

Pierre's Laughter *from John Lynch*

At the COAI Convention 2000 Sunday Hospital Clown Day "Gateway to the Heart," John Lynch read a paragraph from Tolstoy's War and Peace which he called "Pierre's laughter" He read this after a hilarious performance and a discussion "Running away from the Circus." Many of you wrote and asked for it The quote from Tolstoy follows John explanation.

"One of the main characters in War And Peace, Pierre, spends a great deal of time and effort trying to find value and meaning in his life. After many missteps and failures, he finally discovers the secret of life. More interesting than the epiphany itself, is Pierre's reaction to this moment of clarity: laughter -- pure unadulterated selfless giggling. Pierre is a prisoner of war and has just been denied access to visit fellow prisoners across the road. He sits on the cold ground for over an hour deep in thought."

"Nobody disturbed him. Suddenly he burst into such

loud peals of exuberant, good-natured laughter that on every side men looked up on astonishment at the sound of this curious and evidently solitary laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha! laughed Pierre. And he said aloud to himself: "The soldier did not let me pass. They took me and shut me up. They hold me captive. Who is 'Me? . . . Me? Me is my immortal soul! Ha, ha, ha! Ha, ha, ha! . . ." and he laughed till the tears came to his eyes."

Tolstoy's War and Peace (*Signet Classic, pg. 1217*)