

March 2017  
Volume 29  
Number 3



# THE MARK

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



ALLOWING,  
ACCEPTING,  
LOVING  
WHAT IS

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# THE VIA CRUCIS

by Tim Cook

The world is getting hotter and not just in the climate of the physical earth. Our relations with others, people and creatures, who share the earth with us are heating up too. Our mailbox is filled virtually every day with pleas for financial help from organizations all over the world that are attempting to help ease the suffering and ensure the survival of orphans, refugees, political prisoners, rescued circus and lab animals, rivers, oceans and wild creatures of every sort whose survival is threatened by humanity's ever-expanding influence. Barb and I support as many of these as we can as we increasingly realize the profound, unavoidable reality that we are all in this together on this beautiful earth. I believe that sharing our abundance and our service is not praise-worthy, generous, noble or anything of that sort. It just seems like common sense for each small part to do it's best to serve the betterment of the whole human race and our planet. I think of it as enlightened self-interest.

But even though we continue to participate in the maintenance of the world, it is easy to see why

so many of us feel discouraged. The scope of the challenge is vast and there is so much sorrow, pain, injustice, cruelty, instability and anxiety being communicated from every sector that it is difficult to let go of the idea that there is or must be something that we, by ourselves, can do to fix it. Even though it is good and necessary to share our abundance and efforts, we must never hope that money, programs or personal service, by themselves, are the whole story when it comes to doing our part and making our contribution. For some of us there is a deeper call, a call to contemplation.

The Bible story of Martha and Mary puts that thought into clear perspective. Jesus is visiting the home of his friends Martha and Mary. Mary can't take her eyes off the Christ, while her sister Martha is busy preparing to serve him a meal. Martha gets frustrated by Mary's seeming neglect of the task of serving him and asks Jesus to tell Mary to assist her in the effort. He replies in a way that has guided contemplatives down through the centuries, "*Martha, Martha,*" *the Lord answered, "you are worried and*

*upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.*" (Luke 10:41-42) In Christ, both action and contemplation are good but contemplation, gazing at the Christ, is the better of the two. It is necessary for us, because it can never be taken away. Each way of service to Christ is good, but only one is eternal. It fulfills the greatest commandment, "*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.*" (Matthew 22:37)

But keeping our attention on the Christ is by no means a passive, effortless means of accepting his instruction to follow Him. We don't and can't follow Him casually or partially. It is in Him that we live and move and have our very being. We are in Christ and Christ is in us. Following Him means gazing at His presence, staying aware of His presence, in and under all conditions, including the occasions in which we suffer the great difficulties that confront all of us who live in the human condition. He calls us, "Pick up your cross and follow me." He is inviting us, with

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Mary, to the better part, to join Him on the contemplative way to His resurrected life within us.

Our crosses come to us in great and small ways, as we learn to bear the difficulties of our lives and our world without complaining or blaming others. That means that we meet the circumstances of our lives with non-identifying, without taking them personally, as if our conditions, whether outer or inner, are our identity. In Christ Consciousness we are not identified with any conditions, but instead we meet them, all of them, with Christ and in Christ. As we apply the powerful tools of the Work of Inner Christianity to our own experiences, we learn for ourselves the principles of the Work that teach us that a being who is identified is simply identified, dead asleep. When we are identified, asleep or dead, do the whys and hows of getting into that condition matter at all? The reasons we give, the triggers we have, may seem great or small, the burning may be intense or not, but the situation is always the same. When we are identified with conditions, we are asleep and dead to all access of higher knowledge and spiritual

wisdom. But, we also **gain** access to our **cross**, and to our destiny in Christ's resurrection.

Maurice Nicoll refers to it like this, "Always to go your own way is to remain asleep, to remain mechanical, to remain a machine. When you have your own way, when things go smoothly, you are not going against yourself, and you are not conscious. When two things cross, we get a slight moment of consciousness. We wake up a little, for a moment. If you never put the Work in opposition to life you will have no cross, in a big sense, because the Work and life go in different directions, and this cross is not comparable with the little crosses that life produces that come and go and that we deal with in our own life way, but it is a quite different kind of cross. Once it begins to be formed in you it remains and is felt all the time. You know that you cannot have your own way, sometimes more distinctly and sometimes less distinctly, but you know it all the time and you know that even if things seem easier, you cannot delude yourself into imagining that this is what you want. The reality of the Work

becomes a greater reality than the realities of life."

