

"When I have a terrible need of shall I say the word religion,
then I go out and paint the stars."

Vincent Van Gogh

December 16, 2018

Dear Family and Friends,

Stars are widely used as symbols of something beautiful, good and positive. In the past I've often wished for a less busy, less hectic holiday season; a time to pause and reflect on the meaning of Christmas. Covid-19 has caused not only me, but the world, to slow down. While the virus has created havoc in many lives, the slower pace is one positive outcome.

In this very unusual year, I've stayed at home most of the time, remembering to social distance when I go out, always wearing a mask. For the first time in twenty years I have not traveled out of the the United States - or anywhere else for that matter. While I miss traveling, I try to remember this quote by Walt Whitman: *Happiness is not in another place, but in this place....not for another hour, but this hour.*



I have learned to use Zoom, something I was totally unaware of prior to 2020. Zoom meetings, phone calls, email has been a welcome way to stay in touch with friends. Baking cookies, reading and mentally planning future travels to faraway places fill my days. I do go outside several times a week to walk in the neighborhood.

One of my treasured possessions is a small wooden box given to me by a friend when I moved from California to Texas. Etched onto the lid of the box are the words, "*Good friends are like stars. You don't always see them, but you know they are always there.*" These words remind me of our relationships and the good times we have shared over the years. One of my favorite parts of the holiday season is hearing from each of you.

Best wishes for health, peace and happiness now and in the coming year.

Fondly,

Bennetta