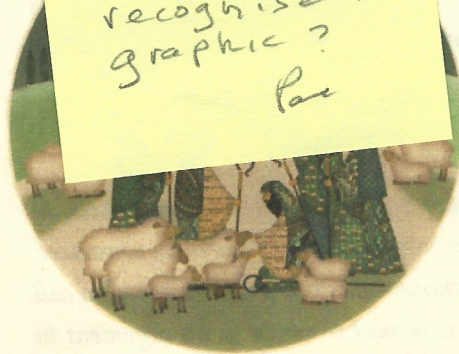


Marilyn:

Do you  
recognise the  
graphic?

Pat



And there were in the same country  
shepherds abiding in the field, keeping  
watch over their flock by night

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Christmas 2021

Dear Friends:

And so we reach the end of another year – and what a year it's been, masked, isolated, and immobile, while trying to survive the twin assaults of COVID and the madness of U.S. politics. I am happy to report that the Winnipeg Earls have managed the first of these goals; the second is the larger challenge. On the "what's new" front, Paul has FINALLY retired, and wondering what to do with the rest of his life. He also passed the ominous milestone of 80 this year, and has begun to feel the ravages of old age. Pat continues to advance with her yoga, and we are still doing our daily two mile walk (currently between 31 and 32 minutes normally). Elder daughter Andrea is still curator to a couple of museums, while son-in-law Ernie continues to create museum exhibits. Kirsten's consulting business is thriving, and husband Kevin continues teaching. The grandchildren – Ian, 16, Finlay and Holly both 14 – are now navigating the treacherous teen years.

Over what is getting to be a long life (Paul writes now) I have spent many hours reflecting on religious issues, and I have been much influenced by the ideas of the second father of modern psychology, Carl Jung. To begin with, unlike Freud – and indeed, in contrast to the secular and scientific views which dominate today's world – Jung was very sympathetic to religious belief and practice. As he put it: "No matter what the world thinks about religious experience, the one who has it possesses the great treasure of a thing that has provided him with a source of life, meaning and beauty and has given a new splendor to the world and to mankind. He has pistis [faith] and peace. Where is the criterium by which you could say that such a life is not legitimate, that such pistis mere illusion?"

In a lengthy article on the Catholic Mass, he praised it as a "still living mystery" that "seizes" a person, and "this seizure, or rather the sensed or presumed existence of a power outside consciousness which seizes him, is the miracle par excellence." I felt some intimation of this mystery in the mid 1960s when, for the first time, I took what was then called "Communion" – the Protestant equivalent of the Mass – at an Anglican church service. That I did so is somewhat more strange than it may seem to those of you who know that my family background was solidly Anglican. Despite that fact, I had had very little to do with the Anglican Church to that point in my life, and such contact as I had had, was not too pleasant. When I was about 10 years old, (after a battle with my mother who finally agreed "it is better than nothing") I went to a local United Church Sunday School because that is where many of my childhood friends went. Then, at age 12 I went to a United Church boys' camp in the summer. The upshot was that, from late childhood to late teens, my religious experience was gained through the United Church. This background aside, in the 1960s, I would not normally have been permitted to participate in an Anglican Communion because I had not undergone what the Church called Confirmation. However,