

Release and Renew

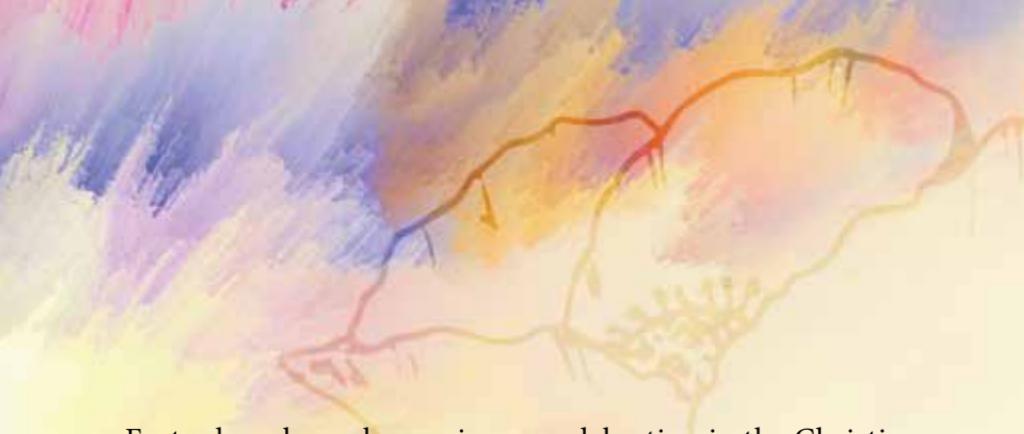
A Spiritual Practice for Lent 2021



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The special articles and Sunday essays in this booklet were excerpted from the book *The Seven Living Words* by Rev. Mark Anthony Lord (Accelerator Books, 2008). It is available on amazon.com along with his second book, *Thou Shall Not Suffer: 7 Steps to a Life of Joy* (Hierophant Publishing, 2014).



Easter has always been a joyous celebration in the Christian world. While it commemorates the death and resurrection of Jesus, it also reminds us of the cycles in our own lives when old ways die to make room for the new.

Lent represents such cycles with the conscious release of what no longer serves us so that we may discover new ways of living. For 40 days this Lenten season, we will explore this pattern of release and renewal with short essays to enrich your daily reflections.

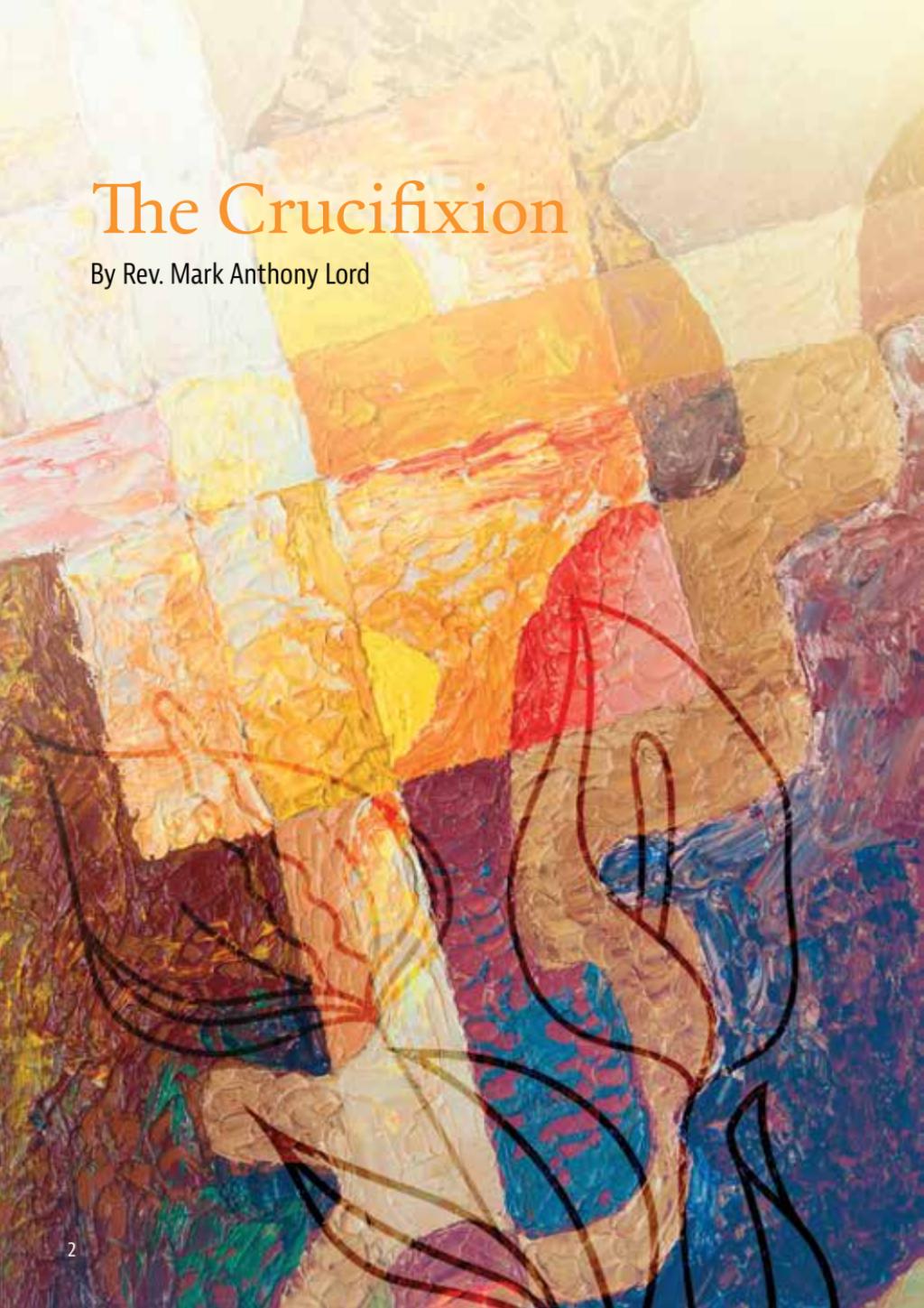
On the seven Sundays of Lent, we would like to share with you excerpts from the book *The Seven Living Words* by Rev. Mark Anthony Lord, who currently serves at Unity Naples, Florida. He presents Jesus' final words from the cross as a guide to developing our own Christ attributes and to living from a higher spiritual awareness.

Lent 2021 begins with Ash Wednesday, February 17, and runs until Easter on April 4. We hope this booklet will be your companion through the season as you contemplate what may be released from your life and find yourself transformed by the renewing of your mind.

Your Friends in Unity

The Crucifixion

By Rev. Mark Anthony Lord



The crucifixion and the seven last words spoken by Jesus on the cross are an enlightening blueprint for transformation—for letting go of the past and moving forward into our next level of expansion and consciousness. Whether you are moving through a major transition, one that feels too enormous to endure, or ... you are simply feeling Spirit within calling you to let go so that you can experience greater life, the story of the crucifixion will guide you on a clear, loving, and perfect path ...

Because the Bible is a study in consciousness and its deeper levels, its stories are a symbol-rich guide for revealing the experiences, situations, and growth challenges that the soul encounters on its journey “back to the Father’s house.” It represents an evolution of consciousness, from asleep to awake and from awake to enlightened.

In [the Unity] *New Testament Interpretation* workbook, it says, “The crucifixion itself symbolizes a process of crossing out, or eliminating, that which is no longer needful for our continued unfoldment. What has fulfilled its purpose in us must be either lifted to a higher level of expression in consciousness, or let go of completely. Jesus’ crucifixion illustrates both these meanings.”

Crossing out that which no longer serves or supports us feels downright scary! I know for myself that when I become aware that something is no longer serving me, whether it be a relationship, a job, a way of thinking, or a way of being in the world, my first thought is, “OK, I want to change ... but I also want to take *this* with me.” What I am really saying is, “I’m willing to change, but don’t change me or anything in my life.” I’m guessing you can relate! Our first impulse is to hold on tighter ...

Our true spiritual evolution is calling us to be happier, more fulfilled, and more on-purpose. So that which doesn’t match our next expansion has to go—or at least change along with us. That brings us to the really uncomfortable part: We don’t *know* what will fall away

in the world of form or what will transform and come with us ... You don't get to pick and choose what stays and what goes ...

Here's the deal: The crucifixion of that which is false and fear-based, and the resurrection of your full, authentic, powerful, and God-centered being, is *not* optional ... What is guaranteed is that you will neither miss nor want for anything. The God-self within you will have the final say, and there will be a day when you completely and unequivocally trust it. The road to this day can be short, long, or ... lifetimes, but the destination is assured; and the outcome will be more magnificent than you can imagine.

Remember ... each crucifixion is calling us to be more fully who we are: fully free, fully powerful, and fully faithful that we are always supported and sustained by the love of the Holy Spirit (the Spirit of Wholeness). Every crucifixion, no matter how difficult or seemingly life-shattering, is simply a desire to follow your dreams at all costs. Our crucifixion is calling us to surrender, so that we can remember the truth—that *within* us is the greatest power of all, a divine Being that is eternal and that can never be destroyed or diminished.

This is the main point that Jesus was making in the story of his crucifixion. He was saying, “Look, take my body if you have to. You cannot destroy me. You cannot take *life* away from me, nor can it be taken away from you!” ...

It's time to stop playing small and pretending that there's something great “out there” that is bigger and better than you. It's time to awaken to the God-self within you so you can cocreate heaven on earth. There may very well have to be some crucifying of that which no longer serves. So be it. Whether pain is pushing you or a vision is pulling you, let this mystical story be your guide.

Excerpted from *The Seven Living Words* (Accelerator Books, 2008)

Who Is This Man Jesus?

By Rev. Mark Anthony Lord

We hear the word *enlightenment* quite often. What does it mean? It all begins with the idea or illusion that there is separation between you and God. Any belief that you and God are somehow at a distance from each other—God out there, in the clouds, up in heaven, somehow outside of your experience of being right here and right now—is a myth that produces what I'd call *in-darken-ment*.

Enlightenment takes place when an individual realizes a oneness with God so profoundly that there is an awakening from this dream of separation, never to return to it or be seduced by it again. The illusion of separation is gone forever because you realize that there is no one “out there” who can hurt, harm, persecute, or save you. It’s the *aha* of all *aha’s*, knowing that the life of God is your own life.

This may seem like an unusual idea to you. Part of you may even be crying out, “Blasphemy!” Take a deep breath and let this idea sit with you for a while. Imagine that there is one power and presence, this thing called God that is within, through, and as *all* of life, all that exists ... We are a part of a divine and perfect spiritual reality that we cannot see with our human eyes, but we can sense it and feel it with our true nature ...

Enlightenment, I imagine, is the place of total freedom, joy, acceptance, peace, and unconditional love—pure *bliss*. It is our natural state of being, our eternal reality. This is the reality that I believe Jesus lived in, spoke from, taught from, and enjoyed to the very last breath of his physical life—and beyond, of course ...

The teachings of Jesus offer us salvation from the belief that we are somehow separate from God, undeserving of love, or doomed to live a life of pain and suffering. In fact, if they were selling this “salvation” over the counter at my local pharmacy, I would be first in line to buy it. Who wouldn’t want that? The good news is that you don’t have to buy it. You do, however, have to be willing to do the work necessary to realize this salvation, this enlightenment.

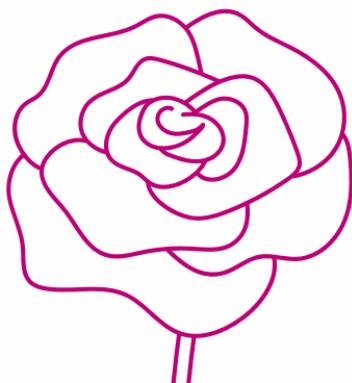
What matters is what Jesus taught—and still teaches—and how his life can be used as an example for anyone who desires to become free. I love knowing that Jesus and I are made of the exact same God, the exact same stuff. I love knowing that we use the same Mind of God and that truly, in God, we are perfectly and forever one.

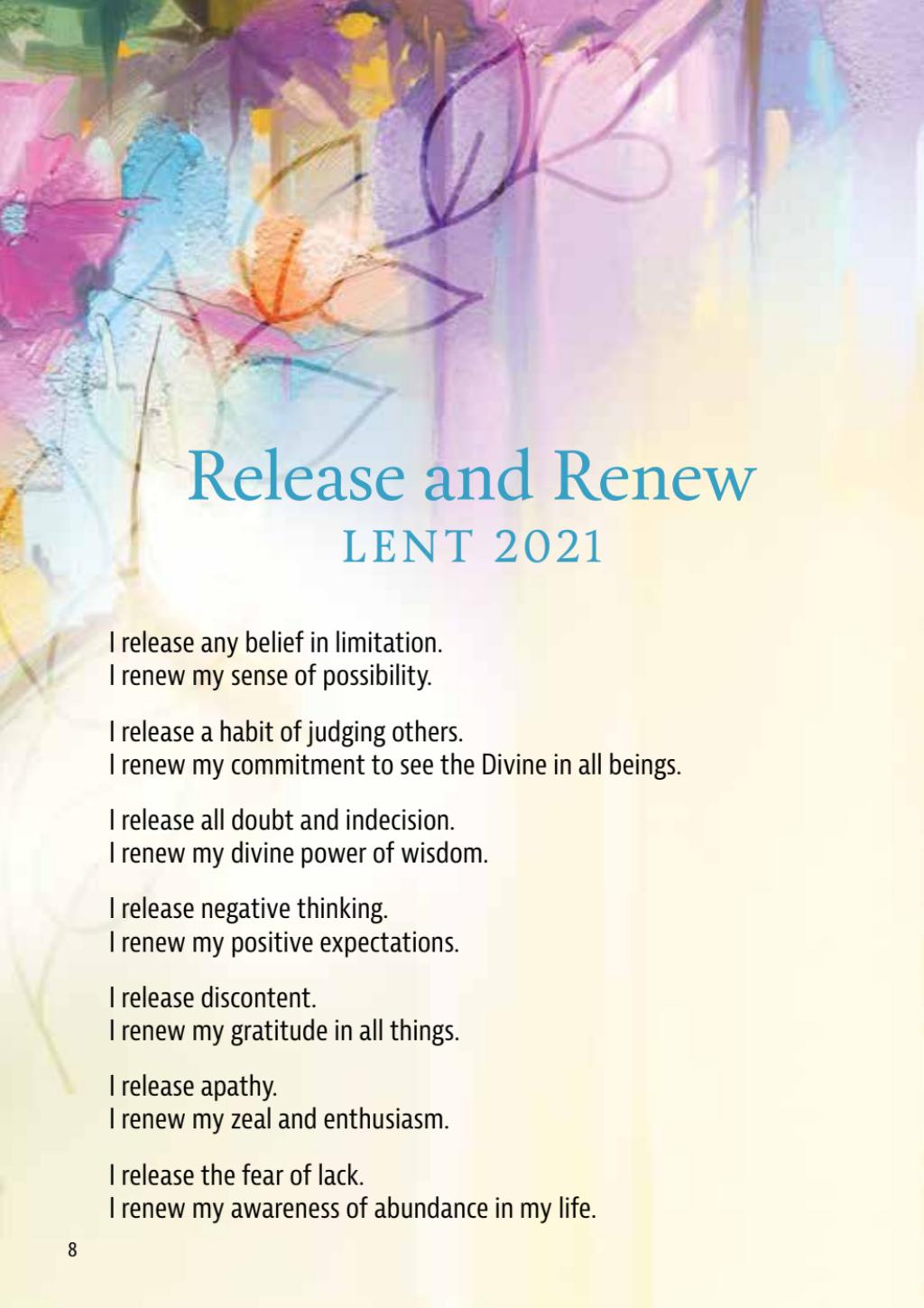
His work on this planet was to be a mirror, to reveal the truth of our own Christ consciousness. He never described himself as the exception or the expert. He taught that “this and greater things shall *you* do.” That simple passage demonstrates that he is not the exception and clearly implies that we are all made of God and are capable of achieving Christ consciousness. In fact, I believe that is ultimately what we are all here to do and will do ...

To wrap it up about Jesus, I would have to simply say: Jesus is cool ... radically cool. Jesus is the most inclusive teacher I know. He truly sees no color, no race, no sexual orientation, no age, and no “sin” or behavior within someone that deems that person unworthy of heaven. Jesus taught that “heaven is at hand.” What that means is that heaven is in this now moment, in this present space and time ... When we find it inside of us, and we commit to throwing our hearts open and revealing it, we see it everywhere and in everyone.

Jesus told us, “I and the Father are one,” which is also true for you and me. We are *all* one. We are all part of the great I AM.

Excerpted from *The Seven Living Words* (Accelerator Books, 2008)





Release and Renew

LENT 2021

I release any belief in limitation.
I renew my sense of possibility.

I release a habit of judging others.
I renew my commitment to see the Divine in all beings.

I release all doubt and indecision.
I renew my divine power of wisdom.

I release negative thinking.
I renew my positive expectations.

I release discontent.
I renew my gratitude in all things.

I release apathy.
I renew my zeal and enthusiasm.

I release the fear of lack.
I renew my awareness of abundance in my life.

I release any sense of worry.
I renew my faith in divine order.

I release thoughts of competition.
I renew my willingness to cooperate.

I release any need to complain.
I renew my outlook through appreciation.

I release old feelings of bitterness.
I renew inner peace by forgiving.

I release feeling stuck.
I renew my will to take the next step forward.

I release any feelings of hostility.
I renew my practice of nonresistance.

I release thoughts of illness.
I renew my openness to the healing power of Spirit.

I release anger.
I renew my patience.

I release any sense of discouragement.
I renew my hope with the power of affirmative prayer.

I release my darkest fears.
I renew the strength and courage of my heart.

I release feelings of loneliness.
I renew my connection with Spirit, self, and others.

