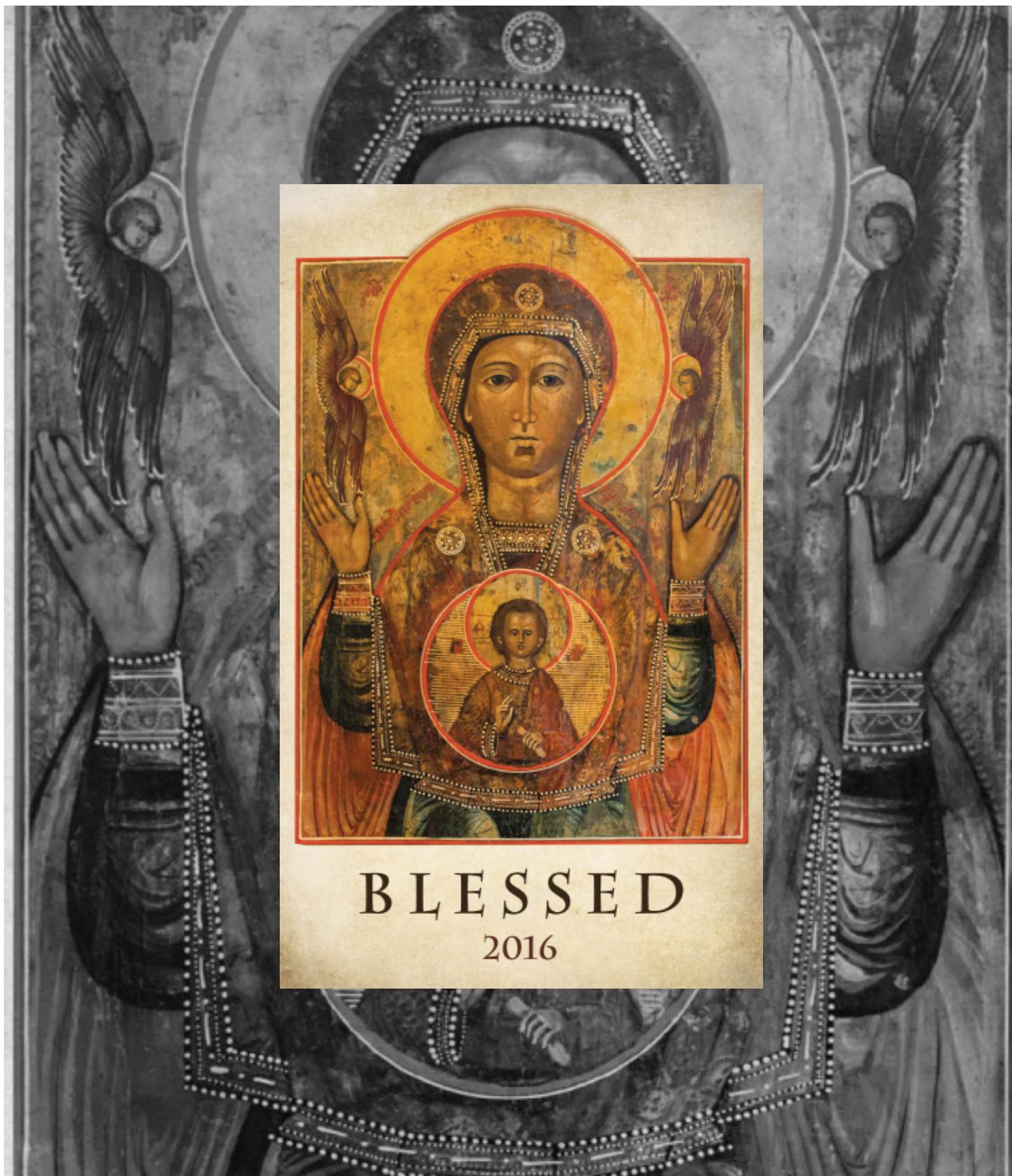


January 2016
Volume 28
Number 1



THE MARK

A Publication of The Church of Conscious Harmony - A Contemplative Christian Community



BLESSED
2016

BLESSED ARE THEY

by Tim Cook

The cover of the December 2015 issue of National Geographic carried a close up of the exquisitely beautiful face of Mary painted by Botticelli. It was accompanied by a headline that read, “Mary – The Most Powerful Woman in the World.” I was amazed to see a secular publication delving into spiritual and religious mysteries that have, for so long, baffled and fascinated the generations born since the Christ event. Did these things really happen? How could this be real? Quarrels and arguments that can never be historically proven one way or another have been around since the very beginning; believers and non-believers equally certain of the rightness of their view.

