Reflections for Nonviolent Community

A BOOK OF READINGS
THE OAK RIDGE ENVIRONMENTAL PEACE ALLIANCE
OCTOBER - NOVEMBER 2019
About this booklet

This booklet, published bi-monthly by the Oak Ridge Environmental Peace Alliance, embraces many members of our peace community. The booklet is intended to build spiritual community. It is available for no charge to those who request it. Those who are using the book are asked to participate by contributing readings to it.‡

The common thread in these reflections is the struggle of human beings to improve the world. In OREPA, our struggle to end bomb production in Oak Ridge is part of that struggle. In these reflections, we join ourselves with the larger community that works to heal the world.

From the outset, the reflection booklet has been provided free of charge. If you are able to make a donation to cover the cost of your booklet, it would be greatly appreciated. A gift of $20 would cover the cost of paper, printing and mailing for one year. If you are unable to make a donation, please continue to accept the reflection booklet and use it.

Each Thursday, in addition to our reflection, you will find the name of a member of our community who is using this reflection booklet. This is an opportunity to think a little about that person and all those who work for peace on her/his day.

‡ contributions, suggestions, requests can be sent to OREPA, P O Box 5743, Oak Ridge, TN 37831 or by e-mail to orep@earthlink.net

Sources

Readings for the reflection booklet this month were contributed by Mary Dennis Lentsch, Linda Ewald and Jim Ullrich. Readings were also taken from Mary Lou Kownacki’s The Nonviolent Moment: Spirituality for the 21st Century.
Tuesday, October 1

There was not, and there never had been, a legal government by Europeans anywhere in the Americas. Not by any definition, not even by Europeans’ own definitions and laws. Because no legal government could be established on stolen land.

~ Leslie Marmon Silko

Wednesday, October 2

Gandhi’s Birthday

Power based on love is a thousand times more effective than power based on fear.

~ Gandhi

Talking about nuclear weapons—a small group exercise during the Catholic Committee of Appalachia meeting in September in Gatlingburg, TN; the CCA honored Kevin and Cindy Collins with the FOCIS Award for the many ways they apply their creative talents to work for peace and justice.
November comes on to me like a C-130
slinking into Dover Air Force base
laden with tin caskets
draped in red, white, and blue
I know, I know I should just let it be
Okay, okay
I can still do this:
push my shopping cart down
the local IGA’s aisles
pick up cheese and wines and crackers
while avoiding aluminum cans
like the plague
pay the cashier
smile at the bagger
push the cart out into the parking lot
neatly place everything I just bought
into the dumpster out back
light up a smoke
relax
Sure, sure, you want me to join in
on your celebrations
bless our bounty
accept your thanks for my service
as if I were some Pilgrim come home to receive your grace
It is November, you say, and we set aside
a day just for you to wrap up war
with the dissonance of fife and drum
and bagpipes blaring down main street
as if we can all finally dance
to the same tune
Sorry about that
My dancing days are long gone
I’d rather skate across the pond alone
I have more faith in ice.

~ Doug Rawlings
Friday, October 4

Whether it is an accident, terrorism or irresponsible push of a nuke button, we all know, the result is devastating. How to prevent nuclear explosions on earth? This is the most crucial political, moral, social, technical and spiritual question of our time.

~ Amit Ray

Saturday, October 5

1923 : PHIL BERRIGAN BORN

People pay for what they do, and, still more, for what they have allowed themselves to become. And they pay for it very simply by the lives they lead. The crucial thing, here, is that the sum of these individual abdications menaces life all over the world. For, in the generality, as social and moral and political and sexual entities, white Americans are probably the sickest and certainly the most dangerous people of any color to be found in the world today.

~ James Baldwin

Sunday, October 6

1917 : FANNIE LOU HAMER BORN
1987 : OSCAR ARIAS SANCHEZ WINS NOBEL PEACE PRIZE

We gather here today to demonstrate that not everyone in our community feels this way. The root of all major religions is love, even in the face of fear. The Christmas story is a story of a displaced family being denied a safe place to stay, and 2000 years later, we have a chance to do better. It makes me hopeful to see so many people here today standing up with compassion in the face of Islamophobia and fear. It’s inspiring to be surrounded by people who recognize that different cultures enrich our communities.

~ Sarah Margaret Hutchison

Monday, October 7

1879 : JOE HILL BORN
1931 : DESMOND TUTU BORN
2001 : US BEGINS BOMBING AFGHANISTAN

The war mentality overwhelms our country, it influences and alters the food we eat, the diseases we suffer, the clothes we wear, the educational and political structures we build and tolerate, complain about and resist.