I release problems that seem to overwhelm me.
I renew my understanding of my spiritual nature.

I release the shadows of sorrow.
I renew myself in the serenity of silence.

Ash Wednesday

FEBRUARY 17, 2021

I release any belief in limitation.

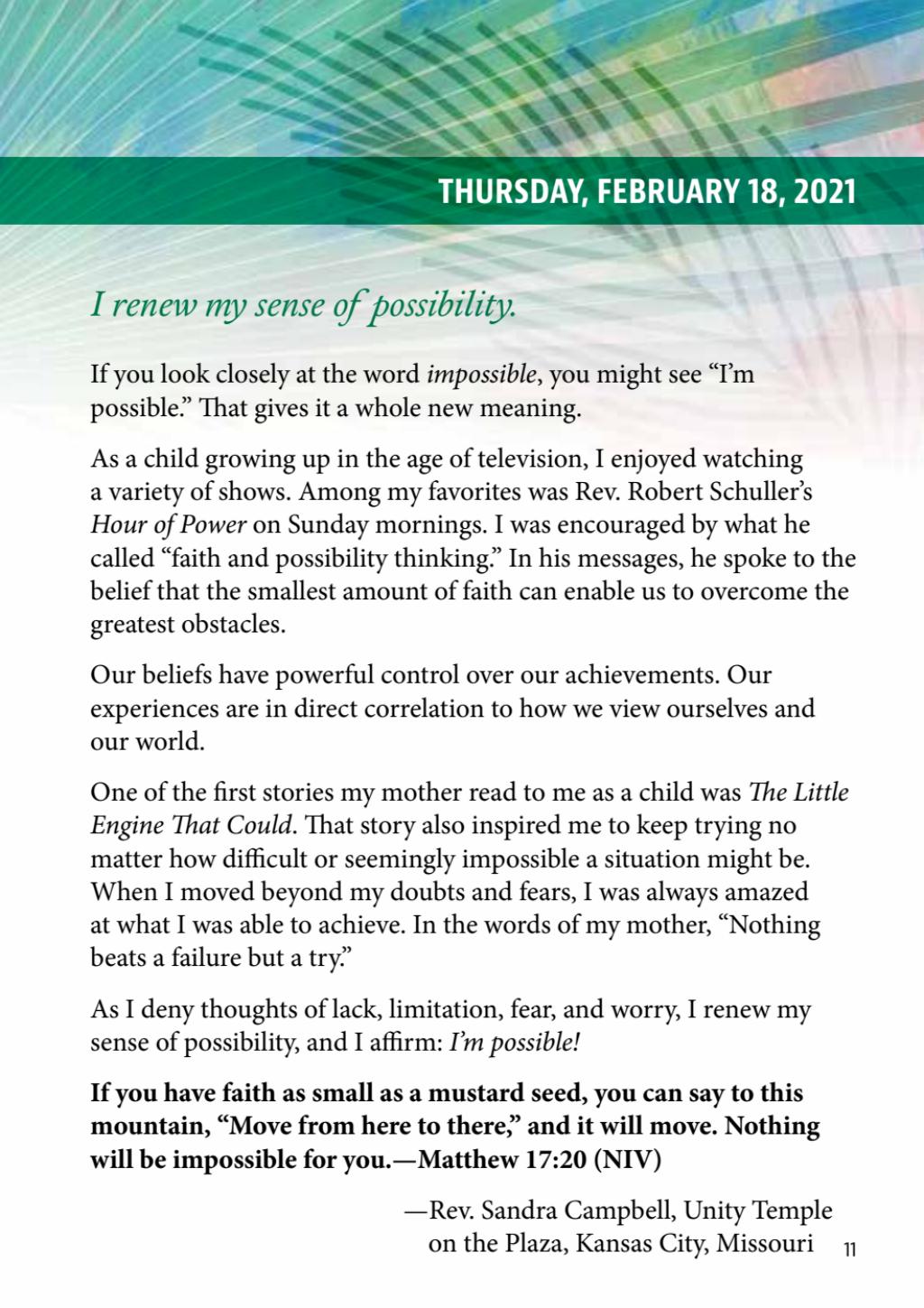
When I was in junior high school, my typing teacher would often lose patience with the endless chitter-chatter of teenage girls in class. Occasionally she would command our attention and silence by proclaiming loudly, “Enough is enough, and too much stinks!”

Those words hold true for beliefs that do not serve our highest good. We may find ourselves entertaining limiting thoughts about ourselves and others. Thoughts about not being or having enough may bombard our psyches. I once heard a minister refer to such negative beliefs as “stinkin’ thinkin.”

In principle, we create our experiences by our thoughts, beliefs, and actions. When we entertain thoughts of lack, we attract more of the same and block our channels to new and better experiences.

During this season of Lent, I set my intention to release any belief in limitation. When such thoughts enter my mind, I quietly affirm that I am happy, whole, wise, and healthy, and I have plenty to meet my needs. By consciously letting go of stinkin’ thinkin’, I give myself permission to see myself and the world around me in divine perfection. After all, thoughts held in mind produce after their kind.

Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.—Philippians 4:8



THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2021

I renew my sense of possibility.

If you look closely at the word *impossible*, you might see “I’m possible.” That gives it a whole new meaning.

As a child growing up in the age of television, I enjoyed watching a variety of shows. Among my favorites was Rev. Robert Schuller’s *Hour of Power* on Sunday mornings. I was encouraged by what he called “faith and possibility thinking.” In his messages, he spoke to the belief that the smallest amount of faith can enable us to overcome the greatest obstacles.

Our beliefs have powerful control over our achievements. Our experiences are in direct correlation to how we view ourselves and our world.

One of the first stories my mother read to me as a child was *The Little Engine That Could*. That story also inspired me to keep trying no matter how difficult or seemingly impossible a situation might be. When I moved beyond my doubts and fears, I was always amazed at what I was able to achieve. In the words of my mother, “Nothing beats a failure but a try.”

As I deny thoughts of lack, limitation, fear, and worry, I renew my sense of possibility, and I affirm: *I’m possible!*

If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, “Move from here to there,” and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.—Matthew 17:20 (NIV)

—Rev. Sandra Campbell, Unity Temple
on the Plaza, Kansas City, Missouri

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2021

I release the habit of judging others.

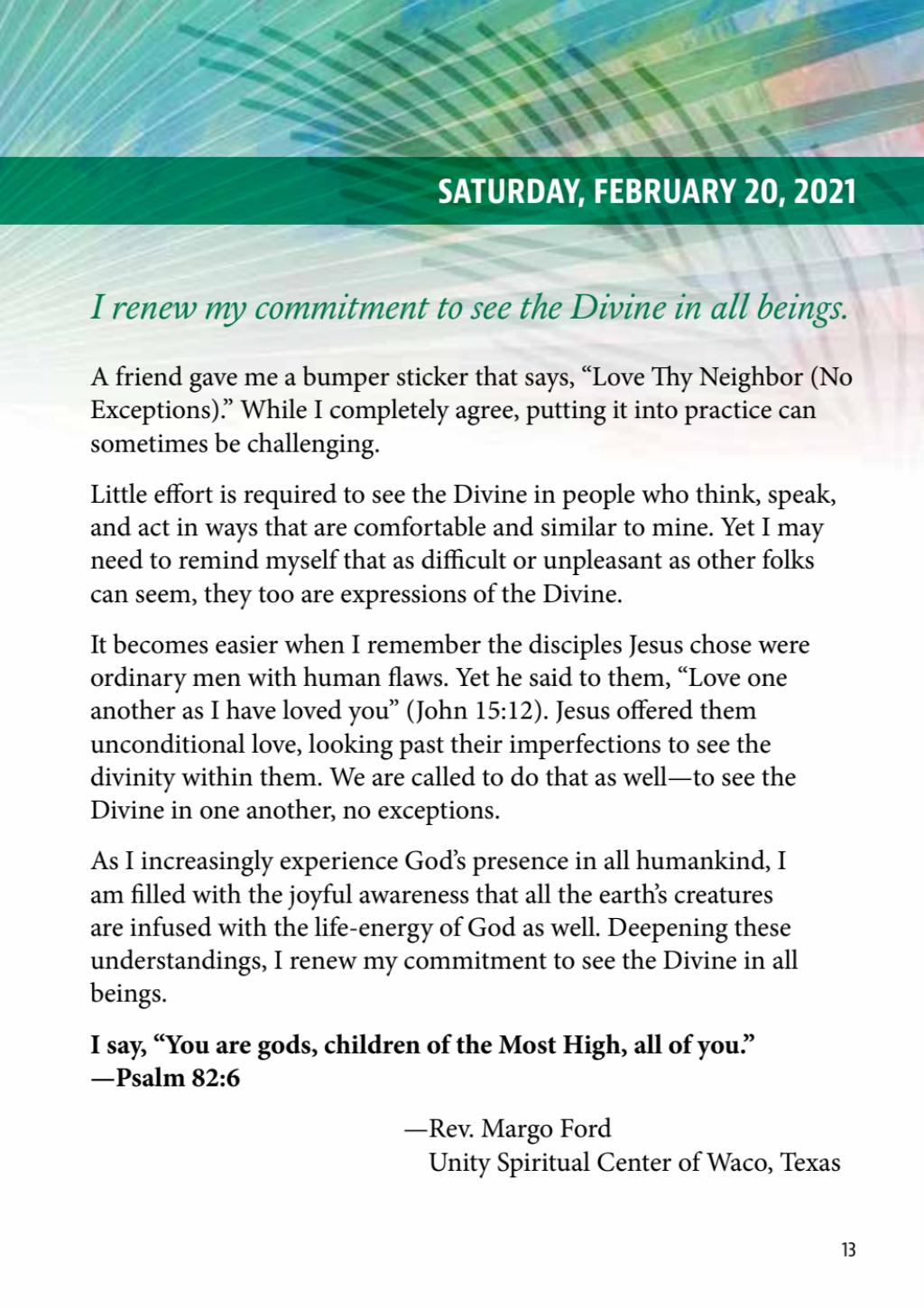
How easy it is to pass judgment on people based on how they look, what they say, their political affiliation, and myriad other perceptions about them. Faultfinding may be a regular habit for many of us, so much so that we may not even be aware of how often negative judgments enter our thoughts and words.

With this realization, I decided to consciously track my critical judgments of others for just one day. I was truly chagrined at what I found! Although not often speaking the words aloud, I certainly had many judgmental thoughts throughout the day, more than I would have estimated.

Recognizing the need to change this, I prayerfully asked for insight on how to release my habit of judging people. The message I received were the words “a blessing.” I was led to substitute a blessing in place of a judgment.

It’s a simple idea but not always easy to do. However, becoming aware of judgmental thoughts as they arise, I say to myself, *I bless this person—a spiritual being having a human experience.* It gets a little easier with practice, and as an unanticipated consequence, I also feel more at peace.

Let us therefore no longer pass judgment on one another.
—Romans 14:13



SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2021

I renew my commitment to see the Divine in all beings.

A friend gave me a bumper sticker that says, “Love Thy Neighbor (No Exceptions).” While I completely agree, putting it into practice can sometimes be challenging.

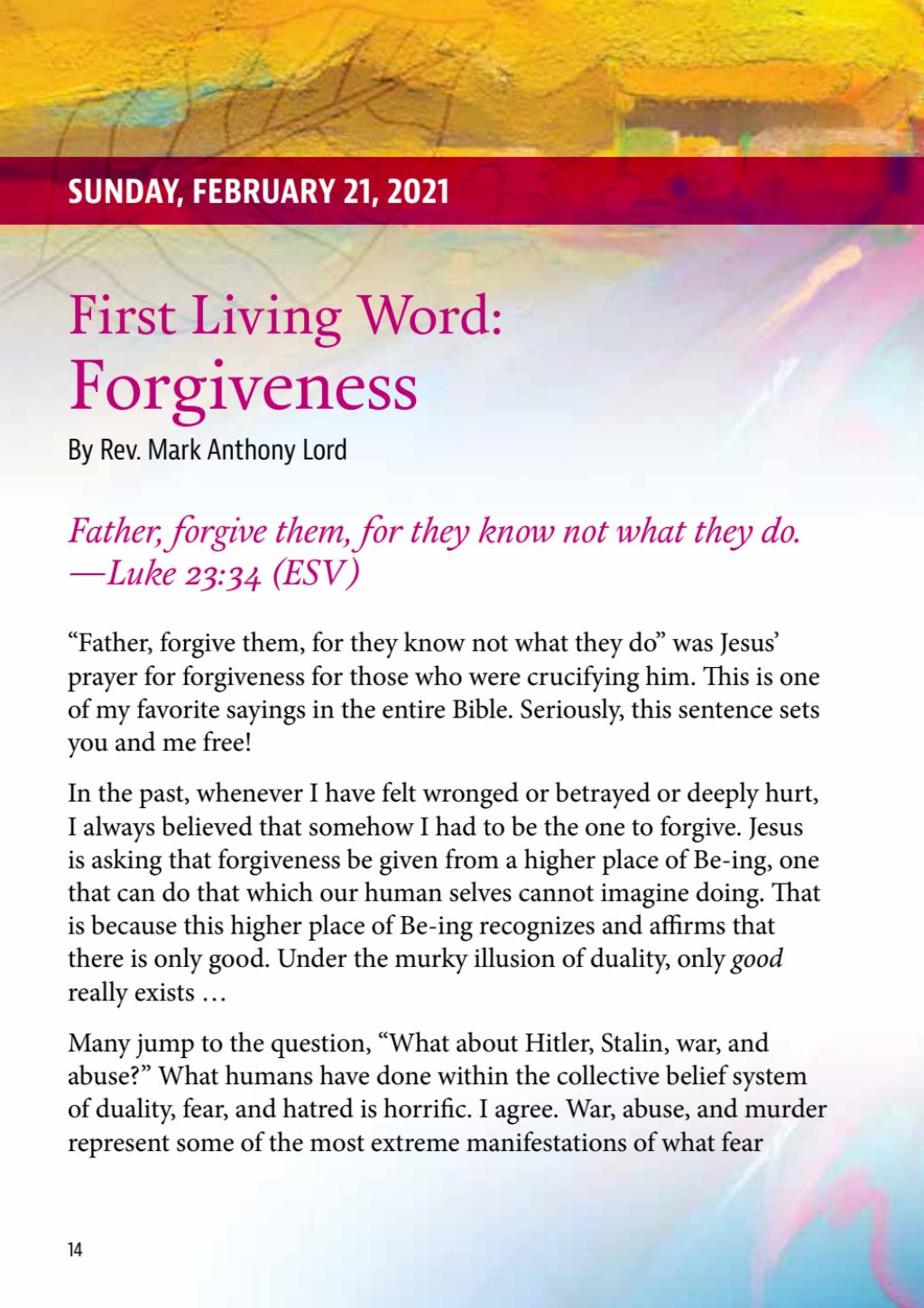
Little effort is required to see the Divine in people who think, speak, and act in ways that are comfortable and similar to mine. Yet I may need to remind myself that as difficult or unpleasant as other folks can seem, they too are expressions of the Divine.

It becomes easier when I remember the disciples Jesus chose were ordinary men with human flaws. Yet he said to them, “Love one another as I have loved you” (John 15:12). Jesus offered them unconditional love, looking past their imperfections to see the divinity within them. We are called to do that as well—to see the Divine in one another, no exceptions.

As I increasingly experience God’s presence in all humankind, I am filled with the joyful awareness that all the earth’s creatures are infused with the life-energy of God as well. Deepening these understandings, I renew my commitment to see the Divine in all beings.

I say, “You are gods, children of the Most High, all of you.”
—Psalm 82:6

—Rev. Margo Ford
Unity Spiritual Center of Waco, Texas



SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2021

First Living Word: Forgiveness

By Rev. Mark Anthony Lord

Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.
—Luke 23:34 (ESV)

“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do” was Jesus’ prayer for forgiveness for those who were crucifying him. This is one of my favorite sayings in the entire Bible. Seriously, this sentence sets you and me free!

In the past, whenever I have felt wronged or betrayed or deeply hurt, I always believed that somehow I had to be the one to forgive. Jesus is asking that forgiveness be given from a higher place of Be-ing, one that can do that which our human selves cannot imagine doing. That is because this higher place of Be-ing recognizes and affirms that there is only good. Under the murky illusion of duality, only *good* really exists ...

Many jump to the question, “What about Hitler, Stalin, war, and abuse?” What humans have done within the collective belief system of duality, fear, and hatred is horrific. I agree. War, abuse, and murder represent some of the most extreme manifestations of what fear



can create. But no matter what they (Hitler, Stalin, the serial killer, corrupt organizations, gangs, mobs, religious zealots, etc.) or you and I do in our fear, it does not and will not take us or anyone out of the heart and love of God ...

Let us all trust the process that this master teacher laid out for us. Follow his lead, even if it goes against the dissonant music in your head that is playing your “somebody done me wrong” song. We only need to be willing to let the love of Spirit, which knows no “other” and no offense, create the miracle that forgiveness offers. This is exactly what Jesus was relying on when he said, “Father, forgive them ...” He is calling upon the divinity, the wholeness, and the unconditional love of God to do the forgiving. “It is the Father within that doeth the work” (John 14:10). The “Father within” is the consciousness of all that is good, perfect, and pure.

Freedom through forgiveness is only a thought away. Our part is to say *yes* to it and let it perform the miracle in the right and perfect time. Forgiveness, when called upon, washes away every story, every hurt, every fear, and every belief in separation. It is the most transcendent and transcending spiritual practice I know of.

Excerpted from *The Seven Living Words* (Accelerator Books, 2008)



MONDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2021

I release all doubt and indecision.