No, we can't prove or disprove any of it by direct evidence or reason, but the indirect evidence is astonishing when viewed as a whole. Just consider the countless works of art depicting Mary that are right now hanging in museums and collections all over. Western art would be impoverished without Michelangelo's Pieta alone. Even all the “kitschy” images of Mary reveal her pervasive presence in homes and churches all over the world. Gardens all over the planet,

including ours, are graced by her familiar cement form.

But it's not only her portraits and statues that reveal her presence in the hearts and minds of so many people over the centuries, it's her appearances; of which there have been over 2000 reported since the first one recorded in 40 AD. National Geographic contains a map showing apparitions on every continent; along with accounts of miraculous healings that have happened along with them. You don't have to believe any of it to realize that the vast number and wide distribution of her images and her adoration by millions over centuries indicates that something big is going on with Mary.

And there is more to her presence than artistic representations and apparitions. Her countenance is gazing out upon millions of people through countless icons all over the world. Icons are much more than art. In fact they are not spoken of as being painted, but as “written.” Icons are known as windows to heaven. They are a wordless source of spirituality and they directly communicate understanding of divine relationships to the contemplative viewer. They are like

windows in our houses; we don't look at them, but through them.

The icon of Mary bearing, within her belly, an adult Jesus that speaks to us from the back wall of our sanctuary is a form called “Our Lady of the Sign,” which first appeared in Byzantine iconography in the 11th century. Our particular icon is about 200 years old and came from a church in Russia. Since the writer of an icon spends significant time in prayer before beginning the actual work, we can be certain that we are gazing at an object that was founded and formed by and for prayer and communion with God. I was unable to find “official” interpretations of the meanings that she is communicating to us; but I have come to understand that icons are powerful spiritual statements that are like visual *Lectio Divina*, often different for each one of us each time we receive them.

Our Lady of the Sign speaks to me of the disposition of the virgin soul, our personal, human soul – wide-open, unprotected and completely surrendered in perfect trust in God. Her upraised hands are touched by the wings of the seraphim that energetically connect her directly to heaven.

Her palms are turned toward us in a gesture that blesses us with the graces she is constantly receiving from heaven. She leads me to see and feel the state of my soul. Only when our souls come to her level of receptivity, openness and trust, *Let it be unto me according to your word*, can the mature Christ be born in our own bodies. Her message can be intuitively felt, even though, we really may not even be able to put it into words or pin it down with thought. Each one's slow contemplative gaze at her form may reveal a personal meaning that grows deeper with each encounter with her.

We've chosen her image to introduce the theme "Blessed" for this year's annual aim so that each of us will have the opportunity to use the icon in visual contemplation as we open our souls to receive Christ, within. She represents the more feminine attitudes and responses to life that are the very essence of the Sermon on the Mount. Each month we'll be contemplating the Beatitudes and other wisdom gifts from Jesus' teaching. "To be blessed" means to be favored by God. Blessings therefore are directly associated with God and

come from God who is Love. The blessings are found as we practice embodying the very attitudes that we will ponder and explore in the coming months.

We live in a time when the more active, assertive, masculine attitudes have become over-represented in the way our world functions and the ideals that it most values. But blessedness comes not through winning, overcoming or getting to the top; but from the strength of receptivity and faith-filled trust in God. Mary leads us to another, more gentle, receptive and simple way of life; and her help could not be more timely, as our human race evolves through the rapid changes in the world and into a new way of being alive.

