

VISION OF A HO-CHUNK HEALER

It is inevitable that this Ho-Chunk medicine man, this healer, is finally sitting here on this riverbank by the still waters listening to the Big Voice. Ho-Chunk means "People of the Big Voice," or "People of the Sacred Language." Simply adorned in the garb of his people, an eagle feather secured in his otter skin headband, his long gray-white hair in a single braid falling over his right shoulder, clothed in a soft shirt, he is peacefully smoking his pipe, experiencing the peace of God.

It is inevitable that it comes to this because, finally, there is only the Great Voice speaking to us. That is the only thing that is real. It was there at the beginning, present during the long descent through time, and is speaking to us here and now. This peaceful healer demonstrates that it is possible to use time, even the great length of time represented by the sandstone cliffs carved by glacier-fed streams, to discover the Great Voice speaking to us right now all through the day. Even through the great Diaspora of his people, meaning their breaking up and scattering, it is possible to use time to discover the presence of the Great Voice, closer than the sound of a heartbeat.

This healer is silhouetted by the sandstone cliffs formed millions of years ago during a period of glacial melting that took place not far from here, an area now known as Portage. Trillions of gallons of water trapped behind a huge ice dam forced its collapse and plummeted through this region, carving out these magnificent cliffs.

Subsequently, for thousands of years the Ho-Chunks naturally gathered here to live near these healing waters. They enjoyed abundant hunting, gathering and farming. Then, starting in the early 1800's, the great Diaspora began as the U. S. Government forced them to relocate in Iowa, then Minnesota, then along the Mississippi, then to South Dakota. Throughout eleven removals the Ho-Chunks continued to return to Wisconsin. Finally, when it was apparent that the Nation was determined to be in Wisconsin, they were able to purchase 40-acre homestead lots and farm and assimilate. Their longing to return home made their return certain, just as our longing to return Home to God makes the outcome certain.

And now we return to the peaceful healer sitting on the riverbank, representing the inevitability of the Great Voice speaking to us all through the day no matter what appears to be going on in time. This inevitability is expressed differently in different traditions, and the healer, listening to David's 23rd Psalm would nod and smile in complete recognition of the Sacred Voice. The medicine man in *the green pastures* of his quiet mind is sitting by *the still waters*.

He would also smile in recognition, hearing Jesus say these words in His unworldly masterpiece, **A Course in Miracles**.

Let us come daily to this holy place, and spend a while together. Here we share our final dream. It is a dream in which there is no sorrow, for it holds a hint of all the glory given us by God. The grass is pushing through the soil, the trees are budding now, and birds have come to live within their branches. Earth is being born again in new perspective. Night has gone, and we have come together in the light.

The darkness of the great Diaspora is gone, **and we have come together in the light**, listening to the Voice for God. Experiencing the light, his mind is healed, and what he sees outside is a reflection of the light within. His peacefulness comes from knowing that he is always only looking into a mirror. What he sees is mirroring his peaceful mind, and that is rendered in the painting so beautifully by the thirteen flowers pushing through the soil by the still waters, framed by the sandstone cliffs and trees and blue sky and white clouds.

Arty painted this panorama from the same quiet place, hearing the still, small Voice for God, just like the healer. She conceived of this painting from the same quiet place the healer is experiencing because their minds are joined in the Oneness of God's Mind, listening to the Voice of the Holy Spirit. The painting is a pictorial demonstration that what is seen outside is a manifestation of what is within. When we look at the painting we are looking into the mirror of her mind.

It is Arty's gift to be able to illustrate, particularly, the images in her mind as these thirteen flowers: Harebell, Common Blue Violet, Hoary Puccoon, Pink Lady's Slipper, Giant Blue Hyssop, Blue Flag Iris, Wild Geranium, Columbine, Canada Anemone, Whorled Milkweed, Large-Flowered Trillium, Black-Eyed Susan, and Common Dandelion. During her long painting career, it has always been her gift and her joy to paint flowers.

And then we have the magnificent ivory-billed woodpecker. News of his sighting broke while she was painting this mural. It is perfect that he is now in the painting because it is such a testament to God's Love that this bird, not having been spotted for over 60 years and assumed extinct, should appear again now. It has a 30-inch wingspan and a jackhammer beak. Audubon called it the "great chieftain of the woodpecker tribe," and others called it the "Lord God bird" because when people saw it, they said, "Lord God!"

As we gaze into Arty's painting we are given the opportunity to still our minds and come to hear the Great Voice telling us that **Truth is true and nothing else is true**.

It is inevitable that this Chapel, resting on this hillside, overlooking the splendid

sandstone cliffs and the healing waters, now opens the doors of the River View Room to offer a peaceful place to still your mind and see the reflection of God's Love.

And now, it is most appropriate to stop and listen to Jesus speaking to us His **Course in Miracles**, two passages from Lesson 125, **In quiet I receive God's word today**.

Let this day be a day of stillness and of quiet listening. Your Father wills you hear His Word today. He calls to you from deep within your mind where He abides. 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.

Today He speaks to you. His Voice awaits your silence, for His Word can not be heard until your mind is quiet for a while, and meaningless desires have been stilled. Await His Word in quiet. There is peace within you to be called upon today, to help make ready your most holy mind to hear the Voice for its Creator speak.

Thank you, Father.