~ John Henry Newman
Tuesday, October 8

When a friend calls to me from the road
And slows his horse to a meaning walk,
I don’t stand still and look around
On all the hills I haven’t hoed,
And shout from where I am, ‘What is it?’
No, not as there is a time to talk.
I thrust my hoe in the mellow ground,
Blade-end up and five feet tall,
And plod: I go up to the stone wall
For a friendly visit.

~ Robert Frost

Wednesday, October 9

1919 : FELLOWSHIP OF RECONCILIATION FOUNDED

Through greater intimacy with the natural world, we begin to appreciate its complexity and gain a clearer understanding of the relationship between the rains, the soul, and the plants, the animals and the trees, and how the welfare of one living being depends on that of another.

~ Nathaniel Altman

Jack Hoefer installs a War is Not the Answer sign at a July Sunday vigil outside the Y-12 Nuclear Weapons Complex in Oak Ridge, Tennessee.
Thursday, October 10
Beth Bingman

May a good vision catch me
May a benevolent vision take hold of me, and move me
May a deep and full vision come over me, and burst open around me
May a luminous vision inform me, enfold me.
May I awaken into the story that surrounds,
May I awaken into the beautiful story.
May the wondrous story find me;
May the wildness that makes beauty arise between two lovers
    arise beautifully between my body and the body of this land, between my flesh and the flesh of this earth,
Here and now, on this day,
May I taste something sacred.

~ David Abram
If Black women were free, it would mean that everyone else would have to be free since our freedom would necessitate the destruction of all the systems of oppression.

~ The Combahee River Collective Statement

In order to healed and restored, European Americans must believe that their authentic selves are worthy and sufficient without dominating and containing people of color. They must believe that they are worthy of being redeemed.

~ Ruby Sales

Everyone’s got to have a dream. It’s not reaching your dreams that counts. It’s going toward them.

~ Cher

The deaf don’t believe in silence. Silence is the invention of the hearing.

~ Ilya Kaminsky

Compassion for others begins with kindness to ourselves.

~ Pema Chodron

No matter the country, every penny spent for nuclear weapons strengthens the hands of evil force.

~ Amit Ray
I admit to walking like someone barefoot on crushed glass when it comes to discussing the truth. Very gingerly. The minute you try to nuance the search for truth, you start to sound dogmatic, as if you already possessed the pearl of great price. I prefer to enter the discussion on truth through stories that hint at the spirit of a truth seeker.

The first story tells about a person who is renowned for his wisdom and holiness. Whenever he was asked how he had become so enlightened, he said, “I know what is in the Bible.”

One day he had just given this answer to an inquirer when an exasperated voice shouted, “Well, what is in the Bible?”

“In the Bible,” said the enlightened one, “there are two pressed flowers and a letter from my friend, Jonathan.”

~ Mary Lou Kownacki
Friday, October 18

If grief can be a doorway to love, then let us all weep for the world we are breaking apart so we can love it back to wholeness again.

~ Robin Wall Kimmerer

Saturday, October 19

1923: War Resisters League founded
1720: John Woolman born

May we look upon our treasure, the furniture of our houses, and our garments, and try to discover whether the seeds of war have nourishment in these our possessions.

~ John Woolman

Sunday, October 20

We live in a time when science is validating what humans have known throughout the ages: compassion is not a luxury, it is a necessity for our well-being, resilience, and survival.

~ Roshi Joan Halifax

Monday, October 21

1971: Pablo Neruda wins Nobel Prize for Literature

If you maintain a sense of humor and a distrust of the rules laid down around you, there will be success.

~ Chogyam Trungpa

Tuesday, October 22

1962: Cuban Missile Crisis

Prayer is not asking. It is a longing of soul, a daily admission of one’s weakness. It is better in prayer to have heart without words than words without heart.

~ Mahatma Gandhi

Wednesday, October 23

Common sense and a sense of humor are the same thing, moving at different speeds. A sense of humor is just common sense, dancing.

