

Dear Friends:

The walk I made across the Country from January 1, 1999 to February 29, 2000. was the only way i could think of to show that at least this old lady cared about what was happening to our government. I had lived too long, through too many wars, to feel any other way about the selling of our democracy to the highest special interest bidder. I took a walk to rediscover the good things about America, and to show I cared.

My life has changed because I made this little leap of faith into the hearts of Americans.

Much is expected of us. We have not been sent into this theater of the soul to watch passively. We are not the audience but the players in this drama, writing our parts as we go, so that we might learn something--both as individual souls, and together as the fragile web of consciousness that sparkles over God's creation. It is all evolving, we hope, toward some unity with the Divine.

This life is not a test or a drill or an accidental light opera. Much is expected of us. Some days it is quite too much indeed. Some days everything we love is suddenly gone, or has turned against us. We look at our life and our meager accomplishments and we sense that the game is lost; the play has run, we have no more to give, we have no interest in fighting on.

Much is indeed expected of us. But we shall always be given enough encouragement to struggle through, if we but listen to the whisper to come to us, to remind us who we are and what work we have come here to do.

It is no secret among my friends that when my husband, Jim, and then my good friend, Elizabeth died, I was quite depressed. God

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did not forget about me. He kept my son, Jim, and my daughter-in-law, Libby, at my side to give me encouragement and sustenance.

And there was a whisper in my ear--you may have heard me tell the story: Jim was driving me down to visit my sister in Florida. Along the road, as we sped by, was an old traveling man out in the middle of nowhere, just standing there. Soon, he was far behind us.

"Well, Doris", he nevertheless whispered, "what are you doing here?"

"Well, Sir, I have become an old woman. My husband and my dear friend are dead, but my son--as you can see--and my daughter are alive. I used to travel with my husband as we journeyed far to help where we thought we could be useful. We drove to Alaska to stop atomic testing, you know." The old man knew.

And in saying it all, I remembered ~~who~~ I was, and I saw that there was still a great deal of work for me to do. And who cares if it kills you if doing it is your business on this earth?

And so the questions and queasiness that I had been struggling with, looking for a way to express my concern for our democracy - so polluted as it is by big, special interest money came suddenly into focus. I stepped out of the cave of my depression and began to plan my work - my job.

like the old man
I decided to go on the road to talk to people about our democracy, and what we might do to help it survive. Every door opened to me. My every thirst was quenched, every hunger satisfied. Whenever I needed a special kind of person for the work at hand, they appeared as if by magic. When it rained too

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hard, there was some^a earthly angel with a great, plastic tarp to walk with me. When the snow was too deep for walking in Cumberland, Maryland, a beautiful ski path, over 100 miles long, presented itself. You must never doubt that you will be given what you need for this show to go on, once you accept the idea of who you are and what you must do.

Much is expected of us, but everything necessary is given us, if we but have faith in the Divine importance of our lives.

We have hard work to do in this life, and it can get very discouraging. It is hard work, loving each other, helping each other, protecting the people and the ideas we care about, preserving nature, helping the millions of people who need our help, taking care of our own needs. It is hard work. But God will give us what we need to carry on. You have but to listen to his quiet voice to find your way.

And so it was that day in 1997 that I was first awakened. I read an article in the Boston Globe written from the office of Common Cause, the watchdog organization established after Watergate. The article described a scandalous event that had occurred. A bill being sent for signing by the then president Clinton had an amendment added to it, in the middle of the night by two ~~senators~~^{House members}, giving a subsidy of 50 billion dollars to a tobacco company.

Common Cause answered my telephone call, saying, there was corruption in the temple of our Democracy, and that I should study campaign finance reform if I wanted to know answers.

I thought, at the age of 89, living in a town of 1400, paying my^a taxes and voting, being a member of the local Planning Board, I ^{church} was a good citizen. I found one needed to do more than that...I came to realize that a poor man had to sell his access, that

belonged to his constituents to the highest bidder, in order to get enough money to run for an office. Or he had to be a multi-millionaire. *INSERT*

14 great grandchildren

With a small group of retired women to which i belong we sent out over 400 petitions covering all 50 states to friends and realtives asking they make listings of their friends and realtives, all to be sent to their individul Senators: We, the people beseech our government to enact with all due haste a bill for campaign finance reform. Letters back from our senators, were almost identical, saying:

Dear little old ladies do not fret yourselves, we are taking care of this. A month later the McCain /Feingold bill, for campaign finance reform was fillibustered in the Senate, after passing in the house.

In 1998 I trained for the trek: carrying a 29 pound pack, I walked ten miles a day, 6 days a week, under the aegis of my son Jim. At the same time I planned the trek, getting a route from AAA, making a list of the towns and cities I would be passing through, co-lating the churches in those towns with the use of directories, sending letters througout my trek asking for help.

The Common Cause organization agreed to send a message to all their members, in the states ^{church} to which I would be traveling announcing I would be traveling as a Pilgrim, walking until given shelter, fasting until given food. I would be following the example set by Peace Pilgrim that doughty walker of the 50's.

When I reached Dallas, Texas, Senator McCain sent word that he and Senator Feingold would be arguing with Senator Mitch McCullough of Kentucky trying to pass their bill in the Senate, and would I please come and sit in the gallery. I did, and I and my aide were the only two people staying for the debate. This was in 1999. In the year 2000, one year later, the bill was once

McConnell



again up for debate. This time the gallery was crammed to the door, hardly a seat available. This time it passed in the Senate, for the first time since Watergate we had a bill that passed, for cutting out the soft, illegal money given to candidates. There was great celebration. Unfortunately, the House, which had always voted on the sister bill of the McCain/Feingold, known as the Shays/Mehan and passed it, was, this time unsuccessful, and the bill remains in committee waiting for ten more signatures on a Discharge Petition to bring it on to the floor for debate. The events of the October 11th makes it unlikely to pass this year.

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So we wait for that small voice to whisper encouragement as we work under the aegis of The Alliance for Democracy, furthering work in the States, where there has been some success.

I AM
We are not discouraged, only knowing the bill will pass one day, if not this year, the next. When it does I shall listen to that whisper and say, thank You, dear One.