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The HOLY ENCOUNTER



JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2026
A Miracle Distribution Center Publication

...when you meet anyone, remember
it is a holy encounter.



Above the Battleground

by Beverly McNeff

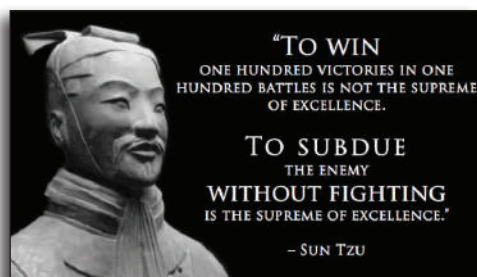
If you have ever read the section in *A Course in Miracles* entitled "Above the Battleground," you quickly realize that the battleground it speaks of is not a place. It is the everyday experiences of our lives in which we see ourselves as separate and at odds with each other. Day by day, we arm ourselves for war, so to speak, with our defenses, grievances, and judgments. We do not see ourselves as one with our brother or one with our Father.

A perception of unity can often be seen as naive or perhaps hoped for in some future experience when we have all "evolved." We don't see, according to the Course, that we have made a choice for "murder" instead of "miracles." We have murdered the awareness of the Son of God (who we truly are) and settled for the pain and suffering of the world. But, at any moment, we can choose again for the healing miracle God is holding out to us.

The Course tells us that we don't even know we have done all this. We are not

even aware of what we have "sacrificed" for this world of pain. All we know is pain and suffering, and this world of misery has become a habit, the "norm," and what we expect. From the perspective of the battleground of the world, it is what we deserve.

So how do we "win" this "war?" Well, not by fighting or attacking, but by transcending. We are to allow ourselves to be lifted above the battleground to a higher place where we can look at the situations we are experiencing from a new perspective. As the Course tells us...



"So how do we 'win' this 'war?' Well, not by fighting or attacking, but by transcending."

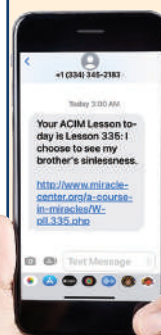
of murder. And the perspective coming from this choice shows you the battle is not real, and easily escaped." (T-23.IV.5)

A Course in Miracles often tells us that choosing with God is simple, easy, and always available to us. From our "battle-

Continued on page 14

Wake Each Day with Miracles Over 18 Million Free Daily Lessons Sent!

Eleven years ago, we debuted our Free **Daily ACIM Lesson Service**, which sends your unique lesson from



A Course in Miracles to you each day by email or text. It was quickly embraced by students eager to have their daily lessons from the Course appear in their inbox.

Since then, over 18 million free daily lessons have been sent. You select the lesson number on which you wish to begin, and our sophisticated software will continue the lessons in sequence each day afterward.

Imagine checking your phone or computer each morning to find your personal lesson waiting for you to practice!

We must continually upgrade the system's software to keep pace with the ever-changing state of the internet. As always, your tax-deductible donations toward this service and the Center's many other services are greatly appreciated and needed to keep meeting the changing needs of our worldwide Course family!

Visit our website
and click "Services" and
"Daily Lesson Service" to sign up

Beverly is the co-founder and president of MDC, one of the longest-running organizations based on *A Course in Miracles*. As a student, lecturer and author on the Course since 1977, her streamed weekly commentaries on Course principles have become an inspirational study and spiritual family for many around the world. View her free weekly livestream meetings at miraclecenter.org

What's Happening...with the Course and the Center

For more Information go to
miraclecenter.org or call **714-632-9005**

● **"Thank you for the beautiful Lessons in Light!** I am just coming out of a dark tunnel of loss, and your inspiration, truth, and wisdom have sustained me and shown me light along the way!" Barbara in California. Join Beverly and MDC's global family as we shine a new light on the concepts surrounding the season leading up to Easter. The lessons are on pages 8-9 of this issue and on MDC's website.

● **Holy Encounter Retreat** — Now is the perfect time to reserve your spot at our next retreat on **June 26-28, 2026**. These gatherings allow students to go deeper into *A Course in Miracles* while enjoying the tranquil setting of the RW Ranch property. If you are ready for a transformative experience in healing surroundings with well-appointed rooms, delicious chef-prepared meals, a picturesque swimming pool and spa, and scenic hiking trails, we encourage you to join us. Space is limited; some room types will sell out, so reserve your room. See page 3 for details.



● **FREE Valentine ACIM e-Cards** — Share a thought from the Course electronically with friends and family this Valentine's Day! We have created a variety of beau-

tiful, full-color e-cards with poignant Course quotes for every occasion, so check them out. It's easy and **Free** on our website!



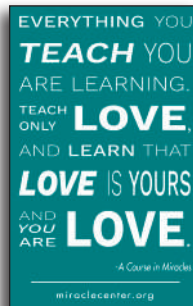
● **Mail Order Service** — "I just purchased an ACIM book from your store, and I would like to say what a pleasure it was to see your store and your website. MDC is really doing a great job. It was so inspiring to review the products that you have available. All I can say is WOW WEEEEEE!! I will spread the word — as you are spreading the miracles!" Visit our online store to try out our service.

● **Our 2026 *A Course in Miracles* Wall Calendar is still available** — Featuring stunning full-color lighthouse photos and inspiring quotes from the Course, this calendar will keep the Course's message of light near you all year long. It's a meaningful gift to give and receive.



● **Teach only Love** — What we "teach" by our living is who we think we are. If we want love in our lives, we must teach

it. This cling in the 2026 color of the year "transformational teal" will help keep this Course truth in your awareness, and it is yours with a nominal donation (request it in the "Message" field).



● **Miracle Milestones (MM)** — Celebrate your loved ones or yourself with a donation to the Center! Whether it's a birthday, anniversary, or simply a way to remember a loved one, making a gift to the Center (and inviting others to do the same) is a way to keep the love and joy flowing. **Dana in Ohio** donated in memory of her loving husband, Charles. **Jennifer in Michigan** and **SandyB in Washington** donated in celebration of Beverly's birthday! **Sharyn in New Hampshire** donated in honor of Tess from MDC. We appreciate the many who celebrate with us and will acknowledge your MM in **THE HOLY ENCOUNTER!**



● **"The memory of God comes to the quiet mind,"** says *A Course in Miracles*. When we take those quiet moments during the day to have faith that God can and will settle every problem now, we call upon the power of the universe, the power of love to work miracles in our lives. We invite you to stop and join us each day at **4:30 pm (Pacific Time)** for a moment of prayerful support for yourself, your loved ones, and everyone in the prayer ministry. Thoughts for:

January: *I am entitled to miracles.* (W-77)

February: *I am spirit.* (W-97)

March: *God is the Love in which I forgive.*

(W-46)

Our 2026 Bookmark is Available!