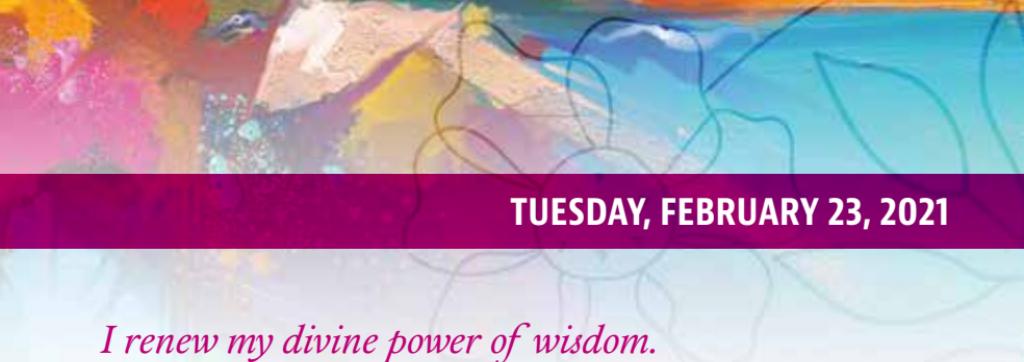
We all encounter doubt. Moses, Jesus, and Buddha had doubts until—through prayer—doubt was transformed into knowing. Deeper questioning helps us know our minds and souls as we ask, *What is mine to do?* This is one of the great lessons of the master teachers.

We welcome the doubts that lead to clarity and discernment toward taking right action. But there are also anxious habits of doubt and indecision that can hound us into “analysis paralysis,” asking too many outside opinions through insecurity, or putting off making commitments.

Fear-based doubts and indecision do not serve us. Are we even aware of those patterns? Looking closely, is indecision simply the fear of making a mistake or not being perfect? Fear and false beliefs about ourselves put us in self-made prisons of negativity and create feelings of unworthiness that were never true.

By letting go, with faith that our spiritual perfection includes the gifts of power and understanding, we engage our creative energy to manifest our dreams and visions. Divine mind—the Christ light within—is active in our lives to help show the way.

For God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline.—2 Timothy 1:7



TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2021

I renew my divine power of wisdom.

Wisdom lives within us, always there, waiting to be consulted. Often it shows up only when invited. Even then, its still, small voice can be drowned out by louder noises of fear, self-aggrandizement, or speculation about what other people might think.

By renewing awareness of our wisdom, we breathe in knowing that the power and presence of Source is providing the right answers to every need. Whether wisdom comes from experience, an intuitive knowing, or seeking guidance in meditation, we recognize it when it comes. We feel it in heart and mind.

Wisdom reveals our choices. It empowers us to confront old habits, poor judgments, and mistaken beliefs of the past. When we center ourselves in God, situations seem to resolve with ease and grace. In gratitude, we renew our appreciation for our higher consciousness that knows what we need for greater happiness, abundance, peace, and love. With renewed wisdom, we trust the power of the Divine within to raise us up and light our way.

You desire truth in the inward being; therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.—Psalm 51:6

—Rev. Lesley Miller
Writer and teacher, New Jersey

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2021

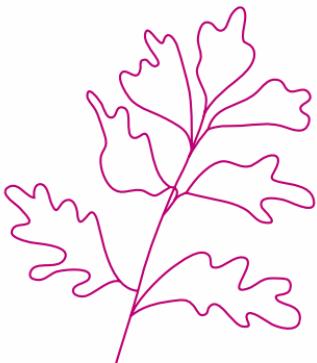
I release negative thinking.

“Nothing ever goes right!” We’ve all likely met people who make similar statements. You know the type: The sky always seems to be falling and nothing ever seems to be going well. Unfortunately, these statements often reveal negative thinking that ultimately attracts precisely the things they don’t wish to attract. It describes the person I used to be.

For many years, I worked in a job that left me feeling both unhappy and depleted. I allowed that unhappiness to seep into other areas of my life, often robbing me of joy. I allowed my negative thinking to tell me there were no other options or I’d never have other opportunities. Before long, negative thinking was all I focused on. Of course, my negative thoughts and words were reflected in my life.

Eventually I began to realize my unhappiness was a result of my consistent negative thinking. I began to ask myself questions. *Did I really want to continue to live my life steeped in that type of thinking? Didn’t I realize I was so much more than that?*

My brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of any kind, consider it nothing but joy.—James 1:2





THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2021

I renew my positive expectations.

I remember the day I finally realized that I needed to take control of my thinking if I wanted to truly take control of my life.

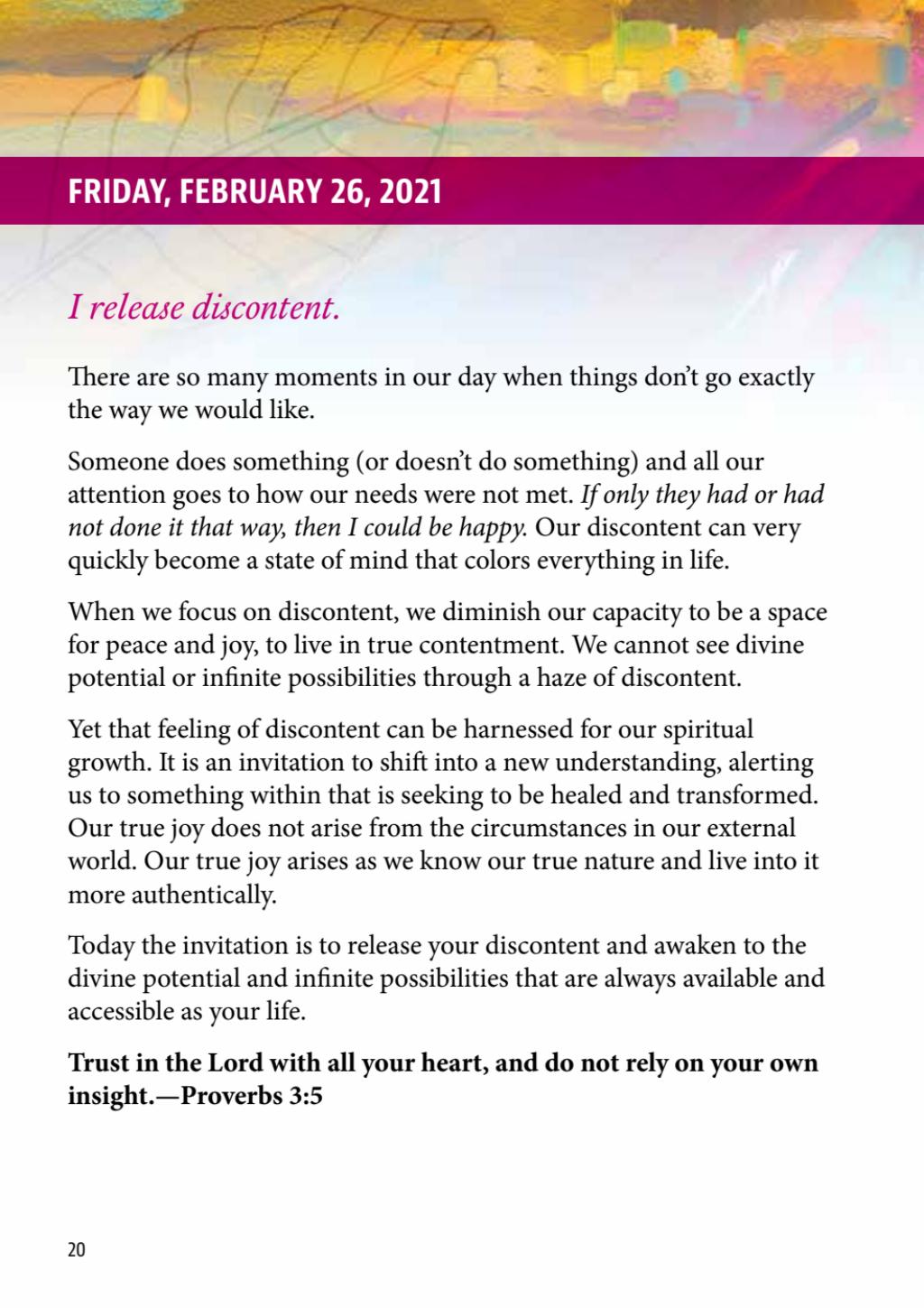
I was living in Washington state, and the beauty of the lush greenery and snowcapped mountains often left me in a state of awe and deep gratitude. While hiking one day, I stopped to enjoy the scenery of a beautiful river, and, just as I was preparing my camera for photographs, I saw a bald eagle soaring over the water. What a sight to behold!

That eagle knew its splendor. It seemed to behold its freedom and ability to fly. It wasn't going to allow anything to hinder its flight, and I decided then and there to do the same. I knew in that moment I was also a splendid, magnificent being.

I knew that I needed to believe I could fly, but first I needed to be willing to spread and expand my wings. With the power of expansion, I face life with positive expectations.

The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?—Psalm 27:1

—Rev. Evin Wilkins
Unity of Madison, Wisconsin



FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2021

I release discontent.

There are so many moments in our day when things don't go exactly the way we would like.

Someone does something (or doesn't do something) and all our attention goes to how our needs were not met. *If only they had or had not done it that way, then I could be happy.* Our discontent can very quickly become a state of mind that colors everything in life.

When we focus on discontent, we diminish our capacity to be a space for peace and joy, to live in true contentment. We cannot see divine potential or infinite possibilities through a haze of discontent.

Yet that feeling of discontent can be harnessed for our spiritual growth. It is an invitation to shift into a new understanding, alerting us to something within that is seeking to be healed and transformed. Our true joy does not arise from the circumstances in our external world. Our true joy arises as we know our true nature and live into it more authentically.

Today the invitation is to release your discontent and awaken to the divine potential and infinite possibilities that are always available and accessible as your life.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight.—Proverbs 3:5



SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2021

I renew my gratitude in all things.

There is so much to be grateful for, and yet how easy it is to take our blessings for granted. Each breath we take is a living miracle. The gentle purring of a cat is a demonstration of divine love. Flowers blooming remind us that life is continually renewing. Trees ablaze in autumn show us how beautiful and integral to life letting go is.

Where is your attention? Is it on the demonstrations all around you of the one power, the one presence, the one life? Is it on the good that is present in your life right now?

No matter what conditions may be arising in your life, there is always something to be grateful for. In the Jewish tradition, the first prayer upon waking is truly a prayer of gratitude for waking. What blessings are you taking for granted? Are you willing to see your blessings with new eyes? As we practice gratitude, we consciously place our attention on the good in our lives and we are changed. We are open to experience even more good.

Today you are invited to renew and cultivate your gratitude. Open your heart and see anew the overflow of blessings present in your life right now.

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing.—1 Thessalonians 5:16-17

—Rev. DeeAnn Weir Morency
Unity San Francisco

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2021

Second Living Word: Now

By Rev. Mark Anthony Lord

Today you will be with me in paradise.
—Luke 23:43 (ESV)

These powerful words, as recorded in the Gospel of Luke, are what Jesus said to the two men who were hanged to the right and left of him as he was being crucified. What I want to explore with you here is a metaphysical perspective on this image. Jesus on the cross represents the *now*, and the two men represent the *past* and the *future*. When we're in a crisis of transformation, the past and future may both weigh heavily on us. Our ideas of how life is "supposed to be," formed from our past experiences and expectations, have collapsed, and the future seems dark and uncertain.

In his time of crucifixion, Jesus speaks to the two men of *paradise*, an often elusive, mythical, faraway concept. But Jesus says, "Today you shall be with me in paradise." The word is also used interchangeably with "kingdom of heaven," and we are told that "the kingdom of heaven is at *hand*" and that it is "neither here nor there but strewn before us."



Paradise, the kingdom of heaven, is available to us all—here, now, and always. And paradise can only be experienced in the now-present moment. There is, of course, much goodness in our memories and in our ideas of who we are becoming. In our fear, we often believe we'll lose something of value, but in our faith, we know that there is never anything lost in God. Jesus' words confirm that only *good* shall remain. All the good that has brought us to the moment of transformation will remain and ascend with us, and all the good that we hope to become and experience will be made manifest ...

I assure you: The greatest joy in the world is the now-present moment because that is where God resides ...

We've all missed the beauty and peace available to us if we could just take a deep breath and embrace right where we *are* ... It is the flights of fancy into the past or the future, and away from the present, that ultimately remove the peace that is possible only in the now moment.

Excerpted from *The Seven Living Words* (Accelerator Books, 2008)

MONDAY, MARCH 1, 2021

I release apathy.

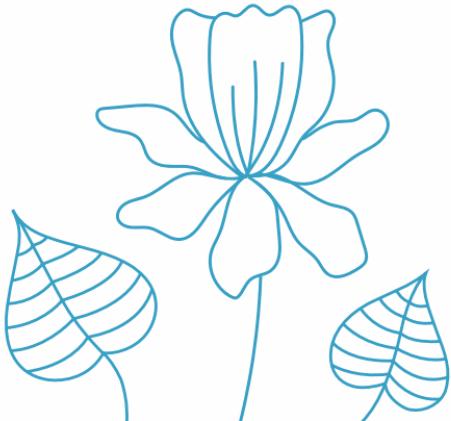
Apathy spreads a blanket of fog over the life I am living. Like a pouty adolescent, it says to me, “I’m not going to engage with life. I am sitting on the sidelines looking at the playing field in front of me.”

Deep within, I know I want to get on the field and participate to the fullest. So I pray, “God, lift me up into a clearer vision of what and who I really am.”

When I fail at something I have put my heart and soul into, apathy is right there waiting to be admitted to my thought process. I am not afraid of apathy, but I am disturbed by its effects if left to fester.

I have learned to hear the call to release apathy and try again, to pick up the tools of effort and desire and keep going. If I fail again, I will try again. Persistence clears away apathy just as the sun dissolves the fog.

So, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I am about to spit you out of my mouth.—Revelation 3:16





TUESDAY, MARCH 2, 2021

I renew my zeal and enthusiasm.

I approach this day with zeal and enthusiasm. Each new day is an opportunity to choose these attributes over apathy or indifference. When I awake to the power of the indwelling Christ, a new birth occurs in my consciousness. There is no limit to God's infinite power.

At times I might begin to think God has forgotten me or this spiritual process is only a figment of my imagination. I cannot prove the existence of God—it is only by demonstrating spiritual truth that it becomes real.

Days when I don't feel like practicing spiritual principle usually don't turn out well. When I lift my thoughts instead to spiritual truth, suddenly I find an answer to a question or a solution to a problem. I use my innate, ever-present power of zeal to turn my thoughts to God and I employ enthusiasm to complete my task or project. I no longer feel trapped in lethargy or indifference as I turn toward Spirit in each moment.

Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord.
—Romans 12:11

—Rev. John Beerman
Unity of Medina, Ohio

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 3, 2021

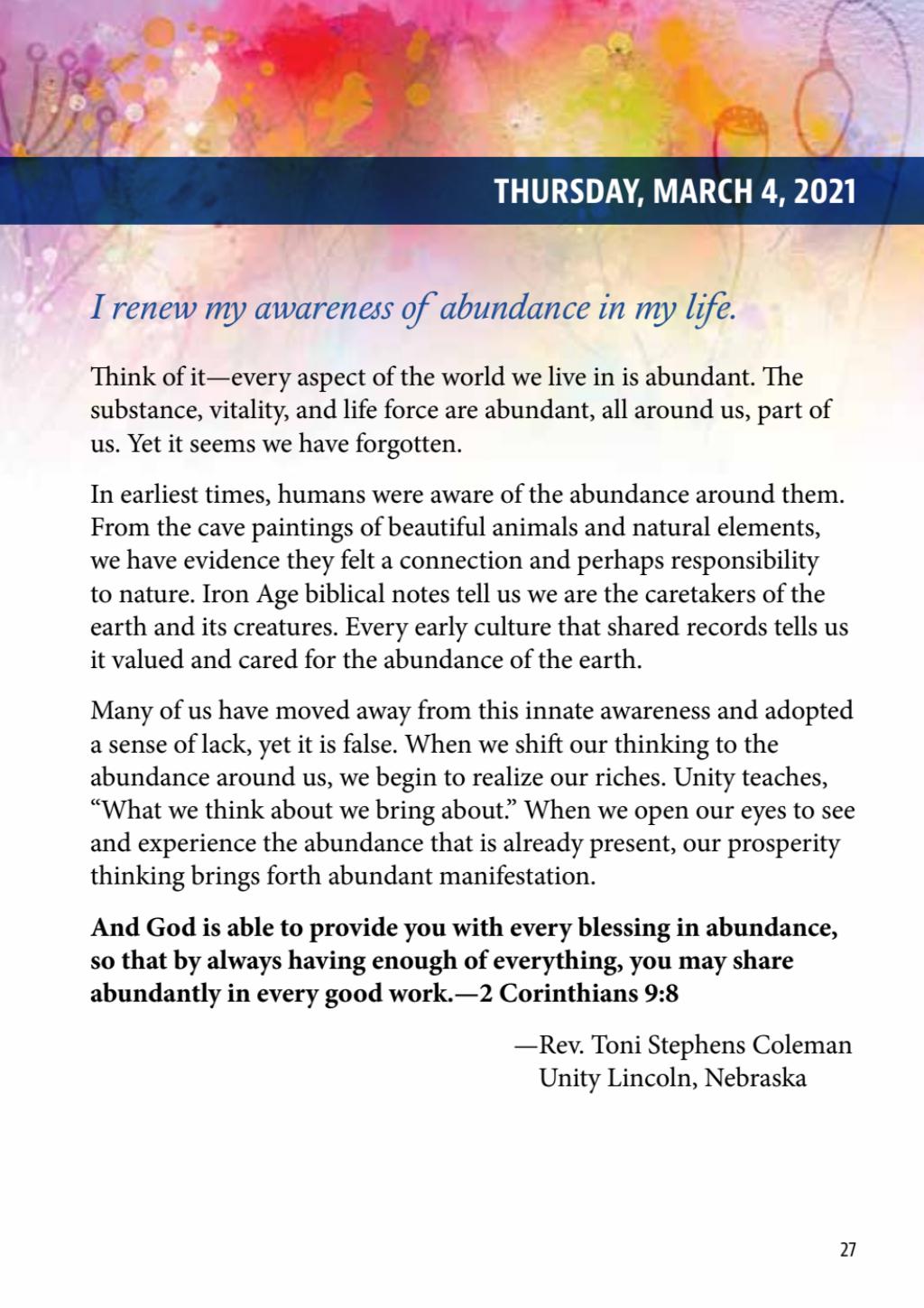
I release the fear of lack.