~ William James
WE THE PEOPLE of the United Nations, determined
to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war,
which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to
mankind, and
to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity
and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and
women and of nations large and small, and
to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the
obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international
law can be maintained, and
to promote social progress and better standards of life in
larger freedom,

AND FOR THESE ENDS
to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one
another as good neighbours, and
to unite our strength to maintain international peace and
security, and
to ensure, by the acceptance of principles and the institution
of methods, that armed force shall not be used, save in the
common interest, and
to employ international machinery for the promotion of the
economic and social advancement of all peoples,

Have resolved to combine our efforts to accomplish these
aims…

~ Preamble, Charter of the United Nations
Friday, October 25

1955: SADAKO SASAKI DIES
1983: UNITED STATES INVADES GRENA DA

If you concentrate on what you don’t have, you’ll never, ever have enough.

~ Oprah Winfrey

Saturday, October 26

2001: US CONGRESS PASSES PATRIOT ACT

To learn which questions are unanswerable, and not to answer them: this skill is most needful in times of and darkness.

~ Ursula K. LeGuin

Sunday, October 27

It’s paradoxical that the idea of living a long life appeals to everyone, but the idea of getting old doesn’t appeal to anyone.

~ Andy Rooney

Monday, October 28

The only kind of dignity which is genuine is that which is not diminished by the indifference of others.

~ Dag Hammarskjold

Tuesday, October 29

1966: NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN FOUNDED
1962: CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS ENDS
1988: SOUTH AFRICAN TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION REPORT RELEASED

A garden is often a series of losses set against a few triumphs, like life itself.

~ May Sarton

Wednesday, October 30

1961: USSR DETONATES 58-MEGATON ATMOSPHERIC TEST, LARGEST EVER

There is a fountain of youth: it’s your mind—you r talents, the creativity you bring to your life and the lives of people you love. When you learn to tap this source, you’ll truly have defeated age.

~ Sophia Loren
Last week President Trump told four of my colleagues to “go back” to where they came from — even though all are American citizens, and only one is an immigrant. But Mr. Trump has somewhere to “go back” to as well: He is a second-generation American. For Native Americans like myself, his comments are perplexing, and wrongheaded.

If anyone can say “go back,” it’s Native Americans. My Pueblo ancestors, despite being targeted at every juncture — despite facing famine and drought — still inhabit this country today. But indigenous people aren’t asking anyone to go back to where they came from.

As a 35th-generation New Mexican and a descendant of the original inhabitants of this continent, I say that the promise of our country is for everyone to find success, pursue happiness and live lives of equality. This is the Pueblo way. It’s the American way.

Those laying exclusive claim to the American dream lack a clear understanding of this country’s history. The tenets of my cultural teachings are rooted in our commitment to lift up every community member so that no one is left behind. Work and food were shared equally. Through our commitment to community, we care about children, even when they aren’t ours, and we want our old folks, and yours, to live their last days in dignity and comfort.

Indian policy throughout history was meant to exterminate us, but we are still here. The president’s tweets and words matter. It’s on all of us to call out what is pure hate and racism and stand up for one another. There is no moral high ground from which President Trump or any of his followers can tell anyone to leave this country, because they are not the first inhabitants of this land. They should instead look into their history to learn where, when and why their ancestors came to this country.

There is space for everyone here — we must look back to our Native American history to remember that.

~ Congresswoman Deb Haaland
Friday, November 1
1989 : DIANNA ORTIZ TORTURED IN GUATEMALA
1995 : SOUTH AFRICA HOLDS FIRST ELECTION FOR ALL RACES

Once people understand the strength of nonviolence—the force it generates, the love it creates, the response it brings from the total community—they will not easily abandon it.
~ Cesar Chavez

Saturday, November 2
1920 : EUGENE DEBS, IN PRISON, RECEIVES 1,000,000 VOTES FOR PRESIDENT

Gratitude is the explicit effort to acknowledge that all I am and have is given to me as a gift of love to be celebrated with joy.
~ Henri J.M. Nouwen

Sunday, November 3
1883 : US SUPREME COURT DESIGNATES NATIVE AMERICANS AS ALIENS

Nature poets can’t walk across the backyard without tripping over an ephiphany.
~ Christian Wiman

Monday, November 4
1992 : RUSSIA RATIFIES START TREATY

At some point in life the world’s beauty becomes enough.
~ Toni Morrison

Tuesday, November 5

The sun, with all those planets revolving around it and dependent upon it, can still ripen a bunch of grapes as if it had nothing else in the universe to do.
~ Galileo Galilei

Wednesday, November 6

Someday we shall look back on this dark era of agriculture and shake our heads: How could we have ever believed it was a good idea to grow our food with poisons?
~ Jane Goodall
If you had to draw a picture of a nonviolent spirit, an empty tea cup would suffice. Or a hollow gourd. Or, in the Christian tradition, an empty tomb. It takes a lifetime to empty yourself out of certain truths and cherished beliefs until only the mystery of God shines through. It is a tricky business to become such a void that all people, ideas and beliefs can find room in the empty space at your center. It is hard writing about something you do not yet possess, but this hospitable hollowness is so inviting when you see it radiate in a person. It’s not that the person is without convictions; on the contrary, she or he often has the strongest sense of direction and the purest of simplest truths on which to build a life. The difference is that such a person remains open to other truth and respectful of every person bearing different visions.

