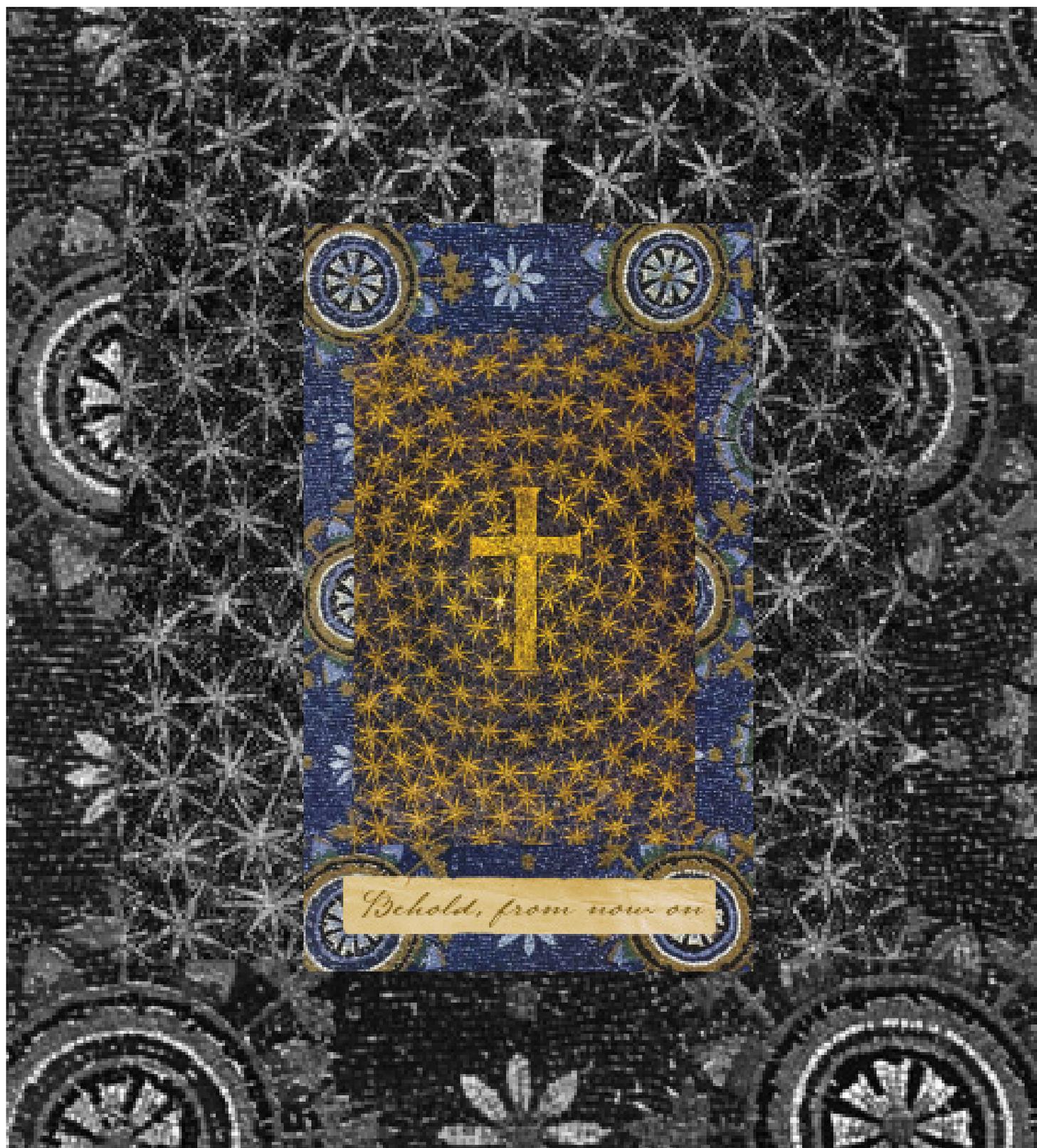


December 2016  
Volume 28  
Number 12



# THE MARK

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



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# SEEING THROUGH THE FOG

by Tim Cook

Driving to church each day I pass over a long dip in the pavement as I travel east on Bee Caves Road. In following the contours of the land the road passes through a small hollow. On most days I don't even notice it. But occasionally that little depression catches and holds the fog that sometimes rolls up from the river below. On those days when the road is barely visible my awareness becomes quickly heightened and I become hyper alert. The fog on those days calls me to a level of attention that I rarely experience when I don't need it. In a strange way, by obscuring my ordinary view, the fog helps me become more conscious.

In a similar way the commercial fog surrounding the Christmas Mystery can, by its very excess, help us to become more alert to the road of true life that it nearly covers over. Have you noticed how it rolls in each year in the late summer months as merchants began displaying their wares nearly half a year before Christmas? Bit by bit Christmas oriented merchandise comes to center stage, pushing aside the small bursts of Halloween and

Thanksgiving items and overflowing the aisles and counters with an almost inconceivable variety of consumer opportunities. The enormous scale and nearly blinding fog of retail excess can call us to a level of attention that we rarely experience when we don't need it. The increasingly obscuring fog of consumerism can help us become more conscious and therefore more alert to the real meaning of Christmas which can become easily hidden.

Christmas is about giving. It originated in God giving himself to the human race. This graceful act of selfless giving, followed by the responsive giving of gifts to Christ by the Magi, is the archetypal origin of this custom of giving gifts at Christmas. There could be no more perfect act of sharing and giving than the gift of Christ to the world. The pure giving that initiated the whole process has somehow morphed into the mostly secular fog that tends to obscure it today. But the very excess of that very fog can be a valuable aid for alerting individual contemplatives to look more deeply into the meaning of

the season in our own personal lives.

