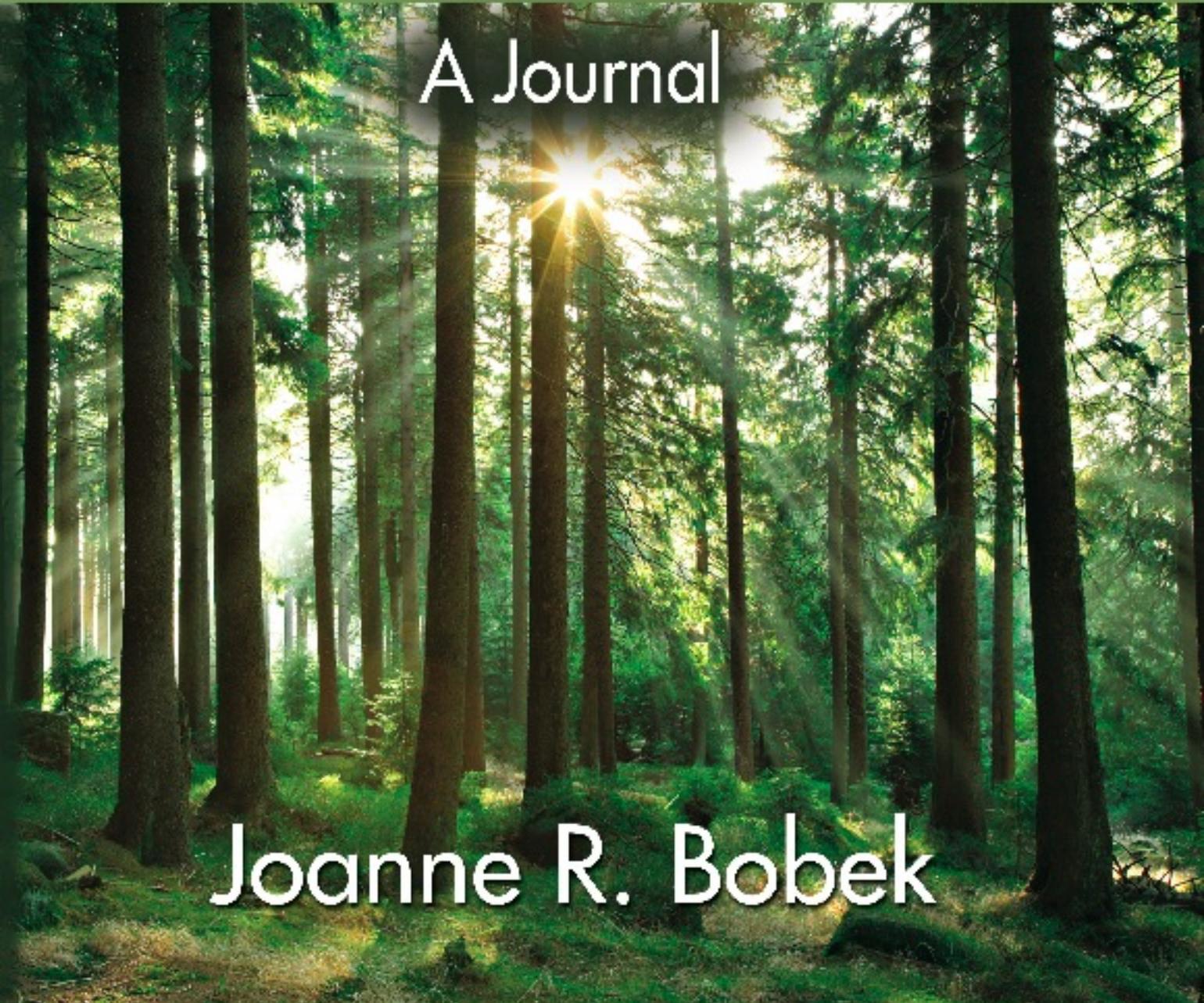
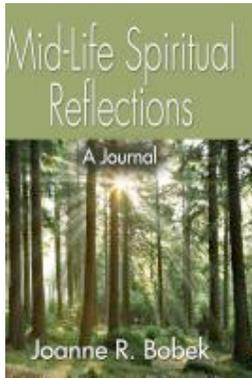