~ Mary Lou Kownacki
Friday, November 8
1897: DOROTHY DAY’S BIRTHDAY!
1972: TRAIL OF BROKEN TREATIES MARCH OCCUPIES BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS IN DC

The legal battle against segregation is won, but the community battle goes on.

~ Dorothy Day

Saturday, November 9
1989: BERLIN WALL FALLS TO NONVIOLENT PROTESTS

Let yourself be silently drawn by the stronger pull of what you really love.

~ Rumi

Sunday, November 10
1938: KRISTALLNACHT

Perhaps because we’re so addicted to strong emotions and loud noises to motivate us, we no longer seek the quiet space of center.

~ Margaret J. Wheatley

Monday, November 11

Only she who is ready to question, to think for herself, will find the truth. To understand the currents of the river she who wishes to know the truth must enter the water.

~ Nisargadatta Maharaj

Tuesday, November 12
1815: ELIZABETH Cady Stanton Born
1991: INDONESIAN TROOPS MASSACRE 150 NONVIOLENT ACTIVISTS IN EAST TIMOR
1993: UN VOTES 183-3 FOR END TO US BLOCKADE OF CUBA

Know and obey the rules well, so you will know how to break them properly.

~ The Dalai Lama

Wednesday, November 13

Over time, offering lovingkindness to all beings everywhere, including ourselves, unites us to one another, so that we cannot go forward forgetting those left behind.

~ Susan Salzberg
Every creature, every person, every phenomenon is just another aspect of who we are. A little girl, a mother, a killer, a policeman are all aspects of who we are. So is the nightingale, the hawk that kills the nightingale, and the hunter who kills the hawk. We are all victims, the perpetrators, and the people who stand indifferently by. We are the feelings and thoughts of all these people who are nothing other than aspects of ourselves. We are not attracted of repelled, for we are them.

The Buddhist service that we perform on the streets on New York City’s Bowery begins, “Attention! Attention!” When we say “Attention,” what do we really mean? When we really listen, when we really pay attention to the sounds of joy and suffering in the universe, then we are not separate from them, we become them. Because in reality we are not separate from those who suffer. We are them; they are us. And once we listen, we have to act. The function that comes out of listening is compassionate action.

~ Bernie Glassman
Friday, November 15
1887: GEORGIA O’KEEFFE BORN

Earth is the play ground of our children and their children. We cannot allow it to be the playground of the nuclear arms of the evil forces.

~ Amit Ray

Saturday, November 16
1989: SALVADORAN DEATH SQUAD (TRAINED IN US AT SCHOOL OF THE AMERICAS) MURDERS SIX JESUIT PRIESTS, HOUSEKEEPER AND DAUGHTER IN SAN SALVADOR

When nobody organizes him/herself, nothing is organized.

~ Peter Maurin

Sunday, November 17

The same stream of life that runs through the world runs through my veins night and day and dances in rhythmic measure.

~ Rabindranath Tagore

Monday, November 18
1787: SOJOURNER TRUTH BORN

Our ancestors were literally fighting to keep human beings as slaves, and continue the unimaginable acts that occur when someone is held against their will.

~ Paul Thurmond

Tuesday, November 19
1915: LABOR ORGANIZER/SONGWRITER JOE HILL EXECUTED IN UTAH

It is a supreme folly to believe that nuclear weapons are deadly only if they’re used. The fact that they exist, their presence in our lives, will wreak more havoc than we can begin to fathom.

~ Arundhati Roy

Wednesday, November 20

Nonviolence requires not only a willingness to risk one’s life. It requires renunciation of all claims to special privileges and power at the expense of other people.

~ Dave Dellinger
Let us now consider the costs we incur when we repress our responses of pain for the world and alarm for the future. What does it do to us to block out not only deep, recurrent responses of fear, anger, grief, but even the very instinct for self-preservation in the face of possible annihilation?