Lack is a belief of being without, not having enough, being deficient. Many today hold dearly to the idea of lack in their lives even if they are not aware of their thoughts. The test is this: Can you provide long lists of what you don't have or think you need? Is this a frequent mental or verbal activity?

Question, too, your relationship with money. Is it an area of competition? Do you measure your success by having and getting? Does money drive you? Or is money simply a means to secure for yourself and your family comfortable provisions? Do you use funds to lubricate your world so it works smoothly? Do your funds support you and your joy? To release the fear of lack, we establish and maintain a healthy relationship with money.

Lack is only a perspective. Instead we can view the universe as abundant and life as a demonstration of plenty. Unity teaches that if we change our thoughts, we change our lives. Take stock of what you *do* have, even the slightest things, and release fear of lack.

Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.—Mark 12:43-44



THURSDAY, MARCH 4, 2021

I renew my awareness of abundance in my life.

Think of it—every aspect of the world we live in is abundant. The substance, vitality, and life force are abundant, all around us, part of us. Yet it seems we have forgotten.

In earliest times, humans were aware of the abundance around them. From the cave paintings of beautiful animals and natural elements, we have evidence they felt a connection and perhaps responsibility to nature. Iron Age biblical notes tell us we are the caretakers of the earth and its creatures. Every early culture that shared records tells us it valued and cared for the abundance of the earth.

Many of us have moved away from this innate awareness and adopted a sense of lack, yet it is false. When we shift our thinking to the abundance around us, we begin to realize our riches. Unity teaches, “What we think about we bring about.” When we open our eyes to see and experience the abundance that is already present, our prosperity thinking brings forth abundant manifestation.

And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work.—2 Corinthians 9:8

—Rev. Toni Stephens Coleman
Unity Lincoln, Nebraska

I release any sense of worry.

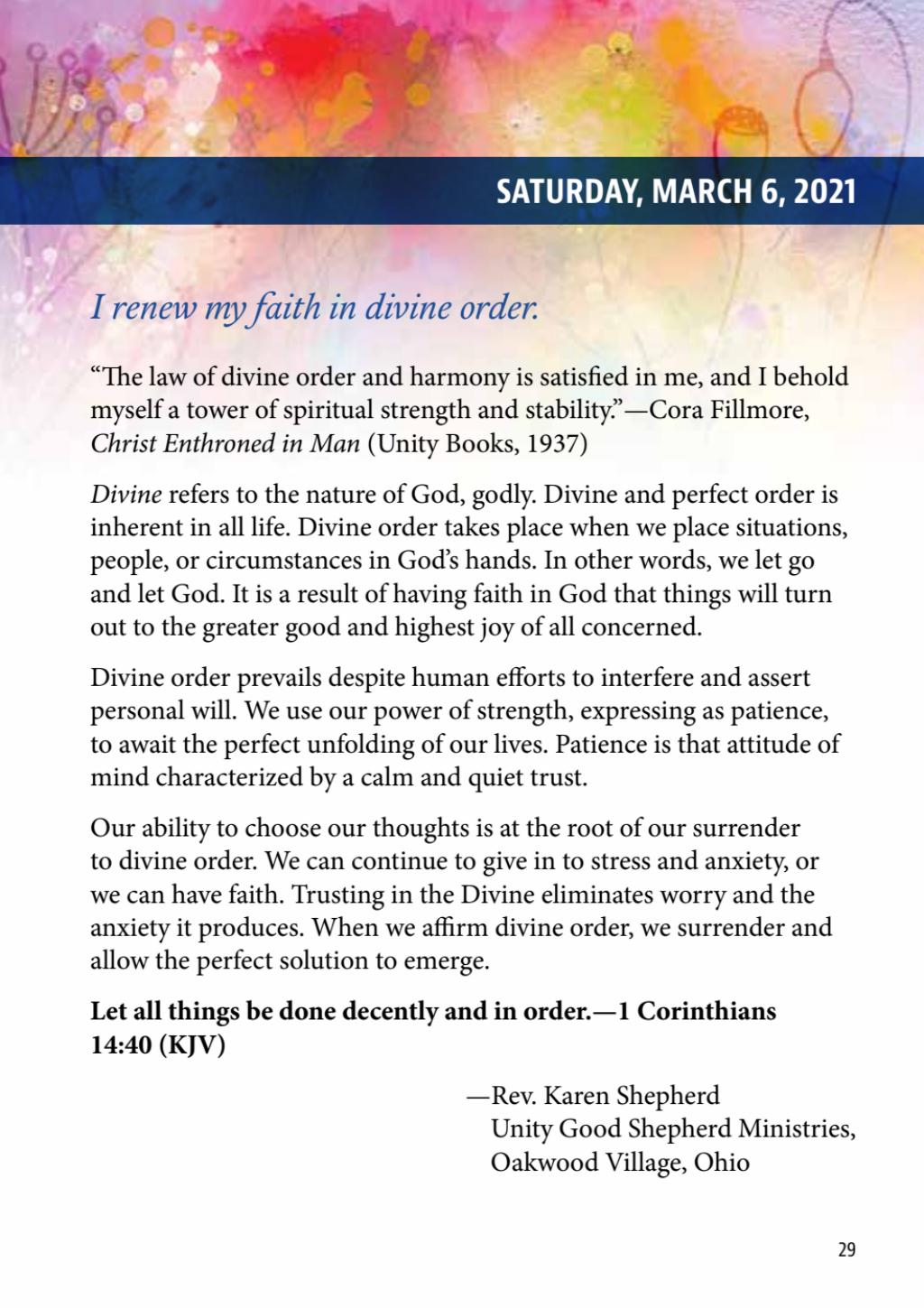
Several years ago, Travelers Insurance produced a commercial featuring a little dog with his prized possession, a bone. The little dog is so worried something is going to happen to his bone that he hides it, then goes back to get it, then buries it, then immediately digs it up. He even rents a safety-deposit box for the bone but ultimately returns to get it. He can't sleep at night for worrying about his prized possession.

As funny and cute as this commercial is, it perfectly illustrates one of the main obstacles to achieving inner peace—worry. To *worry* means to be “anxious or troubled.” It comes from an Anglo-Saxon word meaning “to strangle.”

When we allow our minds to become preoccupied with pending decisions, concern about what might happen, or feelings of inadequacy to meet a challenge, we subject ourselves to a tremendous amount of stress. Worry becomes especially prevalent in turbulent times, focusing on what might or might not happen.

Worry causes us to visualize what we do not want in our lives. It's a misappropriation of our beautiful gift of imagination. It also demonstrates a lack of faith.

And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life?—Matthew 6:27



SATURDAY, MARCH 6, 2021

I renew my faith in divine order.

“The law of divine order and harmony is satisfied in me, and I behold myself a tower of spiritual strength and stability.”—Cora Fillmore, *Christ Enthroned in Man* (Unity Books, 1937)

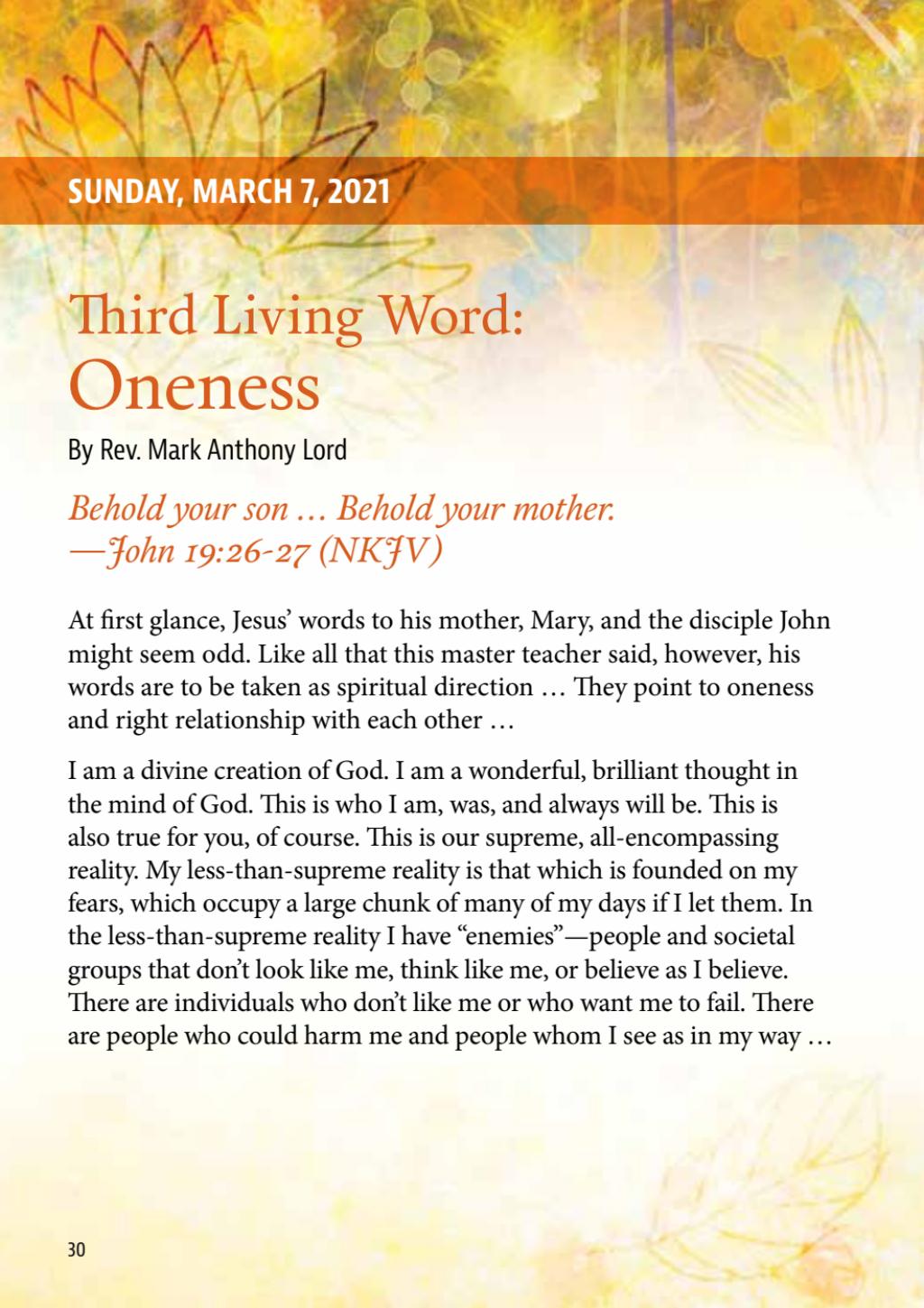
Divine refers to the nature of God, godly. Divine and perfect order is inherent in all life. Divine order takes place when we place situations, people, or circumstances in God’s hands. In other words, we let go and let God. It is a result of having faith in God that things will turn out to the greater good and highest joy of all concerned.

Divine order prevails despite human efforts to interfere and assert personal will. We use our power of strength, expressing as patience, to await the perfect unfolding of our lives. Patience is that attitude of mind characterized by a calm and quiet trust.

Our ability to choose our thoughts is at the root of our surrender to divine order. We can continue to give in to stress and anxiety, or we can have faith. Trusting in the Divine eliminates worry and the anxiety it produces. When we affirm divine order, we surrender and allow the perfect solution to emerge.

Let all things be done decently and in order.—1 Corinthians 14:40 (KJV)

—Rev. Karen Shepherd
Unity Good Shepherd Ministries,
Oakwood Village, Ohio



SUNDAY, MARCH 7, 2021

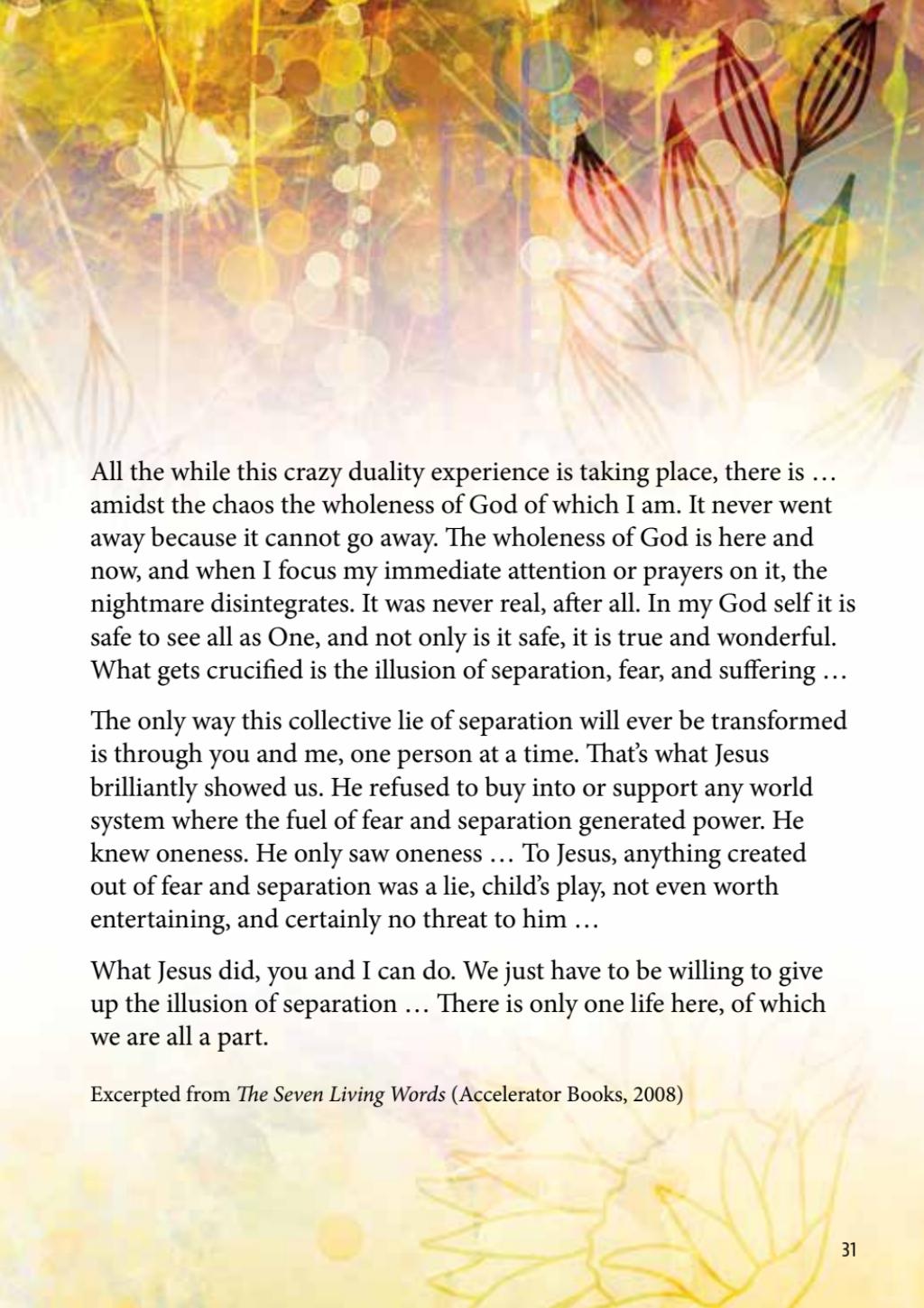
Third Living Word: Oneness

By Rev. Mark Anthony Lord

Behold your son ... Behold your mother.
—John 19:26-27 (NKJV)

At first glance, Jesus' words to his mother, Mary, and the disciple John might seem odd. Like all that this master teacher said, however, his words are to be taken as spiritual direction ... They point to oneness and right relationship with each other ...

I am a divine creation of God. I am a wonderful, brilliant thought in the mind of God. This is who I am, was, and always will be. This is also true for you, of course. This is our supreme, all-encompassing reality. My less-than-supreme reality is that which is founded on my fears, which occupy a large chunk of many of my days if I let them. In the less-than-supreme reality I have “enemies”—people and societal groups that don’t look like me, think like me, or believe as I believe. There are individuals who don’t like me or who want me to fail. There are people who could harm me and people whom I see as in my way ...



All the while this crazy duality experience is taking place, there is ... amidst the chaos the wholeness of God of which I am. It never went away because it cannot go away. The wholeness of God is here and now, and when I focus my immediate attention or prayers on it, the nightmare disintegrates. It was never real, after all. In my God self it is safe to see all as One, and not only is it safe, it is true and wonderful. What gets crucified is the illusion of separation, fear, and suffering ...

The only way this collective lie of separation will ever be transformed is through you and me, one person at a time. That's what Jesus brilliantly showed us. He refused to buy into or support any world system where the fuel of fear and separation generated power. He knew oneness. He only saw oneness ... To Jesus, anything created out of fear and separation was a lie, child's play, not even worth entertaining, and certainly no threat to him ...

What Jesus did, you and I can do. We just have to be willing to give up the illusion of separation ... There is only one life here, of which we are all a part.

Excerpted from *The Seven Living Words* (Accelerator Books, 2008)

MONDAY, MARCH 8, 2021

I release thoughts of competition.

It can be a challenge to admit to myself that I'm acting from a belief I have to outshine others in order to succeed. Constantly seeking to outdo others can lead me into thinking I am not enough.

