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THE MARK

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REAL AND LASTING SECURITY

by Tim Cook

During our pilgrimage to Israel a couple of years ago; Barbara and I visited Masada, the high plateau fortress palace of Herod the Great. It was built a little over 30 years BCE, and it was to be completely impenetrable. The mesa itself ranges in height from 300 feet at its lowest point to a towering 1300 feet above the surrounding valley. The natural approaches are built on steep, narrow and difficult paths, which are topped by huge defensive gates and a 13 foot high, 4300 foot long wall built around the entire complex. Inside those imposing walls were three lavish palaces and two swimming pools plus barracks, armories, vast food storage rooms and several enormous cisterns. In searing desert heat, Barb and I rode up to the top on a cable car, looking down on the winding path of ascent and being simply stunned by the labor that must have been expended to carry all the necessary materials up that precarious path.

On an earlier visit to India, we toured Fatehpur Sikri, the walled city and palaces built in 1500 CE by the great Mughal emperor Akbar. After 15 years of planning and building, this was one of the grandest fortified cities ever built.

The city extended two miles long and one mile wide; with a 70 foot high three foot thick wall enclosing the unimaginably grand palaces, harems and mosques. They thought of everything and even had air conditioning supplied by ingenious networks of internally flowing canals and fountains. Graceful, beautiful and exquisitely ornate, every angle of view is visually stunning.

Though they were built many centuries and continents apart; Masada and Fatehpur Sikri have two very important things in common. Both were built to provide security and comfort for their occupants and neither one did. The last defenders of Masada didn't take account of the tenacity and ingenious engineering capacities of the Romans who surrounded the base of the entire mesa with a wall of no escape, then built a colossal earthen siege ramp made from thousands of tons of hand carried stone and packed earth, and then moved an enormous battering ram inch by inch up the steep slope to breach the walls. Fatehpur Sikri is presently a perfectly preserved, tourist-filled ghost town which had to be abandoned after only 15 years

of use because the water supplies dried up.

Security and comfort have always been high priorities for our species and we go to great lengths to try to provide them for ourselves; yet for all our planning, unexpected difficulties always arise to reveal to us that we are utterly incapable of doing that. One example is the Titanic. A maritime executive was quoted saying, "Even God couldn't sink this ship." Really? Another is that we build bigger and bigger; more prolific weapons to make us more secure. Do we feel more secure? How's that working for us? Simply by looking back through human history and also by reviewing our own personal experience, we'll find countless examples and we'll, without doubt, get the idea.

The theme of security has an enormous presence in the contemporary *zeitgeist*, the mood of our times. If we look at what's motivating the most currently common themes in the advertising, cultural, economic and political arenas, we'll understand the underlying causes of this trend. When we read of internet security, social security, national security,

economic security, identity security, health security, home security and financial security, we're seeing evidence of just how insecure we actually feel. These clear cultural trends reveal that we are deeply afraid and that beneath all these attempts to build great protective walls of whatever sort; deep within we still intuit that it is never going to work; just as it has never worked in history. Remember what the wise and observant King Solomon revealed about our circular, recurring history? Ecclesiastes bears stark witness to our circumstances when we live in the human condition,

What is now, has already been and what was, is yet to come and there is nothing new under the sun. (Ecclesiastes 1:9)

Solomon is, of course, referring to outer conditions and circumstances in our world when he tells us of the vanity of trying to protectively structure our personal lives more effectively than the sisters and brothers who have lived in this world before us. They tried it too. But our real lives do not appear in the world, "under the sun." We don't live in the outer conditions of appearances because our very lives, our True Selves are invisible. In truth, we live in our reactions and responses to our outer conditions. We live in our personal consciousness, while our bodies appear in the world, "under the sun." We don't directly experience the world; we experience and live in our consciousness about the

world and there we can indeed find something new, if we want it. Jesus refers to it as being "born again." Paul calls it the "new man."

Jesus advises us to build our houses, our personal consciousness, on rock instead of the unstable, shifting sand of ego-based reactions to external conditions.

Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.

(Matthew 7:23-24 NIV).

Eugene Peterson translates that passage more plainly and more available in *The Message*,

These words I speak to you are not incidental additions to your life, homeowner improvements to your standard of living. They are foundational words, words to build a life on. If you work these words into your life, you are like a smart carpenter who built his house on solid rock. Rain poured down, the river flooded, a tornado hit—but nothing moved that house. It was fixed to the rock.