The process known as "self inquiry" is a very useful tool that enables us to look deeply into ourselves; beneath the surface layers of personality and cultural imitation. A quiet moment of self inquiry is not difficult and does not take very long but it can yield enormous benefits for keeping our attention focused on what truly matters and what is truly real about Christmas as we navigate these last few weeks toward Christmas Day. A good time to practice self inquiry is just after we've finished one of our twice-daily times of Centering Prayer. With our minds unusually open and receptive and our hearts at ease, we can simply ask ourselves: "What does Christmas mean to me?" Then we just listen for what comes up from our personal consciousness. We don't judge the response; we simply use it as information to see where we are heading on the road of life. Now if what comes up reveals that this seasonal fog has confused our spirit of Christmas with busyness or financial concerns, social concerns or family problems, then there is an easy and simple way to get ourselves

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back on the true way. Using another self inquiry we can simply inquire: “What would I like Christmas to mean to me?” Listening deeply we may hear the Spirit inviting us to personal participation in the ongoing incarnation of Christ in human history.

Christ’s birth in Bethlehem was the beginning of a new chapter in human possibility, opening the way for individual human beings to evolve in consciousness in a way and to a degree that had never before been possible. By taking on a human body and being born into the human experience, Christ offered and continues to offer a way for us to transcend the terrible bondage of the human condition. Jean Jacques Rousseau described our condition succinctly, stating, “Man is born free and everywhere he is in chains.” The chains that bind us are for the most part invisible and for that reason are almost unbreakable. The deeply embedded urges for power and control, affection and esteem, and security and survival operate through our personalities in our relationships with the world, trying

to work out the buried pain. They lock us into struggles with money, food, status, sex, drugs, alcohol and every conceivable experience a human can have through the false self.

The multiplied effect of all the false selves in the world, each trying to have their way, each denying the rights of others for countless generations, has given us a world in which war, oppression, persecution and injustice, are norms. What is wrong with this picture? It’s not what we were made for.

