

MY FOREST CATHEDRAL

Carena del Uno, SRC



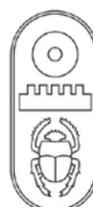
The path leading into the forest.

How can one convey Love, Reverence, and Oneness in words that must be translated by mind on their journey to heart? Could this haloed trinity be felt by those meeting their lifelong companion for the first time, or by those truly devoted to the fullness of their faith when taking communion, or by the loving mother who, having just given birth, holds her baby in her arms for the first time? Love – Reverence – Oneness. For me, it is softly walking, alone, into my forest cathedral and becoming one therein.

How did I come to this beautiful place of quietude, rapture, and oneness? I don't really know. What I do know is that I gave myself to this forest, wholly and completely – without seeing trees and bushes and rocks and sky in their separateness, but in their wholeness -- united – Mother Nature dressed in her finest gown – and thus did we share a wHoly Communion.



The gateway.



The hour was approaching 5 in a springtime evening. The sun had begun to nestle itself in the mountains to the west and thus was gently back-lighting the trees and tall grasses that lay before me. The green grasses and sparkling pine needles were delicately glowing as I walked up the narrow and almost forgotten path. They were so beautiful that I had to pause several times to admire them. At the end of that path, before stepping into more grasses, beautiful young sprouting trees, and the forest beyond, stood two tall, magnificent pine trees, one on each side of the trail. They were like living gate keepers, steadfast and protecting of the forest cathedral beyond.

I couldn't help but stand, almost transfixed to admire that which was before me – and, laying one hand on the large tree trunk to my right and the other on the tree trunk to my left, both at heart level, I gave thanks. Moments later, an overwhelming gratitude engulfed me. I closed my eyes to envision an encompassing light within my consciousness that was made full by my expanding heart – not a light as we know it, that you can see with your eyes, but a fuller, colorless golden light. Was it a sharing of the heart of the two trees, the forest beyond, or of the essence of all forests with my heart? Perhaps, a communion with a part of the Mother of this valley of trees? I can't tell you. My intellect can't reach that deeply inside. In any case, I experienced it.



Shortly after returning home, in the fullness of my forest memory, the following poem floated through my mind. I entitled it “Communion.”

Lost within the forest’s worshipping throng,
I gave my Self the freedom for which it longed,

And with arms outstretched between two noble trees
In Love’s communion, together we breathed –

A rapture of Oneness beyond heart, mind, and soul
A sunburst of the Power through which Destiny unfolds.

And in that Givingness behind all giving
We shared the Glory that lives in all living.

So that you would know truly that all creation, all creatures, flora and fauna, are connected within Love and Being, I will now share with you something personal. One month prior to my communion in the forest cathedral, I fell over a log and broke one or more ribs on my right side. Not a day or night went by that I wasn’t aware of their pain – but after my deep communion in my Forest Cathedral, the pain was gone! I thought it was a temporary high, but to this day, my ribs carry no pain -- no pain when I’m rolling over on them in bed; no pain when I take a deep breath; and no pain when I rub or press on the area of the former break.

Dear Friends, we are living in the presence of Miracles every day, be they within a secluded forest, in a quiet church, or in the arms of a child. Miracles? Or simply the wonders of natural laws at work when we can go into the places of our hearts that contain them and be one with them in Love and Reverence. Try, therefore, to put your minds at ease. Sublimate your pressures and quiet your thoughts by closing your eyes and gently intoning the sound “Aum” or “Om”, silently or aloud. Feel your Integrity with Being. Open your arms outward on each side of your body with your hands open yet relaxed; then feel your heart open as you appreciate the blessedness that surrounds you.

May you step through the Portal to your Cathedral.



A deer, quietly lounging in my backyard, perhaps in his Sanctuary.

