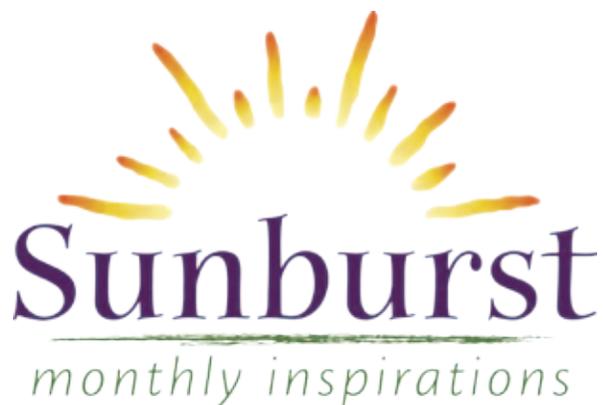


*Realize who you truly are,
and the power you have
to create heaven on earth today
through spiritual practice,
supportive community,
and selfless service.*

DECEMBER 2015



Seeds of Meditation

*The rains
of God's mercy
cannot gather
on mountaintops of pride,
but flow easily
into valleys of humbleness.*

– Paramahansa Yogananda

Love One Another

Norman Paulsen, Sunburst's founder

I awakened on a Sunday morning, went out to the porch and sat in the sun. It was beautifully warm, and a light breeze was blowing. Knowing I was to give the Sunday message that day, I asked God what I might say. I felt God saying: *Talk about Love; talk about the kingdom of heaven within us as a place of love.*

Yes, just as Jesus stated so long ago, if heaven is within us, we should be able to see it, to feel it, to be in it, to walk upon it, to hear it! As I sat there in gratitude, a hummingbird flew directly up to my face, around to my right ear and chirped. I could hardly believe it had come so close! I whispered, "I know the kingdom of heaven is within you too, little bird." It flew off to get a drink of honeyed water and fragrance from a flower nearby.

How wonderfully God moves in our lives to make its presence known as Mother and Father. What a wonderful thing to realize that God is so personal to each one of us, if we but seek. **If we take the time to enter quietness, God will come and visit our sincere prayers, answer our worries, help and heal us.**

Looking at the morning sun, I was reminded once again that the Cosmic Sun we can see inwardly looks the same. **In deep meditation, the brilliant body of Christ fills your soul with light and love; it takes your breath away with its beauty and power.** It is the absolute realization that the kingdom of heaven is indeed within you.

What a wondrous thing it is that God can be known personally. This conscious, divine Being of Light that created all of us, and everything that exists in the vastness of space, lives in every atom of our bodies, and can reveal itself to each one of us! This is why we meditate.

Spirit longs to gain our heart's love; Spirit pursues us all the time. Beyond all of our desires, our going here and there upon the earth, Spirit is always present watching and waiting for that day when we say: "Oh Beloved, I have gone as far as I want to go. I want to know you, I want to see you. I want to understand what life is about. Why am I here? What is my purpose?" To seek God with all our hearts, minds, and strength attracts that Presence to us. Spirit becomes the most important thing in our life.

So beautiful are the children of God, each one so wonderfully and miraculously unique. When we love each other, this power is on the move to do things, to create things, to make this world a place of peace and love and understanding. God gives us the strength, if we ask to live a caring, virtuous life, a life of service. Such a power each soul has to do beautiful things. Our Earth so desperately needs this from each one of us! **Love ye one another** is the message we need to remember as we go forth in the world.



Getting In The Flow

Barbara McCaughey

A while ago on television, I saw a couple who had written a book for people whose lives weren't going well because of addiction. They wanted to make it clear that the book wasn't just for people with obvious addictions; their premise was that we're all addicted to something. It could be work, a cell phone, or the Internet—something that disrupts our flow of life.

I remember the first two of six premises they wrote about—even those are really helpful. The first one is that, when we're feeling out of the flow, "Something has to change, and it's probably me." Then the author said, "Well, you can just take the *probably* out."

The second one was helpful when we get to a point where we feel: "I don't know how to do this; I don't know how to face this; I don't know which way to go"—whatever you want to put in there that you feel you don't know—"but something inside me does [know]." And that is, again, the essence of humility, where we're willing to take a look beyond our limited thoughts.

Recently an example occurred when I was at work. Something had happened earlier in the day that really threw me off kilter, so that my thoughts were very restless. Just before my lunch time, the phone rang and somebody on the other end was telling me that she and her husband were homeless and they needed money to stay in a hotel.

The first things that ran through my mind were, "Well, I don't know you; I'm out here, you're there; it's raining; not everybody represents their needs truthfully." Yet, it was a human being talking to me about a need.