Each of us must realize that Mary's receptivity is within our own power to follow. She exemplifies not just passivity or weakness but rather a powerful, strong and willing decision to trust God to a degree that lets his Christ come to miraculous birth in our own souls. It takes a strong will to say and mean, "Thy will be done." Blessed are we who are learning to say "yes" to Love as the Way of Life. ☺

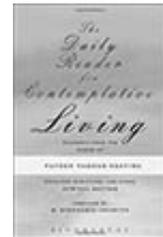
CCH Bookstore

Community Reading

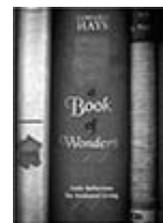


*Making All Things New
Catholicity, Cosmology, Consciousness*
by Ilia Delio

Daily Reader Suggestions...



*The Daily Reader
for Contemplative Living
Excerpts from the Works
of Fr. Thomas Keating*
compiled by S. Stephanie Iachetta



*A Book of Wonders
Daily Reflections for Awakened Living*
by Edward Hays

*A Little Daily Wisdom
Through the Year with St. Teresa of Avila*
by Bernard Banglely

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

BLESSED NEW YEAR

by Barbara Cook

Every year at this time there is a lot of kidding about making and breaking New Year's resolutions; just look back at your own experience and it will probably be there. And yet they are helpful aids in aiming and keeping us on our path. A great Indian sage once said, "If we don't know where we are going, chances are we will end up somewhere else." So here we are beginning a brand new year; nothing written on it yet. It is a perfect time to look at our lives and our spiritual and life aims to see where we are and what direction we want to head this year. Then every one of us can make some plans to support our deepest aims.

Am I doing Centering Prayer twice a day? Remember, Fr. Thomas Keating said that we do Centering Prayer once a day for devotion and twice a day for transformation. No recriminations; just feel into your practice. See if you are into God's plan for you to heal from your past and move deeper into your child-of-heaven Self. Or perhaps you're still warming up to your relationship with yourself, God and your neighbor. Pray about it. You may feel called to deepen those relationships by increasing your

prayer to twice a day or adding more time in prayer. Then pray for the desire to meet Divine Love more often in prayer.

If we wish to be transformed, Fr. Thomas has taught that in addition to regular, daily prayer, we also need to take time apart, to be with the Beloved. Jesus was in perfect union with God, whom he addressed as Abba, Daddy in the most intimate relationship. Yet even he still took time apart. Like any relationship, our relationship with God grows as we nurture it by stepping away from ordinary life and spending time in communion, in deep listening. That is why there are Centering Prayer retreats.

Am I doing ten days of retreat a year? I need to if I want to be transformed into my Child of God Self. This year I can say "yes" to changing my heart through attending Centering Prayer retreats and participate in changing the heart of the world. This change is something we can't do on our own; but when we consent to the presence of the Holy Spirit and make ourselves available in deep silent listening, it changes us.

If you don't yet know how you

can make it happen time, don't let time or money stop you. Pick your dates, make a plan and watch how the Spirit moves through your life to help that wish manifest. If it feels a little intimidating, almost everything new to us feels a little scary at first because we are stepping into the unknown. This unknown, however, is God, the Divine Mystery. This is Divine Love. There is no safer place in the universe.

Do the Welcoming Prayer process. Fr. Thomas is clear when he teaches, "Once we have said yes to God, EVERYTHING is for our healing and union with God, if we say yes to it." So let us say "yes" to God and his plan for our transformation and "yes" to the unfolding of his presence and action in our lives. When we meet him in silent intention; he enables us to feel and release what we feel in the unconscious inner side of our selves. Silence makes room in our beings for God to grow. Let us be the change we want to see in our world, both locally and globally.

May this be the best year of our lives in Christ. 🕊



Since, by virtue of my consent,
I have become a living particle
of the Body of Christ,
all that affects me
must in the end
help in the growth
of the total Christ.
Christ will flood into
and over me, me and my cosmos.
... May my acceptance
be ever more complete,
more comprehensive,
more intense!
May my being,
in its self-offering to You,
become ever more open
and more transparent
to Your influence!
And may I thus feel
Your activity
coming ever closer,
Your presence
growing ever more intense,
everywhere around me.
Amen.

Teilhard de Chardin,
Writings in Time of War

BLESSED 2016

You are invited to join in community
... to participate in intention and will to God
... to renew your commitment to transformation into Christ,
... to move ever deeper together as a community
of intention, practice and devotion.
All glory to God.

