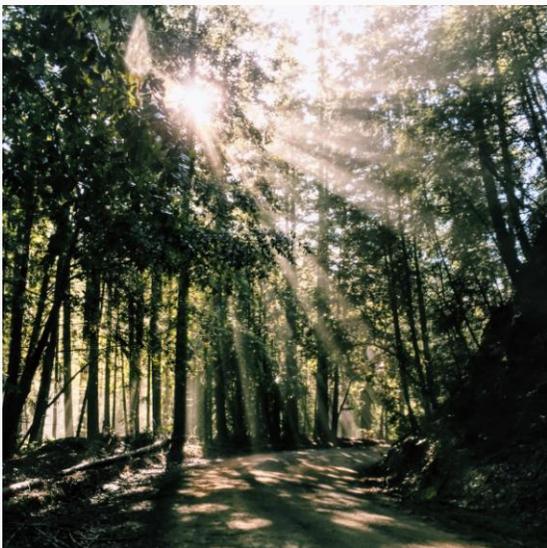




THE COUNTERATTACK: LOVE

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1818–1955) was a paleontologist and a Jesuit priest who attempted to reconcile science and Christianity. His efforts were of interest to scientists and horrifying to church authorities. Rome issued a monitum, a warning to Catholics not to read his books. He was eventually exiled to the Orient where he was involved in the 1929 discovery of the Peking man's skull. A firm believer in evolution, he was perhaps the first to

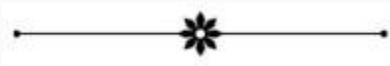


advocate an “Omega Point” — a spiritual belief and a scientific speculation that everything in the universe is fated to spiral toward a final point of divine unification. For him, evolution was an ongoing process. Well, times do change even in most churches. The last three popes have cited Chardin in books they have written, as a legitimate authority. Catholic universities are naming buildings after him.

So why am I going on about this dead priest and scientist? Because he said something very moving and, to me, very applicable to the present mess we

are in politically and spiritually,

Someday, after mastering the winds, tides and gravity, we shall harness for God the energies of love, and then, for a second time in the history of the world we will have discovered fire!



Few people have to be told that we are in a very bad way. We have probably lost our partners in struggling to maintain world peace. Dirk Kurbjuwelt, the prize-winning editor (Germany and UK) and novelist wrote a few days ago in the influential journal SPIEGEL, Explosive narcissism and vulgar capitalism: It is impossible to engage in politics with this US president. Europe should resist the temptation to fixate on Donald Trump and instead pursue its own goals.

We have lost basic humanitarian values which many of us felt were part of the fundamental makeup of our nation. Concerning the policy of this administration to separate children from their parents at entry points, Margaret Talbot put it plainly in a recent NEW YORKER,

This theater of cruelty unfolding at the southern border was the purest distillation yet of what it means to be governed by a president with no moral center.

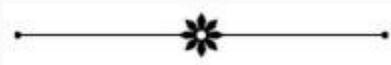
Everyone, even his supporters, seem to accept that #45 has little respect for the truth. I am concerned about what some writers have termed the growing savagery in our country, which seems to be unleashed in many places not just within the cult that bolsters #45.

We have turned our back on many of the people sharing this planet with us. Tonight 815 million people will go to bed with an empty stomach. It is not a result of drought or crop failure, It is largely a result of violence. The UN warns that three nations are bracing for all out famine — South Sudan, Yemen and Nigeria. And there is an incredible amount of homelessness and starvation in cities and towns within driving distance of my home. At Starcross we have increased the size of our gardens to meet the needs of the growing population using



our food pantry but we realize this is a very small drop in the bucket.

Okay, there are a lot of problems and they're not going to be solved in Washington, D.C. unless things change drastically. With an election coming up it is very important that we all vote and support those who are on the front lines of change. But what else can we do to bring about a return to civility, compassion, and balance in our country and our world? Where does this concept of "love," that probably every major spiritual tradition advocates, fit in? How do we discover fire for the second time as Teilhard de Chardin urges?



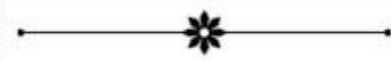
Before helping to found Starcross, our Sister Marti was fond of sailing in the tricky waters of San Francisco Bay. She learned that if everyone was standing on the port side of the boat there would be a danger of capsizing. Therefore it would be wise for some people to rush to the starboard side to balance the boat. She then applied this principle to spiritual growth, which I think it is quite relevant here. If the

country, or the world, is infested with hatred and cruelty, people have to be encouraged to focus on love to restore balance to our society.

"Love your enemy" is a good concept. The author of the Gospel of John quoted Jesus saying I give you a new commandment: love one another; just as I have loved you, you must love one another. (John 13:34) One of the people he was telling them to love and who he loved, was Judas, whom he knew had betrayed him and initiated the process for his savage execution. Now frankly, that is a very high bar for most of us. However, we can add to the amount of love in the world and help to balance the boat, by starting with the people who are close to us.

Our friend and neighbor the late Morton Kelsey, was an Episcopal priest and depth psychologist. In his lovely book, *Caring: How Can We Love One Another*, Morton shared a personal story. He was flying home from a conference he had led when he realized he was flying over the home of his brother with whom he did not have a good relationship. Then while

looking at the map, he saw that he was flying over the home of his father and stepmother with whom he was estranged. His destination was in Arizona to visit his young daughter's college and try to mend their relationship. As a teenager she had told Morton that being a clergyman's daughter "was a fate little better than death" and announced that she was an atheist and would not be attending church anymore. Morton's reason for the visit was not to change her mind but simply to try and restore their relationship. As the plane was starting its final descent he remembered the prayer of St. Francis, *O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be loved as to love*. That is a goal which, in my opinion, is much more realistic to achieve.



Okay everyone, our boat is in danger of capsizing. It is time to move over with our love to the other side.

Brother Toby