# Mid-Life Spiritual Reflections

A Journal



Joanne R. Bobek



*Mid-Life Spiritual Reflections is a journal for readers pursuing spirituality, particularly in the Year of Faith. Selected writings from the author's spiritual journals cover two decades from the mid-life part of life's journey and include reflections for each quarter and month of the year. While the author's background is in Catholic Christianity, persons from diverse spirituality backgrounds could benefit from use of the journal format.*

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First Edition

## **First Quarter of a Year of Faith—Spirituality**

### **Nature**

10/15/94

The fall foliage is really beautiful this year. Along the roadside the trees side-by-side, each one in a different color, looking beautiful.

One has to say isn't it marvelous how Someone could think of this. The very idea of trees in this part of the world changing into such beautiful blends of color. Almost as if that which reflected its unity in the color green, now declares its uniqueness by showing off its own fall wardrobe, right before the grayness of winter.

Those who, at a very young age, perceived this all as the work of God, knew even then that it made their heart move with the love of God.

12/20/04

During the winter when the deciduous trees are bare, the two evergreens across from the bus stop are more apparent. They stand there, the smaller one sheltered by the larger one. A symbol of God's caring for me, perhaps more obvious in the sparse and cold winter times of life.

One day I noticed that both the large tree and the small tree had snow-covered branches. This represented God's entering into all my experiences. The evergreen as a symbol of eternal life. God's Spirit and my spirit together with the aspect of eternity.

God's Spirit shelters and protects our sojourn in this human form

Whereas in the summer, when all the trees and leaves are green, the evergreens sort of blend in. When times are smooth, one might forget it is God's provident care always present. God is with us in good times and in bad.

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1/16/05

How blank it is to stare at the winter landscape. Its cold stillness reflects the absence of anticipated fulfillment of desires. It is the still point that waits only upon God. Bare trees next to evergreen trees.

The ephemeral and the eternal, both rooted in the same soil, both with us as long as our eyes can see, and even beyond that.

Human and divine, God's plan, a mystery to contemplate, but not fully comprehend.

Others have passed through this and gone beyond, and so shall we all in God's good time.

3/5/05

As I gathered oak leaves off of the flower bed today, I saw the new shoots that were making their way upward. New life out of the dead of winter; death into life.

The trees around the pond were bare, with their miracle of life not yet visible. The day was cloudy and damp. Some bright yellow crocuses were blooming.

8/29/08

The evolution of all types and degrees of intelligence. Combinations of the same basic elements in diverse forms evolving into that which becomes conscious of itself.

An evolving creation where we are now conscious enough to see the potentials and risks of having been endowed with free will, and what it means regarding co-creating from a viewpoint of the interdependence of all that exists.

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11/1/08

Looking at the trees and the sky, I thought of God the Creator of it all, and the Creator of myself. God sustains my breath. God's energy in this sustaining is one with that which is sustained. It seemed as though it was one and the same, Energy, flowing in God, flowing in me, flowing in everything. Thus, it has been said that in God "we live and move and have our being." (Acts 17:28) Consider scientific axioms, like: energy can neither be created nor destroyed. This dovetails with the theology that God always was and always will be.

10/18/09

Mother Nature, in whom we marvel at the wonders of amazing and diverse life forms, is also a relentless recycler, taking back to herself whatever she can—an abandoned cabin in the woods, deer hit while crossing a highway, flowering plants at the end of the season, and our own spent bodies.

## **Life**

My life is the living out of a myth, a story, a classic portrayal of characters and plots and outcomes. I see the themes in my life in other places, like Scripture, or other people's stories. I hear a person's story and see they are living out their myth, their plot, their process. They describe what they are in. I observe that they are immersed in it. Maybe we move along in life by sequential experiences of immersion and coming up for air.