Remember, Jesus invited us to "pick up your cross and follow me." That involves **failing** at straightening out the world, just as he was tempted to do by Satan, in the desert. Clearly Jesus was never unfeeling about the state of the world and neither must we be. He grieved, wept, was sorrowed and angered for the world. His response was to die for it. And He invites us to do the same, to go all the way with Him for the sake of the world and die to our false-self in its entirety. We are not here on earth to be improved. We are seeds of the God/man and are meant to die as seeds in order to bloom into a new, previously unimagined life. The Rose of Christ, the resurrection awaits us. The world needs resurrected souls. Few really want to die with Him though.

Ours is a transformative path of *kenosis*, self-emptying, that simply embraces the suffering of the entire human race and the earth, just as it presents itself to us and in us personally. In this way of our participation in the human condition we feel and bear our

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# ACCEPTING WHAT IS

by Barbara Cook

A wise Indian teacher once said, “Everyone would be enlightened, if they just wanted what they have and didn’t want what they didn’t have. Take a moment and think about it...”

In a similar vein, at a time when life was seemingly very trying and difficult for me, I heard a recording of M. Scott Peck saying, “Life is difficult ... but once you get that, it’s not so bad.” It was a laugh-out-loud moment for me, because in a split-second I could see most of the difficulty was in wishing that things weren’t like this and wanting things to be different. I could see the recurrence in thinking “this shouldn’t be this way; that shouldn’t be that way.” But obviously, it was simply the way it was.

Fr. Thomas Keating has said numerous times that if we say yes to what is ... (which is, of course, completely counterintuitive to the false-self), it may not end up being as bad as our self thinks it will be; and, if there is still something that

can change, we will meet it more consciously from a non-reactive place. Gurdjieff had a deceptively simple, but powerfully liberating aphorism, “Like what it does not like.” “It,” of course, refers to the false personality or self.

Could it be that our conditioned selves have limited vision no matter how intelligent or wise they feel about themselves, and that letting them guide our lives could be unenlightened and painful? When we accept that we have a false-self that was and is formed as a tool of survival and socialization and that it is now an impediment to love God and others, we take a great step forward on our spiritual journey. As we open more deeply to how it is, we become aware that there is indeed a power greater than I that reveals itself to us and invites us to a real relationship through prayer. We may even find ourselves praying for the help we need in order to completely turn our lives toward it. Centering Prayer helps us open

to an experiential relationship with God’s presence twice a day, every day.

At The Church of Conscious Harmony we also practice a method of inner sincerity and scathing self-honesty, through the Work of Inner Christianity. We learn tools that help us see our interior environment, to observe the emotional reactivity that is usually obscured by the false-self’s PR department.

Gradually we learn to open to the graces that we were given in Baptism. We become willing participants in the process of dying to ourselves and to rising in Christ. The false-self in each of us, that won’t accept reality as it is, is the very thing that stands between us and Love and Truth. As we progressively let it go, we begin to see for ourselves, that we have been acting as though we were the center of the universe, right about everything.

On the spiritual journey, our feeling of self and the feeling of I,

sorrows and the sorrows and pain of the world, while at the same time knowing that it is actually Christ within us that is doing all the bearing and feeling all the pain. There are big crosses for every generation. That is simply the human condition. It just is as it is. There really are no “reasons.” Anything from a family quarrel to nuclear threats will do to help us see our own violence. When we get identified we are simply identified, asleep and dead. All seeking of the “whys” leads to the same condition of lower and therefore diminished consciousness. This Via Crucis, this

Way of the Cross is fairly easy to know about, but it can be extremely difficult to actually go through and painful to endure. Yet, with Christ’s help and the guidance of the Spirit, it blooms us, resurrects us and carries us across the raging river of life’s chaotic, reactive, confusing, warring impressions and to another unexpected shore of new life.

A good question to consider and ponder as we enter our personal Lenten desert time is, “Am I following the lead of the crucified Christ or His crucifiers?” You’d want to know. ☺

moves from the head to the heart. We feel Christ within loving God’s world and the beginnings of the experience that God is with us, in us, and vastly greater than us. As we consent to this loving Presence, He loves us into wholeness and the false-self starts to die. We die to our attitudes, opinions, self-righteousness and open to the righteousness of God who loves all of His creation. His love turns us upside down or perhaps reveals that we are now right side up for the first time in our lives. I can’t imagine how a person could or would do this without God’s

unconditional love that we receive in Centering Prayer and the sort of honesty that we get in a twelve-step program or the Work of Inner Christianity.