Thoughts in the Miracle Prayer Ministry 2026

Each day at 4:30 p.m. (Pacific Time) we stop for a moment of prayer as we join our minds with God for the healing of all His children. We hope these lessons from the Workbook of *A Course in Miracles* will serve as a guide for your prayerful joining.

January: I am entitled to miracles. (77)	July: The peace of God is shining in me now. (188)
February: I am spirit. (97)	August: I will step back and let Him lead the way. (155)
March: God is the Love in which I forgive. (48)	September: I am not a body. I am free. (199)
April: I am sustained by the Love of God. (59)	October: Forgiveness is the key to happiness. (121)
May: I will there be light. (73)	November: Your grace is given me. I claim it now. (168)
June: There is no will but God's. (74)	December: I am entitled to miracles. (77)

Please send your prayer requests to: prayer@miraclecenter.org - Include a postal address for a personal response.

Request your full-color bookmark today which lists all the thoughts in the prayer ministry for 2026.

Go to: **miraclecenter.org**

JUNE 26-28, 2026

Holy Encounter Retreat

This retreat is designed to help students not just talk about A Course in Miracles but to experience deeply its healing power. Through lectures, meditation, group sharing, music, and laughter, you will be helped to see, and look beyond, the limitations of this world and experience the possibility of God in every aspect of your life.



"I came away with down-to-earth principles that helped me make sense of things in terms of forgiveness, judgment, etc. The environment and food were great...I just had a great time overall!"

"Beverly made the Course so easy to understand. I'm always getting this message that the Course is so hard and she makes it so simple."



The **Holy Encounter Retreat** will be held at the majestic RW Ranch Spiritual Retreat Center in Lucerne Valley, California. Sessions will be conducted in comfortable meeting rooms and time for reflection and meditation may be experienced in various landscaped parks, intimate flower gardens, beside a tumbling stream, or peaceful ponds ... each offering privacy, seclusion, and a distinctive setting.



Everything is included: the week-end retreat activities, well-appointed lodging, and six organic, chef-prepared meals. Our caring and experienced staff, coupled with an oasis in the heart of Southern California, will provide you a safe and wonderful atmosphere for learning and sharing – a weekend where you can truly spend time on your own internal healing.

Please join us as we take a "journey without distance" to find that even in a world of chaos, our goal of peace and forgiveness has never changed.



Beverly McNeff

is an international lecturer, author, and founder of the Center. She brings nearly fifty years of Course study to this weekend that will leave you with the tools and understanding you'll need to experience miracles in your life.

Known for her ability to take seemingly complex lessons and reveal their truth and simplicity, Beverly will help you open up to the worth and beauty inside you now.



**Register Today!
Space is Limited**



Register now, space is limited. Price includes all retreat activities, six organic meals, and lodging.



To register visit miraclecenter.org or call 800-359-ACIM (2246)





Miracle Musings ...

"Happiness New Year!"

by Paul McNeff

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5:8)

"Today I wake with joy, expecting but the happy things of God to come to me. I ask but them to come, and realize my invitation will be answered by the thoughts to which it has been sent by me." (W-285.1)

Here we are in 2026! Happy New Year! Which begs the question. Do you want happiness? Doesn't everyone? What is happiness, and how can I bring happiness to my daily experience?

As I've contemplated these frequently asked and soul-searching questions, I found clarity in the way Sir Anthony Hopkins, a two-time Academy Award winner and one of my all-time favorite actors, reflected on happiness in a recent interview.

"Happiness is a kind of misleading word. You know if I ask, 'What is happiness?' Jumping up and down? Well, that's kind of insanity. Nobody's like that. We have degrees of uplift, and degrees of sadness, because your life is, it's sad and it's also wonderful, because we lose people, we suffer grief. And so to me, it's just being content with what's right now — what makes me free, I think, is the best word to use. It is the feeling that nothing is of that much importance. I have a saying for myself: Nothing to win, nothing to prove, nothing to win, nothing to lose, no sweat, no big deal."

Hopkins's illuminating reflections on happiness are akin to those found in



"Hopkins's illuminating reflections on happiness are akin to those found in other spiritual and psychological healing paths."

other spiritual and psychological healing paths. Like Sir Anthony, the Apostle Paul described happiness as contentment, regardless of his outward circumstances.

"Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! ... I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength."

(Philippians 4:4, 11-13)

Growing up in a large family in Kansas with 10 siblings, my dad had to work two, and sometimes three, jobs to support us, as my mother didn't work outside the home. I have distinct memories of overhearing my parents fearfully discussing how they were going to pay all the bills. To help with family income, at age twelve, we older kids all got paper routes to earn a small amount of money for personal needs, such as, in my case, more stylish clothing. We all worked to help out and despite our outward circumstances and challenges, we learned how to be happy and fairly well content.

Perhaps one of the most enlightening teachings on happiness is given in the Beatitudes, a collection of eight blessings given by Jesus during the Sermon on the Mount found in Matthew's Gospel, chapter

five. The term "beatitude" originates from the Latin word *beatus*, meaning "blessed" or "happy." Each beatitude begins with a statement, followed by a response. For example, the statement, *"Blessed are those who mourn,"* and the response, *"for they will be comforted,"* reveal that once we have surrendered to a spiritual reality we find only within ourselves, moving through a worldly hardship to the other side can reap a happy and healing state of mind.

A Course in Miracles states that happiness can be found by applying spiritual principles to our daily living. Workbook lesson 121, "Forgiveness is key to happiness," beautifully expands on the Beatitudes by plainly teaching, "Here is the answer to your search for peace. Here is the key to meaning in a world that seems to make no sense. Here is the way to safety in apparent dangers that appear to threaten you at every turn, and bring uncertainty to all your hopes of ever finding quietness and peace. Here are all questions answered; here the end of all uncertainty ensured at last." (W-121.1)

I agree with the Course. This world makes no sense. When I get caught up in my ego, trying to figure out the "why" of why do bad things happen to good people — wars, famine, hatred, death, humiliation, threats, bullying, and on and on — I come up empty, like trying to draw water from a dry well.

However, we can overcome that emptiness to live a happy life by applying the lessons we learn from the Course. Lesson 122: "Forgiveness offers everything I want."