We build our houses, our personal consciousness, with everything to which we give our attention. We build them through the company we keep, the books we read, the entertainment and distractions that attract our

attention and the habits we hang on to. The unstable, ever-shifting sand of the fashions and concerns of the times will never protect us the way we so foolishly and unconsciously pretend they will. The foundational rock that builds eternal stability is the Risen Christ waiting for attention and trust within each and every human person. As our identity progressively lets go of the world of appearances, we become increasingly conscious of his Living Presence; eternally linking us to our Infinite Life in the Father, our true help in every need. No one can ever steal this, our true identity. It is not built on sand or even an internet cloud, but on the Reality of Christ within us.

Through our participation in the Eucharist, our twice-daily practice of Centering Prayer and study and application of the Work of Inner Christianity, we gradually build new houses. The old house built on sand, our homemade false-self, becomes a distant memory as we abide more and more fully in our new home, our True Self founded on the rock of Christ.

Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the guards stand watch in vain. (Psalm 127:1 NIV)

If GOD doesn't build the house, the builders only build shacks. If GOD doesn't guard the city, the night watchman might as well nap. (Psalm 127:1 *The Message*) ☸

GUIDELINES FOR CHRISTIAN LIFE, GROWTH AND TRANSFORMATION

Fr. Thomas Keating, in his seminal work
Open Mind, Open Heart,
lists 42 principles underlying the Christian spiritual journey.
Fr. Keating asks that these principles be read according
to the method of Lectio Divina.
One principle will appear in these pages each month.

15TH GUIDELINE



God is not some remote, inaccessible, and implacable Being
who demands instant perfection from His creatures
and of whose love we must make ourselves worthy.
He is not a tyrant to be obeyed out of terror,
nor a policeman who is ever on the watch,
or a harsh judge ever ready to apply the verdict of guilty.
We should relate to Him less and less in terms
of reward and punishment and more and more on the basis
of the gratuity—or the *play* of divine love.

SEEDS

The self is not its own center
and does not orbit around itself;
it is centered on God, the one center of all,
which is “everywhere and nowhere.”
In whom all are encountered, from whom all proceed.
Thus from the very start this consciousness
is disposed to encounter “the other”
which whom it is already united anyway “in God.”

Thomas Merton, *Seeds*, page 124.

CCH BOOKSTORE

Community Reading

Forty Years After Gurdjieff
A Guide to Practical Work
by John Fuchs

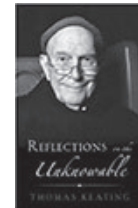


October reading suggestions on
Self-Remembering

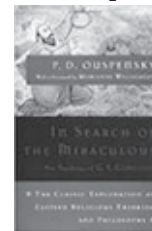
The New Man
by Maurice Nicoll



Reflections on the Unknowable
by Thomas Keating



In Search of the Miraculous
by P. D. Ouspensky



The Reality of Being
by Jeanne De Salzman

Bookstore and Library Hours
Open Monday-Friday 9 am-4 pm
Sunday 9:30-10 am & 11:30 am-noon

SELF REMEMBERING THROUGH PRAYER AND PRACTICE

by Barbara Cook

When I first heard about the idea of Self-Remembering; it sounded absurd. I thought, “Well of course I remember myself; I always remember myself. But according to the great sages and profound spiritual teachings of the world; that’s not the way it goes. Fr. Thomas Keating put it this way, “We mostly know and remember our “false self,” which we’ve unwittingly cobbled together in reaction to our environment and the people and events in our lives. The center of gravity of the false self is itself. And that is why it is self-centered, selfish, and out of touch with the greater reality of Life.

But also present within us is our True Self, whose center of gravity is God and which is our birthright. It will grow if we consent to it and nurture it. The qualities of the True Self are compassion, awareness of God and all others as divine beings. The True Self expresses through us in devotion and service especially to those closest to us.

Here at The Church of

Conscious Harmony, we use the Work of Inner Christianity and Centering Prayer to get in touch with Real I or the True Self. This happens when we begin to non-critically observe ourselves in action while non identifying with what we see and then Self-Remembering, seeing ourselves in God’s plan for the entire human race. We are created whole and free to be our God intended Real I, the one that is the beloved of God already and capable of growing into Christ.