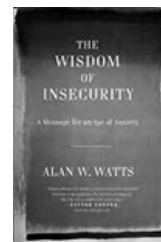
Lent is a special time of desert consciousness, a time to check out what our little, self-protective selves might be doing to block out the love, light, and life of our true nature and God. This is a good time to simplify so we can assess our lives; a good time to hunger for a relationship with Reality. Make more time for Centering Prayer and perhaps do a retreat to clarify your heart and free your vision. Be blessed by accepting what is! ☺

## CCH BOOKSTORE

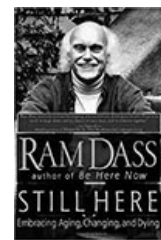
### SUGGESTED TITLES FOR MARCH



*Peace Is Every Breath*  
by Thich Nhat Hanh



*The Wisdom of Insecurity*  
by Alan Watts

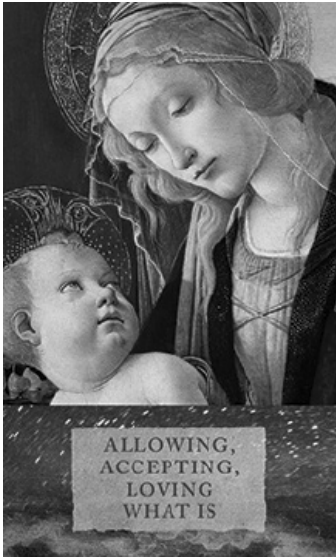


*Still Here*  
by Ram Dass



*Divine Therapy and Addiction*  
by Thomas Keating

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



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*I find joy in Your testimonies ... Glory to God forever!* Psalm 119:14

## ANNUAL AIM: COMMUNION

### ALLOWING, ACCEPTING AND LOVING WHAT IS

by Nicole Dawkins

*His death on the cross  
saves us  
because it teaches us  
how to allow what is,  
to accept what is  
and eventually to actually  
love what is.  
This is more than  
a superficial, passive  
milk-and-water  
acceptance of fate—  
it is a profoundly  
dynamic allowing,  
a deep acceptance.  
Ultimately, in loving what is,  
we are loving  
God Himself,  
we are loving  
our own true Self.*

Frances Bennett, *I Am That I Am*

My friends' nickname for me during my twenties was "Cat," referring to "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof." I was known for being uneasy, on-edge, and agitated. Like the cat trying not to burn its paws, I was always on the move trying to avoid the pain of my internal turmoil.

Happiness and peace was something I could look forward to in the future, something I would gain by "jumping through the hoops" and "chasing the carrot-on-the-end-of-the-stick," placed there by well-intentioned authority figures. I did a good job of doing what I was told, but at the finish line, I was not rewarded with the happiness I had been promised.

As I groped for a direction in my life, finding little satisfaction in the ways of our society, I dealt with my soul-sickness through the use of alcohol. Tim Cook says that we worship that on which we put our

attention. By that definition, alcohol was my god, albeit a kind god – allowing me to deny and repress the emotional pain I suffered. By my late twenties, however, I could no longer drink enough or move fast enough to avoid my cat's paws from getting burned. It was time to get off the roof.

I landed in the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous, where the seeds for my spiritual journey were sown. Through my fellow alcoholics, I was taught how to accept and find strength in my powerlessness. I learned for the first time what it felt like to love and be loved unconditionally. Most importantly, I discovered a personal God of my understanding, who was much different than the one of my youth, defined by the narrowness of institutionalized religion.

I must have done something right in my life up until then

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because I was blessed by meeting a remarkable man. We got married and quickly had a child. I was living the dream life. I was in love with my exceptional husband; we had a nice home, and I was able to stay home and raise my newborn son. Unfortunately (I thought it unfortunate at the time), the dream quickly came to an end when I learned my son had autism.

Now the cat was back on that hot tin roof. Pregnant with my second son and overwhelmed with the prospects of dealing with autism, I began frantically running around to doctors and therapists to find the magic pill or treatment to make this nightmare go away. I entered into a great darkness; I was bewildered, torn, and deeply depressed. Any sense of union I felt with God was obliterated.