I asked her where she was staying, to give me her number and I would get back to her. The first thing I did was call a bunch of social service numbers, and they all led nowhere. I took my lunch break at home, and told my husband what was

going on. He was just about to leave for an appointment.

Still feeling unsettled about the phone call, I went to a place in my house where I sometimes pray, and called out to Spirit: "I need guidance; I don't know what to do." Sitting for a while, I really tried to stick with it. "Please give me guidance."

Back at work, I still wasn't sure what to do, but started looking up the price of a local hotel. Just then my husband called saying, "As it turns out, my appointment is right next door to where these people are."

I thought "Wow!" The unlikeliness of that happening made me feel that God was starting to direct me, and when you know God's speaking to you, whatever the answer is, it's okay.

We decided that John would go to meet with them and, if it felt right, offer enough money for a couple of nights' lodging allowing them some time to find a more settled situation. It did feel right, and on his way home, he saw a big rainbow in the sky, a confirmation of sorts, I thought.

I thanked God for showing me how important it is to get quiet. From a very unsettled state when I picked up the phone, I had come to feeling so much more settled after going to a centered place and asking for help. Pure consciousness is always there, just waiting for us to tap in.

Almighty Spirit, I know that you communicate with me in every moment, but in my busyness, sometimes I can't hear you. Sometimes I can't feel you. Please remind me to go to that center of divine consciousness within me at my single eye, and listen for your direction, that wisdom might become a greater part of my experience. I am thankful for all the brothers and sisters who were able to lead lives of greatness, your greatness, because they were willing to stand aside and let you work through them. Amen

Christmas gift suggestions:

To your enemy, forgiveness.

To an opponent, tolerance.

To a friend, your heart.

To a customer, service.

To all, charity.

*To every child,
a good example.*

To yourself, respect.

– Oren Arnold

One Light

Ekknath Easwaran

Every year as Christmas approaches, I like to see how people are celebrating. Each season seems to bring more lights strung over homes and fences. But putting up hundreds of lights does not mean we are celebrating Christmas. One light is enough: one light, right inside, dispelling the darkness of anger, fear, and greed.

India has a great festival called *Dipavali*, from *dipa*, light, and *avali*, rows. Homes all over India will be lit by rows of lights. It's a beautiful sight, but in every religion the real festival of lights is the display within: patience, sympathy, good will, security, selflessness, love, wisdom. What a long row! We can go in the midst of people and they will receive the benefit of this light.

One person being patient brightens everything around. Being patient with those who differ from us, with those who oppose us, with those who aren't patient with us—this is the real meaning of spiritual growth.

The First Peace

Black Elk

The first peace, which is the most important, is that which comes within the souls of people when they realize their relationship, their oneness with the universe and all its powers, and when they realize that at the center of the universe dwells the Great Spirit, and that this center is really everywhere, it is within each of us.

A Testament of Devotion

Thomas R. Kelly

Deep within us all there is an amazing inner sanctuary of the soul, a holy place, a Divine Centre, a speaking Voice, to which we may continuously return. Eternity is at our hearts, pressing upon our time-torn lives, warming us with intimations of an astounding destiny, calling us home unto Itself.

Yielding to those persuasions, gladly committing ourselves in body and soul, utterly and completely, to the Light Within, is the beginning of true life. It is a dynamic centre, a creative Life that presses to birth within us. It is a Light Within which illumines the face of God and casts shadows and new glories on the face of man. It is a seed stirring to life if we do not choke it.

Here is the slumbering Christ, stirring to be awakened, to become the soul we clothe in earthly form and action. And He is within us all.

*In the silence
of my being,
I can hear
the pulsating hum
of all creation
moving through
every atom
of my body.
If I but listen,
I can hear You;
I can feel You;
I can see You.
I know
I am a being
of consciousness.
I am eternal.
I am part of You,
Mighty Spirit.*

— Norman Paulsen

The Mystical Christ-mass Tree

Norman Paulsen - excerpt from "Life • Love • God, Story of a Soul Traveler" (available in 2016)

I was soon to be seven years old. The Christmas tree was decorated with colored lights, and packages were piled high on the floor beneath it. Inwardly, I sensed the true meaning of "Christ-mass" trees.

Here is an outer image of man's inner tree of life—the central nervous system—the colored lights depicting the chakras or vibratory gateways

(in our cerebrospinal centers) to worlds and dimensions within the expanding sphere of creation.

The star on top symbolizes the first creation of light, the Christ light, crowning the tree of life within. The gifts symbolize the fruits of a life well lived, offered with love in service and humility to the pure light of consciousness that sustains us.

May the Blessings of the Inner Christ
Be With You and Yours

Sunburst labyrinth walk with lights and luminaria, Winter Solstice evening – photo: Al King