The repression takes a mammoth toll on our energies. A marked loss of affect results, as if a nerve had been cut. Barry Childers says, “We immunize ourselves against the demands of the situation by narrowing our awareness.” This anesthetization affects other aspects of our life as well—loves and losses are less intense, the sky less vivid—for if we are not going to allow ourselves to feel pain, we will not feel much else either. “The mind pays for its deadening to the state of our world,” observes Dr. Robert Murphy, “by giving up its capacity for joy and flexibility.”

This state of absence or at best dulled human response to our world is called psychic numbing. Robert Lifton, who coined the term in his study of Hiroshima survivors, now applies it to us all—recognizing that everyone in this planet-time, by the simple fact of being threatened by horrors too vast to contemplate, is a victim of the Bomb. “The very existence of nuclear weapons,” says Norman McLeod, “is an assault on the human heart.” Under such an assault, we tend to shut down and finally to shut off.

~ Joanna Macy
Friday, November 22

1998 : 2,300 CROSS LINE IN CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE AT SCHOOL OF THE AMERICAS
   FT. BENNING, COLUMBUS, GA

We may be too late, but we may be just in time. We shall
not discover which until we act.

~ Martin Luther King, Jr.

Saturday, November 23

We need imagination and indomitable spirit to create a new
mentality in a society that has come to take for granted wealth for
those who can get it and destitution for those who can not.

~ Joan Chittister

Sunday, November 24

Feeding the hungry is a greater work than raising the dead.

~ John Chrysostom

Monday, November 25

The question can never be “How can we hang on?” but,
“What’s next?”

~ Cecil Roberts

Tuesday, November 26

1792 : SARAH GRIMKE BORN

No matter how overwhelming the dangers that confront us
may appear, none of us faces them alone.

~ Joanna Macy

Wednesday, November 27

It’s my world that I want to have a little pride in,
My world, and it’s not a place I have to hide in;
Life’s not worth a damn
‘Til you can say, “Hey, world, I am what I am.”

~ La Cage aux Folles
Nonviolence simply cannot defend property rights over human rights. The primacy of human rights would have to be established within the United States and in all of its dealings with other peoples before nonviolence could defend this country successfully. Nonviolence could defend what is worth defending in the United States, but a badly needed social revolution would have to take place in the process. Guerrilla warfare cannot be carried on successfully without the active support and cooperation of the surrounding population, which must identify justice (or at least its own welfare) with the triumph of the guerrillas. Nonviolence must rely even more heavily than guerrilla warfare on the justice of its cause. It has no chance of succeeding unless it can win supporters from previously hostile or neutral sections of the populace. It must do this by the fairness of its goals. Its objectives and methods are intimately interrelated and must be equally nonviolent.

~ Dave Dellinger
Friday, November 29
1908: THURGOOD MARSHALL’S BIRTHDAY!

Our nation was born in genocide when it embraced the doctrine that the original American, the Indian, was an inferior race. We tried as a matter of national policy to wipe out the indigenous population. Moreover, we elevated that tragic experience into a noble crusade. Even today we have not permitted ourselves to reject or feel remorse for this shameful episode. Our literature, our films, our drama, our folklore all exalt it.

~ Martin Luther King Jr.

Saturday, November 30
1835: MARK TWAIN BORN

Kindness is the fuel that helps us “walk our talk” of love, a quality so easy to speak about or extol, but often so hard to make real.

~ Sharon Salzberg

Utsumi Shonin speaking at the Great Smoky Mountains Peace Pagoda Ancestors Ceremony in August in Cosby, Tennessee. After the ceremony, the table was abundantly spread.
August 6, 2019

clockwise from top left: Denny Moore and Daav Wheeler hold the Peace Walk banner at the Names and Remembrance Ceremony at Y-12 on August 6. Sister Denise Laffan reads; Betty Coleman reads before dawn; Denny plays the pipe; Marese Nephew ties a crane to the fence.

August 9, 2019

Learning a Japanese folk dance at the Peace Lantern Ceremony in Knoxville on August 9; the lanterns set afloat on the Tennessee River.
Scenes from the International Peace Camp, Büchel, Germany in July 2019. from top, left to right: The US delegation meets, first night, in a community center; The nuclear-toothed Big Bad Wolf is vanquished by Little Green Riding Hood in a puppet performance; Morning Circle means planning the day; The puppets take a bow; Sunday morning, hundreds come to a worship service by IPPNW and ICAN; Kevin and Cindy Collins hold a banner on the roundabout; Civil resisters and supporters gather for a group photo the night before their “go-in” action.