

WONDER by Thomas Berry

I look forward to a renewal of a world of wonder. As children the truly great moments in our lives were those moments when we watched the evening sky or wandered across a meadow to wade in a nearby creek, the moments when we were outside playing games or learning the languages of the flowers and trees, the birds, the insects, the butterflies. In this way we learned something of the numinous world present throughout our natural surroundings, the world beyond human explanation, the world that we can express only in our mythic stories of spirit presences.

This was the world of play and delight and laughter, the world of poetry and storytelling, of music and dance and freedom. It was the world of heroic tales, of Cinderella, of her slipper and the Prince, of Robin Hood—his taking from the rich and giving to the poor. It was a sacred world, a world that could not be bought or sold, could not be made by humans. It was the world that brought us into being, nourished, educated us, guided and healed us, and in the end brought us safely through the turmoil and struggle of this earthly existence into an abiding and serene world beyond what we could find here.

The main difficulty in human affairs in these opening years of the twenty-first century seems to be the loss of our sense of wonder, our sense of the sacred, our sense of play and laughter, our inability to respond to the dawn or sunset, the loss of our vision of the stars. One of the most exquisite words in the human vocabulary is *wonderful*, the word we use when we speak of those we love or when we describe an exciting moment in our lives. So now my hope is that the wonder we experienced in childhood will return to quiet our restless souls in this new age of anxiety that has descended upon us.

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