In order to be closer to specialists of autism, my family and I left our dream home and moved to a tiny rental house off of Cuernavaca. This is where the “curse” of autism became a blessing in disguise because The Church of Conscious Harmony was just a few miles away from our new, humble abode. In my despair, I had an authentic longing for experiencing God in my life again – like I had when I first entered the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous. I told my husband I needed to know

God in a new way and wanted to try this small church nearby.

During my first service at CCH, I heard something I had never heard before (or since, for that matter). Before the time of Centering Prayer, Barbara invited us to let go of the roles we served – parent, spouse, employee, child, etc. I believe the Spirit moved through Barbara Cook to speak directly to me. I had never known myself to be anything other than the role I was playing in the “story of me,” so this idea hit me to my very core. Tears streamed down my face for the rest of the service. Upon leaving the church, my son with autism had an intense meltdown. A member of the congregation looked at me and said, “All is well.” In my mind, I was saying, “All is not *bleeping* well.” Yet, the earnestness and conviction in her eyes told me that it was true. All is well. I desperately wanted to see through her eyes, so I immediately signed up for the The Introduction to Centering Prayer offering.

In reading the book *Open Mind, Open Heart* by Thomas Keating, I learned that our basic core of goodness is our True Self. All I had to do was “consent to [God’s] loving presence in interior silence.” Centering Prayer offered me a new way to know God – in the silence and stillness. Quickly, I became

aware that God resided within me. Even during the unpleasant experiences of daily life, I felt the “Divine Indwelling as the inmost Presence of my being.” Dealing with the unpleasant manifestations of autism, tantrums of the younger son, disappointments in married life, and all the things that make life “hard” seemed easy now ... until they didn’t.

My pleasant experiences of God in daily life ceased to exist. Fr. Keating had warned me in *Open Mind, Open Heart* that “when you emerge from [Centering Prayer] into the ordinary routines of daily life, your emotional programs start going off again [and drain] the reservoir of interior silence that you had established during the prayer.” I suppose I thought I was immune from that, so I scheduled a meeting with Tim. I asked him what I was doing wrong and when I would become Mother Theresa. Tim was quick to tell me that God didn’t want me to be her; God wanted me to be me. Well, that was **not** the Good News I went there seeking. Nevertheless, I was at a place of no turning back. If the only way out of Nicole was through Nicole, I would take that path.

Thus I began my studies of The Work of Inner Christianity. I dove into *The Commentaries* by Maurice Nicoll and began going to every

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Thursday night class. As soon as I could, I joined a Second Line Group and attained a Work partner. I began to take directions and recognized their value in becoming a “New Woman.” Now, in addition to my daily practice of Centering Prayer, I began a practice of self-inquiry, which was in no way as delightful as my time of prayer in the silence ... at least in the beginning.

Gaining insight of my self was a humiliating experience. Yet, humiliation led to humility, and humility to love. By seeing and accepting the unpleasantness in myself, I began to accept and love others, without judging us as good or bad. In learning how to love others as myself, I realized that The Work of Inner Christianity was like a *Gospels for Dummies* for me – instructions in how to understand the teachings in the Gospels, which are so simple, yet for me, had been so difficult to understand.

As I wrestled with unlearning, I made space for new knowledge to be taken in. Thankfully, CCH has many offerings, classes, and suggested readings that have aided me in seeing things in a new way. In addition to Fr. Keating, Maurice Nicoll, and Tim Cook, my other teachers came from CCH recommended readings – David Hawkins, Richard Rohr, Thomas

Merton, Alan Watts, Ram Dass, Teilhard de Chardin, Bernadette Roberts, and Ilia Delio – to name a few. Each new teacher teaches me to die again and again to ideas that no longer serve me and be born and re-born to those that do.

