

On this day when we celebrate labor may we also remember the labors of love that make our individual worlds rich.

Labors of Love

September 5, 2016 by [Liz Fisher](#)

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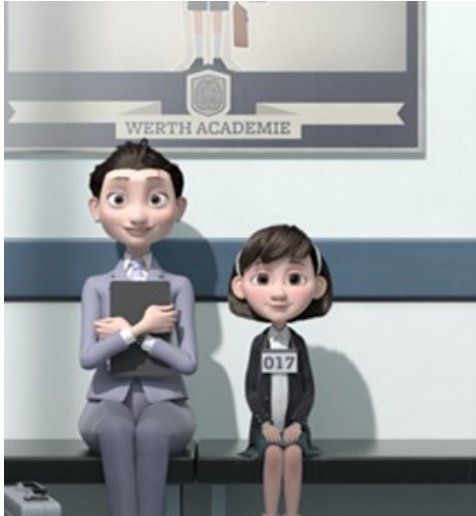
A vital practice of our spiritual community is honoring the work that we each do to make our shared experience whole. The worth and dignity of each person is central to our principles. Today is a federal holiday, established in 1894, which carries multiple meanings. On Labor Day, we as a country officially praise the “social and economic achievements” of American workers. Informally, we mark the end of summer and the coming of fall activities. Schools are resuming, harvest activities accelerating. Here’s my suggestion. Watch this film and read this book.

Recently, Patheos offered contributors the opportunity to review a Netflix original film *The Little Prince*, a creative reworking of the famous story written by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. This tale, published in 1943, is still popular worldwide, reminding us never to forget our feelings of connection to what we cherish. You can get a month free trial on Netflix (an internet service) and see the movie anytime.



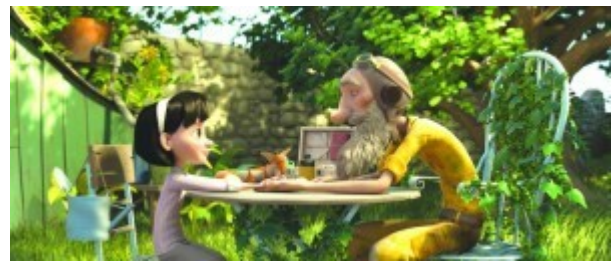
This animated film integrates the original illustrations with modern characters, showing respect for the cherished version while adding interpretation that draws up-to-date parallels. I especially appreciate the presence of female characters since the original is a male-only affair.

I have been a fan of this spiritual saga, full of metaphorical wisdom and memorable truths, since I was a child and have read it several times as an adult. The adaptation is both true to the story and adds its own unique interpretations which take into account the modern context. The book is a quick read and widely available in libraries. The two versions complement each other.



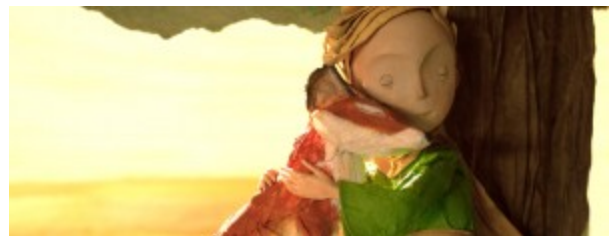
Revealed here are a few bits of insight from this classic, which will only introduce, not spoil, their impact. The movie opens with a little girl applying to attend an elite academy so she will be prepared for success in adulthood. When she blows the entrance exam, her mother finds another way for the little girl to get into the academy. She schedules every minute of her daughter's life, insisting she constantly study. She doesn't feel that the little girl has time for friends.

They moved to a new neighborhood to gain access to the academy. The little girl has curiosity and decides to explore what is going on in the house next door, which is a holdout from days gone by. She finds the rickety place is occupied by an old man, the Aviator. He tells her about a Little Prince he met a long time ago when he was marooned in the desert. This curious being the Aviator met said he came from another planet. As she listens, this old man becomes her friend.



She learns the Little Prince has a special relationship to a single rose on his planet. For a number of reasons disclosed in the tale, he leaves his rose and travels to Earth.

While on the Earth, the Prince also meets a fox and others who teach him. The Little Prince tells about his relationship to the fox. He says: "When I first knew him he was only a fox like 100,000 other foxes. But I made him my friend, and now he is unique in all the world." A hint of an important insight you will learn: the fox is tamed by the Little Prince which has varied consequences. The fox tells the Little Prince this secret when the Prince is leaving Earth to go back to his own



planet. “It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye. It is the time you have devoted to your rose that makes your rose so important.”



After the old Aviator is whisked from his home to the hospital, the little girl takes it upon herself to find the Little Prince and help him get back to his rose. The final third of the movie is rich with fantastic adventures of the little girl and the fox, who

is her pal now. They meet up with a present day Little Prince and help him recover from amnesia. The film is filled with characters that the Little Prince met along the way in the original story who are now reincarnated in contemporary analogous roles. There are comments about the nature of true labor and what is really essential. In both renderings, the written and this brilliant film version, one of the warnings is to never forget about connections you share with those beings you love, even after they leave their bodies.

The Little Prince eventually must return to his own planet. He tells the Aviator that he will appear to be dying. However, he is just returning to his own planet to be reunited with his rose and protect her once more. The Aviator is sad because he will miss the Little Prince’s laughter. To the Aviator’s feelings of sadness, the Little Prince says:



“Where I live everything is so small that I cannot show you where my star is to be found. It is better like that. My star will be just one of the stars, for you. And so you will love to watch all the stars in heaven. They will all be your friends.

“And when your sorrow is comforted (time soothes all sorrows) you will be content that you have known me. You will always be my friend. You will want to laugh with me. It would be as if, in place of the stars, I have given you a great number of little bells that knew how to laugh.”



So, on this day when we celebrate labor may we also remember the labors of love that make our individual worlds rich. When we look up at the stars (or at some creative facsimile because light pollution obscures the actual stars) may we appreciate the laughter of the Little Prince which, if you listen carefully, permeates everything.