We were made for God and our hearts know it. The longings that we feel are revealing our true identity and the desperation in our struggles with the world is telling us what we need to let go of. But by ourselves we could not do this. By ourselves we are powerless. But what is impossible for man alone is possible with the help of God. God became a man like us, through Jesus, so that we could become a Christ like him.

The Light of Reality of which all creation is made became a human being and entered the darkness of human experience. The

Light itself came into the world so that each person might know the truth and live free in the graceful knowledge that each of us is also that very light. We’ve been living in darkness when all our attention and identity is turned toward the world. As we learn to turn our attention within we discover that Christ is already there waiting for us. The celebration of His birth in Bethlehem is a reminder that He wants to be born again and again in any human heart that will have Him. He is the True Self of everyone who has ever been or will be born in this world.

Now is the time to slow down a little and choose to look and listen deeply beneath the fog of the superficial commercial clutter. We will most certainly find the ancient Christmas Mystery waiting within us in an eternal silent and holy night...to welcome us home to our Father’s house so that we can become, in experience, what we always, already are and always have been in Truth.

What would we like Christmas to mean to us? Christ within is our hope of glory. 

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# CHRISTMAS IS COMING; CHRIST IS COMING

by Barbara Cook

At this moment I feel like a child anticipating Christmas as I feel into the oncoming Christmas season. But it is the preparatory period of Advent that I anticipate most eagerly since Centering Prayer became a daily practice in my life. Advent now calls me and offers me a time to get ready for a birth, for the birth of more Christ in the manger of my heart. While everything in my outer world goes into hyper-drive for Christmas, my inner longing is focused on our upcoming Advent Centering Prayer retreat, seven days of intimacy with God through silent prayer and solitude, time to just be with the Beloved and getting slowed down enough to see God in nature and in the human family who gather together in the precious silence.

When those delicious days are complete perhaps I'll be deep enough to meet the call of Christmas in the world and all that entails, while still remembering God, and seeing Christ in those around me. And I will certainly have slowed down enough within myself to deeply ponder Christ

born in history and the Christ wanting to be born in me and in all of humanity.

In her landmark book, *The Real Christ*, which many of us have studied, Bernadette Roberts reminds us that, Christ, in every human person, is that which eternally unites what man is (man's human nature, common to all mankind) to what God is (God's nature or essence).

Advent provides us with a time to deeply consider this profound mystery that St. Paul shouted out to the ages, "Christ in you, your hope of glory." All of us already have

Christ in us. Bernadette echoes his call, reminding us that Christ is eternally, right now and always, uniting what we are to what God is. If we can really take that in and feel it deeply it could be the best Christmas present ever, not just in words but as experience.

Sr. Ilia Delio has said that everybody loves a birthday party with all the gatherings, giving and receiving gifts, decorations and good food. What if this year we brought Christ within us? My prayer for us is that we'll take time, in silence and solitude, to birth or deepen the reality of Christ in us throughout this year. 

## SEEDS

The man who does not permit  
his spirit to be beaten down  
and upset by dryness and helplessness,  
but who lets God lead him  
peacefully through the wilderness,  
and desires no other support or guidance  
than that of pure faith and trust in God alone,  
will be brought to the Promised Land.

Thomas Merton, *Seeds*, page 98.

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## A YEAR IN REVIEW: BLESSED

In 2016, we were invited to join in community to move ever deeper together in this annual aim. Our intention has been to know that we are blessed and clearly see God within and in all.

