

Revelation

1 Revelation comes in two volumes: the Bible and nature. **St. Thomas Aquinas**

2 **Inviting God In: Celebrating the Soul-Meaning of the Jewish Holy Days** (excerpt)

Revelation is like the traffic station on the radio. You are driving down Route 83, and you wonder which is the quickest way to your destination. Is there a traffic jam ahead? Should you get off at the next exit and take an alternate route? Or take your chances with the traffic lights on the main thoroughfare? There is really no way for you to know; you cannot possibly see the next two miles of roadway. But the traffic helicopter hovering overhead sees everything. From its perspective, all the highways and traffic patterns are perfectly visible. So you tune in to the traffic station, and you hear the clear message: 'Traffic jam on Route 83 between Kilmer and Havington. If you're traveling north, exit at Route 144.' Even the most deluxe, state-of-the-art automobile can never know what the helicopter knows, unless the helicopter communicates to it. That is revelation.

Rabbi David Aaron

3 Buddhism shakes the foundations of self, bringing an enlightenment that carries us beyond the standpoint of self. Christianity shakes the foundations of life and death, bringing the revelation of a life that is eternal. Islam shakes the foundations of our will and purpose, bringing the revelation of a God whose will is accomplished in everything that happens. **John S. Dunne**, *A Journey With God in Time*

4 What you love enough reveals its secrets to you. **George Washington Carver**

5 Transformation is the fruit of mystical revelation, at least this is its goal and normal course. The person becomes intoxicated by divine love and compassion. **Wayne Teasdale**

6 Every happening great and small is a parable whereby God speaks to us, and the art of life is to get the message. **Malcolm Muggeridge**

7 **What is Everyday Spirituality?**

Tutors in the art of everyday spirituality have appeared in all times and places. Meister Eckhart, a 13th century Christian mystic, was always on the lookout for God in the midst of life. Brother Lawrence, a 17th century Carmelite monk and cook, examined the present moment in order to practice the presence of God. Thomas Traherne, from the same era, was an Anglican priest and poet; he saw the ordinary as a vehicle for the transcendent. He, like English poet Gerard Manley Hopkins two centuries later, held up an incarnational spirituality built upon the coming of God in

the flesh. Jean-Pierre du Caussade, a French Jesuit priest of the 18th century, tried to practice "the sacrament of the present moment. And Thich Nhat Hanh, a contemporary Vietnamese Zen teacher, poet, and scholar, has written widely on the art of mindful living.

Despite this rich and varied tradition, many people still have trouble understanding and accepting how daily life can be a spiritual practice. Some are influenced by the pernicious division of the world into separate realms of the sacred and the secular. They want their spirituality to take them out of the corrupt world and help them transcend it.

Others are convinced that all divine revelations ceased with the writing of the sacred texts of the world religions. The modern world holds no new insights for them. Still others have bought the idea that only ministers, priests, and other professional religious leaders have the ability to discern the presence of God in the everyday, or that only those with special training can be trusted to know the difference between "Spirit" (assumed to be good) and "spirits" (assumed to be dangerous). The key consequence of these assumptions and apprehensions has been a separation of spiritual belief and practice from daily life.

A better understanding, we believe, is to recognize that spirituality is a way of life, and as such, it cannot be separated from our everyday activities. John Shea, a contemporary Catholic theologian, puts it this way: "The spiritual life is, at root, a matter of seeing. It is all of life seen from a certain perspective. It is waking, sleeping, dreaming, eating, drinking, working, loving, relaxing, recreating, walking, sitting, standing, and breathing. . . . Spirit suffuses everything; and so the spiritual life is simply life, wherever and whatever, seen from the vantage point of spirit."

Frederic and Mary Ann Brussat, written for their website, spiritualityandpractice.com

8 Untitled

The great sea has set me in motion,
Set me adrift,
Moving me like a weed in a river.

The sky and the strong wind
Have moved the spirit inside me
Till I am carried away
Trembling with joy.

--UvavnuK

9 Today I Was Happy, So I Made This Poem

As the plump squirrel scampers
across the roof of the corncrib,
The moon suddenly stands up in the darkness,

And I see that it is impossible to die.
Each moment of time is a mountain.
An eagle rejoices in the oak trees of heaven.
Crying
This is what I wanted.

--James Wright

10 Praying

It doesn't have to be
the blue iris, it could be
weeds in a vacant lot, or a few
small stones; just pay attention, then patch

a few words together and don't try
to make them elaborate, this isn't
a contest but the doorway

into thanks, and a silence in which
another voice may speak.

—Mary Oliver, from her collection, *Thirst*

For Reflection and Discussion

A What is your understanding of revelation? Is it a word you use? Why or why not?

B Does revelation play a role in your life? If so, how would you explain?

C Would you describe your spirituality as an “everyday spirituality”? Why or why not?

D What would be in your personal “book of revelations”? Look back on your life and consider turning points, synchronicities, peak experiences, personal dreams, spiritual realizations, and whatever else feels right. Consider sharing your list or some portion of your list.

E How does your experience of All Souls contribute to your understanding and experience of revelation?

---Mary Beth Hatem, for covenant groups at All Souls Church, Unitarian