



White Robed Monks of St. Benedict

# Network News

Ausculta

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## Abbot's Notes

Peace be with you and yours now and forevermore.

India is always a sobering experience for some. This year especially as very few non-Indians were present. Standard tourist business people are without business. Many people are just sad: sad that we have allowed ourselves to get into this current quagmire of wanton killing, hate, and destruction — because we are right.

We kill in the name of God, the State, the Family, Money, Love — it matters not. We seem most capable of finding an excuse. Human nature, some say.

How uncivilized.

We may even blow ourselves up. Certainly, we must have been right.

There is no right. There is no wrong. There is no state. There is no God. There is no self. We create. We create right. We create wrong. We create state. We create

God. We create self. Then we must defend same as our own creation. We defend.

We can be pious, righteous, sincere, prayerful, hopeful. We can have meetings and councils.

Haven't we been doing these same behaviors since our beginning? Empires come and go. Wars come and go. Great nations become small. Empires go out of existence—puff! Remember the terror of the USSR?

We each simply must surrender — surrender to ourselves and our own self.

Surrender to the moment just as it is. Surrender, not resign. Surrender. Only in total surrender to the givenness of the moment do we experience salvation from our own morass or pleasure.

Shakespeare remarked that we are all actors on a stage. When we each surrender to our act can we be free to enjoy life just as it is be-

cause it is that it is. We then recognize how we have created our experience within the moment and may be even trapped by our experience. Recognizing how we created our experience and then created that we trapped ourselves within that experience frees us of that experience and the trap.

In this Spring time, allow healthy, new realities to come forth within your life. Let the tired and old ways of doing and behaving quietly recede into the veils of the past, forgiven and forgotten.

Then we can experience God as God is rather than as our creation. We can then experience others as they are rather than as we create them. We can then experience our own self as we are rather than as our own creation.

How to surrender? Surrender.

Peace and joy!

+Robert OSB

## Getting Back On Track by Alan Simpson

When driving we always need to make course corrections, big or small, to fit the changing road conditions. We navigate the road not by driving perfectly each moment, but by regularly shifting our attention back

to the road and adjusting accordingly.

Like driving, relationships are not static and require navigating a constantly changing reality. I change, you change and our relationship changes. We keep the relationship

healthy and alive not by being perfect each moment, but by constantly "checking in" and getting back on track.

When we "nod off" and stop paying attention we lose touch with

*(Continued on page 4)*

## Special point of insight: [www.6seconds.org](http://www.6seconds.org)

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Happiness cannot be traveled to, owned, earned, worn or consumed. Happiness is the spiritual experience of living every minute with love, grace and gratitude. (D. Waitley)

How do you define happiness? Dictionary.com defines it as "An agreeable feeling or condition of the soul arising from good fortune or propitious happening of any kind." But, does true happiness really come from good fortune or is it a state of mind?

Try this. . .  
Think of a major life goal you have accomplished. Has it made you happy? Why? Why not?  
If good fortune is not a prerequisite for happiness, can you be happy and grieving at the same time?  
When asked, most parents want more than anything for their child (ren) to be happy. What does happiness for your child look like? What did your parents want for you?

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## A Shift in Perception by Peter Russell

(from *Waking Up in Time: Finding Inner Peace in Times of Accelerating Change*. Peter Russell. Novato: Origin Press, 1998; pp 96f.)

“From either perspective, that of illumination or that of lightening the load, the essence of enlightenment is a shift in perception. It is a shift from seeing the world through the eyes of concern to seeing without judgment — seeing what is rather than what ought to be or might be.

“Enlightenment is waking up to the illusions contained in the belief that we have been fed since birth: the belief that whether or not we are at peace depends upon what we have or do in the material world. It is discovering for oneself, as a personal experience of life, that whether or not we are at peace depends on our perception and interpretation of events.

“This alternative way of seeing is to be found at the core of most of the great spiritual traditions. It is, for instance, the very foundation stone of Buddhism. As a prince in a wealthy kingdom, the young Buddha — Siddhartha, as he was then called — had everything he could wish for in the material world. But, like many of us today, he realized that wealth and luxury do not in

themselves remove suffering. So he left the palace and set out, determined to find a way to end suffering. After six years of studying with various ascetics, yogis, and other holy men, and learning many practices and mental disciplines, he was scarcely nearer his goal. Then one day, sitting in meditation, he had an insight that caused him to wake up — and hence to gain the name *Buddha*, which means ‘the awakened one.’