"What could you want forgiveness cannot give? Do you want peace? Forgiveness offers it. Do you want happiness, a quiet mind, a certainty

Paul McNeff is married to MDC's founder and has been a student of the Course since 1986. He is a professional singer and conductor and holds a master's degree in vocal performance. In 1997, along with Beverly, he founded *KidSingers*, an inner-city, afterschool children's chorus. The program has won many awards and been featured on *Good Morning America*. Learn more at: www.kidsingers.org

of purpose, and a sense of worth and beauty that transcends the world?"

Before we go further, let's establish what forgiveness means from the Course's perspective. We often think of forgiveness as an action, something like, "Bring that dirty bastard to me, and I will forgive him!" But the Course teaches something much more profound. Forgiveness is really more about healing our state of mind than someone else's. But as we shall see, it is all inclusive.

In the Course's Clarification of Terms, it says,

"Forgiveness is for God and toward God but not of Him. It is impossible to think of anything He created that could need forgiveness. Forgiveness, then, is an illusion, but because of its purpose, which is the Holy Spirit's, it has one difference. Unlike all other illusions it leads away from error and not towards it." (C-3.1)

"The face of Christ has to be seen before the memory of God can return. The reason is obvious. Seeing the face of Christ involves perception. ... the face of Christ is the great symbol of forgiveness. It is salvation. It is the symbol of the real world. Whoever looks on this no longer sees the world. He is as near to Heaven as is possible outside the gate. Yet from this gate it is no more than just a step inside. It is the final step. And this we leave to God." (C-3.4)

Universally, the face of Christ symbolizes the light and unadulterated love that is within us all, but because of our grievances and judgments, we are blinded to its miraculous presence. Forgiveness is the willingness, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to see the face of Christ in our brother, so that we can manifest it in our lives.

Several years ago, I worked with a man with whom I did not get along. In fact,

being the pastor of an evangelical church, he represented all the grievances I had with growing up in evangelical Christianity. That was unfair of me, I know, but I felt trapped in my judgments of him and looked to the Course for answers. As in all spiritual advancement, I needed to get involved in the process and be willing to let go and let Spirit help change my mind. I found clear answers as I continued to follow the recipe the Course offered for forgiveness ...



"Forgiveness is really more about healing our state of mind than someone else's."

"The unforgiving mind does not believe that giving and receiving are the same. Yet we

will try to learn today that they are one through practicing forgiveness toward one whom you think of as an enemy, and one whom you consider as a friend. And as you learn to see them both as one, we will extend the lesson to yourself, and see that their escape included yours.

"Begin the longer practice periods by thinking of someone you do not like, who seems to irritate you, or to cause regret in you if you should meet him; one you actively despise, or merely try to overlook. It does not matter what the form your anger takes. You probably have chosen him already. He will do." (W-121.9-10)

As I reached this step in healing my unforgiving mind, I chose my work colleague as the "enemy" and the subject on whom to practice this forgiveness exercise. I remember thinking my colleague was not really my enemy, but for the sake of this exercise, he represented someone with whom I didn't get

along. Going on ...

"Now close your eyes and see him in your mind, and look at him a while. Try to perceive some light in him somewhere; a little gleam which you had never noticed. Try to find some little spark of brightness shining through the ugly picture that you hold of him. Look at this picture till you see a light somewhere within it, and then try to let this light extend until it covers him, and makes the picture beautiful and good.

"Look at this changed perception for a while, and turn your mind to one you call a friend." (W-121.11-12)

The "friend" I chose for this exercise was our four-year-old son, with his adorable face, the unconditional love I felt toward him, and his presence was easily accessible to me. Going on ...

"Try to transfer the light you learned to see around your former 'enemy' to him [your friend]. Perceive him now as more than friend to you, for in that light his holiness shows you your savior, saved and saving, healed and whole.

"Then let him offer you the light you see in him, and let your 'enemy' and friend unite in blessing you with what you gave. Now are you one with them, and they with you. Now have you been forgiven by yourself. Do not forget, throughout the day, the role forgiveness plays in bringing happiness to every unforgiving mind, with yours among them." (W-121.12-13)



"The 'friend' I chose for this exercise was our four-year-old son, with his adorable face, the unconditional love I felt toward him, and his presence was easily accessible to me."

Once this exercise was completed, I found that forgiving my "enemy" was indelibly attached to forgiving my "friend" and MYSELF. The two acts cannot be

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Recognizing Spirit

The Space Between: Breath Beneath All Breath (Part Two)

by Lee Jampolsky, Ph.D.

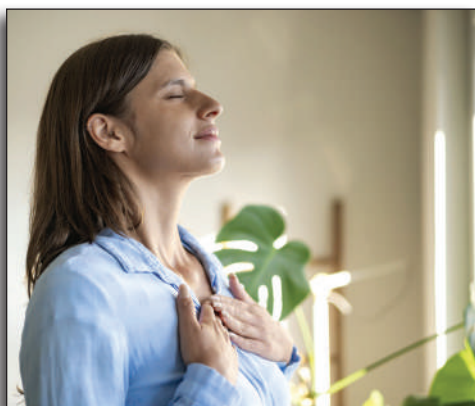
"Into His Presence would I enter now. This is a day of silence and of trust ... It is a time Heaven has set apart to shine upon, and cast a timeless light upon this day, when echoes of eternity are heard ... Today you learn to feel the joy of life." (W-157.1)

There is a rest that belongs only to the spaces between — not the heaviness of a body wearied, nor the shallow pause that drifts in when tasks are done and the surface held together. It is the mind unclenching, the slow release of its effort to measure and manage, to construct a safety always brittle, more fear's invention than lasting truth. Rest may come as a gentle dissolving or as a break abrupt enough to shake us, leaving us exposed and uncertain, with no reflexive defenses to cling to. Yet either way, the press of striving and resistance loosens, and what emerges, waiting to be received, is not absence but a living rhythm of being.

The Soul is the Breath beneath all breath.
there before the body draws,
remaining when the body has no more to give.
We do not summon it —
we surrender into its presence,
found in the spaces between
that yearn to remain open.

Rest here is not earned as it is in the world, a thin commodity exchanged for toil or accomplishment; it is the Soul's gift

from the ground on which it dwells, given freely, a remembering of what has never truly gone. And in this rest — even in a single exhale that settles us into stillness — the Soul draws near, steady and unwavering, carrying a presence that abides without demand, patient as light.



"Even in a single exhale that settles us into stillness – the Soul draws near, steady and unwavering, carrying a presence that abides without demand, patient as light."

The mind is not the enemy, only misplaced in its allegiance. Left to its restlessness, it circles fear and calls it truth. But when turned toward the Soul, it becomes a vessel of peace, carrying the remembrance of what was never lost.