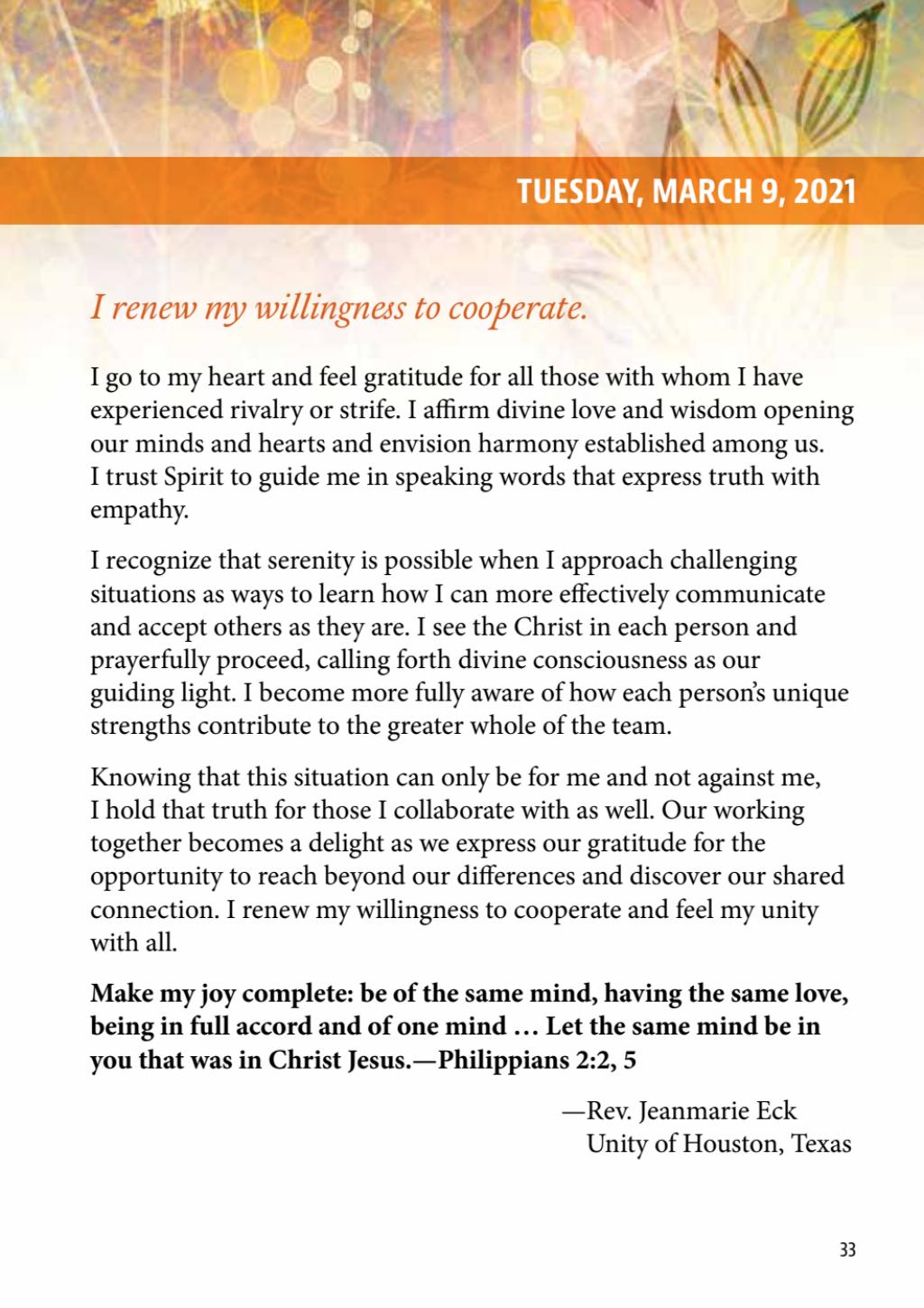
The anxiety of pushing myself beyond my limits to impress others only leaves me stressed and drained. I lose sight of my true essence and become immersed in outer appearances and impressive accomplishments.

When I was looking for work, a minister told me, "If it is your job, no one can take it away from you." I have learned to apply this awareness to any areas of my life where I falsely believe someone can limit my good. When I recognize there is enough for everyone, I can release thoughts of competition. I see where I have limited my experience by believing that others have better luck, opportunities, status, or some other excuse I have created to explain why I feel the need to strive against them.

Holding thoughts of competition leads me to live in separation from God and others. In God, I recognize there is enough for everyone. As I release thoughts of competition, I am at peace.

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others.

—Philippians 2:3-4



TUESDAY, MARCH 9, 2021

I renew my willingness to cooperate.

I go to my heart and feel gratitude for all those with whom I have experienced rivalry or strife. I affirm divine love and wisdom opening our minds and hearts and envision harmony established among us. I trust Spirit to guide me in speaking words that express truth with empathy.

I recognize that serenity is possible when I approach challenging situations as ways to learn how I can more effectively communicate and accept others as they are. I see the Christ in each person and prayerfully proceed, calling forth divine consciousness as our guiding light. I become more fully aware of how each person's unique strengths contribute to the greater whole of the team.

Knowing that this situation can only be for me and not against me, I hold that truth for those I collaborate with as well. Our working together becomes a delight as we express our gratitude for the opportunity to reach beyond our differences and discover our shared connection. I renew my willingness to cooperate and feel my unity with all.

Make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind ... Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus.—Philippians 2:2, 5

—Rev. Jeanmarie Eck
Unity of Houston, Texas



WEDNESDAY, MARCH 10, 2021

I release any need to complain.

Generally, we complain when we feel ill-used or unjustly treated, deprived of what we feel is rightfully ours, or not understood by another. We feel our complaints are justified.

If we look closely we will notice that these complaints arise when we have, consciously or unconsciously, given away our power to another. Some person or outside force holds the reins and we feel separated from our good.

The truth is that no person, situation, or force can withhold the good from us. The Spirit of all possibility is within us in totality now and always. Recognizing that truth and relaxing our mind and body allows us to release the need for and the habit of complaint.

Today I remember that I am a beautiful child of the Divine, given everything I need to live a happy and fulfilling life. I shift my focus from thoughts of seeming separation, division, and complaint, and place them on connectedness, forgiveness, and release. I am free of the need to complain, and I joyously welcome a new and expansive life.

Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.—Luke 12:32

I renew my outlook through appreciation.

Life is complicated. Our modern world is full of pressure, busyness, and conflicting forces. It is sometimes hard to stay centered and poised. We do not want to be detached from the world. In fact, we may be guided to be of service in some way. However, we do not want to be overwhelmed by it either. What to do?

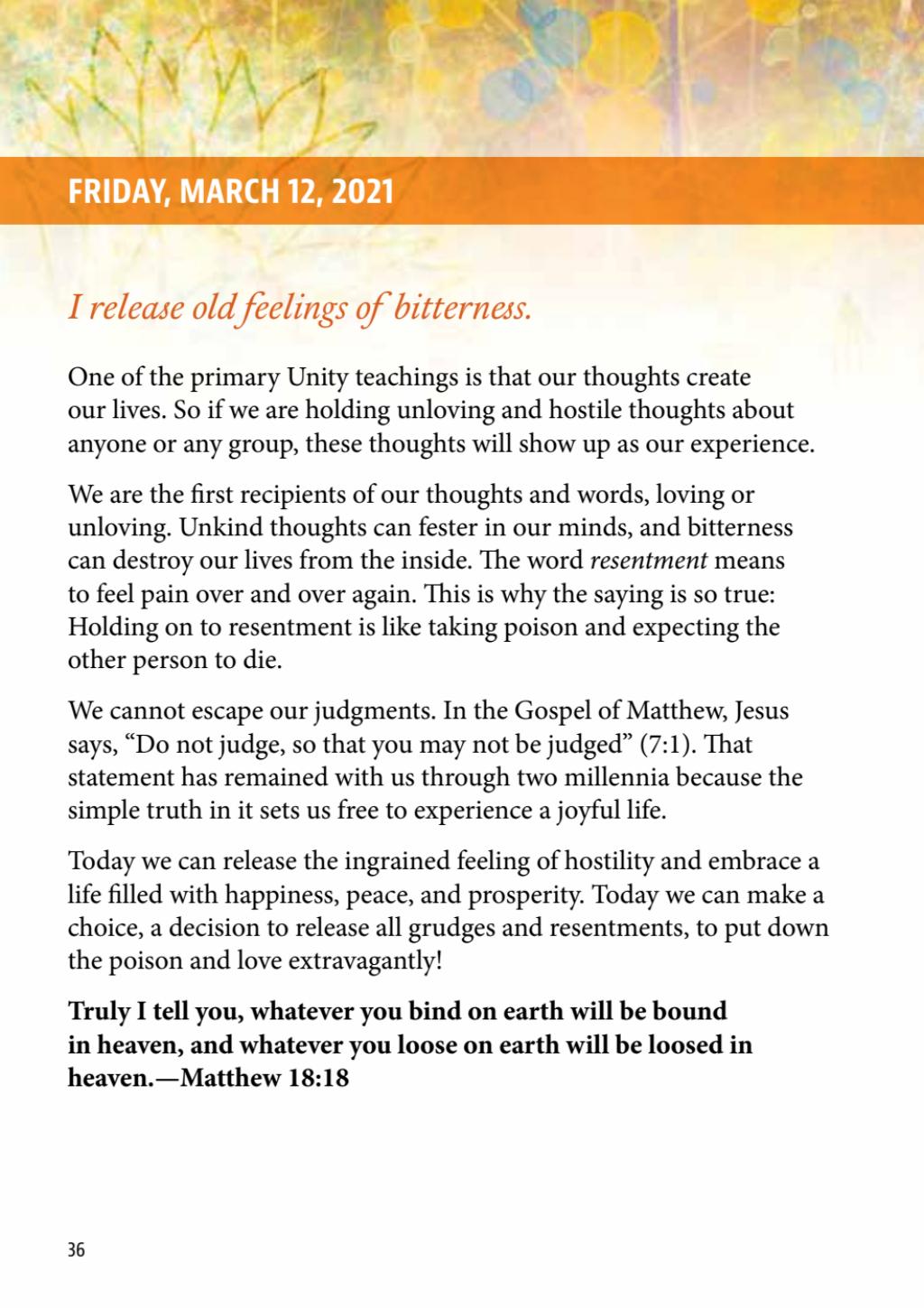
Beginning right now it is possible to renew our outlook through appreciation. This begins in the simplest of ways. For example, take a moment to truly taste a piece of fruit. Enjoy its texture and flavor, the juiciness in your mouth. Recall how many people are involved, from farmer to store worker, in providing you with that piece of fruit.

Once the habit of appreciation is established, we can apply it to all aspects of our lives. Listening to a beautiful piece of music or quietly hearing what another person has to say become delightful responses to life. The complications and the pressures fade, replaced by a new optimism and generosity of heart.

Determine today what you will choose to appreciate, and by so doing, open up a whole new world of possibility.

Give thanks whatever happens.—1 Thessalonians 5:18 (NCV)

—Rev. Paul John Roach
Writer and Unity radio host,
Fort Worth, Texas



FRIDAY, MARCH 12, 2021

I release old feelings of bitterness.

One of the primary Unity teachings is that our thoughts create our lives. So if we are holding unloving and hostile thoughts about anyone or any group, these thoughts will show up as our experience.

We are the first recipients of our thoughts and words, loving or unloving. Unkind thoughts can fester in our minds, and bitterness can destroy our lives from the inside. The word *resentment* means to feel pain over and over again. This is why the saying is so true: Holding on to resentment is like taking poison and expecting the other person to die.

We cannot escape our judgments. In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus says, “Do not judge, so that you may not be judged” (7:1). That statement has remained with us through two millennia because the simple truth in it sets us free to experience a joyful life.

Today we can release the ingrained feeling of hostility and embrace a life filled with happiness, peace, and prosperity. Today we can make a choice, a decision to release all grudges and resentments, to put down the poison and love extravagantly!

Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.—Matthew 18:18

I renew inner peace by forgiving.

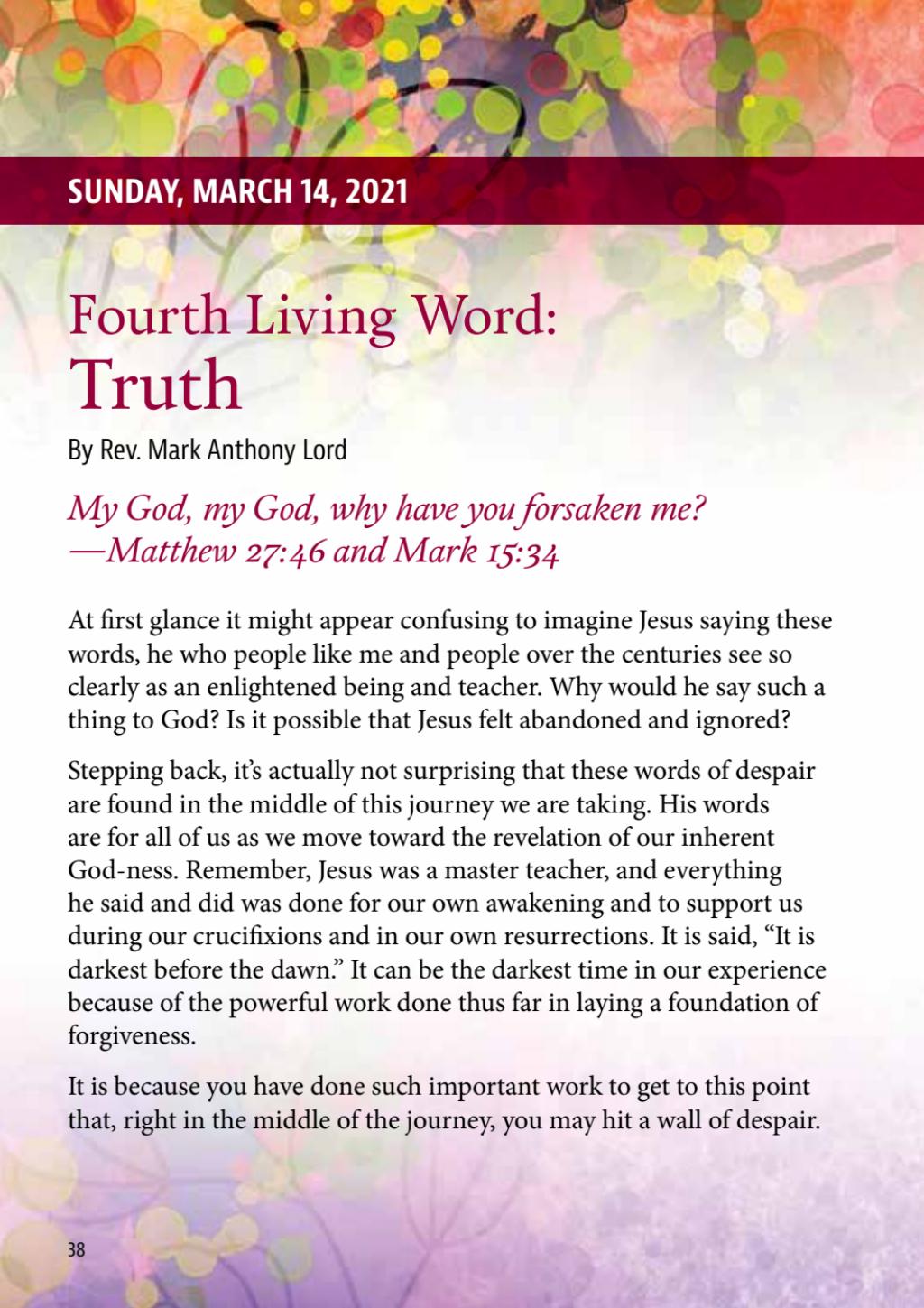
Forgiving allows us to come face-to-face with the faults and shortcomings of ourselves and others. It takes great strength and self-esteem to forgive someone who has hurt you profoundly or taken something from you that you may never get back. You might even think some things are unforgivable. But it is important to remember that not a single one of us is born a thief, liar, or criminal.

In June 2015, a man walked into a Methodist church in Charleston, South Carolina, and shot and killed nine people because of the color of their skin. At his arraignment, family members of his victims came to confront him. One after another, they stepped forward and explained what he had taken from them—the mother, the husband, the friend they would never see again, never hear again, and never hold again. They talked about their anguish and grief. Then they publicly forgave him for what he had done.

When asked how they could forgive this man, they answered that they did it for their peace of mind. They could not live with hatred in their hearts. Their strength, resilience, and love are an inspiration for us all.

Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.—Colossians 3:13

—Rev. Ken Daigle
Unity San Francisco



SUNDAY, MARCH 14, 2021

Fourth Living Word: Truth

By Rev. Mark Anthony Lord

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

—Matthew 27:46 and Mark 15:34

At first glance it might appear confusing to imagine Jesus saying these words, he who people like me and people over the centuries see so clearly as an enlightened being and teacher. Why would he say such a thing to God? Is it possible that Jesus felt abandoned and ignored?

Stepping back, it's actually not surprising that these words of despair are found in the middle of this journey we are taking. His words are for all of us as we move toward the revelation of our inherent God-ness. Remember, Jesus was a master teacher, and everything he said and did was done for our own awakening and to support us during our crucifixions and in our own resurrections. It is said, "It is darkest before the dawn." It can be the darkest time in our experience because of the powerful work done thus far in laying a foundation of forgiveness.

