

Monday with Mikey: November 28, 2016

At nearly every major Rotary Gathering, we sing a very special song:

Let There Be Peace on Earth by Sy Miller and Jill Jackson.

Let There Be Peace on Earth and let it begin with me.

Let There Be Peace on Earth, the peace that was meant to be!

With God as our Father, brothers all are we.

Let me walk with my brother in perfect harmony.

(As a side note, more gender-neutral lyrics have been published. Here they are:

"With God our Creator, family all are we.

Let us walk with each other in perfect harmony.")

Let peace begin with me. Let this be the moment now.

With every breath I take, let this be my solemn vow;

To take each moment and live each moment in peace eternally!

Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me!

The story behind this song is quite remarkable. The late Jill Jackson (1913-1971) explained:

"When I attempted suicide [in 1944] and I didn't succeed," she said, "I knew for the first time unconditional love—which God is. You are totally loved, totally accepted, just the way you are. In that moment I was not allowed to die, and something happened to me, which is very difficult to explain. I had an eternal moment of truth, in which I knew I was loved, and I knew I was here for a purpose."

This realization was followed by years of exploring her spiritual nature and her relationship with God. Jackson discovered her love for writing, and began writing songs with Sy Miller after they married in 1949.

In 1955, she wrote the lyrics for "Let There Be Peace on Earth" while her husband wrote the melody. The song was introduced at a California retreat to a group of young people who were from a wide variety of religious, ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds. The young people had come together for a weeklong experience devoted to developing friendship and understanding through education, discussion and working together. The song's focus on peace and God made it easy to cross many boundaries.

Whatever your faith or concept of the universe is, I hope we all agree that each one of us is the "me" in this song – and it's up to us to be BRAVE enough to let peace begin within EACH of us. Without inner peace, there is no family peace. Without family peace, there is no community peace. Without community peace, there is no national peace. And, my dear Rotarian Friends, without national peace, there is no world peace.

Wouldn't it be splendid, during this time when millions of people celebrate some of their most sacred seasons, if "PEACE broke out" all over the world?

Until next Monday, keep **"Doing Good, Having Fun!"**

Your Friend in Rotary Service,

Mikey

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