*Come, O you blessed of my Father! (Mt. 25:34)*

|           |   |
|-----------|---|
| January   | <i>Blessed are the poor of Spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.</i>   |
| February  | <i>Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted.</i>  |
| March     | <i>Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.</i>   |
| April     | <i>Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.</i>  |
| May       | <i>Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.</i>  |
| June      | <i>Blessed are the pure of heart, for they will see God.</i>  |
| July      | <i>Blessed are the peacemakers, for they be called children of God.</i>   |
| August    | <i>Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.</i>  |
| September | <i>Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you because of me.<br/>Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.</i> |
| October   | <i>Blessed are your eyes, because they see, and your ears, because they hear. (Mt. 13:16)</i>   |
| November  | <i>Blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it. (Lk 11:28)</i>  |
| December  | <i>Behold, from now on will all ages call me blessed. (Lk 1:48)</i>   |

*Blessed be the God, and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavens,  
as He chose us in Him, before the foundation of the world,  
to be holy and without blemish before Him.*

Ephesians 1:3

Previous issues of *The Mark* are available at [consciousharmony.org/read-listen/the-mark](http://consciousharmony.org/read-listen/the-mark) if you would like to review and reflect on these monthly community aims.

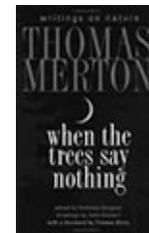
We are so blessed.

## CCH BOOKSTORE

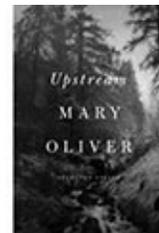
### SUGGESTED TITLES FOR DECEMBER



*Invitation to Love*  
by Thomas Keating



*When the Trees Say Nothing*  
*Writings on Nature*  
by Thomas Merton



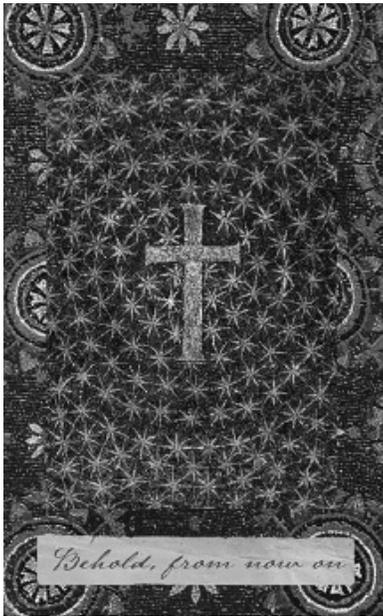
*Upstream*  
by Mary Oliver



*Messages from Water and the Universe*  
by Masaru Emoto

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BOOKSTORE AND LIBRARY HOURS  
Open Monday-Friday 9 am-4 pm  
Sunday 9:30-10 am & 11:30 am-noon



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

## ANNUAL AIM: BLESSED

*Behold, from now on will all ages call me blessed.* Luke 1:48

**BLESSED** by Jim McCune

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In the surrender  
of our unified nature  
to God in love  
... the great I of Jesus Christ  
becomes our I.  
... If special gifts,  
these are exercised  
in dependence  
on God ...  
completely free  
of the results ...  
being, simply, like God,  
the servant of creation.  
*Thomas Keating,  
Invitation to Love*

From that eternal joy  
there comes a call  
to the community of disciples  
here under the cross,  
the call of Jesus,  
“Blessed, blessed.”  
*Dietrich Bonhoeffer,  
Discipleship*

*Blessed are those who have heard the Word,  
embrace it with a warm and generous heart,  
and bear fruit through perseverance.*  
Luke 8:15

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As I look at The Church of Conscious Harmony’s Aim card for December with the blue tapestry background and the overlay of golden stars circling the cross in the center, I reflect on the three associated quotes [see left and above]: disciples who are blessed, being the servant of creation, and embracing with a warm and generous heart. I am continually nourished by these unique monthly aim cards – how the combination of quotes from disparate authors with images combining different mediums, artists, and periods in art history combine into a single unified statement that reinforces the annual church aim: Blessed.

### **Am I Practicing Discipleship? Am I Blessed?**

In the Bonhoeffer quote that has Christ calling to a community

of disciples, under the cross, they are “blessed.”