In Centering Prayer, as we intentionally consent to God’s Plan for us, we express our willingness to bloom into our child of God selves. In this Prayer we sit open and still, letting go of our tight hold on the false self and letting God love, heal, and free us from our over identification with it.

There is some pain in letting go of our cobbled together homemade selves, but it is offset by the growth of God’s love and the freedom that comes from living in Reality instead of in the painfully small world of me

as the center of the universe. There is also some discipline involved. We can’t let the false-self prescribe the medicine for its own healing. So we surrender to some simple guidelines, a couple of times day for 20 to 30 minutes and once a month for a one-day retreat and once a year for a 7- to 10-day Centering Prayer retreat. This discipline is totally in service to our relationship with God and our True Self, both of which grow with this nourishment. Our world is in dire need of some God-centered selves. Our families and friends will appreciate too sure.

Silence is the medium. The way is through participation in helping the Holy Spirit to undo the false self with a sense of adventure and trust in that buried treasure that is already present in our core.

The True Self will grow and Self-Remembering and God Remembering will be our ordinary state.

May it be so! Amen! ☸



ANNUAL AIM: THE SELF

KNOW THYSELF

All of us ... are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory. 2 Corinthians 3:18

SELF-REMEMBERING by Bob Chase

The act of Self-Remembering
increases the force
of consciousness ...
actually creates new energy.
It is like the light becoming
much brighter,
as if the central station
had increased the current.
And this is just what it is.
... The act of Self-Remembering,
in a full sense,
includes all the Work,
all its teaching
and new ways of thinking,
all one has learned
... all that one has gained
... all that it means,
all the insights,
all the new experiences –
all this together.
It increases consciousness –
which is light.

Maurice Nicoll,
Psychological Commentaries

*You, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness,
for the day to overtake you like a thief.
For all of you are children of the light and children of the day.
We are not of the night or of darkness.
Therefore, let us not sleep as the rest do, but let us stay alert.*

1 Thessalonians 5:4-6

As the community explores and goes deeper with this year's aim, "The Self: Know Thyself," we come across this month's theme of Self-Remembering—an essential tool, yet somewhat of a lost art. As I continue developing my practice of Self-Remembering and wish to become more proficient, I found the preparation for this article to be a very useful, delightful and profound study. What I learned was even more than expected. I have shared some quotes in this paper, mostly from the teachings of the Work of Inner Christianity, that enhance my understanding of Self-Remembering. The process seems

to be very straight forward and easy to accomplish: "self observe, non-identify, Self-Remember, and wake up." Though many of us find that Self-Remembering is not as easy as it sounds and is often forgotten.

What is Self-Remembering?

To revisit this question, I begin my journey to truly understand and learn why it is absolutely important to Self-Remember. I learned early on that Self-Remembering is the third state of consciousness, which is being "awake." I found that Self-Remembering is called the "first conscious shock." Dr. Maurice Nicole writes in *The Commentaries*

on the Teachings of Gurdjieff and Ouspensky:

“When a man remembers himself he seeks not to be identified with his Personality. He seeks another feeling and sense of himself. He seeks to not know himself, as it were—to empty himself of himself. He makes himself passive. He wishes to receive something that hitherto has not been granted him. He seeks to lift himself above himself—above the noise of himself—above the inner clamour of negative emotions, grievances, fears, suspicious feelings, anxious thoughts, worries, money, professional and business excitements, above old vanities and conceits, and false self-valuations...”
(p.1282)

This is what happens to me as I “Work” with the help of new tools and opportunities.

My story is probably similar to many others. I grew up in a middle-class family and always felt like I had nothing to offer to anyone. I learned how to live by putting forth as little effort as possible. My entire value system was based on any and everything that could be used for my pleasure, achievement, and success. This became the most important part of my life and my false personality grabbed onto

it. These objects gave me status and became extremely important. Life was all about “me” and what I wanted or needed. I had to spend a lot of energy to meet my wants, needs and status. I was my own worst enemy. I never knew “my being draws my life.”

When I reached The Church of Conscious Harmony several years ago at age 60 plus, I was still very lost but open and ready to understand new pathways to my life. I began taking classes and my life began to change. I began to see the multiplicity of personalities and their effect on my life. The following quote began to make a lot of sense to me.

