

## It's Still a Wonderful World

From our friend Verna Rizvi: Found this on Facebook this morning from Steve Johnson. Steve is a longtime member of The Church of the Nativity in Huntsville, AL, (my old parish) and also a newscaster on the local CBS affiliate.

Talking to a friend yesterday, and he was in a dark place. Hard to be very comforting, since I've been in the "same" place for weeks.

Then I thought of an earlier conversation yesterday about weddings. I described the "ritzy-est" wedding I ever attended. Incredible as the reception was, it was about 3-minutes of the actual ceremony (pre-ceremony?) that I can't forget...even after decades. One of the groomsmen (..turned out to be the Concert Master for the Munich Philharmonic) played "Ave Maria" on the violin. It was one of the most beautiful performances I've ever heard. It was all I could do not to stand and applaud.

It strikes me that all of us have many moments of beauty in our lives. All of us.

It's what we need to grab onto when times are tough.

And when I say tough, I'm talking about the divisiveness that has ripped this country's flag right down the middle. I'm talking about dealing with the virus, and maybe more so...the people who refuse to deal with it.

I'm talking about friends not talking to friends for any number of reasons that seem so righteous, but keep us from the very people who share our need.

So, how to get past all this? How to deal with what's going on without running to the local gun emporium and stocking up?

How to get to a better place...a place where hope rules, and despair is kept at bay?

I wish I was Solomon, and could lay some wisdom on you, but I'm just me...a poor blighter trying to deal...just like you.

Here though is my idea...

Think of all the beauty around you....and summon those images.

Think of happy children (..and even people you can't stand want their kids to be happy...)

Think of a song you've heard that stopped you, and made you feel deeply. Hear it.

Think of your loved ones...your friends, and how much you need them.

Talk to your political enemies (..didn't it used to be opponents?), and talk about all the things you share...the things that connect you.

In fact....remember your momma's advice..."don't talk about politics or religion."

Don't tell ethnic, or racist jokes.

Don't laugh at ethnic, or racist jokes.

If someone talks about using violence to solve "anything" don't stay silent. Persuade them that's absolutely the wrong way.

Respect people...from the most humble to the exalted.

Smile at the next person you see, and say Hi!

Here's where I want to write something incredibly trite like "be part of the solution, not the problem" but that's too much even for me.

So I'm just going to end with a verse from Louis Armstrong's performance of "What a wonderful world." (..that performance...because I can hear it...)

"I hear babies cry  
I watch them grow  
They'll learn much more  
Than I'll never know  
And I think to myself  
What a wonderful world"