

Story 24. Celebrate. Praise

Enthroned, Appreciate, Commemorate

I like special days. They lift us out of robotizing routines to show what we've missed. Once we weren't here. Now we're centerstage, in the presence of the higher, the nobler, the greater. What we didn't create, we receive, and give thanks. How? We join in, We sing, dance, shout, parade, salute, proclaim, bow and share, including as we have been included, giving as we've received. Beneficiaries of grace, we respond to conserve the good, add ourselves, relinquishing the beautiful and best to those who come after us. They're like us, only more so, like those here when we came. We find ourselves inside, outside, around and about ourselves. I am in the king and the king is in me. I am in the Creator and the Creator is in me. I am in the cosmic landscape, and the cosmic landscape is in me. I am in the shadow, and the shadow is in me. I am in you and you are in me. I am in all we've done, and all we've done is in you and me. So much more than we see, hear, taste, feel, intuit or imagine requires that we break the bonds of the ordinary.

We designate special places, provide periodic times, institute symbolic practices whereby we declare and savor what we've come to know is so.

Celebration consists in gratitude and pride in something, in some-one-even oneself. Here the communal element is essential, for who may be sufficiently thankful or proud in isolation? We are at our best acknowledging how good it is to celebrate with and for others. A celebrant is a priest who officiates at the eucharist, commemorating the faith of his flock that all are beneficiaries of the divine sacrifice. We may not choose to affirm the priest's particular version of faith, but we value faith itself and find in it a symbolic realization of our hope. Celebration looks back on what we've received, and forward from the here and now to a future we expect shall be open to include us even when we are no longer there to join in, through how we're remembered. We've been acknowledging this through various rituals and festivities, which are more alike than different. Far from limiting ourselves to the staid and solemn, we participate in exuberant football games, songfests, wakes and revivals. Our holy days and our holidays takes us with one another beyond ourselves. And not only at announced occasions, but out of the midst of recurring routines of home life we affirm the goodness of being alive.

Have I not been describing the psychodrama as we've come to know it? In the theater we celebrate the resilience of the human spirit, and the spiritual vitality of expanding spontaneity and creativity. In the 'Words of the Father' Jacob Moreno demonstrated the soul of the **celebrator**. When a psychodrama session is at its zenith everyone there is a celebrator.

More generally, a celebrator is one who participates in a festivity, celebration or ritual of any kind, be it religious, patriotic, political, a wedding, an anniversary, or simply a joyous social occasion associated with a holiday or Holy Day. Though usually communal, it may also refer to private thankfulness and gratitude, which may or may not be expressed through solitary prayer, poetry, music or ritual.

Celebrated= themes which center on an honored guest, in some sense present, even when the celebrated one is not actually there. We find echoes of these themes everywhere, from fan clubs to ancestor worship. A person honored, a **celebrity** (if the word hasn't become so debased we're not comfortable using it anymore) suggests the **achiever**, oft both **rescuer** and healer, but here we emphasize recognition, especially recognition for character and excellence.

In the detailed exposition reported elsewhere of the Gus, Sue and Arnold example there was strong cultural appreciation. They stood in awe at the Japanese Garden. As for special days, they celebrated Cinco de Mayo together, as well as the Gus-Sue engagement party. Had we supplied the full text it would have served as our transition example to lead us into Story 24, Love.

Media: It's a Wonderful Life, Rally Round the Flag, M.A.S.H. Miracle on 34th Street, The Right Stuff, Yentl, Meet Me in St. Louis, Father of the Bride, George M, Christmas in Connecticut, Field of Dreams, Tribute, Fiddler on the Roof, White Christmas, Touched by An Angel, Seven Brides for Seven Brothers, The Lion King