
ALL TOGETHER

by Tim Cook

As children, before we could speak, we each lived in a private, enclosed world of direct, immediate, subjective experience. The small amount of communication required of us regarding our needs for food or hygiene was automatically and easily expressed through primitive grunts, coos, giggles and screams. But with the arrival of language, our lives began to open up to new horizons of possibility and power as we were enabled to express and share ideas, experiences and learning with our families and the world around us. Some of us even went further and learned to speak the languages of other cultures. Then we learned to think and reason in terms that were not limited to the ideas and insights of our native culture. Sometimes we learn new words in other languages that convey concepts that could not even be expressed or expressed as well in the language of our birth. A case in point for me was the discovery of a couple of German words. One is, *zeitgeist*, meaning the overall spirit of the times for a certain period or epoch in a given culture. Another is *gestalt*, which refers to a gathering

of seemingly different facts or ideas under a single conceptual umbrella that reveals how they fit together into a greater whole. These words are powerful conceptual tools in my thinking and expression. My English reasoning is augmented by their borrowed influence.

Each language is suited to the history and the needs of the civilization or culture in which it arises and when that era ends or when that civilization is conquered by another one that language dies or disappears by being absorbed into another. Currently there are about 7000 languages spoken on Earth. Some linguists estimate that tens or even hundreds of thousands of languages have vanished as global culture has evolved. But all language in all time attempts the same task – communication of needs. Here is food ... there is water ... here is danger ... there is safety ... here is love ... here is meaning ... here is misery ... here is happiness ... and so on. Sometimes languages that are still currently in use can become dull and lose their vitality because we become so familiar with the words that they cease to be powerful bearers of meaning. God

is love, God loves me, I love God, I love cheesecake, I love Barbara; one word tries to express too many meanings and so might fail to truly convey any of them and so we may have to borrow from Greek or Latin to communicate precisely what we wish to express.

Spoken and written words are not the only languages we employ though. Science is also a language and so are religions. They tell us about how parts and wholes and causes and effects operate and work together. Sometimes an idea from science or from another religion can help us gain new and deeper understanding of familiar terms in our native religion. An example is Oneness. “Hear Israel the Lord is our God, the Lord is One” or “The Father and I are One.” What do you feel when you read them?

A Buddhist concept that has been extremely helpful to my understanding of Oneness is *dependent arising*. Everything depends on everything else. This is because that is. If this is not that is not. There is no independent existence of anything. All existence is a single process of manifestation in which nothing exists without everything else, from galaxies

to subatomic structures to the community of humanity and even mosquitos. Everything is always and only One. I have known this in a general way for much of my life. But it was not until I read *The Heart Of Understanding*, Thich Nhat Hahn's brilliant and easily understood commentary on the Heart Sutra, that these concepts became inclusively three dimensional and vitally alive for me. He refers to it as interbeing.

“If you are a poet, you will see clearly that there is a cloud floating in this sheet of paper. Without a cloud, there will be no rain; without rain, the trees cannot grow; and without trees we cannot make paper. The cloud is essential for the paper to exist. If the cloud is not here, the sheet of paper cannot be here either. So we can say that the cloud and the paper inter-are. “Interbeing” is a word that is not in the dictionary yet, but if we combine the prefix “inter-” with the verb “to be”, we have a new verb, inter-be. Without a cloud,

we cannot have paper, so we can say that the cloud and the sheet of paper inter-are.

If we look into this sheet of paper even more deeply, we can see the sunshine in it. If the sunshine is not there, the forest cannot grow. In fact, nothing can grow. Even we cannot grow without sunshine. And so, we know that the sunshine is also in this sheet of paper. The paper and the sunshine inter-are. And if we continue to look, we can see the logger who cut the tree and brought it to the mill to be transformed into paper. And we see the wheat. We know that the logger cannot exist without his daily bread, and therefore the wheat that became his bread is also in this sheet of paper. And the logger's father and mother are in it too. When we look in this way, we see that without all of these things, this sheet of paper cannot exist.

