

Recommended Viewing: Independence Day

It has often been said that the best way to get a bunch of squabbling people to work together, is to give them a common adversary. When a group of terrorists attacked the United States last year on September 11, for a moment we stood together and no one seemed to care about differences of age, race, religion, gender, or even orientation. Nearly every country in the world, it seemed, wanted to be the first to express its outrage, its sadness, and its solidarity with the United States, in response to the attack. But it wasn't long before the passion of the moment was forgotten and all of the familiar dissensions were again common within daily life. So shall we focus upon the enmity, apathy, and bigotry which returned or upon the fact that for a moment we found something within ourselves which was so much better?

Certainly the faults of humanity will always be with us and we need to keep working on restricting or eliminating them in whatever ways we can, but the charm of this movie, even with its more violent side, is the reminder that however forgotten and overlooked it may be, there is a more noble and more worthy strand of goodness within even the most unlikely characters. Even when it makes no sense to fight back against oppressing forces or negative ideas within our world, a miracle just might happen if we do.

Within the focus upon the tragedy of the events of September 11, 2001 and the military conflicts which followed, it would be very easy to overlook every distracting detail. It is the existence of those details and the collaboration which arose out of them, however, that are the true accomplishment and the greatest victory of the whole historical turning point within our national consciousness. It is when people who typically would not associate with each other, join hands to make the world a better place, that the enemy has already lost, even if not even a single bullet has yet been fired.

I encourage you to revisit this movie from time to time, to remind yourself that ultimately, differences are for individual identification and not for building walls between yourself and anyone else. Love and Life are so much bigger and so much better than any of the walls we have ever built. May they continue to build bridges of understanding between every nation and people and religion, in spite of whatever selfish military or political agendas anyone may have, and may we all join hands in whatever ways we can, in support of those bridges. May one and all and everything, blessed and loved ever be.

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Sister Who's Perspective

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Life is a collaborative effort, encompassing more than we know. In a time of abundant "information overload," news, communication, and travel across great distances, we often talk at each other without listening, communicating, or understanding. Humanity needs its icons, but also its iconoclasts to grow beyond the good and bad qualities that now limit and describe us. The essences of both God and us remain, in the midst of questions, to be discovered, experienced, and expressed. Please share in this ongoing dialogue, remembering to indicate whether and how you wish to be identified.
Blessings, love, and peace to you.
---Sister Who

Alpine and Cosmic Perspectives

I sometimes wonder what the mountains high above must think of what transpires below. Perhaps they are puzzled by the abundance of frenetic activity which produces nothing even half so durable as the mountain itself. I do know that when my experience of life veers toward being quite overwhelming, a hike to a mountain's summit will quickly throw everything back into proper and healthy perspective.

To go one step further, as viewed from outer space, the earth looks quite beautiful and serene. It is only as we draw closer that hurtful and perhaps even violent details begin to become apparent, storms and earthquakes but also unnatural and violent conflicts between nations.

If we persist in our journey, however, and refuse to turn back or give up, drawing closer and closer, being willing to see more and more of the details, anomalous individuals also begin to appear. What at one point appeared to be nothing but a vast battlefield, now shows itself to contain a handful of people scurrying about and tending to the wounded in whatever ways they can, to encourage healing. Perhaps we will even see a tiny delegation traveling back and forth between the camps, attempting to establish some sort of cease-fire or state of peace.

So it seems that peace is something which shows itself in the vastness of the universe but which also has the possibility of existence at the level of individual human hearts and lives. Where it is most lacking, apparently, is within the various levels of community and civilization which humanity has collectively created.

For millennia, the earth has whirled through space in a constant state of balance and serenity, showing peace to be a thing of great longevity. Within that same period, literally thousands of wars, battles, and disagreements have come and gone, each one small enough to fit within a tiny fragment of time.

When I practice peace, therefore, I touch upon the eternal. When I practice war, violence, or selfish conflict, I touch upon the temporal, finite, smallness of events which may not even be remembered by anyone, even a few moments into the future. Shall I think of myself as being so small that the present moment could completely contain me or am I bigger than that? Am I so small that the story printed in that grocery store tabloid about me, would actually have the ability to contain and encompass the complete truth of who and what I am? Am I so without multi-dimensional perspective and experience that even a dozen books could contain all the information necessary, for some future civilization to construct a perfect and complete copy of me?

In reflecting upon all of this, I came to the tentative conclusion that peace is very big and anger is very small. If within my own life I strive to harmonize with the universe, I bring that bigness into my own soul. If on the other hand, I embrace the constant striving characteristic of human civilizations, I bring the smallness of anger and hatred into my own soul. If I am more than the present moment could show or contain, then I have the ability to move on to other endeavors and opportunities, no matter how consistently failure of some kind or other has dogged

me or surrounded me in the past. If I possess or allow for expansive thoughts, I can grow. If I am capable of nothing more than the dogmatic recitation of someone else's conclusions about life or spirituality, I am already entombed and my body is no more than food for worms, rather than a temple housing a divine spirit.

While assisting with a festival oriented around alternative spirituality a number of years ago, Willy Two Feather introduced himself to me as being a Native American priest and gave me a poster of his own design which I am finally in the process of matting and framing. The poster simply says, "When you have a problem, when you have a confrontation, when you have a glitch, this is your time to be small or big. Who do you choose to be?"