“He summarized his realization in the Four Noble Truths, which might be paraphrased as follows:

1. We all experience suffering one way or another — mental, physical, emotional, spiritual.
2. We create our own suffering. It is a consequence of our desiring things to be other than they are.
3. It need not be this way. We have a choice as to how we perceive the world and live our lives.
4. There are systematic ways to go about changing how we think and perceive.

“Parallel ideas can be found in Christianity. The admonition ‘Sinner repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand’ is often interpreted as telling us to be sorry for what we have done, because the day

of judgment is coming. But if we look back to the Greek texts, we find another possible interpretation.

“The Greek word that we translate as ‘sin’ is *amartano*. This, as— Maurice Nichol has pointed out in his book *The Mark*, is a term derived from archery and means to have missed the mark, to have missed the target. The target we are each seeking is inner fulfillment, but, imagining that it will come from what we have or do, we aim in the wrong direction, and this “miss the mark.” It is this fundamental error as to how to find happiness and peace of mind that is our ‘original sin.’ The word translated as ‘repent’ is *metanoia*, which means a transformation of mind. So “Sinners repent” can also be translated as ‘You have missed your target, and not found happiness in the world around you, change your thinking,’ for what you are looking for lies very close by, within you.

“Nor is it only religious teachers who have proclaimed this truth. The Greek philosopher Epictetus, living in the first century A.D., gave one of the most succinct and powerful expositions of this wisdom when he wrote, ‘People are disturbed, not by things, but by the view they take of them.’”

## Serenity and Tranquility by Dainin Katagiri

(from *Returning to Silence: Zen Practice in Daily Life*. Dainin Katagiri. Boston: Shambhala, 1988; p. 13)

“To live a spiritual life is to learn and to practice the Way-mind. The Way is the universal path that is complete serenity and tranquility. It is called Mind. This Mind is not ordinary mind. Mind, as serenity and tranquility, is the original nature of human consciousness. This path is open to all beings... Regardless of whether we are conscious of it or not, our life is constantly right in the midst of universal path, serenity and tranquility. The Way-mind is in

everything, constantly.

“Serenity & tranquility as Mind are universal consciousness. It is just like a waterfall that is flowing constantly, regardless of whether you are consciousness of it or not. Although this Way-mind is serenity and tranquility, this serenity is not our usual understanding of serenity; it is at the same time dynamic. If you see a waterfall in the distance, it appears to be quiet, but if you see it close up it is constantly moving. The original nature of human consciousness is just like a waterfall, which is serene and tranquil, & yet simultaneously dynamic.

“In the study of psychology, one tries to understand the basis of consciousness, which is called unconscious. The unconscious is vast; it is filled with many things because it is connected with times past, present and future. Psychology tries to understand this unconscious level, and to take things from it. When you try to take things from it, this is nothing but the functioning of ego-consciousness, ... the source of selfishness, the source of egoistic understanding. “

*Reflection: What did Jesus infer when he said, “I am the way.”?*

## The Irony of the Rat Race Explained offered by Beth Greer

from NY to NC to Mexico ....

A boat docked in a tiny Mexican village. An American tourist complimented the Mexican fisherman on the quality of his fish and asked how long it took him to catch them. "Not very long," answered the Mexican. "But then, why didn't you stay out longer and catch more?" asked the American. The Mexican explained that his small catch was sufficient to meet his needs and those of his family. The American asked, "But what do you do with the rest of your time?" "I sleep late, fish a little, play with my children, and take a siesta with my wife. In the evenings, I go into the village to

see my friends, have a few drinks, play the guitar, and sing a few songs...I have a full life." The American interrupted, "I have an MBA from Harvard and I can help you! You should start by fishing longer every day. You can then sell the extra fish you catch. With the extra revenue, you can buy a bigger boat. With the extra money the larger boat will bring, you can buy a second one and a third one and so on until you have an entire fleet of trawlers. Instead of selling your fish to a middleman, you can negotiate directly with the processing plants and maybe even open your own plant. You can then leave this little village and move to Mexico City, Los Angeles,

or even New York City! From there you can direct your huge enterprise." "How long would that take?" asked the Mexican. "Twenty, perhaps twenty-five years," replied the American. "And after that?" "Afterwards? That's when it gets really interesting," answered the American, laughing. "When your business gets really big, you can start selling stocks and make millions!" "Millions? Really? And after that?" "After that you'll be able to retire, live in a tiny village near the coast, sleep late, play with your children, catch a few fish, take a siesta, and spend your evenings drinking and enjoying your friends."