Looking even more deeply, we can see we are in it too. This is not difficult to

see, because when we look at the sheet of paper, the sheet of paper is part of our perception. Your mind is in here and mine is also. So we can say that everything is in here with this sheet of paper. You cannot point out one thing that is not here – time, space, the earth, the rain, the minerals in the soil, the sunshine, the cloud, the river, the heat. Everything coexists with this sheet of paper. That is why I think the word inter-be should be in the dictionary. “To be” is to inter-be. You cannot just *be* by yourself alone. You have to inter-be with every other thing. This sheet of paper is, because everything else is.

Suppose we try to return one of the elements to its source. Suppose we return the sunshine to the sun. Do you think that this sheet of paper will be possible? No, without sunshine nothing can be. And if we return the logger to his mother, then we have no sheet of

continued on page 5

PLUGGED IN OR NOT

by Barbara Cook

Tim and I have been reading, *Antiquities of the Jews*, by the 1st Century Jewish historian Josephus written for his Roman patrons and other non-Jewish people of the time. He is writing for people who did not read the Bible, but whose interests in history were more scholarly than religious. He chronicles the history of the Jewish people from the time of Abraham up to the time of his writing in about 94 C.E. He had formerly been the head of Jewish forces in Galilee who were fighting for independence from Roman domination. But when the struggle was clearly lost, he worked to convince his people to surrender to avoid being slaughtered. Since he was a scholar he was spared and enslaved, but eventually became a Roman citizen, famous as a historian.

Antiquities recounts many of the same stories found in the Bible regarding the evolution of monotheism. The worship of One God was a rarity in the consciousness of the people of the Roman Empire. Many gods, especially nature gods, were more the norm. His account follows the Bible closely but with a few additions and omissions. It is a fascinating story, revealing some of the same understandings that modern Bible scholars have noted and which some have referred to as the Deuteronomical roller coaster. When the people lived in active relationship, close to God and abiding by the Commandments,

they prospered. When they lived just for themselves and/or worshiped the many gods of their neighbors, their fortunes were reversed and they were repeatedly overrun by their foes. When they again remembered God and restored worship, their lives bloomed. Josephus revealed this history to his Roman readers who loved the history, but were just interested in the stories, not the principles they revealed.

The thing about principles is that they are always true, and what they revealed then is just as true in our own time. Our lives bloom when we are in direct relationship with the Creator of our lives. The best, most direct way I know of is the simple prayer of consent,

Centering Prayer, a prayer of opening to God. All prayer is relationship. Centering Prayer is relationship and a discipline in service to that relationship. If I simply show up for that relationship, twice a day every day, my relationship with God will be truly alive and growing deeper. If I don't relate to Him, if I fail to spend time with Him, I increasingly attempt to run my own life by my own lights, just like the world around me does. Then my foes, pride, doubt, ignorance, fear and greed begin to overtake me and I am liable to be overtaken by worldliness and cast into the darkness of unconsciousness.

Same lesson over and over again. Am I plugged into my Source or not? ☸

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.

35TH GUIDELINE



Obedience is the unconditional acceptance of God as He is and as He manifests Himself in our lives.

God's will is not immediately evident.

Docility inclines us to attend to all the indications of His will.

Discernment sifts the evidence and then decides, in the light of the inward attraction of grace, what God seems to be asking here and now.

continued from page 3

paper either. The fact is that this sheet of paper is made up only of ‘non-paper elements.’ And if we return these non-paper elements to their sources, then there can be no paper at all. Without ‘non-paper elements,’ there will be no paper. As thin as this sheet of paper is, it contains everything in the universe in it.”

Sometimes hearing or reading a religious idea from the conceptual framework of another religion or a scientific point of view can help us to a deeper understanding of our own more familiar, and therefore less-impactful, terms. Consider and ponder the words of Jesus the Christ, from the point of view of interbeing. “I am in you and you are in me and we are in the Father.” Do you get it? We are all in this affair of Life together, united with each and every other part, great and small and with the Great Whole through the Mystery of Christ. Read the Farewell Discourses in John’s Gospel through this mind-blowing lens of inter-being and you will directly feel **God, the Immanent Spirit** touching and warming your heart, opening it to **God, the Transcendent Fathers’ Love**, through the expression of **God, the Omnipresent Logos or Son, Christ**. Each of us participates in the life, the expression and evolution of the entire universe ... not sort of ... not pretty much; but

actually and literally, all the time. The way you play your part and the way I play mine matters. We’re both here right now in this sheet of paper you are holding and so is everything and everyone else.

