

Rotary Reflection Garden dedication - June 11, 2013

WHAT IF?

War is inescapable, historians deduce,
issue of man's essence, his proclivities on earth,
no more erasable than familial spats or territorial tiffs.

But my heart wonders if some hidden stream meanders
on which the egregious use of bloody combat to mend conflicts
might be rendered obsolete by driven determination:

What if jurists and heads of state commit
to struggle first for peaceful answers to societal quarrels,
to join, not divide, with their platforms, laws, policies?

What if ministers, rabbis and imams take holy vow
never to bless organized killing as divine road
to settling political and ecclesiastical impasses?

What if trustees of commerce and industry
devalue and spurn dependence and profiting
from the arsenals and accoutrements of strife?

What if voters employ the booth to choose statesmen
owning records of impassioned waging of peace
and prizing dialogue, negotiation, understanding?

What if the wealthy bequeath their mounded treasures
for research, programs, bold initiatives
which implant global structures that channel accord?

What if parents endow their offspring
with values of respect, tolerance, love,
and life tools for resolving mankind's disputes?

What if teachers, writers, film crafters
honor the stories of peacemaker heroes/heroines
as well as the exploits of battle champions?

What if in World War One the Brit and German troops
who quit fighting and sang carols on Christmas Day
had kept on singing and forgotten to resume shooting?

What if all of us yearning seven billion
shun war's scarred, ugly, evil face
and embrace the spirit of the Prince of Peace?

And *what if* a town suddenly owns its own Peace Pole
around which citizens can circle to heal nagging rifts,
where folk of any age or tongue can reflect harmony and goodwill?

By PDG Robert L. Lynn on the dedication on June 11, 2013 of the Rotary Reflection Garden in North Park in Alpharetta, Georgia by the Rotary Club of North Fulton. Steve Siders, Project Chair, and Ben Hunter, Club President.