I thought my father, a Protestant minister, was modeling discipleship when he willingly accepted difficult or low-prestige church assignments in cities or neighborhoods that might not have been his first choice. This left me questioning was I called for such work, in being what might be called a professional disciple, and in paying this sort of price? Sermons I heard on “discipleship” had the same strong and serious tone. They implied doing something that needed to be done, but wasn’t much fun. The uncertain reward seemed like a poor trade-off for all the sacrifice in daily life.

However, going back to a textbook definition, a disciple is not necessarily a martyr, but just a student who is learning under

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the authority of a teacher, as Jesus taught his twelve disciples. At CCH, it is expected that we will try to be disciples through a strong emphasis on reading, studying, and striving for understanding as a student would. This is wonderfully attractive to some people and very off-putting to others who might simply be seeking a place to attend services on Sunday morning. In any case, this learning emphasis becomes very clear by the second or third Sunday service, and visitors make their decision to return (or not) accordingly. Obviously, I decided to stay, but like many others, it was a twisting path that led me here.

After leaving home for college, I did my own form of religious rebellion by avoiding the college chapel services, the interfaith study groups, and anything that would remind me of churches past. I had been very active in community, but uninspired to know more about myself and my relationship to God. Later, after those college years, I started doing work I loved, got married, and began raising children. Beverly and I returned as a young couple to various denominational churches and enjoyed the friendships, the music, and the programs we found there. But discipleship still had the same early association with words like unpleasant and inconvenient. Did God really show His love for me by expecting me to shuffle through a life that mostly felt dreary and obligatory? I saw no reason to become heroic for my faith, since I didn't have much faith outside of a

faith in myself.

As I was just warming up to this church, I found in the *Psychological Commentaries* by Maurice Nicoll explanations of human psychology, but also wisdom for the questions that are still unanswered at mid-life. Why does life sometimes seem so senseless, or chaotic, or just plain boring? Why can't I think and act in a consistent way instead of shifting around like a sheet being blown by the wind? What makes me act so unloving to people that I love very much? These questions and many more are welcomed, studied, and used to help us grow. For example, I learned that most of life's challenges are occurring entirely in my head. I must question every attitude that I hold as true, or be prepared to suffer. Slowly it has become possible to laugh and learn instead of despairing at these questions.

In *The Unbearable Wholeness of Being*, author, scientist, and theologian, Ilia Delio, believes that God can be found in the messiness of His creation. This messiness naturally carries over into our lives as created spiritual beings. Many other writers have commented that the more we learn, the clearer it becomes how little we know. Rather than being a harsh and discouraging reality, I hear this as an opportunity for unlimited discipleship that grows us into a more intimate relationship with the Divine through every experience of life.

"[God says] Discipleship is not limited to what you can comprehend—it must transcend

all comprehension. Plunge into the deep waters beyond your own comprehension, and I will help you to comprehend even as I do. Bewilderment is the true comprehension. Not to know where you are going is the true knowledge. My comprehension transcends yours." Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*

Now, after years of absorbing and practicing what is offered at our church, I can embrace discipleship, knowing that it means being a student of Life and often unlearning as much as I am learning. Life has become one of my most efficient teachers.

### **We Are Servants of Creation**

The quote for this month from Fr. Thomas Keating describes a kind of love that we can strive towards, in a simple existence where like God, we are the servants of creation.

A Work group study of Ilia Delio's 2008 book *Christ in Evolution* energized my understanding of this term, a servant of creation. Here, I first learned of humans as participants in the evolution of our species, our planet, and even all of creation. This implied that God and the universe are expecting something from us in this regard. This vision forces me to look toward the future instead of backward into the relatively short span of time between Jesus' years on earth and the present day.

In her more recent book, *The Unbearable Wholeness of Being*, Delio takes this even further by proposing that our partnership

with God through technology and knowledge is key in using religious imagination to move us past mediocrity and fear in our spiritual lives. Here is a newer, larger, perhaps scarier definition of discipleship, as a challenge and a responsibility. Am I capable of contributing to such a project? Can I stretch my image of God and my understanding of Love into this “power that can evolve our species towards compassion, peace, forgiveness, and justice?” I certainly wish to.