- ✘ God is all in all. God is eternally revealing as the Trinity – Transcendent Father, Omnipresent Son and Immanent Holy Spirit – active within us as the Divine Indwelling.
- ✘ We are created in the image and likeness of God. Our basic nature, like God's nature, is absolute good.
- ✘ Transformation into Christ, unity with the Living God, and participation in the evolution of all creation is possible in this life. Indeed, it is the design and purpose of every human life.
- ✘ We open ourselves to transforming grace through silent prayer, the Eucharist, the Word and spiritual community.

Excerpted from *Statement of Beliefs*, The Church of Conscious Harmony

Blessed are they
who have been granted the grace, the wish, the energy
to follow the journey of Christ.
Amen.



A SPECIAL INVITATION ...
TO PARTICIPATE IN THE TENTH MAN SCHOOL

My Father is at work until now, so I am at work. John 5:17

The sole aim of the Tenth Man School
is to be a transforming agent of the Spirit, assisting the process
and reality of *theosis* for one another, that each may
“*know myself as Christ, as my Father knows me,*”
fully human, fully divine, always guided by the Spirit
and rooted in Eternal Love.

Membership in the School is a declaration of intentional relationship
to the Divine Mystery that is God and to all creation. It is a formal expression
of a personal hunger and commitment to be transformed into Christ
and to live a committed life in service of this aim.

A formal member of The Church of Conscious Harmony
may choose to deepen his or her commitment to transformation
into Christ by becoming a member of the School.
The term of this commitment is for 2016.

A School member commits to a Rule of Life and *actively participates*
in an intentional community that includes three lines of Work.
The School's Rule of Life is:

1. Twice daily Centering Prayer practice
2. Daily reading of Scripture
3. Daily reading of the Work of Inner Christianity
4. Daily conscious movement (e.g., tai chi, yoga, walking)
5. Small group participation, as available
6. Commitment to attend Centering Prayer retreats annually
7. Seva group or YES program participation
8. Tithing
9. Regular attendance at Sunday Services

The intention to participate in the Tenth Man School is to be submitted
by January 24 (contact the office for an acceptance card).
Orientation and induction will be held February 5, 2016.

We are the recipients of a multi-faceted living Tradition,
the strands of which have been woven together
into a new rope for us to jump for. ~Tim Cook

In the Name of the Transcendent Father,
and of the Omnipresent Son,
and in the Name of the Immanent Holy Spirit. Amen.



**THE CHURCH of
CONSCIOUS HARMONY**
A CONTEMPLATIVE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

7406 Newhall Lane
Austin, Texas 78746
512.347.9673
512.347.9675 fax
www.consciousharmony.org

MINISTERS
Tim and Barbara Cook

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Michael Begeman
Pamela Begeman
Mary Anne Best
Eric DeJernett
Donald Genung
Jim McCune
Lauri Raymond

MUSIC
Susan Boulden, Director
musicdir@consciousharmony.org
Sue Young

YOUTH EDUCATION SERVICES
Deborah Hale, Children's Director
childmin@consciousharmony.org
Jacque Botto, Asst to the Children's Director
Don Hale, Youth Director
youthdir@consciousharmony.org
David Jenkins, Asst to the Youth Director

OFFICE
Mon-Fri 8:30 am-4 pm
Donald Genung, Business Mgr
bizmgr@consciousharmony.org
Lisa Genung, Office Mgr
officemgr@consciousharmony.org

BOOKSTORE
Virginia Maxwell, Manager
bookmgr@consciousharmony.org

NEWSLETTER
Sandra Ely, Editor
garzaely@swbell.net
Carol Hagar, Design
lifisart@austin.rr.com



ANNUAL AIM: BLESSED

Come, O you blessed of my Father! Matthew 25:34

Blessed are the poor in Spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

THE COMMUTE by Michael Begeman

The serpent promised a state of self-sufficiency obviating any need for a God on high, implying that the knowledge and power of human beings in such a state will suffice completely – they will be “rich.”

