

"I HAVE A DREAM..."



A new year has begun! We have heard, watched and participated in celebrations as clocks around the world ticked past midnight and initiated us into a New Year. With it came an accompanying sense of newness. We are drawn into the euphoria of the many who gather to mark what has become a worldwide occasion. It can be unifying and moving to see the fireworks, hear the music and singing, and feel people's celebratory elation in capital city after capital city around the world. We sense the oneness—the oneness of hope that this New Year beginning will be better than that which has just ended. For there is a dream embedded deep in human hearts that is touched by this simple turning of the hands of the clock. Could it be that that dream is a yearning for life beyond the painful divisions we know in the world around us? Dare we dream of a different, more united world?

More than fifty years ago, Martin Luther King Junior immortalized the words "*I have a dream...*" when he uttered his never-to-be-forgotten speech as he faced the assembled multitude—both black and white—who had marched long distances with him to Washington. These courageous people gave witness to the strength of their feeling about the racism that tore them and their country apart. As a result of this powerful demonstration, the words "*I have a dream...*" are a rallying call to those who stand up against oppression of any kind, anywhere, any time, and for all who hold a deep-held belief in the need for change. These words can act as a clarion call to those of us who grow tired of the blindness



inherent in a divided world. His words are timeless and echo down the decades taking on a particularly enlarged meaning in our times, for the world we now know is bigger, older and more connected across large distances than we had ever dreamed possible fifty years ago.

Like him, we all have dreams, but perhaps we only have one common “big dream” – inclusive of all humanity and of the whole earth community...and even the cosmos itself. After reading Martin Luther King’s speechⁱ again I was inspired to reflect on my own dream and attempt to put some words onto it. His articulation of his dream for a deeply divided country was stirring for those who listened. It called them to a unity and equality, beyond racial divisions. It touched the “lodestone” of our longing for a sense of communion with others. It is as if there is a secret desire within us for a connection that maybe we once knew but which has been forgotten or lost in the unfolding and activity of life. Great leaders often touch this forgotten place within. Perhaps writers do this too, when they write from the deep well of life inside.

As I reflected over the year just ended, and on the CEN reflections for 2018, I sensed beneath the words and differing focus points, this “lodestone” of longing for wholeness and oneness which touched upon my own. It was hidden within the folds of the diverse reflections:



- ✦ In *January's* reflection on the experience of contemplative seeing in walking city streets and recognizing, beyond the diversity, a unity of *being* within the throngs.
- ✦ In *February's* invitation to enter the “*developing field of love and compassion where we are distant from one another and yet together at the heart of all that is*”.
- ✦ In *March's* reflection, as we were led to see ourselves being drawn into a ‘different zone’ through pain and trauma – a zone holding potential oneness with the More.
- ✦ In *April's* reflection, which introduced us to labyrinth walking as a practice that can bring us into a mindfulness that can bring a sense of oneness with self, with those who have died, with earth and everything in and beyond it.
- ✦ In *May's* reflection, we were invited into the beauty and power of pilgrimage to sacred sites of past mystics and know a communion with them in those sacred places... as well as a union of heart with the other pilgrims due to a shared intention.

- ✦ In *June*, winter's cold and bareness became an invitation to enter the silent rhythms of the earth and find again the silence and contemplation that can bring our scattered lives into a oneness with earth, with ourselves and with suffering humanity.
- ✦ The *July* reflection gifted us with a sharing of the experience of viewing ancient tapestries and recognizing in them a gateway into the heart-soul of collective humanity. This, in turn, unites us with "the soul of the earth" whose ground is Love".
- ✦ In *August* we saw how the stillness and silence of the communal CEN hour galvanised the action of a retreat for the writer. It "stunched" her heart, soothed painful arisings, as well as evoking communion consciousness with all who suffer.
- ✦ *September's* reflection led us into the rainbow light of "Mysterious Love", revealing its rainbow colours in our human experience of wonder, suffering, and in "absence" - we were drawn into communion with Mystery and a sense of our common human experience.
- ✦ *October's* reflection opened us to the core place of CEN's purpose—our conscious, loving union with our suffering world. This 'union' was recognized as prayer, and we as dwelling in "the great hub of light energy" which, during our contemplation time together, sends blessing from this place of deep unity, to all those who suffer.
- ✦ The *November* reflection on the experience of making a group mandala invited us to share in the contemplative journey into unity through this shared activity. It became an experience of personal healing of "the broken parts within", opening the possibility of this as a pathway to help heal the planet through Love.
- ✦ *December's* Advent reflection drew us into the mystical depths of silent prayer as a reclaiming of deep shared purpose and promise beyond pain, persecution and suffering. It led us to see this as a "womb-space" of birthing something new where we can participate in God becoming "All in All".



Within all these reflections, in some form or other, there dwells the deep 'lodestone' of longing for 'one-ing' with Mystery—or "Mysterious Love"—and with the larger community of earth, world and planet as they struggle to become more than seems possible now. In this larger longing, Martin Luther King's "*I have a dream...*" is itself enlarged to encompass a desire far beyond any one issue or cause. My attempt at articulating for myself some "*I have a dream...*" statements stopped when I reached twenty,