"Miracles are seen in light, and light and strength are one." (W-111.3)

The spaces between are where this shift can happen. Miracles are nothing

more than such shifts — from fear to Love, from serial confusion to vast clarity. We do not enter these intervals to drive out every thought or bind them into silence. We come to remember where to place our trust. Fearful thoughts may rise and fall; what matters is the presence of Love we invite to guide us.

The spaces between are not a stage for struggle,
but a sacred ground of release.
Not a field for control,

but the living place where Soul is remembered.

Here the mind finds its truer purpose — to live from the Soul's intent to Love. In that joining it is not abandoned, not exalted, but restored. In being guided by the Soul, the mind discovers stillness; in being given to Love, it is freed.

The spaces between do not ask for effort, only willingness. They arrive unsought, loosening the grip of time until hours and seasons lose their hold. What steadies us here is not progress but presence, not the structures we assemble but the voice of the Soul itself — that Breath beneath all breath — reminding us that we have never been untended.

"Do not make the mistake of believing that you understand what you perceive, for its meaning is lost to you. Yet the Holy Spirit has saved its meaning for you, and if you will let Him interpret it, He will restore to you what you have thrown away." (T-11.VIII.2)

In these spaces — between what has fallen away and what has not yet come to form — thought does not vanish, but its noise is no longer the only measure of our being. What once held the center — urgency, certainty, the need to manage — shifts aside, and another intelligence — patient, tender, accepting — rises to meet us. Not argued, not displayed, but moving with the inevitability of roots finding water deep in the dark. The mind, when entangled in its own patterns, mistakes itself for the source; yet here, it is restored to its truer place — no longer master, but a companion to a knowing that does not begin or end.

There is no map here,
only the unfamiliar clarity
of standing without answers.
From the unknown,
a deeper knowing emerges —
not taken,
but received.



“The spaces between are not rare. They open in grief when the next step is uncertain, in joy when time seems to stop, in the smallest pauses of an ordinary or busy day.”

These spaces matter because they return us to a continuity beyond measure — where Love does not break and being does not end, and where the Holy Spirit is heard as our quiet guide home. The spaces between are not rare. They open in grief when the next step is uncertain, in joy when time seems to stop, in the smallest pauses of an ordinary or busy day. To trust them is to live differently — not driven by what has ended or by what has not yet begun, but carried by Love, always here.

Even in the midst of change,
even in the uncertainty we resist,
we are held without condition.

To let the spaces between be enough is not withdrawal from life; it is how life itself becomes luminous, how the Soul — the Breath beneath all breath — makes Love visible in the very places we once thought were empty.

It's Free!!

Each issue of
THE HOLY ENCOUNTER
is sent **FREE** to you!
To keep receiving, simply
keep in contact with us
once a year.

miraclecenter.org



Update: Prison Project

The Prison Project of Miracle Distribution Center sends *A Course in Miracles* and other Course-based items to prison inmates. Through your generous donations, we have been able to supply many newly-started spiritual libraries in prisons. In some cases, we have provided multiple copies of books, so more inmates can read about the love that is their essence. These principles genuinely make a difference and quench a thirst for truth that those in prison have found no other place.



The following letter indicates the importance of our Prison Project in many inmates' lives. We are grateful that we are here to bring the truth and inspiration that *A Course in Miracles* so beautifully offers.

Dear MDC Prison Project

To all of you, good health, peace, and continued success. If you are willing, please sign me up for another year of **THE HOLY ENCOUNTER**. Why? Because it is a positive and uplifting publication for all inmates locked up behind bars. Thank you for your organizational compassion.

Prayers and blessings,

Eric at the William P. Clements Unit in Texas



We are honored to meet Eric's request and each request! Thanks to your generous support of the Prison Project and the Center, we can ensure these appeals are answered. Contact us if you know of an inmate who would like to receive books related to the Course or **THE HOLY ENCOUNTER** magazine.

Rules are strict for sending items to prisons and other secure facilities, so please check with the institution before requesting that items be sent.

Together, we can experience healing by demonstrating healing through our willingness to be truly helpful to others. We invite your tax-deductible donations to support this project and the Center, so we may continue to pursue new ways to heal our world.

To read more click on "Prison Project" under "Services" at **miraclecenter.org**

Happiness New Year

Continued from page 5

separated. I learned that I could return to this state of mind when my ego thoughts brought back the "enemy." What is so miraculous, however, in that same instant of ego attack, that initial transformative experience of healing could be recalled, sort of like a spiritual muscle memory, and I could be restored to a state of a happy working relationship with my colleague.

So, no matter who your "enemy" might be — it doesn't have to be a person, as in my case, it was a victimizing thought system — I hope you find that forgiveness is

indeed the key to finding your happiness. As we have found in this teaching, there is no separation in our happiness. As the saying goes, "Mi casa es su casa." It could also be morphed into: "My happiness is your happiness" — "Your happiness is my happiness."

From all of us at Miracle Distribution Center, we want to wish you a "Happiness New Year" with this thought...

*"Forgiveness is the key to happiness.
I will awaken from the dream that I
am mortal, fallible and full of sin, and
know I am the perfect Son of God."*

(W-121.13)





Sacrificing Sacrifice

Shifting our Perception of Lent

by Beverly McNeff

Lessons in Light Begin...

We invite you to join us for our Lessons in Light. This Easter season began on **Ash Wednesday, February 18, 2026**. These lessons will be part of our free, weekly livestream meetings every Wednesday as a way to focus our minds on lasting transformation and healing. These lessons need not be a substitute for your regular workbook lesson from the Course but rather a supplement. We hope you will join us!

As lesson 323 in *A Course in Miracles* says, "I gladly make the 'sacrifice' of fear." If you are ready to release the sacrificing thoughts that yoke you to fear, we can use the traditional time of Lent to do just that. The Course invites us to look with a healed vision, guided by the Holy Spirit, to view the ideas of Christianity in a new light. Not one that separates us from each other but one that unites us in healing. Therefore, during this time that leads up to Easter, referred to as the Lenten season, we will offer a series entitled: Lessons in Light. Why even deal with Lent since the Course does not speak about it? Well, it may not say the word, but it does address the concept that is the focus of Lent, and an important one, it is: sacrifice. So, as most in the western world might approach this time from the perspective of sacrifice, perhaps we can offer an alternative: light!

In the Course, light represents knowledge or truth which can be radiated into this world. Just as the light of the sun causes life to exist on this planet, so does the light we shine allow others to realize

their true life purpose, allowing us to know it as well. So, we symbolically let our light shine during this time of Lent so the darkness and illusion of sacrifice may be seen no more.