“Remembering oneself is just as if an actor on the stage who had become completely absorbed in the role he was playing suddenly remembered that he was merely acting the role and that he was really somebody else and not the part he was playing.” (p. 737)

Change has been and remains to be very difficult and slow. Being a fear-based person makes life a lot more difficult. At CCH I was receiving tools and understanding of how to become what I am created to be. When I read the following I could relate to what Nicoll was saying. I knew I needed to develop ways to change and begin “to think in a new way.”

“All the absurdities and

cruelties of life, all the waste and imbecilities, all the vain-glory and insincerity, all the lies, all the pretence and falsities and misunderstandings, are due to *one definite cause* as this Work teaches – namely, people do not remember themselves.”
(p. 1064)

The next wakeup call came in the class “Lessons in Truth.” Wow, what a life changer that class was! I began using Emilie Cady’s affirmations and others that came from the class every day. During my morning walk, I would review about 50 memorized affirmations. This became my primary source of Self-Remembering. What I didn’t realize at the time was how I was applying a concept that I had learned previously from a counselor: “if you repeat something 8 to 10 times your psyche will believe it is true.” I have been saying these affirmations for several years now and I know they have been a direct link to internal change.

My life began to change from a life of scarcity to a life of abundance. What a difference as I began to see and act on the truth. As an example of this change, my wife and I planned and took our fourth trip to Europe. I never believed that I would ever go to Europe much less spend time visiting unbelievably beautiful places and people. It seems to me the only

thing that really changed was remembering that I was created to live in abundance.

Other changes began to happen. I realized that I didn't have to "fix" everyone or anything; I was learning through my affirmations and new tools how to let "God be God." Much of my negativity has diminished. My anger and acting out diminished—thank God! Every day I continue practicing affirmations, the Work, Centering Prayer, and Self-Remembering.

Forms of Self-Remembering

These are just a few examples that I use to help me incorporate Self-Remembering into my life and practice.

Inspired by Emily Cady's *Lessons in Truth*:

"There is nothing in all the universe for me to fear, for greater is He that is in me than he that is in the world." I add, "The He that is in me has no fear, no shame, no guilt, and no anxiety."

"Pain, sickness, poverty, old age, death, [and false self], can not master over me, for they are not real."

"I am a child or manifestation of God, and every moment His life, love, wisdom, power flow into and through me. I am one

with God, and am governed by His laws [of love, joy, peace, happiness, forgiveness and compassion]."

"I am spirit, perfect, holy, harmonious. Nothing can hurt me or make me sick or afraid, for Spirit is God and God cannot be sick, or hurt, or afraid. I manifest my real Self through this body now. [For this body is Christ's body. I now and always manifest Christ's perfect harmony, balance, order, function, and infinite creative potential.]"

Received from Tim Cook:

"Welcome life, welcome new day, I am glad to be alive in this wonderful world. Darkness has disappeared; shadows have fled with the dawning of a new day. A spirit of newness pervades my house that is my heart. Welcome happiness, welcome joy come and abide with me. I am done with sadness and sorrow, done with vain regret. I feel a brightness and glory suffusing us all. I am glad to be alive in this wonderful world."

"I am love; pure, sweet, eternal love. I bring joy and love wherever I go."

"I have eternal wisdom within me;

I know just what to do."

"It is all about identity." My affirmation: I am secure and able to keep my identity within groups and relationships.

"I can do all things through God, easily, swiftly and well."

From Don Riso's book *Enneagram Transformations*:

"Now I release holding myself and others to impossible standards."

"I now affirm that I can allow myself to relax and enjoy life."

"I now affirm I am loveable for who I am."

"I now release my fear of failing and being humiliated."

"I now release turning my anger and aggressiveness against myself."

I also remember past experiences of fear, regret, wrong decisions, joy, and pleasure and use them to Self-Remember. As I have had the opportunity to travel to many beautiful and wonderful places, I recall these experiences and remember to give thanks for this abundant world. I have developed a practice of giving gratitude daily for all the good and difficult experiences that have come my way.

The above are but a few examples of Self-Remembering. As one begins to find ways to Self-Remember many more examples begin to appear. Look, listen, watch for meaningful examples that appeal to you and incorporate them in your practice of Self-Remembering.

