *this* Mexican festival of *Day of the Dead*, which is a blend of an ancient Aztec celebration and the Catholic holy days of All Saints and All Souls' Days (Nov 1 and Nov 2).

Halloween (All Hallow's Eve) is also connected to those feast days, but grew out of the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain (a Gaelic word pronounced "SAH-win"). Yet instead of warding off ghosts and spirits by wearing costumes and building bonfires like MY ancestors, families in Mexico invite their loved ones back into their homes and hearts. Families create *ofrendas*, altars in the home with photos, mementos and favorite foods of their loved ones.

[Day of the Dead](#) over time has become a blend of Christian tradition and Mexican mysticism, ***commemorating death as another element of life and as a way to remember and honor loved ones.***

In our Unity path, we are taught that our bodily death is an *element of life that continues beyond form*. Yet our human experiences of loss and grief can take the form of an intricate dance of resistance, anger, surrender.

***DÍA DE MUERTOS REMINDS CHRISTIANS TO GRIEVE***

[By Sandy Ovalle Martinz \(from Sojourners magazine\)](#)

“I am not interested in a commercialized version of Día de Muertos; parades, concerts, and celebrations where I must buy a ticket are an invention of capitalism. I am interested in the family remembrance rituals, in the nights at the cemetery communing with loved ones, in the ofrendas set up in homes, schools, and public plazas....

*(Talking about the rituals around her family’s remembrance of her abuelita)*

“Part of our grief was continuing to express love that we did not get to give. Día de Muertos is another opportunity to nourish the relationships we hold dearly.

Día de Muertos **can also have a prophetic touch, shedding light on the horrors of current events, reminding the rich, powerful, and abusive that death is our common experience.** In Mexico, calaveritas do just that. These **satirical poems** written every year around Día de Muertos express what is wrong with the status quo.”

## **Strand 2: Grieve**

In the book (p46) *The Wild edge of Sorrow* by Francis Weller, he writes about the gates of sorrow.

**“The third gate is the Sorrows of the World** [This] gate of grief opens when we register the losses of the world around us. Whether or not we consciously recognize it, the daily diminishment of species, habitats, and cultures is noted in our psyches. Much of the grief we carry is not personal but shared, communal. It is difficult to walk down the street and not feel the collective sorrows of homelessness or the economic insanity revealed in commercialism and consumerism...”

It is impossible to listen to the news and hear about the violence and atrocities in Gaza, in Israel, in Ukraine and Russia, or the violence in our own country and not have our hearts broken open in grief, in anger, in confusion. I

“ It takes everything we have to deny the sorrows of the world. Weller quotes psychologist Chellis Glendinning and what she calls *Earthgrief*... ‘to open our hearts to the sad history of humanity and the devastated state of the Earth is the next step in our reclamation of our bodies, the body of our human community, and the body of the earth.’...The cumulative grief of the world is overwhelming.”

### ***The Fifth Gate: Ancestral Grief (p63)***

“The 5th gate of grief is what I call “ancestral grief.” This is the grief we carry in our bodies from sorrows experienced by our ancestors. Much of this grief lingers in a layer of silence, unacknowledged. Many of our ancestors arrived in the Americas after leaving their homes, family members, and communities behind. Some arrived here after being abducted and forced into slavery. These generations often survived without a feeling of home, living with only marginal connections with the Old Ways to guide them. The traditions that had nourished and held their people for hundreds, if not thousands, of years were difficult to sustain on the new continent. ...

*(And that is for families like my own with roots in Ireland and Germany– that doesn't come close to the genocide of indigenous peoples on this land, or the genocide of those our ancestors enslaved...)*

Ancestral grief also speaks to the grief that remains in our collective soul for the abuses of millions of individuals... This grief is so immense it is hard to reconcile. .... One other facet of ancestral grief revolves around the loss of ancestors. [As a whole], we no longer look to our ancestors as a source of connection with the invisible powers in the world. In a very real way, we have lost our connection to the land, language, imagination, rituals, songs, and stories of our ancestors and, because of this we feel homeless.”

### **Third Strand: Love**

For the past 5 weeks, a number of us have been exploring the Unity teaching that Ellen Davenport illuminates in her book *The Five Principles*. She writes principle five like this: “Knowing and understanding the laws of life, also called Truth, are not enough. A person must also live the truth that he or she knows.” In chapter 5 she explores the question of *how do we express God?* How do we live into this principle?

The first four principles invite us to shift our consciousness as the foundation for changing our behavior. Our goal then is to live consciously in the awareness that God is everywhere present; that we are made of God; that we are co-creating with God in every moment; and so we align my thoughts and words with the heart of God by communing with the Divine.

“(p.111-112) When we are living the truth, any action we take will be from a consciousness of spirit and oneness, **with ego in service to the soul....** any action that feels forced, impulsive or emotional is likely not to be in principle. Acting in principle usually brings a reassuring sense of being on the right track even if others object. It is not stubbornly exerting your will, but it might be moving to the beat of your own drummer or following your own star....

(p118) Putting principle into action starts as an inside job. To bring peace to the world, be peaceful. If you want to practice principle beyond your own home, try seeing the divinity in other people. Try treating each person you meet as a messiah in disguise. Try taking responsibility for what you have created in your life and what your family, your city, country and the human species have created together. Try spending some time alone to remember your connection to Spirit **and to move ego aside to let the Divine flow through you. ...**

### **Braiding the strands**

Remember. Grieve. Love.

- We remember that Goodness, Love, GREAT OPEN DOOR– God– is the ultimate reality and the ultimate power at work in us and as us.
- “To grant evil a power of its own would be to accept it as inevitable...if [instead] it’s the result of human error, then we can do something about it!”
- We remember that LIVING the truth that there is no separation between us–and those we might call enemy, or other– no separation between those we see doing grave harm and those working for justice and peace. LIVING this truth calls us to a love that is not at all sentimental– it is elemental.
- We grieve. We weep at the violence around the world– and look into our hearts to pluck out OUR thoughts of fear and harm and othering. We let our personal grief and losses call into greater compassion for the suffering of the world’s peoples. We practice forgiveness and healing of our ancestral wounds as part of our gift to transform the future generations.
- We align our hearts, minds and souls with the immanent/transcendent presence of God and in the stillness, grace and quiet we listen for the

wisdom to know what is MINE to do? We listen to the news and hold the high watch FOR peace, for justice. We deny the power of either/or, limited thinking over our reactions.

- We gather to support, nourish and affirm each other in our journey. We recognize in our dear friends **Kathleen and Isabel** that the path to living our sacred purpose is uniquely our own as unrepeatable expressions of God alive in us and AS us.
- AND. WE. LOVE. Our commitment as a community is to hold our vision of a world transformed by love— fierce love, tender love, compassionate love— ELEMENTAL Love.

We pray without ceasing. And we Remember. We Grieve. We Love.

And so it is.

Amen!