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PAPERS (3014)**

BOX 16

FOLDER 24

A VIEW FROM THE TOP

NOVEMBER 23, 1980

THE QUESTION
FOR?" IS NOT
PILGRIMS HAD
APPROPRIATE
THANKS FROM?"

THE PILGRIMS WERE GIVING THANKS OUT OF A CONVICTION
OF THE GOODNESS AND ALL-SUFFICIENCY OF GOD. IT WAS
THAT CONVICTION THAT BROUGHT THEM TO THIS LAND.

"A VIEW FROM THE TOP" Nov. 23, 1990

NEXT THURSDAY IS THANKSGIVING DAY. BUT WHAT IS IT ALL ABOUT? WHAT WILL IT MEAN TO YOU?

IN THE PLAY, "TWIGS", THE FEMALE LEAD IS PREPARING A THANKSGIVING DINNER FOR A LARGE GROUP OF VISITING RELATIVES. SHE SIGHS, "THIS HOLIDAY IS AN AWFUL LOT OF WORK...NO WONDER NO OTHER COUNTRY CELEBRATES IT!"

THERE ARE ALWAYS THOSE WHO CYNICALLY SAY: "WHAT IS THERE TO GIVE THANKS FOR, WITH THE HOSTAGE DILEMMA THE ^{Terrorism} OIL CRISIS, THE CONTINUING PROBLEMS OF EROSION INFLATION, AND THE RAMPANT SPREAD OF CRIME?"

WE ARE USUALLY REMINDED OF THAT FIRST THANKSGIVING OF 360 YEARS AGO, THE PILGRIMS SEATED AROUND THE TABLE WITH THE INDIANS...PROBABLY GLAMORIZED AND UNREALISTIC.

ACTUALLY THEY HAD LITTLE ON THEIR TABLE, AND PRECIOUS LITTLE IN THEIR BARNs -- WITH THE PROSPECT OF A VERY SEVERE WINTER AHEAD...AND MUCH HARDSHIP BEHIND THEM, AND EVEN WITH THEM.

THE QUESTION, "WHAT DO WE HAVE TO GIVE THANKS FOR?" IS NOT APPROPRIATE. IT IS OBVIOUS THAT THE PILGRIMS HAD LITTLE TO GIVE THANKS FOR. A MORE APPROPRIATE QUESTION IS, "WHAT DO WE HAVE TO GIVE THANKS FROM?"

THE PILGRIMS WERE GIVING THANKS OUT OF A CONVICTION OF THE GOODNESS AND ALL-SUFFICIENCY OF GOD. IT WAS THAT CONVICTION THAT BROUGHT THEM TO THIS LAND...

AND WHICH WOULD SUSTAIN THEM IN THE YEARS TO COME. IN OTHER WORDS THEIR THANKSGIVING WAS NOT JUST REACTIVE... IT WAS CAUSATIVE. AND THAT IS A VITAL KEY TO A NEW AGE THANKSGIVING CELEBRATION.

WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO GIVE THANKS FROM? IF YOU HAVE NO BASIC FAITH FROM WHICH TO GIVE THANKS, THEN YOUR LIFE IS EMPTIER THAN YOU KNOW... AND ALL THE AFFLUENCE OF HEAVEN AND EARTH COULD NOT GIVE YOU FULFILLMENT. AND IF YOU HAVE A BASIC FAITH, THEN THANKSGIVING COMES EASY. BUT IT IS NOT JUST A RESPONSE TO THE THINGS OF YOUR LIFE. IT IS A CELEBRATION OF THE TRUTH WHICH BECOMES A CAUSE OF GOOD.

THIS WAS THE PROFOUND CONVICTION OF PLATO, UTTERED 2,500 YEARS AGO: "A GRATEFUL MIND IS A GREAT MIND WHICH EVENTUALLY ATTRACTS TO ITSELF GREAT THINGS."

