

# *A Course in Miracles and Mother Teresa*

by Carol Niemi

One of my clients was stalled in her healing because she had not yet begun to practice forgiveness from the vantage point of forgiving illusions. She flopped back and forth from cool denial to abject misery in the knowledge that she had been abused for 41 years. We explored her present and her past, released emotional backlog, prayed, refilled with peace, love, and self-worth, and spoke of projection many times. However, she continued to manufacture more pain because her underlying judgment of herself and others didn't budge.

In order to nudge her into peace and hand her the steering wheel for her emotions, I wanted her to learn to retrieve her projections with wide open eyes. But when I tried to teach her a fool-proof method for taking back her projections, she revolted. A devout Catholic, she was convinced that the principle upon which true spiritual forgiveness is based—the unreality of perception because it is based on our projections—is against her religion. The God of her understanding rewards sacrifice and punishes the guilty. She could not condone doing otherwise, and so ended counseling with me.

Within hours, I came across some writings of the candidate for Catholic sainthood, Mother Teresa. Look at the resonance of Mother Teresa's message with the Course in this excerpt from *In the Heart of the World*, "On Silence" (with ACIM passages following in brackets):

"In the silence of the heart God speaks. If you face God in prayer and silence, God will speak to you. Then you will know that you are nothing. It is only when you realize your nothingness, your emptiness, that God can fill you with Himself. . . . [I call upon God's Name and on my own.—Lesson 183, I choose the second place to gain the first.—Lesson 328]

We cannot put ourselves directly in the presence of God if we do not practice internal and external silence. [Let me be still and listen to the truth.—Lesson 106]

In silence we will find new energy and true unity. . . . [I rest in God. . . . The world is born again each time you rest. . . .—Lesson 109]

Silence of the heart is necessary so you can hear God everywhere. . . . [God's Voice speaks to me all through the day.—Lesson 49, All things are echoes of the Voice for God.—Lesson 151]

To make possible true inner silence, practice:

- ♥ Silence of the eyes, by seeking always the beauty and goodness of God everywhere, and closing them to the faults disturbing to the soul. [Be vigilant only for God and His Kingdom.—Urtext T 6 H]
- ♥ Silence of the ears, by listening always to the voice of God and to the cry of the poor and the needy, and closing them to all other voices that come from fallen human nature, such as gossip, tale bearing, and uncharitable words. [Let every voice but God's be still in me.—Lesson 254]
- ♥ Silence of the tongue, by praising God and speaking the life-giving Word of God that is the truth, that enlightens and inspires, brings peace, hope, and joy; [God's peace and joy are mine.—Lesson 105] and by refraining from self-defense and every word that causes darkness, turmoil, pain, and death. [In my defenselessness my safety lies.—Lesson 153]
- ♥ Silence of the mind, by opening it to the truth and knowledge of God in prayer and contemplation. . . ., and by closing it to all untruths, distractions, destructive thoughts, rash judgments, false suspicions of others, vengeful thoughts, and desires. [Peace to my mind. Let all my thoughts be still.—Lesson 221]
- ♥ Silence of the heart, by loving God with our heart, soul, mind, and strength; loving one another as God loves; and avoiding all selfishness, hatred, envy, jealousy, and greed. [God is but love, and therefore so am I.—Workbook Part I, Review V]

I shall keep the silence of my heart with greater care, so that in the silence of my heart I hear His words of comfort, and from the fullness of my heart I comfort Jesus in the distressing disguise of the poor. [I give the miracles I have received.—Lesson 159] For in the silence and purity of the heart God speaks." [In quiet I receive God's Word today.—Lesson 125]

One of the most sacred sites I know is the ecumenical chapel of a large cancer hospital where I do some massage therapy. The energy of this small space carved out for prayer and meditation is strikingly sweet and still. Amidst a swirling mass of stress, fear, and pain mixed with love, dedication, and hope, this tiny oasis radiates the presence of God. A squash-orange banner announces through symbols the parade of religions honored in the chapel: Native American, Wicca, Goddess, Hinduism, Taoism, Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Confucianism, and several more I don't recognize.

It is certain that these religions do not agree in theology, yet the space dedicated to all of them exudes peace and unity. Every time I pause in this chapel I remember that we are unified by the God we seek, not by our particular beliefs about It.

*Perception is a mirror, not a fact.* (Lesson 304) My lost counseling client is my projection, mirroring the part of me that still believes in victimhood, guilt, and punishment. That she remains my bodywork client reflects the Christ nature—the unconditional practitioner of forgiveness— in both of us. We gently agree to disagree. And in the stillness of the chapel of my heart, I know we are One in God and closer now to the *holy place we never left.* (Lesson 234)

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