In contrast to this the first Beatitude proclaims: “Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven,” i.e., blessed are those who regard as poor any knowledge of power without God – that is, any knowledge or power not of God – for they shall participate in the divine creative work of God. Valentin Tomberg, *Lazarus, Come Forth!*

If a man feels in his inmost being that he knows nothing and is nothing and deserves nothing, if he longs to understand more and to be different, if he feels that he is really nothing and longs to be something, if in fact in his mind, his spirit, his understanding, he feels his own ignorance, his own nothingness, then he is “poor in spirit.” He is empty, and so can be filled. Maurice Nicoll, *The New Man*

Truly, the Lord is waiting to be gracious to you.
Isaiah 30:18

...on the Way to Work

Each morning as I drive to work a series of chants and prayers fill my car. These have evolved over the years – some things get added in and others get modified or dropped. They always begin the way the Liturgy of the Hours start at St. Benedict’s and countless other monasteries:

Oh God, come to my assistance.

Oh Lord, make haste to help me!

As I near the end of my commute, the prayers also conclude. One of the final prayers is directed to the Holy Spirit:

Divine light Shekinah, enter into my heart and flow through my body bringing the joy of your creating light, life, love and presence. Awaken within me the fruits and gifts of the Spirit, and

imbue me with the properties of the Beatitudes.

That last phrase, ‘imbue me with the properties of the Beatitudes’, is what this year’s aim is all about. To imbue is to permeate, saturate and drench – to make it so that I *am* those properties of the Beatitudes. This, in its essence, is a prayer of trust and surrender since some of the Beatitudes don’t seem so inviting at first blush. We begin this year at the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount:

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

What is this ‘poor in spirit’ quality that is being asked of us?

Many things have been written about this passage. The net of it all seems to be that I must be poor of my spirit (small ‘s’) so that I may

become rich in God's Spirit (capitol 'S'). Teachings about kenosis, self-emptying, self-surrender, and making the personality passive abound. The core teachings offered at CCH – Centering Prayer and the Work of Inner Christianity – are fully in support of this dismantling project.

Like the language of the first Beatitude, the invitations to kenosis, self-emptying, self-surrender, and making the personality passive didn't evoke a quick "oh, yes!" when I first heard them...the response was more one of cautious, guarded curiosity. Over time, however, these ideas have grown more comfortable to me, and the drive to assert my personal agenda on my life and the world has weakened considerably. I hear the words of those saints, wisdom figures, renunciates and teachers who have gone before me and am able to translate them into an understanding and daily practice that fits a working professional who is engaged a modern, urban, first-world life.

...on the Way Home

Driving home last week I was streaming the recording of a Sunday service I had missed. [I try to find alternatives to the news when behind the wheel.] The service I was listening to included a Christening – blessing a new

child into our community and acknowledging its participation in the Divine Plan. Tim spoke of the innocence of children being a mirror for the rest of us. Suddenly something was coming through that didn't need translation. He commented that looking at a child reveals the original, essential nature of every human being who has ever been born – reflecting what Fr. Thomas Keating calls our basic core of goodness. He described this nature as God-like, beautiful, innocent, and fresh. And hand-in-hand with this, I saw that children are poor in self-spirit, and full of God-Spirit. This reminded me of several scriptural passages:

...unless you turn and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

(Matthew 18:3)

...Let the children come to me...for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.

(Matthew 19:14)

...whoever does not accept the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it. (Mark 10:15;

Luke 18:17)

I wonder, what is this nature of a little child that I am to become like? Words that come to me in response are: open, trusting, vulnerable, transparent, humble, present, just-as-I-am. Each of these words can be the source of a personal inquiry,

an exercise in self-observation to see where I yet need to 'turn' in order to become poor in self-spirit, and full of God-Spirit.

...on the Way to Bentonville

After Christmas, the Gospel soon turns to the story of the Magi – the three wise men. At this time last year, Pamela and I were recovering from the holidays, taking some time apart in NW Arkansas, and enjoying hiking in the rolling hills of the Ozarks. Sunday came and we stopped for Mass at the St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church in Rogers. This is a large, modern church in a very nice neighborhood. The circular sanctuary was filled with perhaps 500 people. Being in the immediate post-Christmas season, everybody was especially gregarious, the children's choir was still belting out familiar carols, and Jesus was still lying in the manger.