### **A Warm and Generous Heart**

One evening while I was sitting at the computer working on this article, my wife Beverly offered me some advice: to try writing from my heart. The responsible (and unspoken) voice inside me noted how unqualified my heart is to organize thoughts or form logical and correct sentences into a coherent article before the deadline. Despite all that, the next evening’s effort did feel warmer, like it was coming from my heart.

The third quote from Luke also uses the word blessed, this time to describe one who has a warm and generous heart. I have known many people who have a warm and generous heart, but I must place my mother at the top of this list. Mom was the one who brought me a glass of water at night after a bad dream when I was too scared to walk to the bathroom myself. Mom was at home with four young children, making each of us feel special and loved in a unique way. She told

me that my trombone practicing sounded fabulous when it probably did not. She taught me how to cook pancakes, scrambled eggs, bacon, and beef stew, so I’d be able to cook outside over a campfire on Boy Scout campouts. She would remind me to pick up all the tools borrowed from Dad’s toolbox if I left them on the driveway after fixing my bicycle, knowing that Dad’s reminder would probably have a different intensity that evening when he returned home for dinner.

As an adult now, it seems that I’m failing regularly in the warm and generous heart department. I often think about what is best for me, I use people to get what I want, and generosity of heart is being weighed against time, money, and all the other influences that close my heart. I find it easier to love the marvels of nature and the beauty of Creation than the people around me.

Yet there is hope. With the arrival of our first grandchild, I feel different when I am around her pure and innocent spirit, or even just looking at the latest picture of her, arriving in a text message. I am rediscovering the capacity to create and nurture heart connections and place a higher value on relationships of all kinds as I move into my 60s and see the pace of my life slowing.

### **To Be in Relationship**

The word blessed is used several times in our three quotations.

Clarence Jordan’s *Cotton Patch Gospels* spoke to me during my teenage years in the 1970s when the Bible seemed irrelevant and cryptic, so it was like reconnecting with an old friend to come across these thoughts on the word blessed:

“I have tried everywhere to find an English word that would actually translate this Greek word *makarios*. Some translate it ‘happy.’ Some translate it ‘fortunate.’ Some translate it ‘blessed...’ It means to be in a relationship – not a state of joy or happiness, but in a relationship. It means to have the deep security that comes from loving and being loved—to be in union with God. It’s the joy of being on a team that’s playing and going somewhere. I translated it, ‘to be God’s people’—that is, to be in a fellowship of brethren who both love one another and love God. That is the joy, that is the blessing, that’s talked about here.” Clarence Jordan, *The Substance of Faith and Other Cotton Patch Sermons*

This is how I wish to understand the word blessed, and to indeed be blessed. It reminds me of my ever-increasing devotion to God, my love for our church, for the community of friends here, and the vision of living with a warm and generous heart as a servant of creation. This new and broader definition of Christian Discipleship is a very exciting means for being pulled into the future. 

# 2017 CENTERING PRAYER RETREAT SCHEDULE

## CENTERING PRAYER RETREATS AT THE CHURCH OF CONSCIOUS HARMONY

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| Jan 14     | 8:30 am-4:30 pm (p)                    |
| Feb 11     | 8:30 am-4:30 pm (p)                    |
| Mar 5-6    | Sun 8 am-5:30 pm & Mon 7 am-4:30 pm    |
| Mar (tbd)  | United in Prayer Day (location tbd)    |
| Apr 15     | 8:30 am-12:30 pm                       |
| May 13     | 8:30 am-4:30 pm (p)                    |
| May 14-15* | Sun 8 am-5:30 pm & Mon 7 am-4:30 pm    |
| Jun 10     | 8:30 am-4:30 pm (p)                    |
| July 15    | 8:30 am-12:30 pm                       |
| Aug 12-13  | Sat 8:30 am-5:30 pm & Sun 8 am-5:30 pm |
| Sept 9     | 8:30 am-4:30 pm (b)                    |
| Oct 14     | 8:30 am-4:30 pm (b)                    |
| Oct 15-16* | Sun 8 am-5:30 pm & Mon 7 am-4:30 pm    |
| Nov 11     | 12:30 pm-5 pm                          |
| Dec 9      | 8:30 am-4:30 pm (p)                    |