SO... NOT JUST ON THANKSGIVING DAY, BUT AS A WAY OF LIFE, WE NEED TO CULTIVATE AN ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE: FOR IT IS A LEVEL OF CONSCIOUSNESS AND A PERSPECTIVE BY WHICH TO VIEW LIFE IN ALL PLACES AND AT ALL TIMES.

A GREAT LESSON IN LIVING IS THIS: GET A VIEW FROM HIGH ENOUGH UP, AND SEE FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF WHOLENESS... AND YOU WILL BE ABLE TO DEAL EASILY AND EFFICIENTLY WITH LIFE.

WE HAD WORD RECENTLY OF THE PASSING OF A DEAR FRIEND IN ENGLAND. I MET THIS MAN TWENTY YEARS AGO WHILE LECTURING IN ENGLAND. HE WAS AN INVETERA STUDENT OF METAPHYSICS, AND A VERY POSITIVE PERSON.

INTERESTINGLY, HE WAS AN ACUPUNCTURIST AND HAD BEEN DECADES BEFORE THIS CHINESE SYSTEM OF THERAPY WAS POPULARIZED IN THE WEST.

A FEW YEARS AGO THIS MAN AND HIS WIFE WERE VISITING OLGA AND ^{MC} IN NEW YORK. IT WAS THEIR FIRST TRIP HERE, AND THEY HAD BEEN ~~CONDITIONED~~ WITH ALL THE LURID/DETAILS OF HOW SORDID AND CRIME-RIDDEN OUR CITY WAS.

THE FIRST PLACE I TOOK THEM WAS UP TO THE TOP OF THE RCA BUILDING. IT WAS ONE OF THOSE BREATH-TAKINGLY BEAUTIFUL DAYS WHEN YOU CAN LITERALLY "SEE FOREVER". THEY WERE THRILLED BY THE SIGHT. LATER, AS WE TOURED AROUND THE CITY, THE MAN SAID, "I JUST CAN'T FORGET THAT VIEW FROM ON HIGH". AND THEY WENT AWAY SINGING THE PRAISES OF NEW YORK CITY.

THIS HAS LED TO A HELPFUL INSIGHT ABOUT THANKSGIVING IT IS LITERALLY AND FIGURATIVELY: A VIEW FROM THE TOP... A CONTEMPLATION OF ALL THE CHANGING AND CHALLENGING THINGS, EXPERIENCES, AND PERSONS OF ONE'S LIFE FROM THE HIGHEST POSSIBLE POINT OF VIEW.

WHenever THERE IS A CONFLICT OR CHALLENGE, THE NEED IS TO GET THE VIEW FROM THE TOP... TO SEE THE INHERENT GOOD... TO SEE THE ACTIVITY OF GOD... TO GET OUR CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE COSMIC FLOW OF LIFE.

THIS ALWAYS RECALLS THOSE LINES OF EUGENE O'NEILL'S PLAY, "LAZARUS LAUGHED" (1926) THAT HAVE SO MUCH MEANING TO ME. IT WAS STORY OF LAZARUS AFTER JESUS BROUGHT HIM BACK FROM DEAD. HE HAD SEEN THE OTHER

SIDE OF LIFE...NOTHING DISTURBED HIM...HE WAS ALWAYS LAUGHING AND CHEERFUL.

I ESPECIALLY CHERISH THESE LINES FROM THE PLAY:

"WHY ARE YOUR EYES ALWAYS FIXED ON THE GROUND IN WEARINESS OF THOUGHT, OR WATCHING ONE ANOTHER WITH SUSPICION. THROW YOUR GAZE UPWARD TO ETERNAL LIFE... O BROTHERS IN GOD, WEAVING DANCE RHYTHMS OF ETERNAL PEACE TO THE LONELY DRUMS OF TIME, LAUGH THINE EVERLASTING LAUGHTER, LET IT DESCEND ON MAN'S SEARED LIPS... O BROTHERS, SONS OF ETERNAL LIFE, CELEBRANTS OF ITS FLAMING REVEL ALONG THE MOUNTAIN RIDGES OF INFINITY, LET MAN FEEL THY ECSTASY THAT HE MAY EVOKE HIS OWN HIGH FREEDOM."