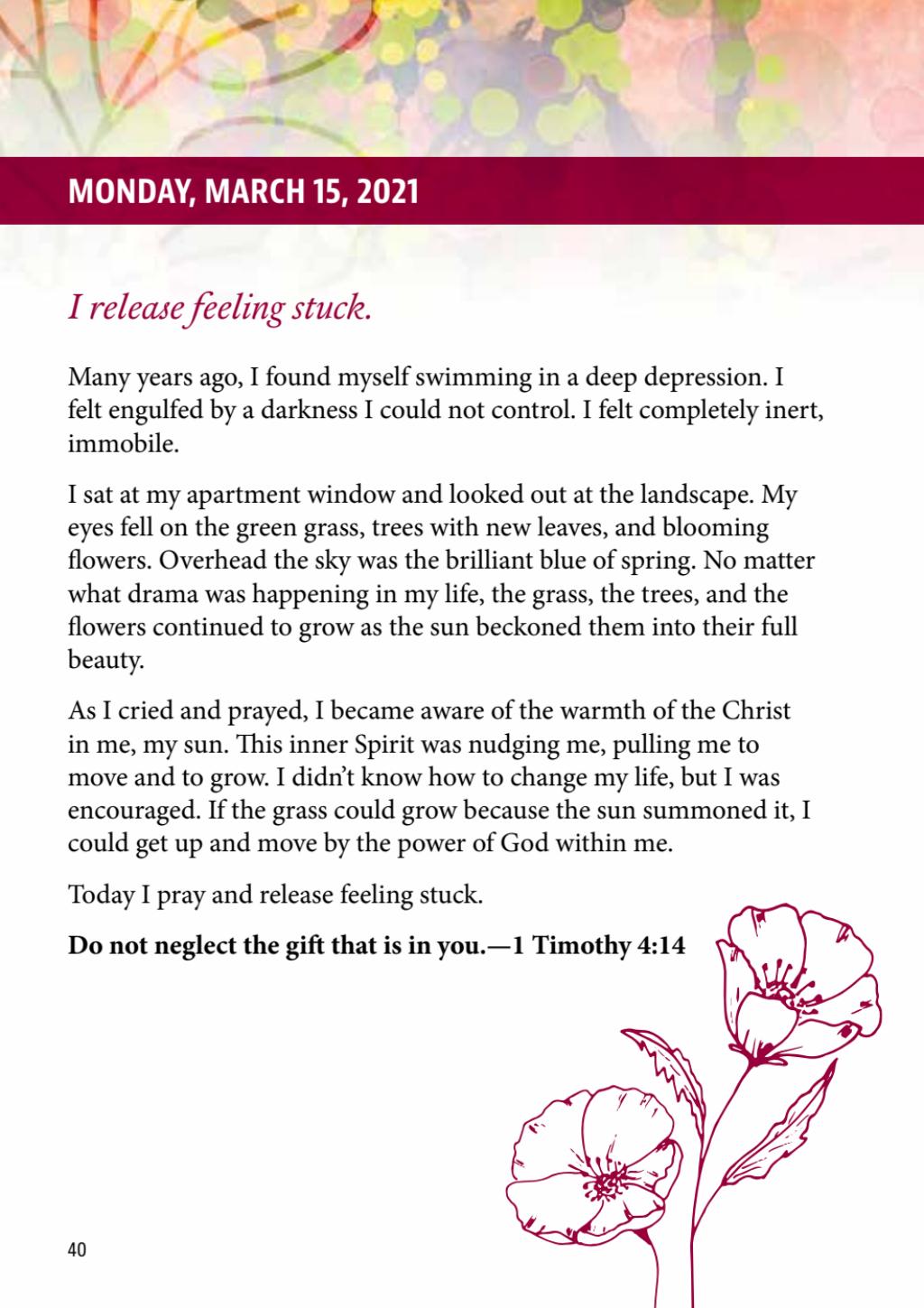
It is because you have done such important work to get to this point that, right in the middle of the journey, you may hit a wall of despair.



Whether you feel despair or not, this fourth living word, *truth*, is a gift that says, “Now it’s time for a final, deep cleansing of the consciousness … and you are ready.” As difficult as it may seem, this point in the journey is to be embraced and even celebrated. It is a sure sign that you are doing right and wonderful work.

If you are feeling fearful and abandoned, it is of utmost importance that you do not call these feelings “wrong.” They are to be moved through with perseverance and faith in all that is good (God). If at this point of your journey you are *not* feeling fear or betrayal by God, I still encourage you to embrace this word, *truth*, and take a deep plunge within to uncover any fears or betrayals lingering there. Past betrayals by people, especially people we have loved or needed, may seem to have been dealt with, but often there are remnants of fear, despair, and anger. Go into the Truth and gain new insights.

Excerpted from *The Seven Living Words* (Accelerator Books, 2008)



MONDAY, MARCH 15, 2021

I release feeling stuck.

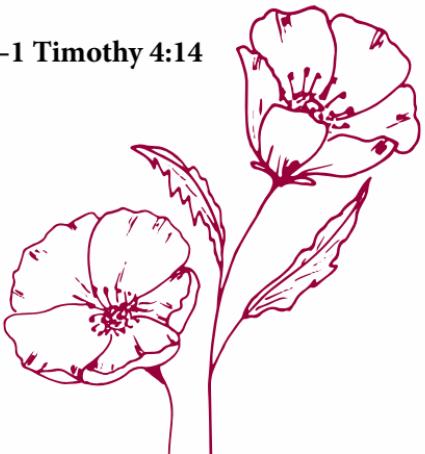
Many years ago, I found myself swimming in a deep depression. I felt engulfed by a darkness I could not control. I felt completely inert, immobile.

I sat at my apartment window and looked out at the landscape. My eyes fell on the green grass, trees with new leaves, and blooming flowers. Overhead the sky was the brilliant blue of spring. No matter what drama was happening in my life, the grass, the trees, and the flowers continued to grow as the sun beckoned them into their full beauty.

As I cried and prayed, I became aware of the warmth of the Christ in me, my sun. This inner Spirit was nudging me, pulling me to move and to grow. I didn't know how to change my life, but I was encouraged. If the grass could grow because the sun summoned it, I could get up and move by the power of God within me.

Today I pray and release feeling stuck.

Do not neglect the gift that is in you.—1 Timothy 4:14



I renew my will to take the next step forward.

Imagine with me a young child pulls up to the couch and stands on wobbly legs, then promptly sits down on their bottom. Again and again, the child pulls up and stands for a moment, until those shaky legs gain strength.

In a few days, the child will take the risk to let go and move toward a desired toy. Often it is only one step, then *kerplunk!* The child sits down again. Over and over the scene is replayed until eventually the child reaches their goal.

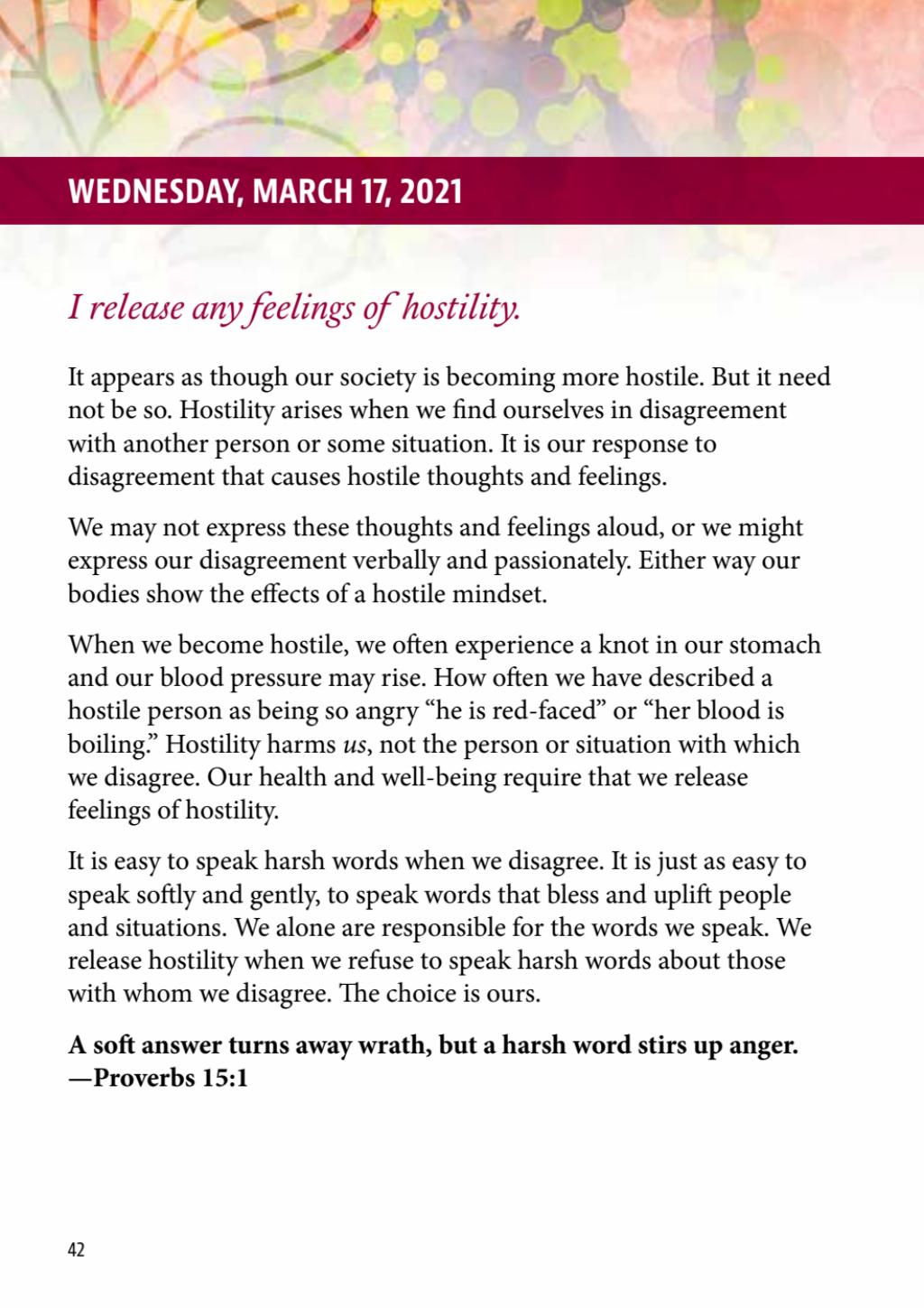
As kids, you and I stretched and reached, tried and tried again. As grown-ups, we often give up the first time we are met with discouragement. If we had given up in our first year of life, think of all the things we wouldn't be able to do today!

In this moment, I renew my will to take the next step forward.

For the Lord God is a sun and shield; he bestows favor and honor. No good thing does the Lord withhold from those who walk uprightly.—Psalm 84:11

—Rev. Robin Volker

Speaker and life coach, Blairsville, Georgia



WEDNESDAY, MARCH 17, 2021

I release any feelings of hostility.

It appears as though our society is becoming more hostile. But it need not be so. Hostility arises when we find ourselves in disagreement with another person or some situation. It is our response to disagreement that causes hostile thoughts and feelings.

We may not express these thoughts and feelings aloud, or we might express our disagreement verbally and passionately. Either way our bodies show the effects of a hostile mindset.

When we become hostile, we often experience a knot in our stomach and our blood pressure may rise. How often we have described a hostile person as being so angry “he is red-faced” or “her blood is boiling.” Hostility harms *us*, not the person or situation with which we disagree. Our health and well-being require that we release feelings of hostility.

It is easy to speak harsh words when we disagree. It is just as easy to speak softly and gently, to speak words that bless and uplift people and situations. We alone are responsible for the words we speak. We release hostility when we refuse to speak harsh words about those with whom we disagree. The choice is ours.

A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.
—Proverbs 15:1

I renew my practice of nonresistance.

The road to peace of mind and personal well-being is paved with the stones of nonresistance. Daily, we face people and situations we find disagreeable. At such times it is good to practice nonresistance.

Nonresistance is the spiritual practice of holding our minds and hearts above disagreement. It is to agree on a higher level. Nonresistance does not acknowledge or agree with any so-called evil—it instead lifts up the person or situation we might have viewed as disagreeable or evil. Every person, situation, or condition has at its core a divine spark. Nonresistance fans the divine spark into a flame of peace and well-being.

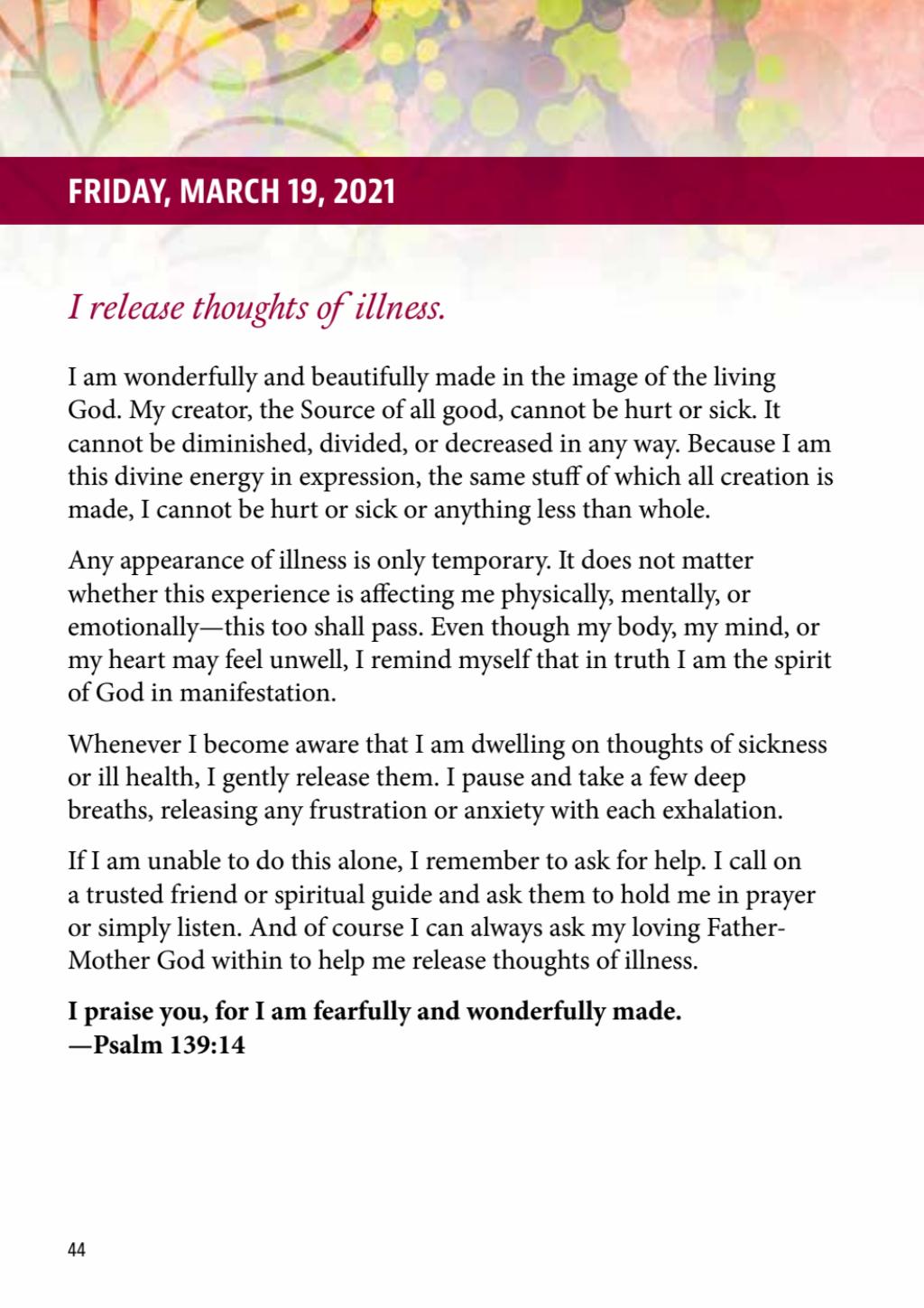
The command to “turn the other cheek” does not ask us to stay in the presence of evil. It requires us to turn away from it. This is the spiritual practice of nonresistance. In its highest form, it is lifting up our vision to see the beauty and Truth in every person, situation, and condition.

We practice nonresistance when we hold our minds and hearts above any conflict. Each loving thought and each gentle word are a paving stone on the path of nonresistance.

Come to terms quickly with your accuser ... Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also.—Matthew 5:25, 39

—Rev. Ric Schumacher

Unity Chapel of Light, Tallmadge, Ohio



FRIDAY, MARCH 19, 2021

I release thoughts of illness.

I am wonderfully and beautifully made in the image of the living God. My creator, the Source of all good, cannot be hurt or sick. It cannot be diminished, divided, or decreased in any way. Because I am this divine energy in expression, the same stuff of which all creation is made, I cannot be hurt or sick or anything less than whole.