The gospel of the wise men was read and the priest began his sermon, telling entertaining stories of visiting his seminary classmates' homes in Christmas seasons past. The sermon was pretty shallow and directed mostly to the children, so I settled in for the duration – waiting it out until the Eucharist. (Note, at this point, that I was rich in little-spirit.) The priest turned the topic to the day's gospel, and asked the kids what gifts the wise men laid in

front of the baby Jesus. With some coaxing he got the three expected responses: gold, frankincense and myrrh.

He then asked “What other gift did the wise men lay in front of baby Jesus?” There was squirming... the kids had no idea. He asked the whole congregation. Again, nobody knew. And then, right there in Rogers, Arkansas, in front of 500 people, dressed in his Christmas vestments, the priest went down on the floor in a full body prostration. He stayed there without moving for a couple of minutes. The moment was electric – you could have heard a pin drop in the sanctuary where moments before had been pretty restless. He finally stood, and explained that the Magi came, not to give the symbolic gifts to Jesus, but to give themselves to God, and that the total gift of ourselves is the only gift that God wants.

And lo, the star, which they saw in the East, went before them till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary His mother, and fell down, and worshipped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto Him gifts:

gold, and frankincense and myrrh. (Matthew 2:9-11)

As for me, the hair on my arms stood on end when he went down on the floor, and I woke up to the man of deep Being who was in front of me. In that moment I experienced great humility, and in that humility great grace. The transition from being rich in spirit to poor in spirit (and thus rich in capitol-S Spirit) was palpable.

...Around Rogers

We made it a point to attend this man’s evening weekday Mass. This time there were just a couple dozen of us in a side chapel. At the end of Mass he looked at everyone present and spoke very deliberately. “Folks, it’s going to be bitterly cold tonight. The forecast is for the low teens. There are people who live on the streets here. This is the kind of cold that kills people who are exposed.” He paused for a moment. “On your way home tonight you may see someone on a corner or shop entry with no place to go. If you do, stop your car...” And then there was that long silent pause he had left us with in the sanctuary. The rich in little-s spirit mind races, imagining the unimaginable request that was about to come, arguing with it, feeling helpless, squirming, protecting itself. The long pause was enough for plenty

of self-observation, and finally he finished the sentence “...and give them your coat.”

A flood of relief came upon me, and similar to what happened a few days before in the sanctuary, I was left with a dose of self-knowledge, and a simultaneous experience of great humility.

...Back Home

I start my morning commute with this prayer, but it often returns to me throughout the day as I get other glimpses of what in me is rich and poor:

Oh God, come to my assistance.

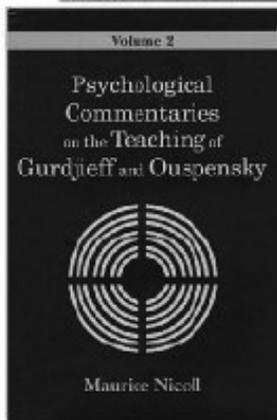
Oh Lord, make haste to help me!

I can’t really pray it enough.

...Epilogue

“Get up...it is time to move on. The world is begging for new and more abundant life. The life of the world is your life, and your life belongs to the whole of life. Stop trying to preserve yourself; lose yourself in something more than yourself because you have the power to Christify life, to help unify it, to raise it to a new level of ultra-humanity. ... Omega love is in our midst, and this love is our power, our hope and our future. ... Be the co-creator you are made to be: emblazon this world with the grandeur of God.”

~Ilia Delio, Making All Things New, p. 190 



THE WORK

OF INNER CHRISTIANITY

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

SERMON ON THE MOUNT AND CHANGING OUR LEVEL OF BEING

... your life is an expression of what you are, therefore your Being is what you are, and all that happens to you in life is the result of your level of Being. ... People do not see that their level of Being attracts all these things which they regard as having nothing to do with themselves. But the Work teaches that it is your level of Being that attracts all this and keeps you constantly under its influence.