IN OTHER WORDS...GET THE VIEW FROM THE TOP, LOOK UP AND SEE THE WIDER SPHERE, SEE THE DIVINE CREATIVE PROCESS AT WORK, SEE THE ACTIVITY OF GOD IN PERSONS AND SITUATIONS. WHEN YOU DO...YOU WILL EASILY AND SINCERELY GIVE THANKS.

WHEN JESUS WAS CALLED TO BETHANY TO MEET WITH THE SORROWING FAMILY OF HIS DEAR FRIEND, LAZARUS, THE SISTERS SAID, WITH A HINT OF REPROACH, "IF YOU HAD BEEN HERE OUR BROTHER WOULD NOT HAVE DIED."

HE WENT TO THE TOMB WHERE LAZARUS HAD BEEN INTERRED FOR THREE DAYS. HE HAD THEM ROLL AWAY THE STONE. THEN...HE LIFTED UP HIS EYES (GOT THE VIEW FROM THE TOP) AND SAID, "FATHER I THANK YOU THAT YOU HEAR ME."

CAN'T YOU IMAGINE PEOPLE THINKING, "THANKSGIVING!
WHAT IS THERE TO BE THANKFUL FOR? THE MAN IS DEAD!
THIS HEALER HAD BETTER WAIT AND SEE IF HE CAN REALLY
DO ANYTHING BEFORE HE GIVES THANKS."

BUT JESUS KNEW THAT THE KEY TO POWER IS ACKNOWLEDGING
THE AVAILABILITY OF POWER. HE WAS NOT GIVING THANKS
FOR ANYTHING... HE WAS GIVING THANKS FROM A HIGH
PERSPECTIVE THAT COULD SEE LIFE AS TRANSCENDENT
TO DEATH.

IN THIS CONSCIOUSNESS HE AFFIRMED: "I AM THE
RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE" -- NOT TO MAKE IT TRUE,
BUT THAT WHICH WAS TRUE FROM HIS VIEW FROM THE
TOP. THEN HE PROCLAIMED, "LAZARUS COME FORTH!"
AND THE MAN WALKED OUT FREE AND WHOLE.

IN OUR CONTEMPORARY FRAME OF REFERENCE, THERE MAY
BE NO WAY TO REALLY UNDERSTAND THE IMPLICATIONS OF
THIS EVENT... THE ACTUAL RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD.

I SAY: DON'T GET SO INVOLVED IN ANALYZING THE
DETAILS THAT WE LOSE SIGHT OF A SIMPLE
FUNDAMENTAL:

IF JESUS WOULD LIFT UP HIS EYES TO GET A VIEW FROM
THE TOP IN AN ATTEMPT TO DEAL WITH THE FINAL ENEMY
OF DEATH -- HOW MUCH MORE IMPORTANT IT IS THAT
WE LOOK UP AND GIVE THANKS IN EVERY EXPERIENCE OF
OUR LIVES. ACTUALLY, THANKSGIVING CAN BE A GOLDEN
KEY TO RESURRECT WANING POSSIBILITIES IN ANY
EXPERIENCE OR RELATIONSHIP.

THE IMPORTANT THING: IF YOU ALWAYS SEEK FIRST TO GET A VIEW FROM THE TOP, AND GIVE THANKS IN ALL THINGS FOR THE ACTIVITY OF GOD THAT "NEITHER SLUMBERS NOR SLEEPS" . . . BY YOU ACTUALLY SET OFF A CHAIN REACTION OF POSITIVE POWER.

WE CAN SEE OR SENSE THE CHAIN REACTIONS OF LIFE WORKING IN A NEGATIVE SENSE IN SO MANY WAYS -- SOMETIMES TRAGIC WAYS.