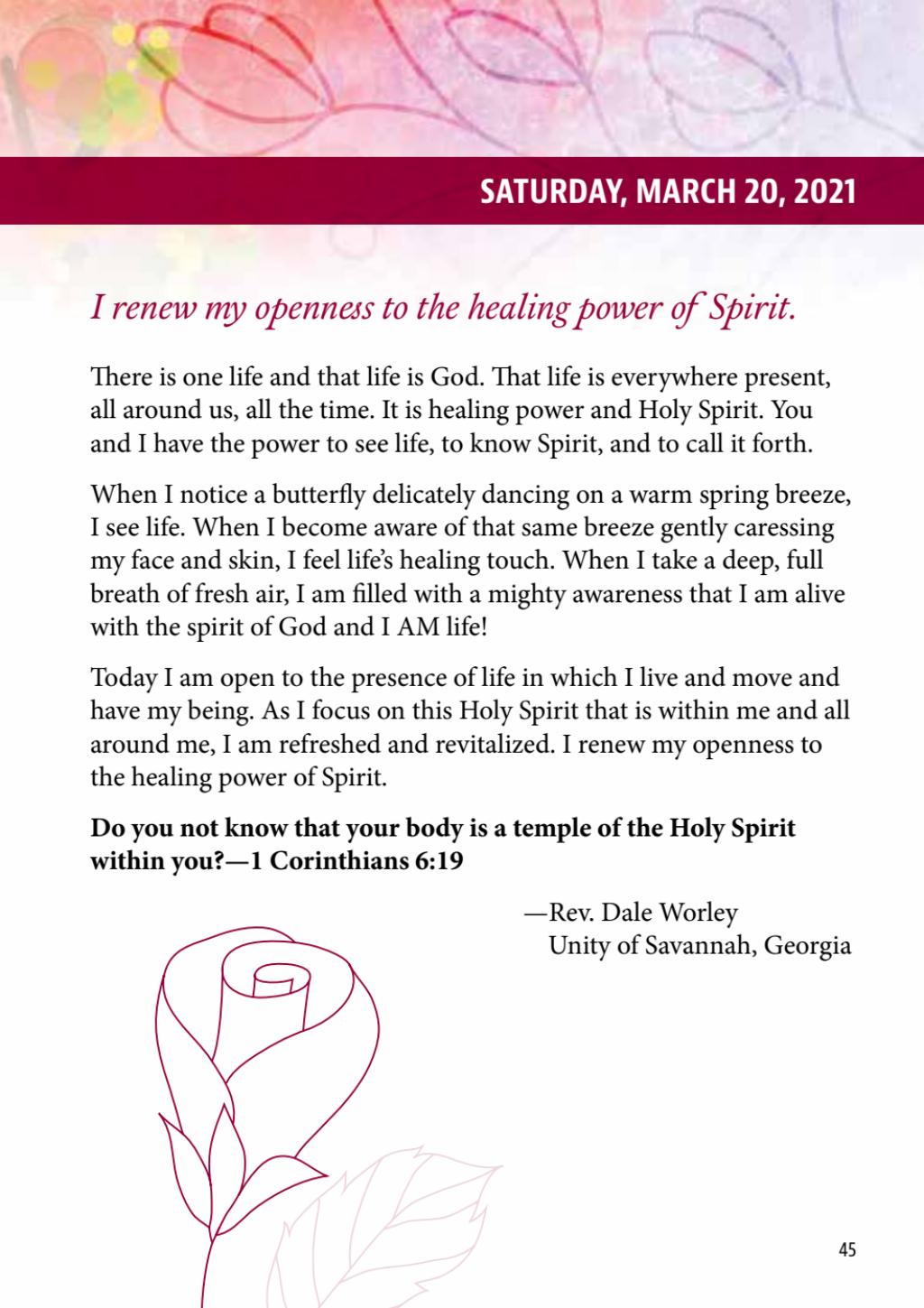
Any appearance of illness is only temporary. It does not matter whether this experience is affecting me physically, mentally, or emotionally—this too shall pass. Even though my body, my mind, or my heart may feel unwell, I remind myself that in truth I am the spirit of God in manifestation.

Whenever I become aware that I am dwelling on thoughts of sickness or ill health, I gently release them. I pause and take a few deep breaths, releasing any frustration or anxiety with each exhalation.

If I am unable to do this alone, I remember to ask for help. I call on a trusted friend or spiritual guide and ask them to hold me in prayer or simply listen. And of course I can always ask my loving Father-Mother God within to help me release thoughts of illness.

I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.

—Psalm 139:14



SATURDAY, MARCH 20, 2021

I renew my openness to the healing power of Spirit.

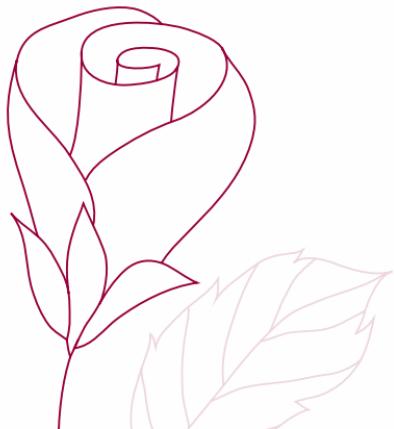
There is one life and that life is God. That life is everywhere present, all around us, all the time. It is healing power and Holy Spirit. You and I have the power to see life, to know Spirit, and to call it forth.

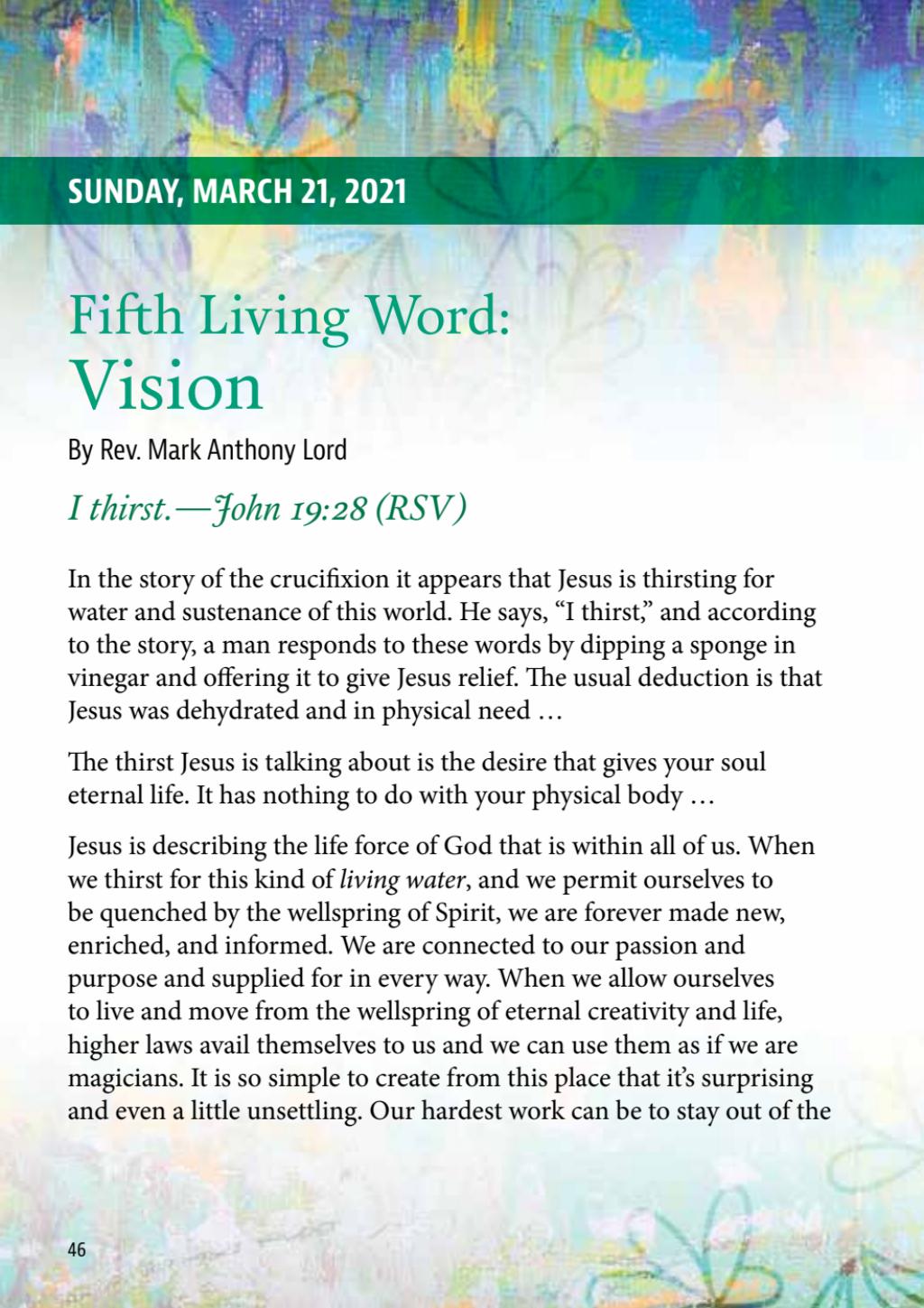
When I notice a butterfly delicately dancing on a warm spring breeze, I see life. When I become aware of that same breeze gently caressing my face and skin, I feel life's healing touch. When I take a deep, full breath of fresh air, I am filled with a mighty awareness that I am alive with the spirit of God and I AM life!

Today I am open to the presence of life in which I live and move and have my being. As I focus on this Holy Spirit that is within me and all around me, I am refreshed and revitalized. I renew my openness to the healing power of Spirit.

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you?—1 Corinthians 6:19

—Rev. Dale Worley
Unity of Savannah, Georgia





SUNDAY, MARCH 21, 2021

Fifth Living Word: Vision

By Rev. Mark Anthony Lord

I thirst.—John 19:28 (RSV)

In the story of the crucifixion it appears that Jesus is thirsting for water and sustenance of this world. He says, “I thirst,” and according to the story, a man responds to these words by dipping a sponge in vinegar and offering it to give Jesus relief. The usual deduction is that Jesus was dehydrated and in physical need ...

The thirst Jesus is talking about is the desire that gives your soul eternal life. It has nothing to do with your physical body ...

Jesus is describing the life force of God that is within all of us. When we thirst for this kind of *living water*, and we permit ourselves to be quenched by the wellspring of Spirit, we are forever made new, enriched, and informed. We are connected to our passion and purpose and supplied for in every way. When we allow ourselves to live and move from the wellspring of eternal creativity and life, higher laws avail themselves to us and we can use them as if we are magicians. It is so simple to create from this place that it's surprising and even a little unsettling. Our hardest work can be to stay out of the



way and not interfere with the flow of grace and ease. Can life really be this easy? You bet it can, and it should be!

This is an important turning point in your spiritual awakening because it is time to lay down the things that used to work for you, like making things happen, using your intelligence to dazzle your way to success, employing your wit and seductive skills to catch a mate, or studying every book on the law of attraction to amass more and more power, material and monetary wealth, and prestige. Your life is not about getting one more master's degree so you can move up the corporate ladder. God is your source, your power, and all that you need ...

It is time to create such a powerful vision for yourself that you will never be pushed by pain again. It is time to ignite your passion, the fire in your belly that cannot be ignored or extinguished. I'm not talking about a burning desire to conquer the world, but an inner fire to express God and to see God. It is a fire so dedicated to being used for the glory of oneness that you are transformed, and in this transformation, people are healed in your presence.

From this fire within, all that is created through you and drawn to you *blesses* you and everyone.

Excerpted from *The Seven Living Words* (Accelerator Books, 2008)

MONDAY, MARCH 22, 2021

I release anger.

Anger can be a spiritual gift or a spiritual wound. How we respond to its presence creates a life of peace or a life of strife.

Anger lets us know that something is wrong, either in our consciousness or our outer world. Acknowledging it is healthy—holding on to it is not.

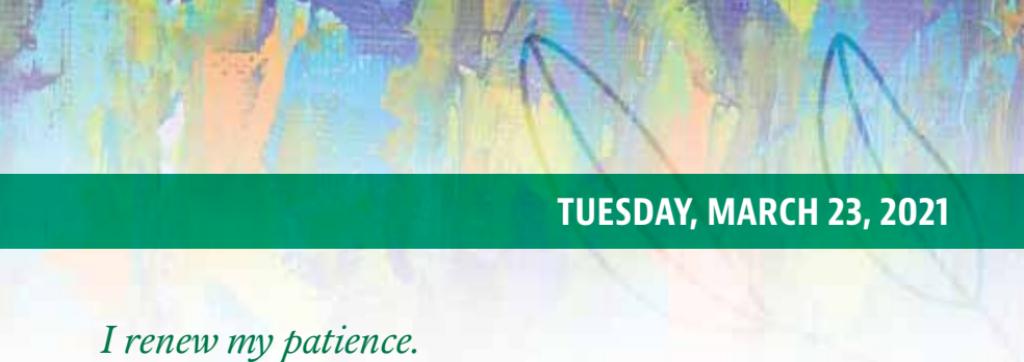
It is a wound when we let it dominate us and react from our pain, real or imagined. We lash out, we blame, and we are resentful. We are deaf to what it is telling us.

What expectation or need hasn't been met? Is anger a habitual reaction? Is there injustice? Anger can be a spiritual gift when we are willing to uncover its message and heal whatever is revealed.

We take our questions into meditation and prayer and allow God's guidance to direct a response and action that is grounded in love and compassion for all.

We acknowledge our anger, and we release it for our greater good.

Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, and be kind to one another.—Ephesians 4:31-32



TUESDAY, MARCH 23, 2021

I renew my patience.

If anger is woundedness, then patience is the balm. Patience gives us the gift of freedom from the remorse that reaction can bring. Patience quietly builds spiritual strength and endurance that leads to love and compassion.

Jesus spent 40 days and nights in the desert being tempted by worldly desires, and he patiently rejected them. He held to spiritual truth rather than earthly rewards.

Patience is grounded in the faith that Spirit is ever present, guiding us to a deeper awareness of what is possible. When we are angry, rather than reacting, patience allows us to respond from love and compassion.

In *Keep a True Lent* (Unity Books, 1953), Unity cofounder Charles Fillmore wrote, “Patience is an attitude of mind characterized by poise, inner calmness, and quiet endurance, especially in the face of trying conditions. Patience has its foundation in faith, and it is perfected only in those who have unwavering faith in God.”

We pray to be patient with our spiritual growth and the temptation to react in anger. We have faith that our prayers will be answered.

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.

—Colossians 3:12

—Rev. Margaret Flick

Minister emeritus, Unity of Santa Rosa, California

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 24, 2021

I release any sense of discouragement.

If I'm feeling discouraged, stuck, or unsure, I acknowledge my feelings but also ask myself what changes I'd like to see. Whether it's a relationship, work, health, or other issue, I ask: *What are the highest desires of my heart?*

I can turn within for help. My spiritual nature, my connection to God, urges me to release the hold of discouragement and embrace the freedom of divine encouragement. That positive energy will supply the impetus to achieve all that I want.

I am reminded to honor the unique, wise, wondrous being I truly am. I recall times I moved forward against the odds and overcame. I list ways I've persisted, goals I've reached, people I've helped, and dreams that came true. Self-empowered, I now release any sense of discouragement. I let go!

Bolstered by my divine connection and renewed faith, I step free from the fog of discouragement. I brush off any lingering wisps of doubt and leave them behind me. I access my spiritual tools of positive thinking and imagination and create bold new plans. I dream lofty, fabulous dreams.

I acknowledge the brilliance and courage of God within me as my comfort, energy, and guide. It will continue to propel me forward.

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.—Joshua 1:9 (NIV)

I renew my hope with the power of affirmative prayer.

Today I create positive results in my life through affirmative prayer as I acknowledge the constancy of God within me as a loving, empowering, comforting source. I use this knowledge to fill me with confidence and brighten my path.

My prayers sustain me during times when I feel limited or discouraged because I can affirm with certainty that the renewing presence of God is with me.

I now steer my mind away from judgment, lack, worry, and fear. I focus on wonders and blessings in my life and take delight in positive news and acts of kindness. I marvel at the joy in birdsong, ripples in a pond, and the smiles of people I encounter. Centered in peace and filled with gratitude, I pray.

I affirm that I have the wisdom, courage, and momentum to move forward in all that I wish to accomplish. Grounded in this truth, any sense of discouragement dissipates. I achieve my highest good easily and with great joy. Solid faith and powerful hope bless me on my journey, and I am continually guided to my perfect path and purpose.

In alignment with Source, I am empowered to step forth to do brave and beautiful things.

Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.—Isaiah 60:1

—Rev. Bronte Colbert
Unity Athens, Georgia

FRIDAY, MARCH 26, 2021

I release my darkest fears.

In childhood, my darkest fear included fear of the dark. I was told, “Do not be afraid.” Yet fear was there. Darkness felt very much like the unknown. My room had an electric heater with coils that glowed bright orange, illuminating the entire room. The glow was eerie but also comforting.

That glow made everything look different, but then again, everything was the same. It was as if orange lenses were put over my eyes. Seeing everything with an orange hue, the world took on a happier tone and my fear abated. Nothing really changed in the outer world. The only change was the way I saw and perceived the world.

I learned to no longer fear the darkness, but fear of the unknown has been harder to release. The inevitable ups and downs in life brought fears to the surface. *Could I face those down the same way I faced down fear of the dark—by seeing them differently?*

I found that I could do just that. When faced with new fears, I perceive them differently, as if seeing them through a different colored lens. The lens of faith.

Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid.—Matthew 1:20

Do not be afraid, Mary.—Luke 1:30

SATURDAY, MARCH 27, 2021

I renew the strength and courage of my heart.

Fears can be overwhelming and at times have driven me to despair and paralysis. That condition was exacerbated when I dwelled on worst-case scenarios.

Nearly 40 years ago, I started to record every challenging situation that sparked fear and anxiety. When the situation resolved, I would go back and record the results. It was astonishing that all the worst-case scenarios I had envisioned never ever came to fruition.

That doesn't mean, however, I didn't have to face challenges. Over the decades, I faced many, as we all do. Remarkably, without the paralysis of fear being at the forefront of consciousness, I was able to deal with whatever arose (job, relationship, family, health) and move through these situations and circumstances.

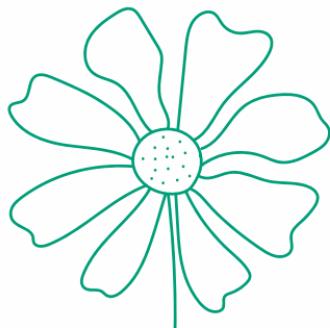
I look back and remind myself it is all going to work out just as it has over the decades. Knowing this, I have renewed strength and courage.