I have also several times spoken of the need to be bigger than any corner of life experience within which I find myself to presently be. These are all simply nice words, however, until that moment when the corner of life experience within which I find myself to be, is very small indeed and is making loud and forceful demands that I become likewise very small and my light of little significance to the world around me.

When all is said and done and the time comes for me to sign my name to the life which has been my own, will I do so with pride and confidence for having contributed something good to that part of the on-going symphony of Life in which I was privileged to participate? Or will I instead write the letters of my name very small, hoping no one will notice who it was, who did so little with the vast possibilities my life included, possibilities to love and shine brightly in a million different places and ways? With whatever limitations I possess, am I still willing to take the chance to touch another's life, even if the direct and obvious (but not ultimate) reward is only embarrassment and rejection? (In all honesty, the best answer I myself can give to this question is, "sometimes;" yet as any writer knows, it doesn't matter how many times you're

rejected, as long as you keep trying until you're not.)

Shall I turn a deaf ear to the sufferings around me, simply because I am too big to be bothered by some opportunity which will not be remembered? To turn a deaf ear or a blind eye toward any opportunity to provide the light and healing power of divine love, disconnects me from the peaceful bigness of the universe. The universe, divinely created and orchestrated, honestly and unjudgmentally opens its arms to embrace all the myriad tiny details of Life's unfolding in all of the diverse places where it may be found. In being disconnected by such a choice to be both deaf and blind, I am reduced to being the smallest and most insignificant thing of all. I cannot help but think that God must feel ashamed, though resolved to continue loving until such smallness of mind and spirit finally passes from me, a specific person within the spectrum of creation with yet-untapped potential for divine embodiment.

I recall reading somewhere, years ago, that "no one stands so tall, as when stooping to help another." In perhaps one of the greatest of all enduring ironies, the transcendence and miracle of divine love and presence large enough to fill the entire universe, is most easily revealed and demonstrated within the simple acts of kindness and love each of us has the opportunity to perform each and every day. Just as the mountain reaches from the sky to the earth, forming a solid bridge by which we may cross from one to the other and back again, each of us may be the bridge by which God is made known within the confused and warring world, within which we find ourselves to be.

Especially within times of great strife, may one and all and everything, blessed and loved ever be. The healing of the world will come by no other means.

A Personal Update

To prepare for participation in the bodybuilding competition of the sixth international Gay Games and Cultural Festival, to be held in Sydney, Australia, November 2-9, 2002, I have pretty much maintained since January 3, of this year, a daily exercise routine including two miles of jogging and over sixteen hundred repetitions of a hundred and sixteen different exercises (anyone want to accuse me of being lazy?). Through a friend of an acquaintance I haven't seen in almost ten years, I now have housing provided within the Sydney metropolitan area, for the time that I will be there. I met last week for the first time, with a woman who has volunteered to help and has past experience as a competitive bodybuilding coach. She was very complimentary of the progress I've made so far, but also gave me a few areas upon which to focus a little more effort. In terms of remaining needs, regarding this exciting and significant challenge, I am negotiating with a friend at the present time for use of tanning equipment but more importantly, I still need to secure a roundtrip plane ticket.

The book manuscript upon which I'm working, *ReInventing the Sacred Clown*, which is essentially a sort of autobiography of Sister Who, is coming along well. The first two chapters (of fifteen total chapters) have been completed and the third, fourth, and fifth are in the process of final editing.

Video editing equipment by which to produce more television shows and also hopefully by which to export the show to more

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viewing audiences around the country, is gradually being pulled together by my former lifepartner who has extensive knowledge of computers and an intuitive gift for finding the best prices. Nevertheless, the bill continues to creep upwards and another \$200 or so is still needed.

For the moment, my main focus is upon the Gay Games in Australia in November. I have contacted several individuals there to advise them that Sister Who will be present at the celebration, but have no specific details yet concerning where I will be appearing or what I will be doing while I am there. I plan to compose and mail the November issue of "Sister Who's Perspective" immediately before departing for Australia and to give a full report in the December issue when I return. In that the first seed of becoming Sister Who was planted at my first participation in the Gay Games in 1990, which occurred in Vancouver, B.C., Canada, I strongly suspect that this participation in the Gay Games will become an extremely positive and life-changing experience also.

After returning from the Games, tentative plans for the following year include the production of numerous television shows, the creation of a personal spiritual growth tool which has been in the planning stages for a number of years and is tentatively entitled "The Tarot of Sister Who", the drafting of governing documents for a new non-profit organization by which an inter-faith retreat center will eventually be built, and the recording of an album of original folk and worship songs by Sister Who a/k/a Denver NeVaar. Does all of that sound rather grandiose? Well, I guess I'll just take it one step at a time and see how far I get, or more accurately, how long it takes to get there (since I'm generally not the kind of person to give up on a good idea, if there's any way to continue working towards its realization). I've been Sister Who for over ten years now and already done a whole list of things I never thought I would, so who knows what might be possible within the next ten years? Thank you for listening in each month through this newsletter, as we find out together.

Blessings, love, and peace to you, now and always.

---Sister Who