Costs: Half-day ~ \$10 love offering One-day ~ \$15 love offering

Two-day commuter retreat \$100 (sleep at home; meals included)

\* Can be combined with the Saturday 1-day retreat,  
for a 3-day retreat experience.

(p) potluck lunch or (b) brown bag lunch

## MULTI-DAY CENTERING PRAYER RETREATS AT CEDARBRAKE RETREAT AND RENEWAL CENTER

|              |                        |               |
|--------------|------------------------|---------------|
| Jan 20-24    | 5-day Renewal          | Cost: \$425   |
| Mar 24-Apr 2 | 10-day Lenten          | Cost: \$825   |
| June 16-25   | 10-day                 | Cost: \$725** |
| Aug 14-23    | 10-day                 | Cost: \$725** |
| Sep 15-20    | 6-day Welcoming Prayer | Cost: \$495   |
| Dec 1-7      | 7-day Advent           | Cost: \$625   |

\*\*Double rooms only

Single rooms, if available, are an additional \$15/night to advanced & post-intensive retreatants on a first-to register basis.

Contact the office for further information and registration.



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

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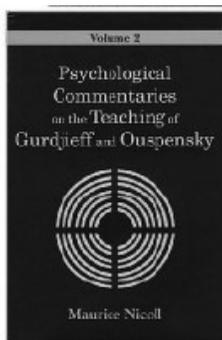
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# THE WORK

## OF INNER CHRISTIANITY

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

### A DIFFERENT WORLD

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When you are relaxed from Personality and Imaginary 'I', things are close to you. They speak to you. You are then truly taking in impressions. Impressions are falling on Essence. The level of Essence is higher than that of Personality. We understand that a higher level receives greater meaning. Now when you are blessed—that is, when you are relaxed from the Personality—you feel the intimacy of everything around you, as if things realized they could go on playing and you would not be angry. If you get angry you cannot relax from the Personality. Or it is as if you and everything around you felt quite suddenly at ease and something could creep out from each object and show itself alive to you. And then suddenly life slams the Personality back into its place and everything is dead.

... But if we can relax from the Personality we wonder at the antics and capers we were indulging in and why we were madly pressing, streaming, rushing along, both outwardly and inwardly. Who is this person who takes charge? Who is this person we have to serve, who dictates what we should think and say, and how we should behave and what things should mean, the person of whom the more we catch glimpses, the more is seen

as stupid, ruthless and tyrannical? Is this person composed only of *imagination*? ... Were I freed from the tyranny of Imaginary 'I' would I see everything differently? Let us see what Ouspensky saw about this tyrannous person when he was lifted above its sphere of influence into another level of consciousness:

“A very great place—perhaps the chief place—in all that I had learned was occupied by the idea of 'I'. That is to say, the feeling or sensation of 'I' in some strange way changed within me. It is very difficult to express this in words. Ordinarily we do not sufficiently understand that at different moments of our life we feel our 'I' differently. ... I knew that in sleep, 'I' is felt differently, not as it is felt in a waking state; just as differently, but in quite another way, 'I' was felt in these experiences. The nearest possible approximation would be if I were to say that everything which is ordinarily felt as 'I' became 'not I', and everything which is felt as 'not I' became 'I'. But this is far from being an exact statement of what I felt and learned ... so far as I can remember it, was a very terrifying sensation. I felt that I was disappearing, vanishing, turning into nothing ... in one case it was ALL that swallowed me up, in the other it

