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Peaches and Me, Part Trois

Well, it has been some time since we've spoken together. (And I've missed our little conversations.) At this moment I am seated at my desk and Peaches has her head in her bowl (What else is new? --That cat eats more than a baby rhino -- with about the same effect.)

Looking out of my window, the snow is falling all about, my room is semi-warm, (we are conserving energy) and all seems right with the world. I love winter. (Not the cold part.) It demonstrates God in all His Pristine Majesty. The white of the season covers all the gray and blotchy spots, making everything new, almost virginal. It reminds of how perfect He is. Which brings me to what Peaches and I were talking about the other night. (Yes, I talk to my cat.)

The Christmas season is much more than a time for giving. It is a season of renewal. When I was a kid in Brooklyn, we had a thing called "Do Overs." When we did something that didn't come out right, we'd yell, "Do Over," and get a second chance. I think that's what God does. Covers everything in white and starts over. Perhaps to show us how to do it.

My God, besides being a Guardian, is also a Mentor. He shows me every way how to start over again. He has given me "Do Overs" on numerous occasions.

When I was walking the streets, alone and miserable, life stunk! I couldn't see past the end of my own nose. When all seemed lost, He would nudge me (a Brooklyn term!). Make me see something good. It was almost like a cup of hot coffee for the soul. He'd get me out of myself. When I get to feeling how important I am; (really thinking that the world must see things my way, and no other matters.) He shows me how I figure into his scheme of things. Usually when this happens, a kind of warm calm settles over me. He gives me things! (No kidding.) It's His Birthday and I get the presents!

I remember one year, some eighteen years ago (almost). It was one of the last times before I sobered up. That year was one of the wettest on record in San Francisco. As I made my way down the Embarcadero

trying to stay dry and feeling very, very alone. Despair, anger and a general hatred of the world permeated my very existence. First as I rounded one of the buildings, I happened to look up. Framed in the distance was the Golden Gate Bridge. Arcing over the bridge was one of the most beautiful rainbows I had ever seen. I seemed to stretch all the way to Sausalito. "Okay God!" I remember saying aloud. About three weeks later, I had my last drink: "Do Over!" God gave me a "Do Over" for my life!

Whenever I get to feeling low, or feeling so self-important that I can't stand myself, I think of that rainbow and that "Do Over." So many miracles in my life!

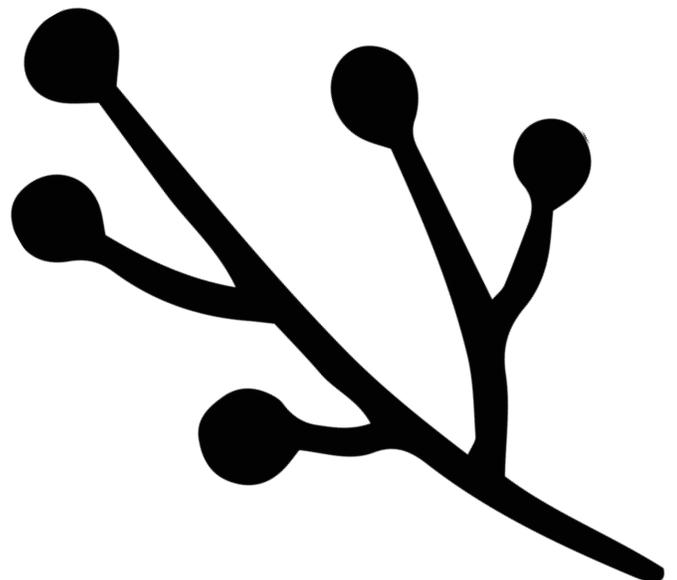
My life at "The Acres" is like that. Each day I am blessed with an Epiphany. A new rainbow! A rainbow of the soul. I see "Do Overs" everywhere.

That's what "The Acres" is all about.

Well, Peaches is nudging my leg. I guess she figured I had written enough. So I'll say so long from Peaches and me.

Have a very Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year.

God Bless You All,
Johnny and Peaches



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Here we are again in the middle of a stretch of weather that has no place in the end of November, only through the wonderful grace of God can we enjoy such a gift. He always gives us what we need without us even knowing we need it. I stand in awe and reverence of the Lord Jesus every day of my life, He gives me hope and courage and lets me know that I am not alone in this life no matter what happens.

I have been going through some health problems lately and find it so easy to feel sorry for myself, however when I close my eyes at night and go into his presence he lets me know it is going to be alright. When I am with Him, all my pain and illnesses melt away in His everlasting and over-whelming love. He reassures me that I am His own creation and if it is His will for my life that I should be in the condition that I am in, then that is sufficient for me. I know that I must Glorify Him who gave me life and I do so with a glad and loving heart.

This is a passage from a book I have been reading by Joni Eareckson Tada, I would like to share it with you:

“Sometimes -- especially when we are suffering -- the only thing we can do is to approach the throne of grace, as we have been invited, and kneel in silence before our God. We may do so even when we can't put two words together in prayer. The Bible promises mercy and grace in those times of trouble and distress. His favor wraps around our shoulders like a warm blanket, and His Spirit prays for us in words beyond our comprehension. Step into that throne room right now; and experience intimacy with your God.”

What a beautiful array of words put together for us to ponder the next time we want to know that we are not alone in our suffering and distress. I leave you now with this passage of scripture and with my unyielding love for you all.

“This is too glorious, too wonderful to believe! I can never be lost to your Spirit. I can never get away from my God! If I go up to heaven, you are there; if I go down to the place of the dead, you are there. If I ride the morning winds to the farthest oceans, even there your hand will guide me, your strength will support me. If I try to hide in the darkness, the night becomes light around me. For even darkness cannot hide from God; to you the night shines as bright as day.” (Psalm 139: 6, 12)

Sincerely in Christ,
Bill Bogart

DECEMBER PRAYER: ADVENT/CHRISTMAS

“Be alert! Be watchful! What I say to you, I say to all:
watch!”

-Mark 13:33-37 (1st Sunday in Advent)

“Comfort, give comfort to my people, says your God.
Speak tenderly (to them).”

-Isaiah 40:1 (2nd Sunday in Advent)

Loving God, we pray: send us Your Spirit in this Holy Season. Inspire us to be alert, watchful, and comforted by Your Word. We see war, violence, death and destruction seemingly everywhere. The faces of people in anguish are ever before us. But we pray: help us to be ever more watchful, to be a people of true vision. May we be alert to the needs of our suffering sisters and brothers. Help us to watch for ways in which we may give them -- your people -- comfort. Move us to act, in love and compassion.

God and Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Whose birth we prepare to celebrate, send us Your Spirit. Give us voice to speak tenderly.

We live in a world too full of harsh sounds, of chaos and conflict.

- The sounds of bombs exploding and gunfire daily;
- The sounds of homes and buildings -- and people -- shattered;
- The sounds of people screaming and fleeing from so many disasters;
- The sounds of voices raised in anger, in prejudice, in words of hate;
- The sounds of prison doors clanging shut.

So many harsh noises, O God!

Through all the din, O God, help us to hear You speaking tenderly to us. Quiet our hearts that we may hear Your message of love and peace -- of comfort.

And then, give us the voice and the heart to speak tenderly to all.

So may we “Hear the message of the Lord, and make it known to the ends of the earth: Our Savior is coming!” --Jeremiah 31:10; Isaiah 35:4 (Monday, 2nd week in Advent)