

THE CALL OF LOVE

Anne Bliss

*'And we are put on earth a little space,
That we may learn to bear the beams of Love'.*

William Blakeⁱ



LIFELINES

*There are veins in things
rivers in rocks
fire in a beating heart.
Between tissues and bones
sea and loam
a divine Mystery roams.*

*When waves meet shore
and break into foam
listen for their gentle kiss
as they sweep the silky sands.
Look what they weave
when they recede....*

*Tiny veins,
etched by ebbing streams...
These vital flows we all share
in the struggle to be born,
to live, to love, to die,
as we dance, leap, weep and cry.*

*The wave never forgets her place
in the ocean's churning space.
May we remember our place
in this spinning Embrace.*

*May we too, as the waves do,
break freely on this sacred shore,
not counting the cost
but bearing the Cross,
opening again and again
unto Love's beckoning.*

Anne Bliss

ⁱ William Blake, 'The Little Black Boy' in *Songs of Innocence* - 1789

The inspiration to offer this reflection arose following a gentle invitation from Madeline as well as from my appreciation of a growing affinity created through the rich reflections and shared presence offered by so many within the Contemplative Evolutionary Network. I sense that our reflections offer glimpses into the unfolding of a divine mystery. In this reflection, I will endeavor to share my understanding of the relationship between love, suffering and life, based on the journey I have taken and continue to take in following the call of Love.

From my earliest years of growing up in the heart of the Rocky Mountains, I have been intimately aware of the glory of God as manifest in creation...in the wild spring-time anemones, the sappy pinewoods, running rivers that we leapt across on the way to school and under the vastness of starlit nights. In my imagination, God was as close to me as my heart. Later, as a searching young woman, I was blessed with an even more intimate and intense revelation of God, through the gift of his Son. This life-changing moment came about at a time of great need, through a prolonged period of pain, dislocation, and finally, through prayer!

With the gentle laying on of hands by a young compassionate Maori woman, 'I' became radically reconstituted with the infilling of Christ. This embodied reality was, as Paul describes a reality where *"I no longer live, but Christ lives in me"* (Galatians 2:20). Such a profound reorientation of my entire being, as bewildering as it was, gave me the inner bearings to live with a 'Christ-centered' heart in this world. My healing, or 'growing into wholeness' is ongoing as I learn to lessen my resistance to Life's breaking open on to the shores of Love.

The way of the Cross, leading to the triumph of Love, is beautifully expressed in a verse by William Blake: *'And we are put on earth a little space that we may learn to bear the beams of love'*.ⁱⁱ In these words, both the passion and resurrection are imaged. The first, 'bearing the beams of love', brings into focus the image of Jesus on the Cross of his passion. In the second, his whole being is laying bare the beams (rays of light) of Love; God's glory in the midst of the darkest devastation. This is the truth of suffering. When we allow that to happen in ourselves, we are actively participating in the way of Love.

The poem included in this reflection emerged during a retreat at Bateman's Bay a few years ago at a time when I was struggling with grief. Walking along the beach one morning, I was stopped in my tracks by a canvas of beautiful, delicate etchings in the fine sands, resembling tiny veins and arteries. They were a gift from the divine, showing me something that God wanted me to see.

Webs of intricately interconnecting water channels entranced me, and an image of a womb came into focus, with a myriad of veins and arteries carrying life-giving nutrients. I had a sense that we are all nourished embryonically within this generative earth. All of creation shares in a procreative fecundity entailing painful struggle, relinquishment and, ultimately, new life. As I wandered and pondered, a heart came into focus and I saw the arteries and veins of an infinite heart of love forged in the first fiery flaring forth of life some 14 billion years ago. Firing all our individual hearts are the sparks from that original flaring forth.



ⁱⁱ William Blake, 'The Little Black Boy' in *Songs of Innocence* - 1789



Strolling further along the beach I notice a small white baby feather and see a shaft running down the middle, learning later that these 'blood feathers' carry critical life-giving blood for the growing bird. I notice rocks with red veins indicating the intrusion of water filled with minerals and I realize their apparent solidness is an illusion. Rocks are porous and so are we. Life is more fluid and flowing, more shape shifting than solid when we look closely. Whether feathered or two-legged, porous or less so, we are kin together on this earth.

Love, like life, flows as it wills, seeking out the darkest and most abandoned shores of our being. Love has shown me that it is constant, returning faithfully over and over again to claim for itself all that belongs to it. I am learning to trust the wave that carries me to Love's shores and to know that in the breaking open I am ever close to the Christ who is all in all.

Suffering is to bear our collective pain and our individual share for the fullness of life. So much of the pain in the world today arises when, instead of carrying our portion of it, we flee from it, project it onto others, or turn it within to harm ourselves. When I have sat and allowed myself to experience the fullness of pain, though it feels in body, mind and spirit like a death, an eclipse of love as painful as a dagger's slash, the triumph is that life opens out radiantly. The feeling then is one of being in the spaciousness of God with peace and healing love flowing through.

As I (we) open into the fullness of God I sense that our human consciousness is continually being transformed into the consciousness of Christ. We become entwined within the unitive consciousness of Christ, as intricately as the life-giving veins and arteries that pulse through the heart of creation. Mercy, inclusivity, and forgiveness flow freely, bringing us into right relationship with the earth and all her creatures. There is no 'other', no one that we can exclude from this project. Each of us is called to reveal the Divine Mystery at work in and through our lives. This is the gift we offer each other, a gift that truly delights God. I think this is what Irenaeus means when he says; " *The Glory of God is a man (human being) fully alive*". ⁱⁱⁱ

In our faithful daily contemplation and through our conscious daily moments, may we come home to the shores of Love. May we become who we truly are, bearing the image of God, with Love's infinite heart beating through. May we stay vigilant. May this simple but mighty endeavor ripple throughout creation, bringing healing and life to all. And may we live with hope and trust in the affirmation of Teilhard de Chardin, when he says:

"Some day, after mastering the winds, the waves, the tides, and gravity, we shall harness for God the energies of love, and then, for the second time in the history of the world, man (humankind) will have discovered fire." ^{iv}

ⁱⁱⁱ Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyon, in *Adversus Haereses* – 180 AD, Book IV chapter 20 paragraph 7

^{iv} Teilhard de Chardin "The Evolution of Chastity" in *Toward the Future*, 1936, XI 86-87