FOR INSTANCE, HERE IS A HYPOTHETICAL ILLUSTRATION: JOHN JONES IS AWAKENED EARLY BY THE RINGING OF THE TELEPHONE. ONE OF THE FOREMEN TELLS HIM THAT A CERTAIN MACHINE IS OUT OF ORDER AT THE PLANT. ~~THE~~ JOHN SNARLS SOMETHING UNPLEASANT ~~BACK~~ OVER THE PHONE, SOMETHING CRITICAL OF THE FOREMAN'S CARE OF THE EQUIPMENT. JOHN IS NOW IN A VILE HUMOR . . . SO IS THE FOREMAN.

AT THE BREAKFAST TABLE JOHN SNARLS AT HIS WIFE. AT THE PLANT THE FORMAN SNARLS AT HIS MEN. MRS. JONES SNARLS AT HER SON BEFORE HE GOES TO ~~SCHOOL~~ SCHOOL. LITTLE JOHNNY SNARLS AT HIS TEACHER. THE TEACHER SNARLS ~~AT THE WHOLE CLASS~~ AT THE WHOLE CLASS. THE WORKERS AT THE PLANT GO HOME AND SNARL AT THEIR FAMILIES, THE CHILDREN GO HOME AND SNARL AT THEIR PARENTS. IT IS A THOROUGHLY BAD DAY, AT SCHOOL, AT THE SHOP, AND IN AN UNBELIEVABLY LARGE NUMBER OF HOMES. A BEAUTIFUL DAY HAS BECOME A DAY OF SNARLS.

WHY? WE COULD BLAME IT ON THE TELEPHONE - FOR IT WAS THE TELEPHONE THAT WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN SETTING OFF THE IRRITATION CYCLE.

BUT WHAT SHOULD WE DO... REMOVE ALL THE PHONES? OF COURSE NOT... THE PHONES ARE HERE TO STAY.

IT IS AN EXAMPLE OF A NEGATIVE CHAIN REACTION.

NOW... NOTE WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN IF THE PHONE CALL WAS MET WITH A CONSCIOUS EFFORT TO VIEW THE EXPERIENCE FROM THE HIGHEST POINT OF VIEW. THE BOSS WOULD ACTUALLY START AN INSPIRATION CYCLE INSTEAD OF A IRRITATION CYCLE.

CARLYLE - "HISTORY FRENCH REVOLUTION"
"DANCE, DANCE, LIFE MADE"

NOTE THE DIFFERENCE IN SO MANY LIVES... AND IN THE WORLD AS A WHOLE.

IN ANY CHALLENGING SITUATION, IT IS GOOD TO TAKE A MOMENT TO GET SOME ALTITUDE IN YOUR THINKING. TAKE A TIME OF QUIET MEDITATION TO SEE IT FROM THE HIGHEST POINT OF VIEW. THIS IS WHAT EMERSON SAYS PRAYER IS.

IF YOU CAN LIFT UP YOUR EYES HIGH ENOUGH, AND GIVE THANKS DEEPLY ENOUGH, AND OPEN THE GREATNESS OF YOUR GOD-SELF COMPLETELY ENOUGH, YOU CAN SET OFF A CHAIN REACTION FOR GOOD. THIS IS THE STUFF OF WHICH PEACE IS MADE.

AND... THIS ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE... THIS VIEW FROM THE TOP... ENABLES US TO SEE THINGS AND PEOPLE AND EXPERIENCES IN A COMPLETELY NEW WAY. WE HAVE A NEW SENSE OF APPRECIATION. WE APPRECIATE PEOPLE MORE, FOR WE SEE BEYOND APPEARANCES... WE SEE THE DIVINITY IN THEM... WE SEE AND SENSE THE WHOLE PERSON... AND BY SEEING IT AND RESPONDING TO IT, WE TEND TO CALL IT FORTH.

AND WE WILL BEGIN DEALING WITH LIFE WITH A VIEW THAT IS OPTIMISTIC AND POSITIVE.

✓ THERE IS ~~AN~~ OLD SAYING: A DONKEY MAY CARRY A HEAVY LOAD OF PRECIOUS SANDALWOOD ON ITS BACK AND NEVER KNOW ITS PRECIOUSNESS... ONLY ITS WEIGHT.