At one moment we are so overwhelmed by the forces about us we can only describe what is happening to us or about us or in us. At another moment we are sitting back reflecting on the memory of our self as having been caught up in something. And then, after a time of quiet, another upheaval occurs. We may acquire more insight from an upheaval, or it might be such as to take away our faculties, and so we become an experience for another person's reflection. In that way no energy is really lost in the universe.

Each one has myriad dimensions, different possibilities, and no one of them will completely fulfill us in this life. While our image is of God, we can only

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approximate it. Though if we live our own unique life, as Jesus lived his, we will in fact come into the fullness of God and be one with God.

As a spiritual being living for a time in an earthly mode, the aim for existence is to manifest love, unconditionally, in the moment, whatever it might be. While we are bound in this mode, we face an uphill struggle to manifest that love in face of darkness and opposition. Where we are weak, Jesus reassures us that his life has taken up the slack for us; the way he lived opened up the path for us. To follow him may be to experience the worst, and yet out of that comes the most glorious. We can only but take each day as it comes, planning or not planning, laughing or crying, knowing we are en route. We can only do what we can do; we are aware of our finiteness. But whatever we do, we make our contribution to the whole.

10/14/94

Life can be looked at with a mystical eye, that at the same time we are living in the concrete physical universe there is, as if behind a veil, a simultaneous other world, or dimension of reality, in which all those who have lived before abide.

They abide with God, as spirits, and thus are present in the invisible presence of God. A God known through the Spirit activity that comes to our awareness. Thus, we are all together all the time as the communion of saints even though we have not yet joined our predecessors on the other side of the veil. We can call upon them as friends, just as we call upon God who is ever near to us. A power who loves us and wants to help us, to grow along the spiral path of what it takes to evolve into fuller consciousness. More consciously choosing to be an embodiment of the virtues, and become more and more the image/light of God we are intended to be.

People live as embodied spirits. Other living things have an essence or life principle. The physical body must be intact enough to function, in order for the life principle to abide in it, and the life principle must stay in that body in order for it to live/function/not die.

People have out of body experiences where their essence leaves their body which bystanders then observe to be dead. Or a person's heart stops functioning and the body dies, and the life principle/essence/soul no longer

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resides there. It resides then in a spiritual world, the unseen yet eternal dimension. Humans' life principle is a conscious entity, and when a person lies there with an impairment of their mental capacity, we say their mind is not functioning. It is really their brain which is not functioning, and so their mind cannot communicate through this obstruction. Because of the mind being a spiritual essence, it has been said who knows whether the "soul" turns to God at the last moment. After all, that part of the person is in the spiritual realm where it can communicate with the Spirit of God.

At the same time we say how all of matter is permeated by the love of God holding it all in its way of being. It is interesting to try to get an image of the way body-mind-spirit interact, each somehow distinct and yet each working together as one.

5/21/95

The living spirit incarnated becomes a soul, a person, an everlasting being temporarily limited by the physical world, time and space. A person lives by the indwelling Spirit, the breath of life. For the person who is in the Spirit, the spiritual life evolves and expresses itself in the concrete reality of attitude and action.

7/9/95

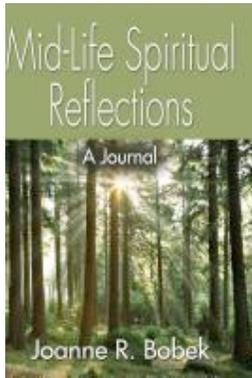
Recall the scripture about the Pharisee praying thank God I'm not like all the rest, and the Publican praying oh God, be merciful to me a sinner. In a way that exemplifies the first and second halves of life, or the before and after of conversion, or the illusion and the reality.

Namely, the ego by comparison seeks its self-worth, the self sees the commonality of all human beings and that they are creatures of God.

The Pharisee reflects the idea that someone deserves to be blessed more than another, as if God had sorted people by value. The Publican reflects our common humanity and dependence on everything as gift, from a God who shows mercy to us who are weak. The illusion is that anything we get we

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deserve, the reality is that what we have is no measure of our intrinsic value in God's view.



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