Now I would ask you: “Do you understand about levels of Being? Do you understand how deeply the Work is based on different levels from the Ray of Creation downwards and how everything is at a certain level of Being in this vast scheme of Being reaching up to the Being of God?” The question then arises in a practical sense: “How can we change our level of Being? What is it we have to do to change this level of Being that we speak of as all having?” The answer is that the whole Work is about changing our Being and giving us

methods as to how to change it. We spoke briefly of the Sermon on the Mount as being a practical illustration of how to change one’s level of Being, and we took the first saying: “Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.” Now bliss is a wonderful thing to touch. The Work says that we must practice non-identifying, and non-identifying begins with not identifying with yourself. Now if you are full of yourself you are rich in spirit, but if you begin to observe yourself through what the Work teaches about identifying you will become poor in spirit—that is, you will not identify with yourself so much. What will the result be? You will find what for you is bliss. You will find an enormous relief, a strange kind of happiness in no longer having to keep up the idea of yourself with which you were formerly so identified. Now here you have a quite direct practical method of changing your level of Being. The Work

also, as you know, speaks of many other methods which have to be applied at the moment. All the practical work, all the directions given to you constantly in terms of the original teaching, belong to methods of changing your Being. That is why I say to you so often: Do you know practically what the Work teaches that you have to do? It is a very good thing when a person reaches that stage in the Work when he or she realizes that it is about something absolutely practical and that all these phrases, these formulations, that they have to listen to for so long, are real instructions as to what they have to do to change the level of Being at which they are mechanically.

... As I said, we can understand what it means to be poor in spirit in the right way. ☺

Maurice Nicoll, *Psychological Commentaries on the Teaching of Gurdjieff and Ouspensky*, pages 726-728. 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.

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.

18TH GUIDELINE



The growing awareness of our true Self, along with the deep sense of spiritual peace and joy which flow from this experience, balances the psychic pain of the disintegrating and dying of the false self. As the motivating power of the false self diminishes, our true Self builds the *new self* with the motivating force of divine love.

SEEDS

The way to find the real “world” is not
merely to measure and observe what is outside us,
but to discover our own inner ground.
For that is where the world is, first of all: in my deepest self.
This “ground,” this “world” where I am mysteriously present
at once to my own self
and to the freedoms of all other men,
is not a visible, objective and determined structure
with fixed laws and demands.
It is a living and self-creating mystery
of which I am myself a part, to which I am myself
my own unique door.

Thomas Merton, *Seeds*, page 10.

JANUARY CALENDAR

Visit consciousharmony.org
for a complete listing of events

SPECIAL EVENTS

Intro to Centering Prayer
Jan 16 9 am-3:15 pm
Pre-register in the office.

Ego & The Dynamic Ground
7:30-9 pm (begins Jan 20)

Simple Explanation of Work Ideas
Jan 21 7:30 pm
Pre-register in the office.

Lessons in Truth
Jan 27 for 9 classes 7:30 pm-9 pm
Pre-register in the office.

MONTHLY

1st Sundays
Bring non-perishables for Caritas

Gurdjieff Music
Jan 19 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 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



THE CHURCH *of* CONSCIOUS HARMONY
A CONTEMPLATIVE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY
7406 NEWHALL LANE AUSTIN TX 78746

NON PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
AUSTIN TX
PERMIT # 3386

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



EPIPHANY

*Rise up in splendor!
Your LIGHT has come,
the glory of the Lord
shines upon you.
Upon you the Lord shines,
and over you appears His glory.*

Isaiah 60:1

Christmas is only the beginning.
Christmas shows us the Word Made Flesh
in the form of this little infant, a form that grows into His full humanity,
and then the sacrifice of that human nature for the healing and salvation,
or nowadays if you're into the scientific discoveries,
evolution is the way of creation and then human development,
including Jesus' own humanity,
develops and becomes more complete and full and capable
of being shared with others, always from a motive of unselfish love.

... We are invited to become living cells or members
in the Mystical Body of Christ, which is Christ resurrected
and Body glorified, and consumed in the fire of the Spirit,
a fire that moves like a moving stream throughout the relationships
in the Trinity and into which we're invited to share.
That's what's meant by "grace;" a sharing in the divine life itself,
which means the divine light, life and love.

...

It's impossible to imagine this, as Paul says,
"What God has prepared for those who love Him."
Do you consent to become divine?
That is the question of the day.

Thomas Keating, "The Prayer for Us All" A Blessing for the Epiphany, *Awakenings*