

Time-Out

Suzanne Core: It's such fun to listen to everyone "sign in" during "rollcall," to see who is on the teleconference this day. Well, what a galaxy of angels encircles the planet this morning, coming to focus right here right now, together in this sacred space. The word "angels" is not meant to be hyperbole. That is how I see you, and so many others around the world, each expressing the best of themselves for the good of their community, local or digital. Each rising to the occasion, doing their part, during a trying and dangerous time.

Like Larry, I love the piece from Beethoven's Ninth Symphony that we heard played by the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra just before rollcall. A video clip of a rehearsal done in these days of Social Distancing and Sheltering in Place—each musician connecting from his or her own home via a digital medium like Zoom—has been circling the internet for a couple of days and has come to my inbox a couple of times. There is something so uplifting about that particular piece, Ode to Joy. The title of the choral piece sung at the end of it is, "All Men Shall Be Brothers." The melody also became a hymn. The first line of the hymn is, "Joyful, joyful, we adore thee; God of Glory, Lord of Love." Both music and words uplift even a heavy heart. And it's not just the Rotterdam Orchestra that has done something like this, coming together individually, digitally, to create something collectively and share it online. In the past week or so, there have been a number of orchestras and choral groups around the planet that have done the same thing: come together to make music and share it with the public, each musician from their own room, each playing their part, making a whole. One such offering is called "Isolation in Unison." I think of them all as "angels incarnate, expressing"—a phrase coined by writer, speaker and friend, Martin Exeter, who sometimes spoke of his friends as "angels incarnate and in expression."

These "isolation in unison" performances online reminded me of what this group looks like when we gather digitally, too, with a small square on the screen for each one who calls in, so we can see each other, through live video or photographs of those on their laptops and telephone numbers for those on their phones. And as people sign in here, it is so good to hear voices of old friends and friends I've not yet met. Angels incarnate and in expression. Two weeks ago I really enjoyed the sign-off at the end of the teleconference too: people saying "bye," "see you," "ciao," as they joyfully signed off one after another. Then I got to thinking, the spirit we are seeing now around the world is not just in the musicians and the way they are connecting online but all the others—the medical personnel all over the world, putting themselves at risk, and their families; the delivery people who keep delivering because now today it is the only way a lot of people can get food and supplies; grocery clerks; firemen and

EMTs and police; all essential services joining the musicians in continuing to do what they do best even in the face of uncertain times, maybe unprecedented times. Angels incarnate, expressing.

Sometimes people call that the human spirit but I'm not sure about that; it's the human spirit, it seems, that got us into this state. Do you remember Bill Bahan, Sr., giving an introductory talk to The Art of Living, talking about "human being?" Saying we aren't just human, we are also Being, the "angel incarnate." So I think it's the spirit of Being in each of us that is popping its head up around the planet in all of these different ways, from musicians to medical people to others. Angels incarnate, expressing. Being is where we are all one, where we come together, in reality and in truth. That's where we come together in the only safe place, which we have called, "the vibrational ark."

There's a comedian named Trevor Noah who was interviewed last week and he said, "Why does it feel so apocalyptic? It isn't the end of the world." (Remember this guy's name is Noah!) If it seems apocalyptic, why? Is it because it's something invisible that sneaks up on you, so you don't know how to protect yourself from it? Is it because it came on so fast? Because it spreads so rapidly? Because it is so disruptive, and kills? I don't know. By the way, the word apocalypse doesn't mean the end of the world as it is usually thought of, as Armageddon. The word apocalypse actually comes from Latin and Greek for "to reveal," "to unveil," "to disclose." Apocalypse is Revelation. [The name of the Biblical book Revelation was originally Apocalypse.]

Martin Exeter also once said, "Unveiling the angel reveals the light of the King." People around the earth are unveiling the angel these days even amidst the uncertainty, or maybe because of it. Maybe that's one of the side effects of this pandemic: people are given time to think, to slow down, to "be still and know." So when we come together, as we do every two weeks, we have a special opportunity of extending a radiance into the world collectively, in a focused moment, more intense perhaps than when we're going about our individual lives, as we must do. A passage from the Bible that I've had on my mind the last few days is this, from Song of Solomon: "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away; for, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone, the flowers appear on the earth, the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land. Rise up, my loves, my fair ones, and come away." (Song of Solomon 2:10-12)

When we come together in a specific way, like this teleconference every two weeks, we have a particular opportunity to extend that message, to call to the angels incarnate, to call to that expression, not to the fears and the uncertainties, not to the strangeness and the changes,

but to the one place where all is safe: the high mountain, under the hand of God, the only place for unprecedented times. It has been said, it is sustained radiance that saves the world. I always love hearing rollcall at the start of these teleconferences and I love being able to see the faces of friends, to hear their voices. But I know we are always together in what we call the vibrational ark, from whence flows what Larry, about a year ago, called “vibrational governance.” And I love the phrase, “angels incarnate and in expression.” We rejoice in hearts rising up to meet what’s coming down from above; that’s what the Ode to Joy touches into, and that’s what we’re seeing in so many and varied ones around the world. That is what we have to offer, and to share with the world.

So I have loved having these few minutes with each of you, from the point of stillness, from the place of home, where we are always gathered together.