The nature of Reality, however, is not only a matter of interest for inter-religious dialogue. The very same understandings are pouring into human consciousness from the world of science. Quantum physics employs an entirely different language to express the very same condition of the indivisible wholeness of existence itself. But there is no true wholeness in science alone because it always leaves out the scientist herself, as though she could stand outside the entire process as a disinterested, impartial observer. Religion invites her to participate in the mysterious wholeness of Life, even while studying its parts. Religion can bring warmth to science. Science can help religions from growing crusty and stale. Religions can bring understanding to each other. Together they form a critical new *gestalt* for the *zeitgeist* of our desperate times.

God’s Love and Presence is in all of it. When we understand, we see, along with St. Paul, that Christ, the Logos, is all in all. Look deeply, deeper and even more deeply into this sheet of paper you are now holding and see for yourself and **see** yourself. We are all in this together. There is only One, Love. ☸

CCH BOOKSTORE

SUGGESTED TITLES FOR JUNE



THE HEART OF UNDERSTANDING
BY THICH NHAT HANH



LIVING THE RESURRECTION
BY EUGENE PETERSON

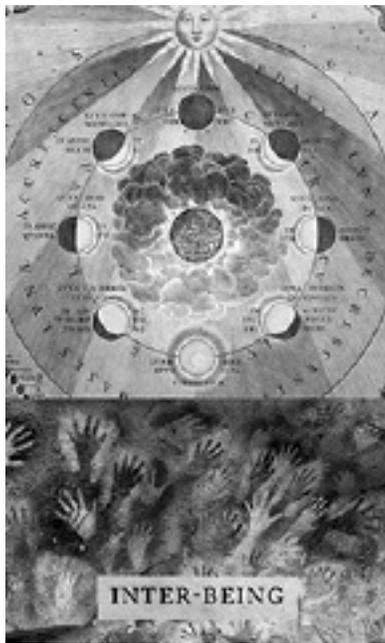


THE TYRANT WITHIN
BY BOB HUNTER



ROGUE ELEPHANT
BY BERYL POGSON

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Sunday 9:30-10 am & 11:30 am-noon



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

ANNUAL AIM: COMMUNION

CONNECTIONS by Tamera Iyer

*You cannot point out
one thing that is not here –
time, space, the earth, the rain,
the minerals in the soil,
the sunshine, the cloud,
the river, the heat.
Everything co-exists
with this sheet of paper. ...
“To be” is to interbe.
You cannot just be
by yourself alone.
You have to inter-be
with every other thing.
This sheet of paper is,
because everything else is.*

Thich Nhat Hanh,
The Heart of Understanding

*It really boils down to this: that all life is interrelated.
We are all caught in an inescapable network of mutuality,
tied in a single garment of destiny.
Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.*

Martin Luther King, Jr., *Sermon on Peace*, Christmas Eve 1967

An experience of inter-being tells me I am not alone. One of my favorite quotes on inter-being is from Charles Eisenstein: “Each experience of love nudges us toward the Story of Inter-being, because it only fits into that Story and defies the logic of separation.”

This truth resonates with me because I need to be reminded that God is the whole loving universe working for me not against me. Inter-being is a timeless connection with everyone and everything. There are four areas of inter-being that stand out for me: emotional connections, connections in shared suffering, a connection with infinite

supply, and a connection with nature.

Emotional connections remind me – I am not alone

I have a first cousin who is seven years younger. I was his first crush when we were young. The family joke was that every time I sat down, he was on my lap. We lived in the same small town in Michigan so we saw a lot of each other. At first it was too much with him always being on my lap. I was annoyed. But I figured out that if I would just give him a nice long hug and whisper in his ear how wonderful he is I could see his little face light up with joy! Soon we would both be

laughing and he would be off my lap and playing somewhere else. That was all he needed from me. The connection was fun for both of us.

This experience created a hunger in me to want to be a mom someday. My kids are teenagers now. I have gone back to that memory over and over again through the years. It has shown me what my kids need from me and I need from them. My job as a mom is to hold on to an emotional connection and let it show me what is needed.