In the Christian tradition, Lent is a time of fasting and penitence that begins with Ash Wednesday and continues until Easter. It is a time of sacrificing something we value, such as a specific type of food, a particular activity, etc., so that we might be closer to God, become more holy, and so on. In this scenario, God's Love is seen as something we must bargain for, as the Course says, "giving to get" (T-4.II.6), which is the central belief of the ego's thought system. "When you associate giving with sacrifice, you give only because you believe that you are somehow getting something bet-



"In His Presence, all pain is healed, and all thoughts of loss are met with peace. We are asked only to make the 'sacrifice' of sacrifice (of suffering, sadness, anxiety, doubt, etc.) and to allow God's Love and light to come streaming into our awareness."

ter, and can therefore do without the thing you give." (ibid)

Under the Holy Spirit's guidance, there is no sacrifice, for there is nothing to pay or atone for. We are God's perfect children — heirs to His Kingdom. In His Presence, all pain is healed, and all thoughts of loss are met with peace. We are asked only to make the "sacrifice" of sacrifice (of suffering, sadness, anxiety, doubt, etc.) and to allow God's Love and light to come streaming into our awareness.

Therefore, let us use this time of Lent

as a symbolic way of releasing the idea of sacrifice — a world of suffering and pain — and to learn to live in the world while not being of the world. The Course says that truth does not demand that we give up the world, for that would appear as a sacrifice if we still value it, nor does it advocate that we cherish the world. It invites us to walk a path between these two, one that leads away from loss, sacrifice, and deprivation. To follow this path, we are asked to step back and let Him lead the way. We are asked to think of Him a while each day so that He may speak to us and tell us of His limitless Love and great trust.

(paraphrase W-155)

This is our dedication as we begin these Lessons in Light, that we may place into God's Hands the pain, fear, worry, suffering, sickness, and burdens of life so that we may awaken to the resurrected child of God we truly are. As the mythical bird, the Phoenix, arose out of the ashes, we too dust off the years of sacrifice by affirming our desire to "step back and let Him lead the way" as we "allow the light in us to shine upon the world throughout the day."

(W-237)

Lessons in Light

1st Week of Light (February 18)

"Into His Presence would I enter now." (W-157)

This is our dedication: to enter into God's Presence and allow Him to lead the way. This awareness and willingness become a blessing that touches everyone we meet, think of, or who thinks of us. It becomes a vision that can truly transform this world and assure us that peace and healing are possible, for it is God's Will for us.

2nd Week of Light (February 25)

"Light and joy and peace abide in me." (W-93)

"Salvation requires the acceptance of

but one thought; — you are as God created you, not what you made of yourself. ...Your sinlessness is guaranteed by God.” We have forgotten our true Identity and made a self that contradicts God’s opinion. It is time for us to stop believing in a lie and join our will with God’s Will. This is our resurrection, our salvation, and the world’s.

3rd Week of Light (March 4)

“God is the Love in which I forgive.” (W-46)

“God does not forgive because He has never condemned,” but through His Love, we find the strength to look at the hurt in our lives and see only the calls for love. And, as we recognize the “hurt” for what it is, we awaken to our innocence and that of all our brothers.

4th Week of Light (March 11)

“Love holds no grievances.” (W-68)

“You who were created by love like itself can hold no grievances and know your Self.” Therefore, if we are to know God’s gifts and help for us, we must be willing to “sacrifice” grievances. “Love holds no grievances. I would wake to my Self by laying all my grievances aside and wakening in Him.”

5th Week of Light (March 18)

“I could see peace instead of this.” (W-34)

“Peace of mind is clearly an internal matter. It must begin with your own thoughts, and then extend outward. It is from your peace of mind that a peaceful perception of the world arises.” It is our choice to experience peace!

6th Week of Light (March 25)

“God is the strength in which I trust.” (W-47)

Our own strength has failed us, but God is our safety and strength in every circumstance. “Use it [this thought] as your answer to any disturbance. Remember that peace is your right, because you are giving your trust to the strength of God.”

7th Week of Light (April 1)

“I am sustained by the Love of God.” (W-50)

“Put not your faith in illusions. They will fail you. Put all your faith in the Love of God within you; eternal, changeless and forever unfailing. This is the answer to whatever confronts you today.”



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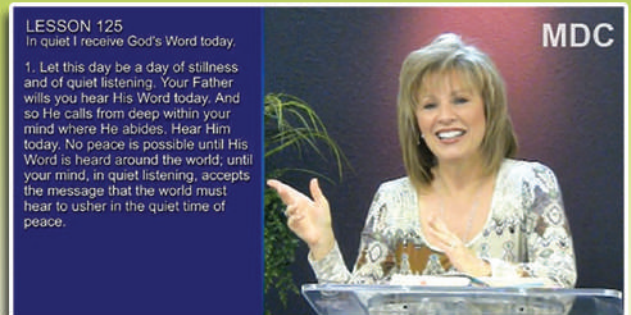
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A Crack in Everything

by Joseph Miller

*"Ring the bells that still can ring
Forget your perfect offering
There is a crack in everything
That's how the light gets in."*

Anthem, Leonard Cohen

Stuff breaks. People get sick. Plans get dashed. Pets die. Bankruptcy, earthquake, a broken water main. The realm of form is plagued by "doubt, chance and mutability," in the words of the poet Shelley. We typically regard this as a deficiency; proof that the world is not enough, and we who form part of the world are not enough either. Insufficiency, scarcity, lack.

But could we see this another way? Could this be reframed in a constructive sense? To be sure, people attempt all sorts of reframes to reconcile faith and fear, to offer consolation. "God's ways are mysterious," runs the pat theological reply, which feels as weak as it is evasive. Some think that a little more progress, a little more technology, a little more pharmacology is needed, and then hunger, disease, and even death will be banished. Some are even willing to put their bodies into deep freeze in the meantime. Wake us up when the utopia arrives.

Of course, we all like things to go our way. We like events to unfold as planned. We enjoy the new car before the door gets dinged. We like money in the bank and gas in the tank. We like winning at the black-

jack table. We prefer to achieve pleasure and avoid pain. But who would we be if we always got our way?

A Course in Miracles suggests we are idolators. We seek for perfection in the realm of form — status, fame, wealth, a stunning

house, a flawless body, knowing the right people. These are our gods. But all of these will fail us. Cherished expectations will eventually end in disappointment.

"The world you see holds nothing that you need to offer you; nothing that you can use in any way, nor anything at all that serves to give you joy. Believe this thought,

and you are saved from years of misery, from countless disappointments, and from hopes that turn to bitter ashes of despair."