A couple years ago, I attended a workshop at CCH on the Welcoming Prayer Practice, which I feel transported me to a whole new dimension in my spiritual journey. I had heard Tim say many times that the issues are in the tissues, but up until then, I had gone over, under or around the issues. As a recovering anorexic and alcoholic, I had spent a lifetime repressing emotions in the body. The simple practice of the Welcoming Prayer taught me how to *allow* the sensations in my body without resistance. I could *accept* what the body felt without resisting what was happening in life. Simply by engaging in the suffering in this new way, I was transformed into *love* in a whole new way. At last, I felt grounded in a “kind of deep acceptance and profound surrender that permeates life and makes challenges more livable.” (*I Am That I Am*, Frances Bennett)

In January, I attended the Ilia Delio workshop. Just when I thought I had “it” all figured out,

free as a butterfly, I was returned to liquid within my chrysalis, albeit a very nutrient-rich soup. Yet, no longer do I fret being melted away. All I have to do is *allow* myself to be teachable, *accept* knowing that I do not know, and oh how I *love* it! As Ilia would say, “Trust, love, and give it all you got!”

Looking back through my spiritual journey, I see that, somewhere in the process, I *allowed* the story to drop; I began to *accept* that life is unfolding simply how it has to, and I could *love* people without insisting that they be any different than they are. I once heard Ram Dass say, “The resistance to an unpleasant situation is the root of suffering.” By accepting myself and my life exactly as is, I can trust and love what God has arranged for me to experience in each new moment. Whether difficult or easy, preferred or not, I can trust that God is in all, and all is in God.

The best part is that I am not alone. No man is an island; without the support of my fellow community members at CCH, I’d still be the distressed cat, miserable on that hot tin roof. After all, “Undergirding God’s mysterious love for us as individuals is the even more wondrous way grace comes to us in community.” (*Addiction and Grace*, Gerald G. May, M.D.) ☺



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# SEEDS

We do not exist for ourselves alone,  
and it is only when we are fully convinced of this fact  
that we begin to love ourselves properly and thus also love others. What  
do I mean by loving ourselves properly?

I mean, first of all, desiring to live, accepting life  
as a very great gift and a great good, not because of what it gives us,  
but because of what it enables us to give to others. ...

If we live for others, we will gradually discover that  
no one expects us to be "as gods."

We will see that we are human, like everyone else, that we all have  
weaknesses and deficiencies, and that these limitations of ours  
play a most important part in all our lives.

It is because of them that we need others and others need us.

We are not all weak in the same spots,  
and so we supplement and complete one another,  
each one making up in himself for the lack in another.

Thomas Merton, *Seeds*, page 136.

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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.

### 32<sup>ND</sup> GUIDELINE



The Beatitude of poverty of spirit  
springs from the increasing awareness of our true Self.

It is a nonpossessive attitude toward everything  
and a sense of unity with everything at the same time.

The interior freedom to have much or to have little,  
and the simplifying of one's life-style  
are signs of the presence of poverty of spirit.



## THE CHURCH of CONSCIOUS HARMONY

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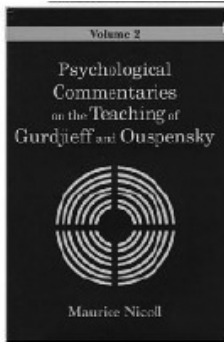
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# THE WORK

## OF INNER CHRISTIANITY

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

### ACCEPTANCE OF ONESELF

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Acceptance comes after the work of uncritical Observing 'I'. Self-observation is not acceptance but what self-observation does is to present you with a fuller consciousness of yourself and, through the new material that it has collected in its special memory, you have to come to the question of acceptance that all these things are true of you. There is however a curious state in us all owing to which we do not accept ourselves. ... Buffers prevent us from seeing contradictions and so prevent us from awakening from sleep. Buffers replace Real Conscience. If we had Real Conscience we would see and feel all sides of ourselves together. Such a state would completely destroy False Personality and all forms of imagination that contribute to its strength. We would become simpler, nicer. We all have buffers in every part of a centre but do not see them. ... Self-observation is compared, as we all know, with a ray of light let in to our inner darkness. So we gradually find that we are not

what we thought or imagined. ... Here the idea of False Personality comes in. You say, for example ... "God, I thank thee, that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all that I get"? ... Whatever we may understand by God, we may be quite sure that we can hide nothing from this supreme force of consciousness and that all our buffers, all our pictures, our pretences, all our inner lies, and everything to do with False Personality, all this is nothing but so much dirt. ... I cannot believe that a man who has become conscious of the full circle of himself would lose anything save the valueless things of False Personality. Would not this give such a man a greater inner stability? Such a man would no longer have buffers—and let me remind you here that once a buffer is destroyed it can never reform itself. I fancy that such a man would never be rendered useless by anything that was said to him,

that might in another man offend his self-love, his vanity, his pride, and produce endless hatreds and recriminations and jealousies.