And so it goes ....

## Enlightenment as a Scientific Phenomenon by N. Trasi

(from *The Science of Enlightenment*. Nitin Trasi. New Delhi: DK Printworld, 1999; p. 66f.)

"We (have) seen how it is the left hemisphere which does the job of selecting from the abundance of sensory inputs that the brain is bombarded with, and how by its selective editing it maintains a coherent belief system, a consistent storyline.

"We saw that is therefore this part of the brain which is responsible for the illusion of a 'self' & the illusion of separateness from the rest of the universe. This belief is programmed into

our brains from early childhood. The left brain then consolidates on this. It selectively registers events which would seem to support this belief, & edits out those which point against it. By this constant 'filtering' of information, it maintains this fiction of a separate 'self.'

"We also saw that the job of the right hemisphere is to point out inconsistencies in the storyline, & that there is a threshold level up to which the selective editing can be successfully carried out by the left brain. This level is different in different people.

When the inconsistencies pointed out by the right brain reach that threshold, the left brain is forced to abandon the old model, & there is a paradigm shift.

"Enlightenment is a paradigm shift — the most radical that there can be. The entire old, individualistic, 'me'-centered world-view is 'ripped up,' and is replaced by a new world-view which is no more 'me'-based, but us instead universal in outlook — where everything is seen not as from a center, the 'me,' but "from no center at all,' as J. Krishnamurti has said."

## A Congregational Catholic Parish for All Souls

[Acting locally we think globally.]

### GRACE NORTH CHURCH

2138 Cedar at Walnut  
Berkeley, CA 94709

[one block east of Cedar  
and Shattuck in North Berkeley]

E-mail: richard@mapplebeckpalmer.com

PARISH MASS with communion for all, every Sunday at 10 A.M. followed by Coffee Hour in the Parish Hall. This is the best time to meet the community and its clergy.

The parish sponsors **THE GRACE INSTITUTE FOR RELIGIOUS LEARNING**, a non-academic learning community with on-going programs tailored to specific interests of participants. [Cognitive Science & Spirituality a *specialite de la maison!*]

Parish and Institute together generate **THE GRACE COMMUNITY** pastored by the Revd. Richard Mapplebeckpalmer.

The parish is a member of the National Association of Congrega-

tional Christian Churches and is associated with the White Robed Monks of St. Benedict.

The Sanctuary is available for Weddings and other religious activities. The Parish Hall can be rented for social occasions.

The City of Berkeley recognizes our Sanctuary as a Landmarked building (1914) and our parish (1892) as an Historically marked location — with limited street parking. So please budget extra time to park.

**White Robed Monks of St.  
Benedict**

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**Peace and Joy!**

## Getting Back On Track (con't)

*(Continued from page 1)*

each other. We may miss a thought, ignore an emotion or just be preoccupied. From that moment on our realities diverge. Sometimes we recognize a misunderstanding early and the correction is quick and painless, while other times we don't notice how far off course we are until we "crash".

The longer we wait before making a correction the more outdated our understanding of each other and the more clumsy and inappropriate our actions. It is much easier to handle an upset the moment it occurs than deal with anger that has been stewing for months. Fully listening to a truth spoken the first time requires much less adjust-

ment than hearing it only when it emotionally explodes in our face.

How well we do in relationships is based on how quickly we notice a misstep and our shared ability to get back on track!

A good example of being off track is the Israeli - Palestinian conflict. 50 years ago both sides stopped listening to each other. Their realities began to diverge and today each side is solidified in their own mutually exclusive universe, both correct from their own point of view. With no shared reference points the ability to reach an agreement, or even communicate, is minimal. A course correction will not be easy to make, nor will

it be quick. The first step, as with any relationship, is to fully understand each other. It will take authentic listening to 50 years worth of misunderstandings before it makes sense to sit down at a negotiation table to discuss an appropriate action.

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*Those who can't remember the past are condemned to repeat it -  
George Santayana*

Those who are attached to the past ARE repeating it.

Those who experience the past and then let it go live in the present.

Those who are fully present have no past.

<http://www.soulmate.org/>