Snow and Thunder

William Apel
Linfield College

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.linfield.edu/linfield_magazine

Recommended Citation
Available at: http://digitalcommons.linfield.edu/linfield_magazine/vol6/iss1/14
It was early February and the snow was falling outside our conference center in the hilltop town of Castelgondolfo just outside Rome. Then came the loud claps of thunder. Quite unusual. But no more so than our gathering. My son and I had joined about 400 religious workers from 59 countries and five continents to speak of the things which make for a more just and peaceful world. Roma 2009 was not another conference in which people get together, speak about peace and go home. The vast majority of those in attendance came out of environments of conflict, human suffering or a history of violence and warfare.

Some were emotionally depleted from the arduous task of surviving in native lands where government and military are oppressive and overpowering. Most were invigorated by the opportunity to join together with other peacemakers and justice-seekers for mutual support and sharing of stories. Peacemaking often can be a lonely and thankless task. My role at the meeting, along with a few other academics, was to talk about our teaching, writing and research as it relates to peace. In my case, it meant discussing my recent book, Signs of Peace: The Interfaith Letters of Thomas Merton, and exploring the intersection of peacemaking and interfaith understanding. Thomas Merton, the Trappist monk and celebrated author, had written much that was relevant to our gathering. The Interfaith Letters of Thomas Merton, and his work as a Benedictine monk and author, had written much that was relevant to our gathering. The Interfaith Letters of Thomas Merton, and his work as a Benedictine monk and author, encouraged one another to become “signs or sacraments of peace.”

Since the majority of those present were Baptists of “all shapes and sizes,” I also spoke of the work of Martin Luther King Jr., who himself was a Baptist minister. In addition to Baptists, there were representatives of the larger Christian community. Also present were several Muslim peacemakers. A group of Buddhist monks from Southeast Asia, with whom I had intended to meet, were denied visas and could not attend. The week-long conference involved worship in many languages, skills-training workshops, storytelling and meals together.

As the week unfolded, I wondered what my real contribution to the conference might be. Then, it hit me all at once—like the thunder and the thunder. I would leave behind the words of Dr. King for others. I knew the contribution to the conference might be. Then, it hit me all at once—like the thunder and the thunder. I would leave behind the words of Dr. King for others. I knew the contribution to the conference might be. Then, it hit me all at once—like the thunder and the thunder. I would leave behind the words of Dr. King for others. I knew the contribution to the conference might be. Then, it hit me all at once—like the thunder and the thunder. I would leave behind the words of Dr. King for others. I knew the contribution to the conference might be. Then, it hit me all at once—like the thunder and the thunder. I would leave behind the words of Dr. King for others. I knew the contribution to the conference might be. Then, it hit me all at once—like the thunder and the thunder. I would leave behind the words of Dr. King for others. I knew the contribution to the conference might be. Then, it hit me all at once—like the thunder and the thunder. I would leave behind the words of Dr. King for others. I knew the contribution to the conference might be. Then, it hit me all at once—like the thunder and the thunder. I would leave behind the words of Dr. King for others. I knew the contribution to the conference might be. Then, it hit me all at once—like the thunder and the thunder. I would leave behind the words of Dr. King for others. I knew the contribution to the conference might be. Then, it hit me all at once—like the thunder and the thunder. I would leave behind the words of Dr. King for others. I knew the contribution to the conference might be. Then, it hit me all at once—like the thunder and the thunder. I would leave behind the words of Dr. King for others. I knew the contribution to the conference might be. Then, it hit me all at once—like the thunder and the thunder. I would leave behind the words of Dr. King for others. I knew the contribution to the conference might be. Then, it hit me all at once—like the thunder and the thunder. I would leave behind the words of Dr. King for others. I knew the contribution to the conference might be. Then, it hit me all at once—like the thunder and the thunder. I would leave behind the words of Dr. King for others. I knew the contribution to the conference might be. Then, it hit me all at once—like the thunder and the thunder. I would leave behind the words of Dr. King for others. I knew the contribution to the conference might be. Then, it hit me all at once—like the thunder and the thunder. I would leave behind the words of Dr. King for others. I knew the contribution to the conference "Dedication trumps money"