When I want to be inspired I imagine the kind of mother I wish I would have had. I take the time to get the picture in my heart and mind. Then I wish to be that kind of mom for my kids now. Naturally when I fall short it is okay because the wish and connection are there. It helps me listen to what Love wants me to do. Emotional connections with family members are important to me. For the last nine years The Church of Conscious Harmony (CCH) has become my spiritual family. My heart views CCH as a contemplative family that provides me with a safe place to feel deeper levels of inter-being.

Shared suffering reminds me – I am not alone

When I was twelve, my dad and a lot of our relatives were farmers. One summer day Dad asked me to ride with him into town. Half way

into town he pulled his truck over to the side of the road and started shaking. I had never seen him like this before. He was stuttering and crying with his voice cracking as he began to tell me what happened to my ten year old cousin, Amy, the day before. Amy was riding a large John Deere farm tractor along with a fifteen year old town girl who was the driver. They hit a bump and Amy fell off the tractor under the tire. The fifteen year old driver panicked and accidentally ran over Amy's mid-section. Amy died on the way to the hospital.

There was an open casket at Amy's funeral. I went up with my mom and I threw a fit when I saw Amy's body. I started yelling that her golden skin looked green and her beautiful blond hair looked like straw! I made it clear to everyone in the room that the frog-like creature in the casket could not possibly be her. She was so pretty and now she looked like a beat-up, lifeless doll with green skin.

Once I sat down, I realized everyone was sobbing including my mom, the fifteen year old girl, who drove the tractor that ran Amy over, and her parents. I felt their suffering. As I looked around I saw that the little church was packed and everyone, especially Amy's parents, looked devastated. But I felt mainly anger. The minister was reading Amy's favorite verses.

They were all about love. That softened me a bit. I thought about how I didn't know anything about God and the Bible. I had no favorite verses. I needed something stronger than death. I thought there has to be more than this. I know now that I was so angry because deep down I knew it could have been me in that casket instead of Amy. Amy's unexpected death touched me deeply and brought up a desire to be closer to God. Looking back now I realize this was my first experience of shared suffering. But that's not the end of the story.

Fast forward to when I was 30 years old and working as a Licensed Marriage and Family therapist in Austin, Texas. I was hired by a 29 year old client from Indiana who was traumatized from a farm accident that happened when she was 15. During our session, she revealed to me that she is haunted by guilt about accidentally running over a little boy when she was driving a farm tractor. He died from the injuries. My client said she would do anything to be able to go back and change that event. The whole time she was talking my heart lit up because I was deeply moved and amazed. She was so close to my age and Amy could have easily looked like her if she would have had the chance to grow up. My client was this beautiful petite blond with blue eyes from the Midwest.

Almost identical to what my cousin Amy could have looked like. The connections were overwhelming. I sensed God had brought us together to help each other heal. This encounter with my client gave me a beautiful and powerful experience of inter-being in shared suffering.

At CCH I have experienced healing and felt a deep connection in a safe community. I have been an active participant in the Thursday night Work of Inner Christianity class for over seven years and have had eight Work partners. I have been involved in a Second Line Group for over six years and benefitted from one-on-one counseling with Tim and by joining a Seva group. The lie of my lonely existence drops when I experience heartfelt sharing with the power and wisdom of the Circle of Conscious Humanity. These deep connections transform pain and reassure me that I am not alone. God is the whole loving universe here to help.

Connection with Infinite supply shows me – I am not alone

After 10 years of marriage, there was an event that triggered my divorce. My kids were four and seven years old at the time. When I discussed the divorce details with my soon-to-be ex-husband, he insisted on keeping our house. I struggled to let it go. I felt scared, insecure, and uncertain. I had to figure out where the kids and I

were going to live. I was planning with my parents how the kids and I might live with them after I filed for divorce, but that would make the kids change schools. We all agreed that living with my parents would not be the best plan. So my plan was to find a smaller place for just the kids and I. I was fine with a two bedroom apartment, as long as the kids did not have to change schools. I had a wish for them to have as much stability as possible and have a nice place for us to live.