(W-128.1:1-2)

The Course is very close to Buddhism in this regard. The First Noble Truth of the Buddha is dukkha, or "dissatisfaction," sometimes translated as the truth of suffering. What is meant is not that lasting happiness is impossible, but that it is never secured under our terms, in our efforts to grasp the

goods of the world.

"Failure is all about you while you seek for goals that cannot be achieved. You look for permanence in the impermanent, for love where there is none, for safety in the midst of danger; immortality within the darkness of the dream of death. Who could succeed where contradiction is the setting of his searching, and the place to which he comes to find stability?" (W-131.1)

If I am honest with myself, I have to admit that I would not do well in a world that had no cracks. The pains, the surprises, the confounding puzzles, the flat tires — these keep me alert. If I had access to some imperturbable sanctuary of bliss, wouldn't I fall into a state of dangerous passivity, like an opium addict? Or a self-satisfied dream where I could simply ignore the suffering of others? But things don't work out, so we wake up and keep searching. Lesson 131 states that well. "Yet searching is inevitable here. For this you came, and you will surely do the thing you came for. But the world

can not dictate the goal for which you search, unless you give it power to do so." (W-131.3)

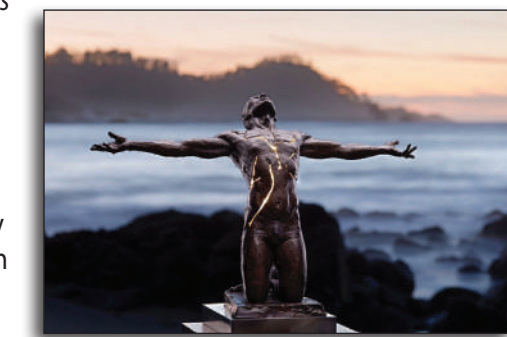
In his poem, *Our Real Work*, Wendell Berry wrote that our journey and work really begin only when our illusions fail us.

"It may be that when we no longer know what to do we have come to our real work, and that when we no

longer know which way to go we have come to our real journey."



"We seek for perfection in the realm of form — status, fame, wealth, a stunning house, a flawless body, knowing the right people. These are our gods."



"... we might discover that the brokenness of the world is the wholeness of the spirit, that the light which enters the crack is the formless truth ..."

Rather than cursing the seeming deficiencies of circumstance, we might discover that the brokenness of the world is the wholeness of the spirit, that the light which enters the crack is the formless truth which has been there all along, and which remains forevermore.

The Course calls this “the Love of God.” It alone is steady, unchanging, and reliable.

“Only the Love of God will protect you in all circumstances. It will lift you out of every trial, and raise you high above all the perceived dangers of this world into a climate of perfect peace and safety. It will transport you into a state of mind that nothing can threaten, nothing can disturb, and where nothing can intrude upon the eternal calm of the Son of God.”

(W-50.3)

The Course frequently beseeches us not to attempt to bring truth to illusions, but to bring illusions to truth, and surrender them there. We idealize and absolutize our idols and opinions. We attempt to secure our possessions behind fences, barbed wire, and armaments.

But these are things that crack, and all our efforts to foil nature also fail, or even accelerate the demise. But, as the quotation above suggests, there is a “state of mind” possible which is above threat. Lasting happiness may result from steady attention to the Real within.

Paradoxically, it is in accepting vulnerability that we achieve true strength. The posturing that the world promotes — strutting, gun-toting, brash, threatening — is, in fact, a desperate clinging to form, a compensatory armor over a heart of fear. Writer and researcher on “vulnerability,” Brene Brown, has studied the dysfunction in relationships that occurs when men (especially) are ashamed of vulnerability, hide from it, deny it, and regard it as a personal failure. Yet an experience of great relief results from forgiving the world and

ourselves for being imperfect. We begin to sense the divine scheme where the apparently imperfect is ruled by the perfect, where “All things work together for good. There are no exceptions except in the ego’s judgment.” (T-4.V.1)

If “forgiveness” is overlooking, then the miracle is the assurance to look beyond the crack to the light. At work one recent morning I received a tearful phone call from Radoslav — one of the young Ukrainian boys who lives with me. His gecko was dead. There I sat, 40 miles away, unable to hug the boy who was racked with grief. I called Kim, my wife, and she immediately left work to be with him. After making due allowance for grief, the two of them had a plan. They made a headstone, dug a grave in the yard, and

held solemnities for the dearly departed “Karosh”. Then Kim gently suggested that people who are sad about a pet dying sometimes find relief through an act of charity. So Radek decided he wanted to make a donation to the Humane Society. He withdrew \$30 from his bank, and off they went.

Later, in an act of affirming life over death, they made a visit to the pet store on the way home — not to buy anything, but simply to marvel at the abundance and variety of present life.

When Kim told me what had happened, I marveled at her wisdom. The crack in Radek’s world became a window into the laws of the human heart: a respectful reckoning with death; a discovery that giving is receiving; and a looking beyond the horizon of one’s own personal sorrow to others who need help now.

Our minds converse with both the outer and the inner, the crack and the light, the imperfect and the perfect. What has — and must always have — a crack in it is the illusion that you are on your own, that you are *for* yourself alone. There is no crack in that which cannot be broken, and that is Divine Love.



“Yet an experience of great relief results from forgiving the world and ourselves for being imperfect.”

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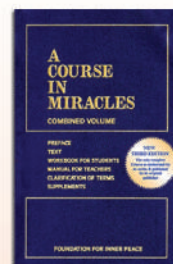
LESSON 125
In quiet receive God's Word today
1. Let this day be a day of stillness and of quiet listening. Your Father wills you hear His Word today. And so He calls from deep within your mind where His abode. Hear Him today. No peace is possible until His Word is heard around the world, until your mind, in quiet listening, accepts the message that the world must hear to usher in the quiet time of peace.



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Try the Miracle-Fix in 2026!

by Beverly McNeff

As we enter a new year, there is a tendency to bring our "same old" thinking into it, but that need not be the case! Every day is a new opportunity, and the beginning of a new year can often give us the impetus to start again. I know you have heard all this before, and I know it has failed many times, but let's not be discouraged. This year, let's try a little different approach; one that will require our faith. We will need to put our trust to the test, because we will not be the ones in control.

A *Course in Miracles* tells us we study a course in miracles. A course in the power that is within us now, even if we have denied that power and given our power and loyalty to a mistaken thought that can never be or never was Who we are. Nothing is lost by this mistaken thinking, and there is no retribution or penalty to be paid. It assures us that God's love for us is infinite and with us forever.

God has never left us alone, but we need to continue to tune in to Him and not get distracted by a world that says we are powerless, lost, and need the mistaken ego voice of fear and attack to guide us.