Larry Krantz: As we know, the world we live in does not reflect the true world that spirit would bring forth; the true state is blocked by human misuse and confusion. The resultant state is filled with disease and violence and uncertainty, and with it, underlying fear. It has been that way for thousands of years. It is so deeply ingrained it is difficult to imagine another state of living that is harmonious and at ease. I have often wondered how spirit could change this distorted state, which is so widespread and maintains such a firm grip on people’s lives. But, look at how billions of people around the world have quickly changed the way they live when faced with this virus pandemic! Pressure is needed to stimulate change, so we may welcome change, regardless of how it affects us. In just a few weeks, most of the population of the earth are sheltering at home, and many activities and most travel have come to a full stop. It illustrates that changes can come quickly to the body of humankind, and perhaps transformation, because the roots of the distorted state, while massive, do not run deep, but are shallow. How easily masses of people can be swayed! It is a remarkable time.

This pause for the world is like a Time-out, often given by parents and teachers to a misbehaving child, who is given time to cool off and think about how they have acted. Maybe a few words are spoken about sharing toys or not hitting another child, but mostly that child is given space for reflection, because inherently they know how they should behave. Most adults in the world are spiritual children. Their behavior has been off-kilter, mesmerized by false beliefs and jealousies and anger and fear. A Time-out can be very useful, to re-consider how one has lived, what is important, life’s purpose, and so on. Maybe we will come out of the Time-out more spiritually aware, kinder, wiser, and more in tune with our true selves.

In this Internet age particularly, we realize that we may be separate but not alone. Of course, we are never really alone, for we are one human body composed of billions of cells,

connected at unseen levels. The Internet enables us to link up directly with family conferences, shared music, and humor. In the face of fear and uncertainty, many have risen up to give selflessly, showing courage and nobility, which is an inspiration to all of us.

Tess Taylor from the San Francisco area said, “Viruses clearly don’t care whether we are rich or poor, white or black, gun owners or radical pacifists. We share common breaths. There is really no elsewhere, no place to retreat, no gated community whose walls will serve; we are all linked and our health is a community function, the well-being of others is also the well-being of ourselves.”

We are in this together. Borders and ethnicities and skin color and belief systems seem less important. The virus has leveled the playing field and shown that we are one body of people and should come together as a human family. For one thing, working harmoniously is the best way to meet the threat of this virus, as well as all the challenges of life. As Suzanne mentioned, it is indeed time to rise up.

I would like to read a poem written by our friend, Chris Foster. It flies above the human viewpoint, to see from the vantage of the one within, the view of the god-being that is our true identity—what some would call our higher selves, the lord within, or the angel incarnate. It is worth meditating upon. It is called, “The Spirit Speaks.”

I have never once deviated
 In my love for you.
 From the moment you were conceived
 I have loved you with a love
 Changeless
 Endless
 Irrevocable.
 There has never been a day, an hour, an instant
 When I was not with you
 Loving you.
 I nurtured you as a seed
 Enfolded you as a child
 Strengthened you as a man.
 I was an invisible shield over your head
 Though you knew it not.
 I am still that invisible shield!
 With infinite care I attend your wounds,
 Govern your heartbeat,
 Remove the wastes that do not belong.
 I sleep not at night.

When you close your eyes
Yielding at last more fully to my care
I go to work
And heal, as far as I can
The ravages of your insane, inexplicable self-activity.
You imagine in your blindness
That you can love or not
As you choose,
Condemn, criticize, hate
As you choose.
Fortunately for you I have no such choice.
I am true always to the solemn dictates of love.
I respect to the last the covenant I made
When I came into the world.
Yet I know too that you cannot survive
If you continue to fight against me,
Ignoring my government
Preferring strange impulses of your own choosing.
Rejecting me, you reject love.
This is why you are always looking for love
But never find it.
Just when you think you have it
Love
Like a bird
Flies away.
Your songs, art, literature all sing
This vain and fruitless quest
For a love that will never change
A love that will never die
A love that is ever new.
Turn to me
Acknowledge me
Accept me
Love me
And you will know such love
Here and now.
Together we will restore the world
To order and to beauty.

Wise words. If we are still, we hear the voice within, which is our true voice, guiding our lives, putting us in the best place to succeed, and to carry out the mission for which we were born. I took a walk in the desert recently while Joyce stayed home to make chocolate chip cookies, which incidentally, taste delicious. Our desert, the Sonoran, is not like the Sahara, with miles of sand dunes. It is alive with flora and fauna adapted to a dry environment. We have trees like mesquite and paloverde, bushes and shrubs that are starting to bloom, carpets of yellow wildflowers, and an endless variety of cacti including the famous saguaro cactus you see in the Southwest. A family of quails scuttled across the trail as I hiked. In the desert it is very quiet and peaceful and reminds me of the silence we know when we are one with our inner selves. It is like a deep well that is both empty and full. I suppose that sounds like a paradox. The emptiness comes from letting go of the outer self, free of concepts and beliefs, no longer needing to boost the human ego or manipulate one's world, for there is complete trust in what is higher. The often uncomfortable impacts to our minds and hearts from out of the world no longer push us this way or that, for our hearts and minds are turned to, and respond, only to spirit. That connection upwards opens a vast resource of truth, as big as the cosmos, and permits the fire of love to burn away everything that does not belong.

These forced Time-outs may be seen as times of contemplation as well as entering a sacred space, a place of deep stillness. If we use these opportunities creatively, we will be in position to provide meaningful spiritual leadership—to blaze a trail for all who would come back to their true selves. We are not alone. We have never been alone. And our connection in spirit, which allows agreement among many, lends strength to what we are doing. Let us use this cycle wisely, to the glory of the One who leads us.

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Pre-Service Music

Ode to Joy from the 4th movement of Beethoven Symphony #9

Performed by the Rotterdams Philharmonisch Orkest each musician performing remotely from their homes yet together as one.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3eXT60rbBVk>