

It is eternity now. I am in the midst of it. It is about me in the sunshine; I am in it, as the butterfly in the light-laden aire. Nothing has to come; it is now. Now is eternity.

Richard Jefferies "The Story Of My Heart" 1883

Winter 2005

Dear Friends,

We have a guest at Martins who has the compulsion (I see it as a form of mental illness) as soon as he walks in the gate to tell us of the latest bad news; children drowning in the Bay, soldiers dying in Iraq, oil spills into the oceans. Whatever the tragedy he always has a need to share it with us. At the same time, looking around us each day, we see our guests' suffering, we see violence and shootings in the streets, more and more cancer diagnoses, the wars, the threatened environment, the list is endless. How are we to deal with the daily sufferings anxiety and horrors we call reality in the 21st century?

The first thing we can do is to take a deep breath and relax. People on a spiritual path know that we must periodically quiet our wondrous but overactive minds to remember spirit, faith, the divine. As humans we base our lives on the 24-hour 7-days-a-week model but we also know in our souls the experience of eternity. When we remember eternity we have enough time each day to both experience and share good news. I am not saying we should ignore suffering, I am only asking that each day we try to bear the responsibility of living for a while in eternity. I ask for faith in the Great Teacher who is challenging us. At the same time I ask that we learn the infinite patience that all great teachers teach their students.

From the beginning, we humans have grappled with violence, anger, greed and oppression but we have simultaneously been learning to act out of compassion, justice and love. We can choose to live our lives and fill our minds with fear, hate and anger, at whatever the cause, or learn to remind ourselves of good news also happening all around us, in all of us, right now.

For we, each and every one of us is loved. Look around at the stars, the sun, the trees, the birds all given freely so we might thrive and grow. Take time to appreciate yourself and the world's process no matter how lost you feel you and/or the world are. Trust in what we are learning and how we are growing. It is happening! We must do this together, as none of us is alone. Share joy wherever and whenever you find it.

At Martins each day, year after year, at the same time that we acknowledge the suffering of the world we try to remember, in the midst of it all, to share the good news of eternity.

Thank you for all your generous support.

All blessings,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Barbara", with a small flourish underneath.