There is more to us than the body we think we are, the world that tries to overwhelm us, and the lies of a mad ego out of control. It is time we take our power back. It is time we become the mighty miracle workers that we can only recognize as we "step back and let Him lead the way." (W-155)

I am a fan of old television shows, especially those with a

sci-fi bent. The original series, called *The Outer Limits*, which ran from 1963 to 1965, was a favorite. I was just a child then, but I remember the opening of each episode. The words that were spoken really made an impact on me...

"There is nothing wrong with your television set. Do not attempt to adjust the picture. We are controlling transmission. If we wish to make it louder, we will bring up the volume. If we wish to make it softer, we will tune it to a whisper. We will control the horizontal. We will control the vertical. We can roll the image, make it flutter. We can change the focus to a soft blur or sharpen it to crystal clarity. For the next hour, sit quietly and we will control all that you see and hear. We repeat: There is nothing wrong with your television set. You are about to participate in a great adventure. You are about to experience the awe and mystery which reaches from the inner mind to ... The Outer Limits."

Of course, I knew no one was controlling the television set, but the idea was so intriguing to me. It was the idea that there was a power greater than little, singular me. One that was promising me

"a great adventure." It was telling me right now, right here, I could "experience the

awe and mystery which reaches from the inner mind" outward. It made me feel joined with something greater than the little me.

And, to me, this is what the Course is offering. To step back from our will so God's Will can be done in and through us. It is not a relinquishing of our power; it is how we find our true Power. And, for the little that is asked of us, our belief in the lie of our powerlessness and separation, it gives us the faith to experience the truth.

"Perhaps you do not see the need for you to give this little offering. Look closer, then, at what it is. And, very simply, see in it the whole exchange of separation for salvation. All that the ego is, is an idea that it is possible that things could happen to the Son of God without his will; and thus without the Will of his Creator, Whose Will cannot be separate from his own. This is the Son of God's replacement for his will, a mad revolt against what must forever be. This is the statement that he has the power to make God powerless and so to take it for himself, and leave himself without what God has willed for him. This is the mad idea you have enshrined upon your altars, and which you worship. And anything that threatens this seems to attack your faith, for here is it invested. Think not that you are faithless, for your belief and trust in this is strong indeed.



"Of course, I knew no one was controlling the television set, but the idea was so intriguing to me. It was the idea that there was a power greater than little, singular me."



"God has never left us alone, but we need to continue to tune in to Him and not get distracted by a world that says we are powerless ..."

*"The Holy Spirit can give you faith in holiness and vision to see it easily enough. But you have not left open and unoccupied the altar where the gifts belong. Where they should be, you have set up your idols to something else. This other 'will,' which seems to tell you what must happen, you give reality. And what would show you otherwise must therefore seem unreal. All that is asked of you is to make room for truth. You are not asked to make or do what lies beyond your understanding. All you are asked to do is **let it in**; only to stop your interference with what will happen of itself; simply to recognize again the presence of what you thought you gave away."*

(T-21.11.6-7)

Maybe you doubt that anything has the power to heal your mind or change a world so filled with division and warring thoughts, but if you are even a little intrigued by the possibility of the power of miracles, perhaps we can start again. We are simply being asked to let the power of miracles, the power of love, find a place in our minds, and then God's Answer will do the rest. That is how great miracles are in our lives.

A Course in Miracles tells us some essential things about miracles in the first chapter of its text, "Principles of Miracles." Here are a few to whet your appetite...

- Miracles are *our* right and *everyone's* right
- Miracles are healing, and they enable us to heal
- Miracles are expressions of love that can reverse the physical laws to *"bring more love both to the giver and the receiver."*
- *"Miracles bear witness to the truth."*
- *"Miracles are natural signs of*

forgiveness."

- *"Miracles make minds one with God."*
- Miracles dissolve error
- Miracles acknowledge everyone as your brother
- Miracles have the strength to release you from *"your false sense of isolation, deprivation, and lack."*
- Miracles are *"an expression of an inner awareness of Christ ..."*

... and Christ is power and glory that we all truly are, and miracles are the fix!



"Maybe you doubt that anything has the power to heal your mind or change a world so filled with division and warring thoughts, but if you are even a little intrigued by the possibility of the power of miracles, perhaps we can start again."

Let's try the miracle fix in 2026. You are not powerless in the face of what is done to you. It is time you recognize this and accept the truth about yourself, as you arise in your glory every day, and allow the light (the power of miracles, love) in you to shine upon the world throughout the day. You will never be alone in this quest, and if you ever doubt it, reach out to us here at the Center.

We have been here for 48 years, and just like God's Love, we aren't going anywhere.

"All miracles mean life, and God is the Giver of life. His Voice will direct you very specifically. You will be told all you need to know." (T-1.1.4) ❖

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Simple Trust



by Beverly McNeff

It has been over twenty years since my dad's entry into eternal life. When it occurred, our son Jeffrey was six years old. I wanted him to understand this life-lesson in a way that was not fearful, so I explained that those who leave this physical existence are always in our hearts, and we can talk to them whenever we like. This simple and gentle explanation seemed to help him, and it comforted me, as well.

One night, shortly after that conversation, this explanation was put to the test...

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ground” perspective, it doesn’t feel easy or simple. As the Course says...

“Simplicity is very difficult for twisted minds. Consider all the distortions you have made of nothing; all the strange forms and feelings and actions and reactions that you have woven out of it. Nothing is so alien to you as the simple truth, and nothing are you less inclined to listen to.” (T-14.II.2)

So, we may be “less inclined to listen to” the simple truth God is holding out to us, but it is not impossible. As a matter of fact, God is the only possibility available to us; the rest is not even there. That is why the world is called an illusion. Not that you do not believe in it, on the contrary, it is there for you to behold because you do believe in it. This belief, however, does not make it true; it simply makes it your belief. If you are willing to invite in the Answer God has given you in the Holy Spirit (His Voice in this world), He will gladly lead you past the battleground to the miracle that stands “in shining silence next to every dream of pain and suffering, of sin and guilt.” (T-28.II.12)

I have often asked readers to send me their favorite quotes from the Course and tell me why. I remember receiving this explanation from a subscriber to our weekly livestream in Ft Lauderdale, Florida. She shares a powerful quote and a transformational story about an experience we can all relate to: physical sickness. Her story highlights how we can rise above any battleground of life. She wrote...