Aim to Awaken

There are many ways to Self-Remember, but the real issue is to *do* it. When I can stop just for a few seconds and remember who I really am and what life is really all about, many of my anxieties, fears, and worries begin to dissipate. It may take time and practice, but for me, there is no better way to wake up and give myself the first conscious shock.

“The real aim of the Work is to awaken, and only through self observation and Self-

Remembering can a person really awaken from life. But unless a man, a woman, can distinguish themselves from their habitual, mechanical reactions to life—that is, what they imagine they are—there is no possibility of awakening out of life...”

To end, I am thankful for the opportunity to prepare this article, which has not only deepened my understanding of the many ways to Self-Remember but has also been and remains to be very enlightening and rewarding. I hope and pray that you more deeply explore and experience Self-Remembering until it becomes an active part of your life. It is my belief that as we Self-Remember, we will begin to “Know Thyself” and continue forward into transformation. May it be so. ☺

MULTI-DAY CENTERING PRAYER RETREAT AT CEDARBRAKE

Dec 4-10 7-day Advent
\$625 (double room) \$715 (single room)

“The value and magic that result from these retreats cannot be described in words. Although I have moved away from Austin, the CCH community remains as a spiritual foundation for me.

I do intend to be a part of other retreats;
the payback for a few days away from the noise of life
is astounding.” ~Hank B.

Contact 512.347.9673 or officemgr@consciousharmony.org to register.



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THE WORK

OF INNER CHRISTIANITY

My Father is still working, and I also am working. John 5:17

BEING PRESENT IS SELF-REMEMBERING

The work to be present is in the direction of consciousness—that is, a special kind of perception independent of the activity of the intellectual mind, a perception of oneself: who one is, where one is and then what one knows and does not know. In the moment of consciousness there is the immediate impression of a direct perception. This is quite different from what we usually call “consciousness,” which operates more like a reflection faithfully accompanying what I experience and representing it in my mind. When this consciousness reflects the fact that I think or feel something, this is a second action that, like a shadow, follows the first. Without this shadow I am unconscious of and ignore the original thought or feeling. If, for example, I am angry and beside myself, I only see it as long as I am aware of the reflection which, like a witness, tells me in a whisper that I am angry. The whisper follows so closely upon the preceding feeling that I believe they are one and the same. But it is not really like that.


Can we become conscious? It is all a question of energies and

their relation... For [consciousness] to grow, we need to learn to concentrate... This is the first thing that we do ourselves, not dependent on anyone else.

The practice of being present is self-remembering. Instead of being taken outward, the attention of the functions is turned toward the inside for a moment of consciousness. I need to recognize that I can understand nothing if I cannot remember myself. This means remembering my highest possibilities, that is, remembering what I open to when I come back to myself alone. To remember myself also means to be present to my situation—to the place, the conditions, the way I am taken by life. There is no room for dreaming.

Perhaps I will not come to a state that is satisfying. It does not matter. What is important is the effort to be present. We cannot always find a better state that brings a feeling of something new. We feel unable and conclude that there is nothing permanent in us on which we can rely. But it is not true. There is something. In a better state, we can see that we have in us all the

elements necessary to come to it. The elements are already here. This means the possibilities are always here in us.

What is too often missing is knowing what I want. And it is this that undermines my will to work. Without knowing what I want, I will not make any effort. I will sleep. Without wishing for a different quality in myself, to turn toward my higher possibilities, I will have nothing to lean on, nothing to support work. I must always, again and again, come back to this question: What do I wish? It must become the most important question of my life. Yet this wish for a different quality has no force at all if it comes from my ordinary “I.” It must be related to something completely different from my ordinary “I” and free from the desire for a result. I must not forget *why* I wish. This must be for me really a question of life or death—I wish *to be*, to live in a certain way. 

Jeanne de Salzmänn, *The Reality of Being – The Fourth Way of Gurdjieff*, pages 18–20. For more information and experience with these teachings, you are invited to attend the *Work of Inner Christianity* class held Thursdays at 7:30 p.m. at The Church of Conscious Harmony.

CONTEMPLATIVE RESPONSE TEAM

For almost 10 years, the Contemplative Response Team has been assisting our community in times of need—in transition from life to death, along the path through illnesses and accidents, and with other difficult circumstances. The Contemplative Response Team is guided by a statement of intention as “a Christ-centered ministry for responding to requests for contemplative service to The Church of Conscious Harmony community through spiritual companionship, prayer, and compassionate hospitality.”

