



StillPoint Retreats

Bi-Weekly Symposium

What Is the Foundation of All Love?

The resounding answer is ACCEPTANCE! We are told that the perfect love for God is accepting all things and circumstances. Everything comes from Him. It is all part of His Plan for us. That we may share in the abundance of His Eternal Life.

In essence God's Love is a magnificent bliss.

Functionally God's Love is the design of our lives.

Loving Him is accepting what He gives us.

So, we can all relate to our friend NOBBY

Love is the religion of the Christ!

Only Love,

Jerry



NOBBY'S JOURNEY TO SELFLOVE

I am presenting here a story written by Erin Williams. It is her homework submission to the task of creating a teaching about the truth that “your experience of life is a reflection of your relationship with God.”

Her assignment: write about the idea that “Your experience of life is your relationship with God; your understanding of Who God is; and who you are.” In light of this, write a letter to your yet-unborn children bringing these Truths to life – simply and practically.

Erin: I was contemplating this while idly looking out the window and realizing that Jerry, Sandy and Judy's Halloween card with the Jack o' lanterns was in my line of sight -- and this is the result:

² Erin is a Lay Carmelite and has been a member of StillPoint since age ten. Her unique contribution to StillPoint has been to work closely with me to research and rewrite some of the more complex “lessons” found in *Tree of Life* and *Silence Speaks*. In a way – she is like a “Jerry clone” - while still maintaining a strong individuality and beautiful soul. She is currently a Lieutenant in the United States Navy serving the medical corps in Japan as an

Occupational Therapist. We pray for her continued acceptance and love for God, self and other. (Note a huge hint of fatherly-esque pride!)

To my little children,

Once upon a time there was a Jack o' lantern. He was always very sad. He was made from a little oddly shaped pumpkin that had lots of lumps and discolorations on it. He didn't have a nice smooth side for carving, so his face was lop-sided and one eye bulged out much farther than the other. He looked at all the other Jack o' lanterns and thought that they all were so beautiful and perfect. They had wonderfully balanced features and nicely even orange color, instead of his questionable murky brownish-greenish-orange. One day he noticed that a pumpkin without a face had joined the Jack o' lanterns. The ugly little Jack o' lantern watched in amazement as a girl appeared and began to carefully and lovingly scoop out the seeds and carve a festive face on the blank pumpkin. Under her skilled hands it was transformed into a jolly little Jack o' lantern with a cheeky smile. The ugly Jack o' lantern couldn't believe his eyes. He realized that he and all the other Jack o' lanterns must have been born the same way. He was flabbergasted. Someone had made him this way?? Someone had deliberately chosen to put one of his eyes on the strange bulge rather than on the other side where it was slightly more seemly and flat? Also, someone had chosen this goofy little discolored pumpkin as a Jack o' lantern in the first place-- what gives?? This Creator must be off her rocker! He looked suspiciously at the girl. She must be either very stupid or very cruel to have created this ugly Jack o' lantern only to suffer and feel bad about himself in the midst of all these handsome ones.

Or maybe - and perhaps worse - it was his fault! What if he had done something wrong to be this deformed and funny looking? Was he being punished for something? Maybe it meant that the Creator was not stupid at all, but just didn't like him as much as the other Jack o' lanterns. She didn't love him enough to craft him as well as the others.

The little Jack o' lantern was sadder than ever. He felt worthless and unlovable. Why did the Creator even bother keeping him when she had all these nice Jack o' lanterns to look at? Maybe he should just roll off the porch into a pile of leaves and be done with it all.

As the little Jack o' lantern was thinking these sad thoughts and growing more and more discouraged, time was passing and it became dark. Now the light shining out of the other Jack o' lanterns' faces was clear and bright in the surrounding darkness. The ugly little Jack o' lantern couldn't take it anymore and cast his eyes down on the ground.

But wait, there was a sweet clear light shining on the ground in front of him too! He could see the silhouette of his own lopsided little face smiling up at him. He couldn't believe it, and he looked quickly away and back to make sure he wasn't imagining things. But no - the same lovely light was coming from inside him as all the other Jack o' lanterns. The light wasn't just in the pretty ones, the perfectly symmetrical ones. It was in him too! The light was shining just as clearly and beautifully through his uneven bulgy eyes as the most geometrically perfect ones.

The girl came out onto the porch and gently lifted all the Jack o' lanterns onto the porch railing so they could look out over the street. As she picked up each of them, she greeted them and called them each by name. The ugly little Jack o' lantern was afraid she would skip him, but no; she picked him up just like the others and whispered, "Hello, Nobby. I smile every time I see your lopsided little smile. I know you're not quite like the others, but your mix of colors and your unique face are part of your charm. Sit right here where I've put you, little one, and let your light shine."

The little Jack o' lantern, Nobby, could hardly believe it. His little heart of pulp was about to burst with joy and love. The girl not only loved him and accepted him as he was, she had chosen him specifically because of his lumps and funny color and they made her smile. He had always been

wanted and appreciated, even when he least knew it. He found that he felt a deep affinity and friendship for all the other Jack o' lanterns and could appreciate the way each one of them projected the light differently. He sat in a deep serene peace as he shone his little light out into the dark autumn night.

My dearest little ones, God is present in you and all around you. He shows Himself as the pretty things and the ugly things. He gives everything to you - the fun and nice things, but also the tough things. Always remember Who gave everything to you and remember that He gave it to you out of the deepest, truest love. Like Nobby, you might not understand God's choices, or why He made you with certain features, like Nobby's lumps. But remember always that everything that comes to you was chosen especially for you by God. The world is like a big costume party: the point is not to love or hate or want or reject the costumes, but rather to peek behind the mask and recognize Him in all His variety of disguises. This will allow you to let your own light shine always, my little Jack o' lanterns, no matter what darkness surrounds you. For Mommy, this has meant that she can be brave even when she's scared and do the right thing even when it isn't the most fun thing, because she remembers Who is wearing that mask and Who is always holding on to her hand, no matter what.

I love you.