was NOTHING. But this made no difference, because ALL was equivalent to NOTHING. But it was remarkable that later, in subsequent experiments, the same sensation of the disappearance of 'I' began to produce in me a feeling of extraordinary calmness and confidence, which nothing can equal in our ordinary sensations. I seemed to understand at that time that all the usual troubles, cares and anxieties are connected with the usual sensation of 'I', result from it, and, at the same time, constitute and sustain it. Therefore, when 'I' disappeared, all troubles, cares and anxieties disappeared. When I felt that I did not exist, everything else became very simple and easy. ... In the idea of 'I', in the sensation of 'I', such as we ordinarily have, there was something almost abnormal, a kind of fantastic conceit which bordered on blasphemy, as if each one of us called himself God. I felt then that only God could call himself 'I', that only God was 'I'. But we also call ourselves 'I' and do not see and do not notice the irony of it.” 

Maurice Nicoll, *Psychological Commentaries on the Teaching of Gurdjieff and Ouspensky*, page 1547-1549. 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.

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## 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.

### 29<sup>TH</sup> GUIDELINE



The practice of a spiritual discipline is essential at the beginning of the spiritual journey as a means of developing the foundations of the contemplative dimension of life: dedication and devotion to God and service to others. Our daily practice should include a time for contemplative prayer and a program for letting go of the false self.

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## CHRISTMAS SEASON SERVICES

Office closed and no weekday services or classes  
Dec 26-30

Candlelight  
Christmas Eve Service  
Dec 24 6-7 pm

Christmas Day Service  
Dec 25 10-11 am  
(no Lectio Divina or brunch)

New Year's Day Service  
Jan 1 10-11 am  
(no Lectio Divina or brunch)

New Year's Eve Service  
December 31  
8:30 pm-12:15 am

Taize Service  
8:30-9:30 pm

Centering Prayer & Fellowship  
9:30-11:00 pm

Burning Bowl Ceremony  
11-11:45 pm

Centering Prayer  
11:45 pm-12:15 am  
Bring light finger foods to share

## DECEMBER CALENDAR

Visit [consciouharmony.org](http://consciouharmony.org)  
for a complete listing of events

### SPECIAL EVENTS

7-Day Advent Retreat at Cedarbrake  
Dec 2-8  
Call 512.347.9673 to register

One-Day Centering Prayer Retreat  
Dec 10 8:30 am-4:30 pm  
\$15 Bring a potluck dish to share

The Glorious Impossible Christmas Program  
Dec 15 7 pm

See the Christmas Season Calendar on the  
left for additional special events.

### MONTHLY

1st Sundays  
Bring non-perishables for Caritas

Gurdjieff Music  
Dec 20 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 10:15-10:45 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

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Recordings of services are available  
through the Bookstore and online at  
[www.consciouharmony.org](http://www.consciouharmony.org)



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

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*The true light, which enlightens everyone,  
was coming into the world.  
And to those who would accept Him He gave power  
to become children of God,  
to those who believe in Him,  
who are born not by natural generation  
nor by human choice  
nor by a man's decision but of God.*

John 1:9, 12

## INCARNATION

Christ, by joining the human family, has subjected Himself to the consequences of the flesh and at the same time introduced into it the principle of redemption ...

The joy of Christmas is the intuition that all limitations to growth into higher states of consciousness have been overcome. The Divine light cuts across all darkness, prejudice, preconceived ideas, prepackaged values, false expectations, phoniness and hypocrisy.

It presents us with the truth.

To act out of the truth is to make Christ grow not only in ourselves, but in others.

... 'Now is the time of salvation,' that is, now is the time when the whole of the Divine mercy is available.

Now is the time to risk further growth.

... As we turn our gaze toward the Babe in the crib, our inmost being opens to the new consciousness that the Babe has brought into the world.

Thomas Keating, *The Mystery of Christ*

