

Dharmette: Love in the Time of COVID-19

Transcribed and edited from a short talk by Gil Fronsdal on April 1, 2020

Good morning to those of you in the morning; good afternoon to those in the afternoon; and good evening to those in the evening. I have just a few words I'd like to say this morning. I think you all know that we either have front row seats for an historical event of great proportion, or we are on stage in the middle of this great event. The coronavirus is shaping and changing the world.

Yesterday I was given something from the Internet, which seems to be anonymous. It touched me, so I want to share it with you:

When you go out and see the empty streets, the empty stadiums, the empty train platforms, don't say to yourself, "It looks like the end of the world." What you're seeing is love in action. What you're seeing in that negative space is how much we do care for each other, for our grandparents, for our immunocompromised brothers and sisters, for people we will never meet.

People will lose their jobs over this. Some will lose their businesses. And some will lose their lives. All the more reason to take a moment, when you're out on your walk, or on your way to the store, or just watching the news, to look into the emptiness and marvel at all that love.

Let it fill you and sustain you. It is not the end of the world. It is the most remarkable act of global solidarity we may ever witness.

I would like to live in a world where we care for each other as neighbors, friends, family, and community. For those of us who are able to shelter ourselves, that is an act of love. It is a way of caring for this world and the people around us. For those who have essential work that has to be done, that also is an act of love. They're taking care of all the rest of us. Before this, we may not have appreciated how essential and necessary they are for us.

I'm touched by the people who work in stores. They're putting themselves in the middle of this – in places where all kinds of people are coming, including people who may not even know that they're contagious. Those workers are supporting us, feeding us, and making sure that we continue. I think of this as an act of care and generosity.

I think of the doctors, nurses, and administrators working in hospitals. I think of the people who clean and sterilize the hospitals. People at all levels are caring for others. Right now, it's a time for the whole world to care for each other.

With regard to this quote, I've walked through empty streets and seen all this emptiness – the absence of people and of all the hustle and bustle. It is indeed an expression of people caring.

Rather than this being the end of the world, maybe we can see it as the beginning of a new world, a fallow time. It's creating space and breathing room for something new to be born.

We can appreciate that what we're doing is caring, loving and supporting each other – and being supported, loved and cared for. If we go out there, and really feel this potential being formed, maybe we will create a new world when this is all over.

So if you go out and about and see empty spaces, think of all the care that represents.

I hope that you take good care of yourself and the world we share. Thank you.