“I had lunch with THE HOLY ENCOUNTER today and decided to write and let you know my favorite quote from the Course. How could I possibly have just one? Here goes ... ‘Sickness is a defense against the truth.’ (W-136)



*“I had lunch with **OL O** today and decided to write and let you know my favorite quote from the Course.”*

“It took me a long time to really come to terms with that lesson. Every time I was feeling sick, I would pick up the Course and read that passage. One day, when my ego was not getting in the way and I had stepped out of my fear, Holy Spirit really had me understand that sick-

ness is a choice I make. The lesson says that we choose sickness and then forget that we do, but on this particular day, I could actually see, like a stack of dominoes falling backward, what past decision had brought me to this point of suffering. In that instant (yes, a Holy one), I was able to ‘choose

peace instead of this.’

“My illness didn’t go away, but the suffering that usually comes with it did. To this day, I still get sick, and yet I’m sick in a whole new way. I don’t dread it, and I’m not frightened by it; I merely recognize that I am defending against God. That somewhere in my past few hours, days, or weeks, I made a choice to listen to fear instead of love, and then I make a conscious decision to choose love again. The illness may disappear, or not, but my suffering does. My attitude becomes one of acceptance, and I am at peace with the illness, not fighting it or figuring out what I’ve done wrong to get myself in this situation (I recognize analyzing is a function of the

ego and stop). I let go and let God, and once again I am at rest in His arms.”

As this insightful Course student allowed herself to be lifted above the battleground, she permitted the healing process to begin. She did not have to struggle to figure out what she had “done” — that was not the issue. She just wanted to experience healing — a healing of the mind. She joined her will with the Holy Spirit, accepted her responsibility for her choice for pain and not peace, and chose again. The result was a miracle (a holy instant) that healed her mind.

We are asked to accept responsibility for our choices, not guilt for our choices. Accepting responsibility allows the Holy Spirit to lift us above the battleground. Feeling guilty for the situations or experiences we find ourselves in “murders” the awareness of peace in our lives. Therefore, we have chosen attack. Attack of ourselves, our brothers, and God. We feel separate, and our experience of guilt reinforces that choice.

Accepting a miracle instead of murderous thoughts and allowing the Holy Spirit to lift us above the battleground lets us experience, right now, a world of peace that is God’s Will for us. It does not mean that anything in the “form” of the

world changes, but the way we experience that “form” has been transformed. We have no idea, from our limited perspective, how to make that transformation, but then that is not our concern. Our focus is on looking at the clouds of confusion and separation that the world so often shows us and that we have given so much power to, and on allowing a new perception to come

to us. This perception and insight will lift us above the battleground, so that we might experience the world of clarity that



“When our son Jeff was little, he would sometimes get so worked up when he was overtired. Nothing would satisfy him, not even his favorite toys or activities.”

God has promised us.

When our son Jeff was little, he would sometimes get so worked up when he was overtired. Nothing would satisfy him, not even his favorite toys or activities. He would become so confused that he would “attack” everything. He wouldn’t even want his favorite blanket. He didn’t want to go to sleep, and yet he really did. It is how we all get when we are caught in the confusion of this exhausting world. When we try to figure anything out on our own, whether it be personal challenges or global concerns, attack fills our minds. We judge ourselves, and the people and world we see. In that moment, we need to stop. We need to rest from our perceptions. We need to be lifted above the battleground of our minds to a place of peace and understanding.

Having the awareness that God’s Help

is ever available is a start. Knowing that there is another choice we can make with this Help is critical. But we must also

recognize the signs of the ego’s plan to keep us in our murderous thoughts of separation, and dependent on guilt, fear, and attack for our salvation. The ego survives if we are not vigilant for its signs and choose for God instead. As the Course counsels...

“When the temptation to attack rises to make your mind darkened and murderous, remember you can see the battle from above.

Even in forms you do not recognize, the signs you know. There is a stab of pain, a twinge of guilt, and above all, a loss of peace. This you know well. When they occur leave not your place on high, but quickly choose a miracle instead of murder. And God Himself and all the lights of Heaven will gently

lean to you, and hold you up. For you have chosen to remain where He would have you, and no illusion can attack the peace of God together with His Son.” (T-23.IV.6)

“A stab of pain, a twinge of guilt, and above all, a loss of peace,” all of these are warning signs that we are being tempted to leave the world of peace that God is holding out to us in favor of the painful, suffering world of the ego. Let us not “leave our place on high, but quickly choose a miracle instead of murder.” And we are told that this choice will be supported by God Himself. Is there really a better support or help?

It is time we committed ourselves to living together in peace and harmony and making the choice to be lifted above the battleground of hate, attack, name-calling, and violent threats. We must become aware of the temptation to assault love by cherishing attack and grievances, and consciously make the choice to rise above it all and choose miracles instead of our murderous assault on peace and healing. Perhaps this will be the year when we finally believe what the Course has been telling us, that we **are** entitled to miracles. And, we will rise above the battleground to a place of healing and peace. ❖



“It is time we committed ourselves to living together in peace and harmony and making the choice to be lifted above the battleground of hate, attack, name-calling, and violent threats.”



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with Beverly McNeff

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JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2026

In This Issue ...

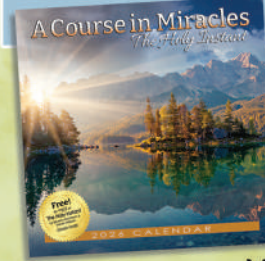
- Above the Battleground
- Happiness New Year!
- The Space Between
- Lessons in Light —Sacrificing Sacrifice
- A Crack in Everything
- Try the Miracle-Fix in 2026!

...And So Much More!



**Miracle
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Keep miracles beside you all year long...
with these Calendars



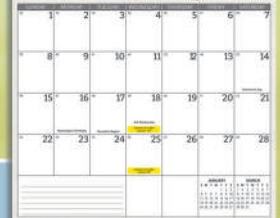
MDC's
2026
Wall Calendar



MDC's Perpetual
Flip Calendar



February



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Holy Encounter Retreat

JUNE 26-28, 2026



Beverly McNeff

is an international lecturer, author, and founder of the Center. She brings nearly fifty years of Course study to this weekend that will leave you with the tools and understanding you'll need to experience miracles in your life.

Experience the healing power of the Course
through lectures, meditation,
group sharing, music, and laughter!

"I came away with
down-to-earth principles that helped me
make sense of things in terms of forgiveness,
judgment, etc. The environment and food were
great...I just had a great time overall!"



SEE PAGE 3
FOR MORE INFO



"Beverly made the Course so
easy to understand. I'm always
getting this message that
the Course is so hard and she
makes it so simple."



Held at the majestic **RW Ranch Spiritual Retreat Center** in Lucerne Valley, California. Everything is included:
the weekend retreat activities, well-appointed lodging, and six organic, chef-prepared meals.

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