✓ MANY OF US GO THROUGH LIFE FEELING ONLY THE WEIGHT OF CIRCUMSTANCES, NEVER ABLE TO APPRECIATE THE PRECIOUS NATURE OF LIFE -- BECAUSE OF A CHRONIC NEGATIVE ATTITUDE: HEAD BOWED DOWN, EYES FIXED ON ~~THE~~ GROUND. WE NEED TO LOOK UP, TO GET THE VIEW FROM THE TOP, TO CULTIVATE THE ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE.

✓ THE BEAUTIFUL PART OF THIS HIGH PERSPECTIVE IS THAT IT ENABLES YOU TO APPRECIATE YOUR ABILITY TO APPRECIATE. SO MANY PERSONS... WHEN LOOKING FOR THINGS FOR WHICH TO GIVE THANKS... SIMPLY BECOME MORE AWARE OF THEIR INADEQUACIES. SO INSTEAD OF COUNTING THEIR BLESSINGS, THEY COUNT THEIR ENVIES.

"HE IS SO TALENTED" "SHE HAS SO MANY LOVELY THINGS" "I WISH I HAD A HAPPY HOME LIKE THEY DO" "WOULDN'T IT BE WONDERFUL TO BE SO CREATIVE?"

✓ I HAVE ALWAYS LOVED ROSTAND'S PARABLE, "THE CHANTICLEER" THE ROOSTER THOUGHT THAT IT WAS BECAUSE OF HIS CROWING IN THE MORNING THAT THE SUN ROSE... FOR EVERY DAY HE WOULD AWAKEN IN THE DARK, AND THEN AFTER HIS CROWING, THE SUN WOULD RISE.

ONE DAY HE OVERSLEPT... AND HE AROSE TO FIND THE SUN HAD ALREADY RISEN WITHOUT HIS CROWING.

IT WAS A CRUSHING BLOW... FOR NOW HE FELT THAT HIS LIFE HAD NO MEANING. THEN, IN A FLASH OF INSIGHT, HE THOUGHT: "IT MAY BE THAT IT IS NOT MY POOR VOICE THAT BRINGS ON THE DAY: BUT EVEN IF I MAY NOT CAUSE THE SUN TO RISE, I MAY LIFT UP MY VOICE AND CELEBRATE ITS RISING."

MAM - MADISON Ave - ^{ART WORK} ~~PARADE~~ IN WINDSOR.

IT IS A MARVELOUS INSIGHT INTO THANKSGIVING AS A POSITIVE POWER... NOT A REACTIONARY EMOTION, BUT A VITAL CAUSATIVE ENERGY.

SOME PERSONS MAY DO GREAT THINGS, OR HAVE GOOD HEALTH OR RICH POSSESSIONS. THEY MAY SEEM TO HAVE GOOD REASON FOR THANKSGIVING.

BUT IF YOU GET A VIEW FROM THE TOP, YOU REALIZE THAT YOU CAN APPRECIATE GREAT THINGS, AND BE GRATEFUL THAT YOU CAN. YOU CAN CELEBRATE THE ABUNDANCE THAT IS EVERYWHERE, NO MATTER WHOSE LIFE IT MAY APPEAR IN

WHAT WOULD ART MUSEUMS BE WITHOUT ART ENTHUSIASTS... OR A SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA WITHOUT MUSIC LOVERS?

WE CAN'T ALL PAINT OR SEW OR COMPOSE OR SING OR PLAY. AND YOU MAY NOT HAVE THE MONEY OR THE JOB THAT OTHERS HAVE. BUT YOU CAN CELEBRATE THIS ORDER AND BEAUTY AND AFFLUENCE. MAYBE APPRECIATION IS THE GREATEST KIND OF CREATIVITY.

AND PERHAPS YOUR VIEW FROM THE TOP, YOUR ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE, IS THE KEY THAT WILL OPEN THE WAY TO THE FLOW OF YOUR OWN AFFLUENCE.

PLATO: "A GRATEFUL MIND IS A GREAT MIND WHICH EVENTUALLY ATTRACTS TO ITSELF GREAT THINGS."