

Day of the Dead: Remembering with Love 11-2-25 Rev Brigid Beckman

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

Meditation, part 1:

Why have you come to earth?

Do you remember?

Why have you taken birth?

Why have you come?

To love, to serve and remember.

Message:

What is Day of the Dead/All Souls Day?

Diana Butler Bass reminds us:

*The Day of the Dead commemorates the souls of all who have been taken from their loved ones— a fate we ultimately share with them. Remembering them is a kind of spiritual rebellion against death’s power. **All Souls’ is a festival that invites death to the party, a family reunion that no separation can foil.***

This morning, I invite us to remember with love those ancestors who helped us know why we came to earth, why we’ve taken birth, those who left a legacy of how to live our fully human, fully divine lives. Who are those ancestors for you? Maybe they are from the long line of your family of birth, and maybe they are from the souls collected over time through friendship’s ties. Perhaps the lessons you learned were taught with gentleness, wisdom and compassion. And perhaps you learned how to live fully by witnessing “what not to do” from those who raised you. Families are complex ecosystems, and our soil for growing isn’t always tilled with tender loving care, even in the best of them. Yet here we are!

Both of my daughters-in-law have lost their moms. They are walking a path I haven’t yet traveled, and walking it with them as their mother-in-law has made me think of my relationship with mine, Doris, who died in May 2007 just a few months after I’d left my

marriage. We had moments of “complex ecosystem” over the years, but after my father-in-law died, Doris moved from NJ to live right around the corner from us.

For 13 years that proximity helped us know each other at a deeper level. This spring, one night near the anniversary of her death I came across a letter she’d written to my son Matt as he went on his freshman retreat at LeMoyne College. It sparked so many memories of this “ancestor,” a woman whose life was so different from my own, but whose DNA is wound up in the lives of my children, and in my own heart.

As I witnessed Matt’s wife Meghan in these past months prepare to walk in the world without her mother’s physical presence, and then witnessed the moment of Kathy’s letting go, and the rituals around the public goodbyes, I am struck with an image of the threads that bind us beyond time and place. The threads that we celebrate during this “thin time” when the veil between the living and the dead is a gossamer thread are actually available to us *any* time we slow down enough to love, serve and remember why we are here.

I’ll share a poem I wrote in honor of Doris, and then I’m going to bring us back into a short time of meditation, with an invitation to bring to heart-mind one of those ancestors whose gossamer threads are holding you.

For Doris

Past and present and future are not disjointed, but joined.

~Walt Whitman in preface to ***Leaves of Grass***

In that 18-years-ago moment
I am the daughter in law
who has just left your son.
Now three months later,
we’ve gathered around your hospital bed
as you prepare to leave all of us.

Forgiveness and grace
are in your soundless laugh,
your shoulders dancing up and down
proof of my absolution
as I lean in, whisper that memory we both love...

*How the patron saint of car-trouble-disguised-as-blessing
gave us two days together,
in the now blessedly quiet cabin
sharing stories, sharing chocolate bars,
sharing schadenfreude as we
picture our two husbands flying solo with all four kids
after our frenetic week of family camping at the lake*

What patron saint has prompted me tonight
to pick up an old notebook,
and discover tucked in its pages,
your note to my then-18- year- old boy?
Your handwriting brings you right here,
your wit and wisdom dancing across the page.
I think of all I've learned from you
About how to be grandma, mother-in-law,
how to be a woman facing life squarely...

As past and present and future join,
my shoulders dance
their prayer of thanks. ~BB 9/2025

Meditation, part 2:

Bring to heart-mind one whose gossamer threads of connection are present in your memory at this moment. You might recall an image of a face, a snippet of a favorite song, a sensation of a time and place that still echoes in you...

As we return to the room, take a moment to jot down on your paper what gift or lesson you learned from this ancestor...

Back to Day of the Dead...

DÍA DE MUERTOS REMINDS CHRISTIANS TO GRIEVE

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

(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.

[Yet] 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 the book ***The Wild edge of Sorrow*** by Francis Weller, he writes about the gates of sorrow, including the sometimes overwhelming Sorrows of the World. Yet Weller ends with a chapter on “*Becoming Ancestors*” reminding us that part of the sacred work of grief calls us into that “prophetic touch, shedding light on the horrors of current events” that Sandy Ovalle Martinz points towards.

We live in a moment when benefits for the wealthiest are borne on the backs of the most vulnerable. When children, elders, those with disabilities and the working poor– the many– will go hungry at the hands of the cruel greed of the few. Our communal grief over the horrors of current events compounds day after day after day. What is ours to do in the face of this grief? How are we called to be prophets, to arise and walk forth, to wake up, get moving AS the blessings we are and walk into the complex ecosystem of our human family? How are we called to remember– and then to *act-* with love?

Luke Healy, co-founder of the Integral Christian Network, writes about our call in the “loving evolution” of this moment:

“...if we are to see the loving evolution of Christianity and the world come forth, it will take more than a few great saints. It will take all of us stepping into our

divine vocation—to live from *who we truly are*, into our *authentic calling*, offering our precious voice. Our sacred work in the world... Living into our Divine Vocation is not something we are meant to do alone. We have the great gift of beloved community, from the living and from beyond, to guide and support us...

...we can step into the great divine dance of the world becoming anew. From the great Source of divine vitality, our deepest passions and holy calling in this life bless the world and bring forth heaven on earth, here and now...Holiness is not about morality or spiritual heroism, but the sacred act of taking up the truth of our divine being, clothing ourselves with this calling every day, and walking into the world together to be the enlivened hands and feet of love, the mind of Christ, the womb of new life, the heart of God.

Meditation, part 3

Why have *YOU* come to earth? Why have *YOU* taken birth? Why have *YOU* come? What kind of ancestor are *YOU* called to be?

Let's take a deep breath in and out together, and in a final moment of shared quiet, on your paper, write a statement that reminds you of your own sacred calling, your divine being.

We are here to love. To serve our community and the world. And to remember our divine vocation as unrepeatable threads in the fabric that gives shape to the Mystery.

May it be so. And so it is. Amen.