

Connecting New

August, 2018

This month I share two poems pondering whether love and kindness are one and the same. I am attracted to such sayings as "Before speaking, ask yourself, 'Is it true? Is it necessary? Is it kind?'" and "If you can be anything in the world, be kind." However, is it possible to act in a loving way that is at the same time not particularly kind?

Convergence

If there is a place where kindness and criticism meet,
surely it must be a place of love.
We know Jesus criticized often, but was it only
when provoked or did he initiate?
Was Martin Luther King, Jr. kind when he shone a mirror
on bigotry, hatred, and pervasive injustice?
Can you recall an instance when the Dalai Lama raised his voice?
When St. Paul told the Judaizers to castrate themselves,
was this a moment of weakness or loving kindness?
Was Francis an instrument of peace when he tore the tiles off
the roof or John Muir acting against love with his scathing writing?
Sweet Sister Thea challenged with her exuberance for life,
singing and dancing and teaching all who would notice,
but when she saw her brethren on the wrong path
she didn't hesitate to speak up.

Did Jesus ever apologize to the Pharisees for calling them out in public?

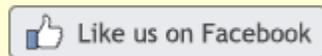
It's personal and it's not.
It's bigger than one person and it's not.
It's loving and it doesn't feel like it.

A Graced Decision

Was it a sin when Jesus expressed his anger by turning over the money
tables?
Did he lose his composure, acting upon impulse, or did he discern this action
methodically, over time, paying attention, being and doing with God?
Was it like the brave people of color sitting at the whites only lunch counter?
The practice of injustice is too often a long-standing tradition unquestioned.
Jesus knew.
He knew what love required.
He knew the consequences.
He knew that he and God were one.

May we all act with greater kindness, but even more, may we act in union with the love of God, all other people and ourselves.

Peace and Blessings,
Clarence



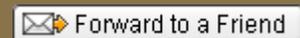
Clarence Heller is a spiritual director, poet, and dreamer whose writing and paintings are inspired through prayerful reflection.

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