Thomas Keating in *The Gift of Life: Death and Dying, Life and Living* writes, “we are called to accept the diminishment of self, which includes our personality and all its prides and vanities, our life-work, relationships, health, possessions, and finally our very life itself.” Henri Nouwen said, “our greatest gift is our ability to be there, to listen, and to enter into solidarity with those who suffer.” That is the starting point for a contemplative response. It is a Christ-centered presence that listens deeply to what someone expresses as his or her need.

The Contemplative Response Team is a group of individuals who desire to pray and serve as guided by the statement of intention in response to requests from the CCH community. Training includes exploration of our motivations for helping versus rescuing, listening skills, boundaries, and expressions of suffering. The team meets monthly to pray, explore topics of contemplative service and review opportunities for service within our community.

God is coming to us in suffering, in joy and delight, always at the same time!

*Where two or three are gathered together in my name,
there am I in the midst of them.* (Matthew 18:20)

The team works closely with the ministerial and office staff to respond in an appropriate and timely manner.

Please contact the office with requests or to find out how to become a member of the Contemplative Response Team. The next training is 9 am-noon on October 31, 2015. ☺

OCTOBER CALENDAR

Visit consciousharmony.org
for a complete listing of events

SPECIAL EVENTS

Oct 10
Introduction to Centering Prayer
8:30 am-3:30 pm
\$75 lunch is included
+ 6 consecutive Tuesdays 7:30-9 pm

Oct 17
One-Day Centering Prayer Retreat
8:30 am-4:30 pm
\$15 Bring your own lunch

Oct 26 - Nov 16
Welcoming Prayer Workshop
Mondays 7:00-8:30pm
Cost \$40. Register with office.

Oct 31
Contemplative Response Team Training
9 am-noon

MONTHLY

1st Sundays
Bring non-perishables for Caritas

Oct 20
Gurdjieff Music 7:30-8:30 pm

WEEKLY

Sundays
Lectio Divina 8-9 am
Worship Service 10-11:30 am
Youth Program 10-11:30 am
Fellowship 11:30 am

Wednesdays
Prayer Circle 9:15-10 am
Contemplative Lunch noon-1 pm
Contemplative Communion Service 6-7 pm

Thursdays 7:30-9 pm
Work of Inner Christianity Class

Fridays 7:30-8:45 pm
Devotional Service

DAILY

Mondays-Fridays 7-7:35 am
Centering Prayer Service in Theosis Chapel

Recordings of services are available
through the Bookstore and online at
www.consciousharmony.org



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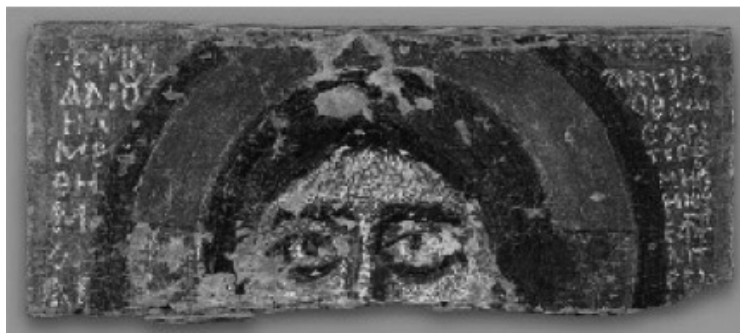
THE DIVINE LIFE: IN ORDINARY TIME

*The divine power
has bestowed on us
everything that makes
for life and devotion,
the knowledge
of Him who called us
by His own glory and power.*

*Through these,
He has bestowed on us
the precious and
very great promises,
so that through them
you may come to share
in the divine nature.*

2 Peter 1:3-4

∞



It must be emphasized over and over
that daily life is the fundamental practice.
To bring both our activity and our vision together
in vital dialogue is to perceive the right way
of manifesting vision *today*.

Maybe it will be a little different tomorrow.
Every day is a new unfolding of our life in Christ.

Our practice has to be adjusted
as we keep climbing the spiral ascent . . .
The eagle circles as it rises toward the sun.

Thomas Keating, *The Mystery of Christ*