

Blossoms from the Inner Journey

By Christine Loughlin, OP

Tucked on the bottom shelf in the back corner of our resource room is a loose-leaf binder that holds the memory of ten years of 'learning circles', the programs and events that have become the expression of Crystal Spring over the decade. The first flyer is a bright yellow card stock with splashes of orange paint that announced the celebration of Candlemas. On that cross quarter day when lengthening light of a new season was evident in the outer dimension of unfolding work here, we gathered family and associates for our first program. I remember telling the story of the astronaut who saw with new eyes the marvel of Earth from space. A new consciousness erupted in him on that Apollo flight and, like wildfire on a dry forest floor, that consciousness spread and took hold in the collective psyche. The hardy ones present that February afternoon pushed our way through the thicket of briars and tangled fox grape vines to place candles where the spring waters come to the surface close to the old well.

Ten years later the briars are cut back and the old apple trees have surrendered to forest succession. There is now an open sweep of green to the old well and a dug out rock bed stream where the waters from the well and the surfacing springs flow to the human-made pond and onto the garden.

This year at the time of Candlemas thirty-eight women gathered to lift their human voices on behalf of the "great work" of personal, social, and planetary transformation through the power of music and song.

*Be there Spirit of the Wind, breathe in me
Spirit of the Sun, rekindle my flame
Spirit of the Rain, fill my dry and deep recesses
Spirit of the Land, raise me again.*

In springtime as natural light increases seeds bring forth blossoms. The human heart too must blossom after the deep inner journey of the soul into the darkness of thought and seeking new insight. The blossom of the heart is wisdom. Here at the turn of the decade we observe what is blossoming this spring. What manifestations reveal to us the self-organizing core here as the future presses itself into our present mode?

We scurry to make room for the numbers coming to our creative sacred art programs. Our human souls intuit the disequilibrium particular to our time and folks trust that the wildness in the artist will guide the divine imagination pulsating through them.

We walk our woodland trails with a core group from Spirit in Nature. How innovative "the dream of the Earth" that such dreaming has brought forth a group to tend the connecting paths where people of diverse spiritual traditions may walk, worship, meet, meditate, and promote education and action toward better stewardship of this sacred Earth. In the walking we journey to the inner dimension, for in the going out we are really going in.

The cluster of Earthlight Magazine readers who have chosen to form a circle here are the very 'implicate order' manifesting a new community of the sacred web in the hills and lowlands of southeastern Massachusetts.

They intersect with another circle of women whose inner organizing form is protest of our war. They stir the mind and heart that we may see a *spilling grace o'er each horizon* that leads us to a deeper place where our lives align with unceasing effort the recovery of our way. Their daring

vision opens to include the whole for now we know we go forth no longer a 'we and they', but only *us among the many*.

The Religious Lands Conservancy Project humbles us as we seek the ways to open communication and build a working relationship between religious congregations with land holdings and conservationists. As we come together to find the tools for saving lands, we know that at the root we are saving our own human souls.

We rejoiced in the abundance of the Community Supported Garden the past five years. The beauty of the raised beds spoke of the recovery of the soils and spirit of Crystal Spring Farm. To relinquish the CSA this growing season has been a difficult decision for us. As we allow the land to lie fallow, we ponder and pray the true expression of our agricultural project will reveal itself to us. Yet, even now the seeds are ready and the potting soil prepared for the kitchen garden plotted and planned. The heirloom seeds from another farm will be planted and tended that we might take up the noble task of saving seeds.

These, along with our programs, are the circles that define us at this turn. To be Earth literate one must read like a sacred scripture what blossoms forth. These blossoms are the wisdom at the heart of this place. Seeing what is present we sense what the future is shaping. To resonate with the spirit of this place we must know the process of surrender to each unfolding succession.

■ CL