I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

—Philippians 4:13

—Rev. Bill Englehart

Writer, speaker, Southern California



Palm Sunday

MARCH 28, 2021

Sixth Living Word: Completion

By Rev. Mark Anthony Lord

It is finished.—John 19:30

The perfection of the spiritual laws of the Universe is revealed to us in Jesus' final words. When we're completely aligned spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and physically, we can move mountains. The catch, so to speak, is that we ourselves need to be "finished" with what we've put on the cross ...

The Holy Spirit loves us unconditionally and waits patiently for our readiness and willingness to be free. So it behooves us to consciously reach the point where our work on the cross is completed. That is the work and the reward of the sixth living word, *completion*, which creates the opportunity to call what is done, done—on every level of our being.

Here's the spiritual truth about completion. That which you have put on the cross to be "crossed out" is absolutely done. Our prayers are answered. There is no space and time in God; there is only the now, remember? Therefore, your prayers are fulfilled in the mind of God now—signed, sealed, and delivered—and that which you have crossed out is complete ...



Our way home—our resurrection—is certain. So, if we know what we cross out is complete, and we are assured the prayer is answered, why don't we just walk on forward with our lives in confidence? Why do we still get triggered, instead of setting ourselves free and letting it *be*? ...

Let's say you have a garden, and you have cleared away all the old weeds and overgrowth. The soil has been tilled, and you have planted new seeds that will produce a beautiful garden overflowing with good. You water this garden and take loving care of it. You see the new plants breaking ground and reaching for the sun. About one month later, you see some weeds starting to crop up here and there. You realize that it's just leftover baby weeds rising from the soil—no harm, no foul—and you simply weed again, clearing the weeds away for even greater plant growth ...

When it comes to crossing out something that no longer serves us, we tend to panic when a “second crop” idea or experience happens. “Oh, my God,” we exclaim. “I thought I was done with this!” ...

Today, you are conscious of the patterns, and you can choose. Even if it looks, smells, and feels just like the old story, call it “second crop,” call that old game complete, and declare your good—right in the face of the old story. Declare your good with power and conviction. Dare to refuse to settle. Refuse to give any substance to the lesser thoughts and refuse to see yourself as a victim. Say *no* to believing yourself anything but the full glory of God and the fulfillment of the new you.

Excerpted from *The Seven Living Words* (Accelerator Books, 2008)

MONDAY, MARCH 29, 2021

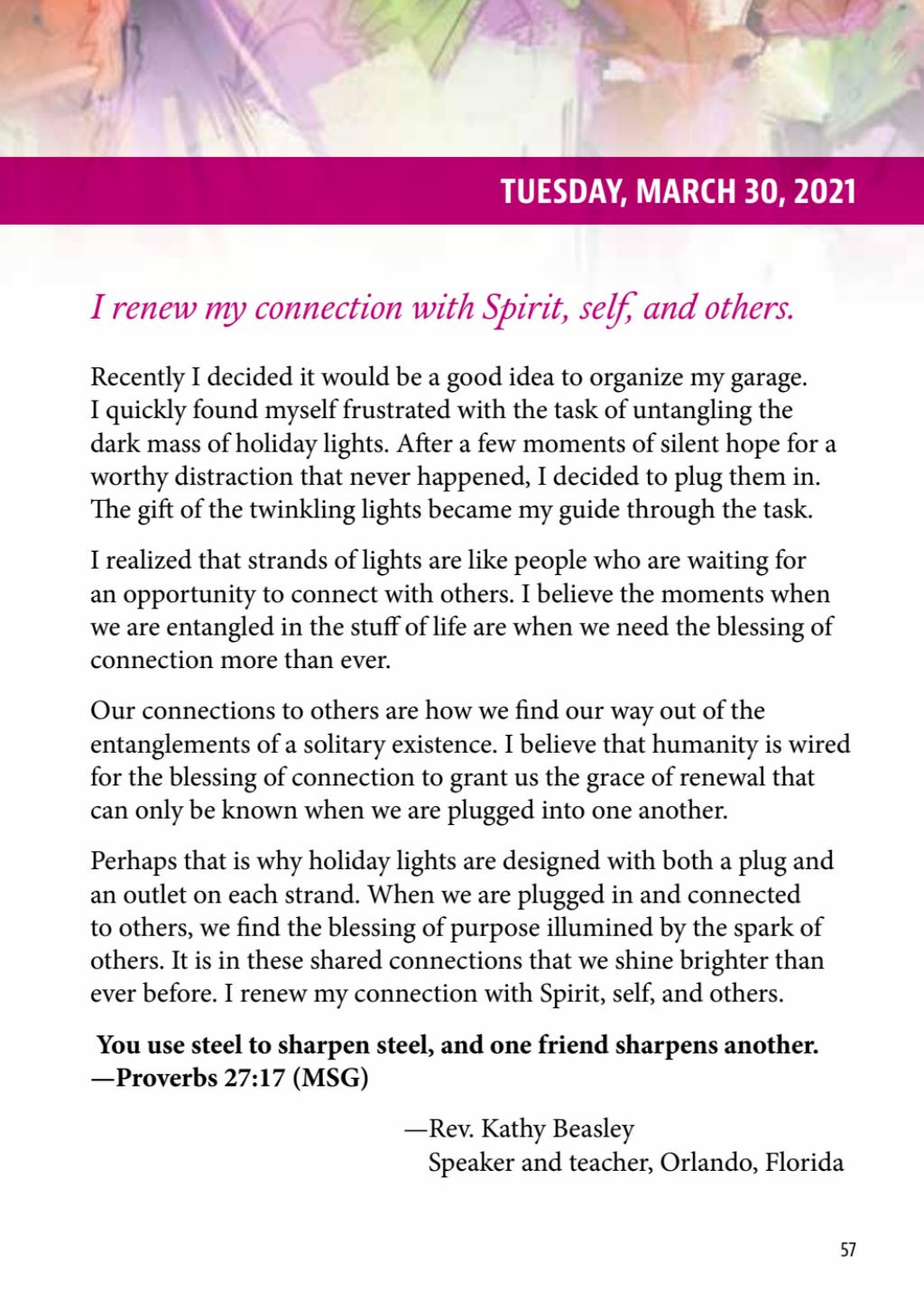
I release feelings of loneliness.

One of my favorite pastimes as a child was to play dress-up and pretend to be one thing or another, depending on which objects and articles of clothing I could fashion into a costume. While in disguise, I would take on a larger-than-life persona and become for a moment that which I could only imagine. As with every good game, there came a time to return to the reality of my life and the truth of my being.

We can often live a partial existence of having to hide, usually from ourselves, as the game of pretend and dress-up lives on—until today. Today I recognize that we are what we pretend to be, so perhaps we should be careful about what we pretend to be.

I believe that we save one another by being true to ourselves. I no longer pretend to be anything other than who I know myself to be. I shed the need to pretend to be okay when all I feel is loneliness, and I put on what has always been a hidden wholeness of the soul. I release feelings of loneliness. No more pretending. I am not afraid!

Do not fear, for I am with you, do not be afraid, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand.—Isaiah 41:10



TUESDAY, MARCH 30, 2021

I renew my connection with Spirit, self, and others.

Recently I decided it would be a good idea to organize my garage. I quickly found myself frustrated with the task of untangling the dark mass of holiday lights. After a few moments of silent hope for a worthy distraction that never happened, I decided to plug them in. The gift of the twinkling lights became my guide through the task.

I realized that strands of lights are like people who are waiting for an opportunity to connect with others. I believe the moments when we are entangled in the stuff of life are when we need the blessing of connection more than ever.

Our connections to others are how we find our way out of the entanglements of a solitary existence. I believe that humanity is wired for the blessing of connection to grant us the grace of renewal that can only be known when we are plugged into one another.

Perhaps that is why holiday lights are designed with both a plug and an outlet on each strand. When we are plugged in and connected to others, we find the blessing of purpose illumined by the spark of others. It is in these shared connections that we shine brighter than ever before. I renew my connection with Spirit, self, and others.

You use steel to sharpen steel, and one friend sharpens another.
—Proverbs 27:17 (MSG)

—Rev. Kathy Beasley
Speaker and teacher, Orlando, Florida

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 31, 2021

I release problems that seem to overwhelm me.

Tomorrow's Maundy Thursday marks the observance of the Last Supper, when Jesus washed the disciples' feet, sent Judas out to betray him, and gave his followers a new commandment to love one another as he loved them.

He knew his time was short and what he faced would be incredibly difficult, yet his focus was on divine love. The trail he blazed ultimately led to the birth of Christianity. Can you imagine how different the story would be if he wallowed instead in how big his problems were?

With everything that comes my way I have a powerful choice: fight what is and become mired in the mess or release my resistance and use my energy to create solutions. The amount of time and attention is the same, but the result is incredibly different.

I choose to accept life's situations just as they appear. I breathe in the unlimited possibility for the way things might unfold and then I go deeper. Releasing the impulse to deny or fight what is, I embrace the divine love at my core. Within that love, the path ahead is clearly lit. I walk along with confidence and purpose, sharing my light with all.

And when you turn to the right or when you turn to the left, your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, "This is the way; walk in it."—Isaiah 30:21

Maundy Thursday

APRIL 1, 2021

I renew my understanding of my spiritual nature.

As the Last Supper was ending, Jesus had a message for his disciples: “Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these” (John 14:12).

How is that possible? Because Jesus came not to be the great exception for us to build a religion around but to be the divine example for us to follow. He was our Master Teacher, fully expressing his God-ness for all to see. We are not called to read about and marvel at the things he did. We are asked to awaken the Christ presence that exists within each one of us and to bring that Christ energy to life in practical ways today.

I remember that even as I breathe, I am breathing the breath of God. Everything I do, I do within God. I recall not who but *what* I am—a unique expression of God, here to fully express my divine nature in ways that have a positive impact on the world around me.

From the smallest thought to the grandest action, the Christ within me shines through, and I live my destiny.

The Father and I are one.—John 10:30

—Trish Yancey, CSE, LUT
Unity of the Palm Beaches, Florida

Good Friday

APRIL 2, 2021

I release the shadows of sorrow.

After being arrested, Jesus would have spent time in a dark dungeon awaiting trial and sentencing. We can only imagine what this place might have been like—prisoners’ chains rattling; the dank, dark, horrific stench of cramped quarters; an angry, terrifying, and dangerous place.

I also wonder what Jesus would have been thinking amidst this hell. This man, referred to as “the light of the world,” was plunged into deep darkness and chained there. Did he pray? Did he think back on his last meal with friends? Did he talk to other prisoners, maybe console anyone? Did he reflect on the regrets of his life? Did he think about his mother? We can only imagine what he experienced.

Jesus was a passionate protagonist, but his passion is not to be relegated solely to the events of Good Friday, separated from the passion that animated his life. Instead Good Friday is a chance for us to acknowledge our own prisons, sorrows, and suffering; to enter into them; and then to reclaim the passion that animates our own lives—to remember once again we are the light of the world.

Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful.—Hebrews 10:23



Holy Saturday

APRIL 3, 2021

I renew myself in the serenity of silence.

In the Jewish tradition, Saturday is the Sabbath, the day of rest. Even Jesus' deceased body rests on Saturday. We cannot go from Friday to Sunday without space in between. It's referred to as "liminal space," the crucial in-between time of quiet where most of our mental, emotional, and spiritual lives unfold. We may think nothing happens in this space, yet it's where everything happens—a day of surrender and trusting.

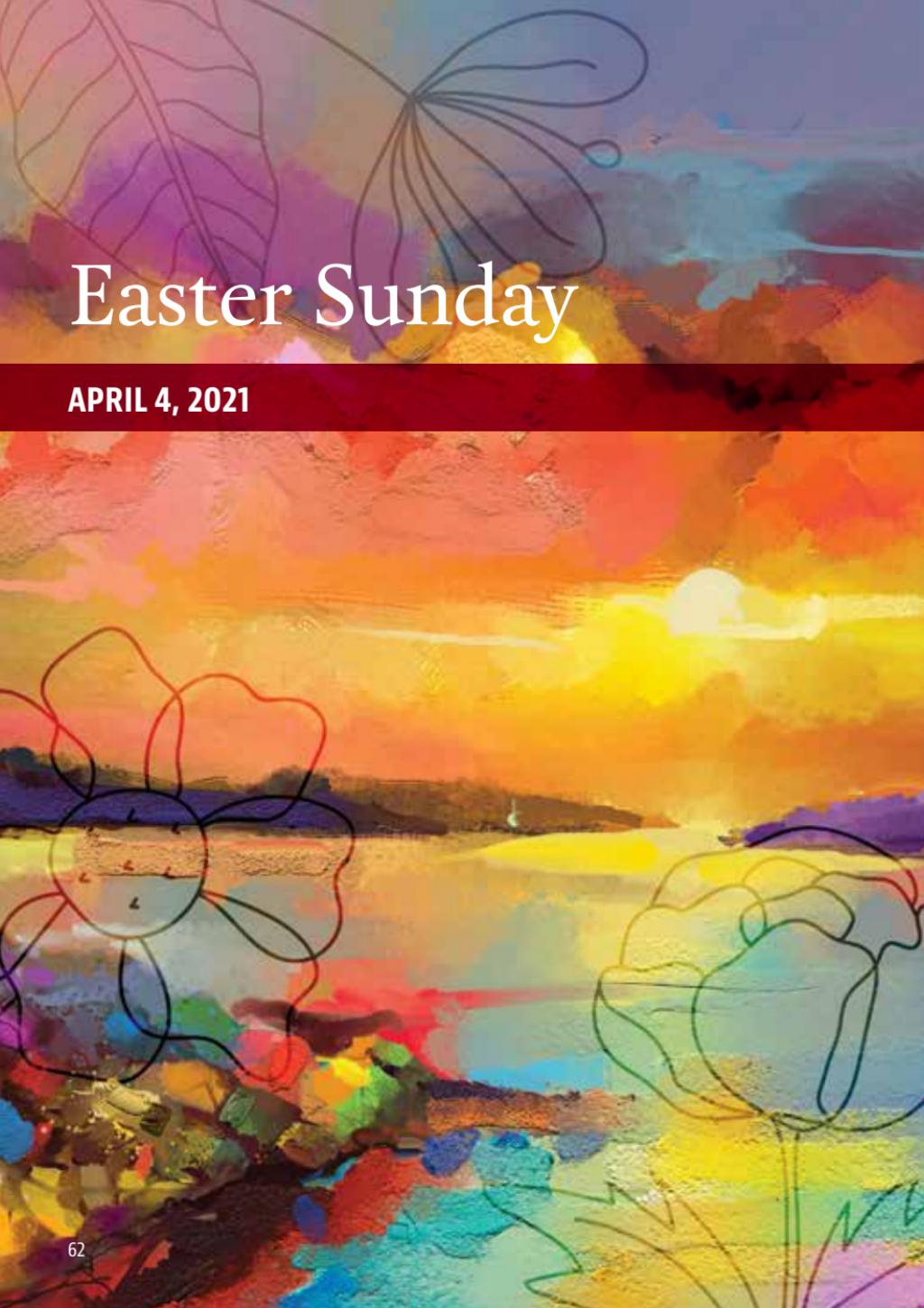
We surrender to the understanding that we can't skip the darkness of the tomb. We pause to reflect on the image of the cross and tomb, both showing us how to hold pain and be transformed by it. We trust that after crucifixion comes resurrection, after wounding comes healing, and after injustice comes mercy.

Most of our lives are spent in "Holy Saturdays." Our days aren't always marked by the unbearable pain of crucifixions or the joys of resurrections. We often live in between, experiencing darkness. Yet by engaging that silent space, divine discovery emerges and life is renewed.

After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will raise us up, that we may live before him.—Hosea 6:2

—Rev. Kelly Isola

Speaker, teacher, Lee's Summit, Missouri

A vibrant, abstract painting of a landscape. The upper portion features a large, stylized butterfly with purple and blue wings. Below it is a field of flowers in various colors (red, yellow, green, blue). In the background, a bright sun rises over a body of water, casting a warm glow over the scene. The overall style is artistic and colorful.

Easter Sunday

APRIL 4, 2021

Seventh Living Word: Surrender

By Rev. Mark Anthony Lord

*Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.
—Luke 23:46 (ESV)*

Jesus' life and death were an absolute demonstration of surrender, faith, and unconditional love. His final teaching in the seventh living word, *surrender*, is his resurrection. Surrender contains within it all the support and guidance you need for your journey of transformation—the return to God—your greatness.

When it comes to this final living word, we need to remember something essential: We have to live in surrender. It is not a one-time deal. (If only it were!) Over many years of practice we deepen our understanding, willingness, and experience of surrender. Surrendering is a process that is infinite, and there are always deeper layers to dive into until enlightenment is reached ...

Surrender ... can and should be joyful ... [because] ideally there is enough of a foundation of faith and understanding to joyously let go. Why, then, does surrender feel so difficult? ...



Surrender, to the eyes of the world, looks very unappealing ... “Win at all costs” has become a standard for everything from business deals to wars. It perpetuates the illusion of separation and the false belief of enemies and us-versus-them ...

It’s an upside-down world in a lot of ways. That’s why, when our spirituality calls us to surrender all that we are, all that we believe ourselves to be, and all that we hope to become for the greatest glory of all, which is the revelation of God through us, many of us quickly back up and try to renegotiate the rules ...

Think about this: What are you surrendering to? You are surrendering to the God that you defined in the beginning of this journey. It’s now time to own your idea of a God that is so powerfully and completely *for* you that nothing can ever be against you ...

The relief of surrendering to God completely is phenomenal. It is the greatest spiritual practice and the most important one in our journey of transformation. All we’re seeking is to know God in and *as* our life. All our spirit truly wants is to experience the kingdom of heaven ...

Now, as you surrender to that small, still voice, you shall see. You shall see love that has no conditions. You shall see joy that has no bounds. You shall see peace that is beyond understanding. You shall see ... the kingdom of heaven. This is the will of God.

Excerpted from *The Seven Living Words* (Accelerator Books, 2008)

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