When people talk to me about their private difficulties and their hidden life I do not find anything astonishing because I have learned through this Work that all these things are also in me and that it is useless pretending they are not. ... No one can feel his own nothingness unless he accepts this other half of the circle. Then he will feel no illusions about himself and in a quite strange way he will feel at peace. He will feel stronger, not weaker, and it is then that he will be shown what he has really to work at and transform because he is then no longer building on the sand of False Personality.

... Acceptance destroys Personality and all imagination about oneself and brings one to a new basis from which the Work can start ... so that Essence can grow. When you can accept every accusation and insult without

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## RITE OF PASSAGE 2017

The passage from adolescence into young adulthood is a critical milestone in development, yet in our society this transition is virtually ignored as a spiritual rite. Ritual is a physical representation of the unseen, of the spiritual or metaphysical realm of life, and rites of passage in other cultures have been powerful ceremonies that include educational, experiential and challenging elements.

The Church of Conscious Harmony, with the abundant and generous guidance of the Holy Spirit, has created such a Rite for its youth. The Youth Council was formed in 2001 to initiate, empower and honor our youth by ritually celebrating and blessing them as they move into their next stage of life. Our aim is to serve our youth by acknowledging them as sacred beings and to prepare them for the journey that lies ahead.

High school seniors and college students who are active in CCH and who are interested in participating in this Rite may contact Don Hale, [youthdirector@consciousharmony.org](mailto:youthdirector@consciousharmony.org).

As we begin our sixteenth year of offering this Rite of Passage, we invite you to join our intention to bless the youth who have chosen this path. We pray that the Youth Council members may open their hearts to the movement of the Spirit within and that the initiates may be filled with the Light and Love of Christ as they cross the bridge from childhood into adulthood. ☸

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reacting violently you are beginning to understand the place from which this Work can grow and produce another being in you, so notice what upsets you most violently, what makes you indignant, what makes you say that you cannot stand it any longer, for this is a very good guide to self-observation and to what you have to observe. When you begin

to feel your own nothingness you begin to receive the help of the Work to replace that nothingness by something. So you have to go down a long way before you begin to go up. ☸

Maurice Nicoll, *Psychological Commentaries on the Teaching of Gurdjieff and Ouspensky*, pages 874-878. 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.

## MARCH CALENDAR

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

### SPECIAL EVENTS

Ash Wednesday Service  
Mar 1 12-12:30 pm

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

Two-Day Commuter Retreat  
Mar 5 8 am-5:30 pm &  
Mar 6 7 am-4:30 pm  
\$100 Pre-register in the office.

10-Day Lenten Retreat at Cedarbrake  
Mar 24-Apr 2  
Call the office for information.

### MONTHLY

1st Sundays  
Bring non-perishables for Caritas

Gurdjieff Music  
Mar 21 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  
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Temptation of Christ, J. Kirk Richards

## ENTRY INTO LENT

The struggle between the old and the new self is a constant theme in the New Testament. The [old] self easily adjusts to the circumstances of the spiritual journey as long as it does not have to change itself. Thus, it manifests its radical self-centeredness in various expressions of human activity: in material pursuits ... in emotional satisfactions ... in intellectual goals ... in social goals ... in religious aspirations ... even in spiritual commitments such as prayer, the practice of virtue and every form of ministry. .... No amount of theological, scriptural or liturgical study can heal the egoic-self system, because as long as our self-centered programs for happiness are firmly in charge, such studies are easily co-opted by them.

The heart of the Christian asceticism – and the work of Lent – is to face the unconscious, limiting values that underlie the emotional programs for happiness and *to change them*.

Thomas Keating, *The Mystery of Christ*

*Let it be done to me according to Thy Word.*

Luke 1:38



*Now if I do what I do not want,  
 it is no longer I who do it,  
 but sin that dwells in me.  
 ... For I take delight in the law of God,  
 in my inner self,  
 but I see in my members another principle  
 at war with the law of my mind,  
 taking me captive to the law of sin  
 that dwells in my members.  
 Miserable one that I am!  
 Who will deliver me from this mortal body?  
 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
 Romans 7:18-25*