Six months later, I was divorced and living with my kids in a large four bedroom house with a great yard – nicer than the house I had with my ex-husband! The kids stayed in the same schools and we are only four minutes from my ex-husband, so drop offs are convenient for all of us. As a single mom, I didn't think that was financially possible. I am still amazed how door after door opened up for us to live in a place that is perfect for us in so many ways. It exceeded all of my expectations! We have been here nine years now. When I look around I am reminded of how well taken care of we are from the generosity of God's infinite supply. CCH helped me to understand the law of attraction as God is working for me not against me. This was for me the gift of inter-being. I don't have to worry. I have what I need from God because I am connected to everything and everyone.

Connection to nature tells me – I am not alone

About once a month, I dream of living in the country again with no neighbors. I want to get away from traffic, noise, shopping centers, and crowded places. Instead I am moved by trees, quiet, stars in the night sky, and privacy. There is something about feeling a spiritual connection with nature. Inter-being includes privacy and personal space that I need sometimes. Inter-being is about love and connection. I have a hunger to feel God through nature more in my life.

One of my favorite experiences at CCH has been the silent retreats. My practice refreshes my spirit and reassures me I am not alone. Centering Prayer Retreats at Cedarbrake and CCH have given me beautiful experiences of God in silence and in nature. That combination is inspirational for me. I feel a connection in silence and in a community where each person gives others space and respect to experience God in our own way. CCH helps me experience the irony of how connected I feel to everything and everyone when I make internal space away from my life. I am grateful for the opportunity to write this article. The topic of Inter-being is perfect for reflection because it is what I need to be reminded of over and over again. ☺



ABOUT “THE MARK” FROM A GODLY PLAY PERSPECTIVE

Have you ever wondered about the symbol known as The Mark? As we explore this month’s topic of Inter-being, it seems appropriate to share the youth program’s story about The Mark. As you read, you’re invited to pause, reflect and wonder—just as the children at The Church of Conscious Harmony wonder on Sunday mornings as our Godly Play stories are presented.

For this story about The Mark, the Sunday school teacher uses a prop with four pieces: a shallow, black wooden box that holds three puzzle pieces that are shown both assembled and individually to illustrate the connections described below. The children are seated around the storyteller, who shares this story with reverence:

“The people of God are a Great Family. They know that God is everywhere and they follow God into new experiences. This is also known as the spiritual journey. The Great Family chooses to make God the center of their lives while living in the ordinary world.

“This is ‘The Mark.’ Some people think it looks like a target. If you aim at a target you focus on the center. Do you see the center of the Mark? Some people call it the eye of God. Perhaps you have seen this symbol somewhere before.

“A puzzle is like a mystery. God is a mystery. This puzzle may be like the mystery which is God.

“The Mark has three pieces, just like a triangle has three sides. There’s a circle with another circle at the center and three lines making a triangle.

“The outer circle is God, God beyond us. This is the Father we do not know and cannot name.

“The inner circle is God, God within us. This is the knowable namable Son.

“The triangle links them. It is the Trinity. The eternal relationship of God as in Itself—God above all, in all, and throughout all. God all knowing, all powerful and present everywhere. God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

“The larger circle represents God, while the smaller circle

represents God in the center of us. We are in God and God is in us. God is in me and I am in God.

“All creation comes out of the unknowable and unmanifested Absolute from which all things proceed and to which all things return.

“This outer circle is God present right now.

“The triangle is God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

“God is here right now at the heart of me and I am right here in the heart of God.

“I wonder how this puzzle is like the mystery which is God.

“I wonder what you like best about The Mark.

“I wonder if there’s any part of this puzzle we could take away and still have the whole mystery.” 

Multi-Day Centering Prayer Retreats

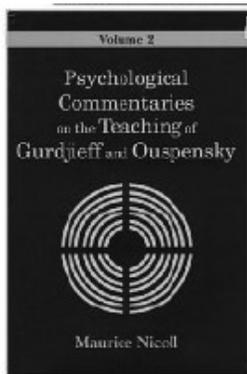
June 16-25	10-day	\$725*
Aug 12-13	2-day	\$100
Aug 14-23	10-day	\$725*
Sept 15-20	6-day	\$495**

2-day commuter retreats at CCH include meals (sleep at home).

*Double room occupancy rates at Cedarbrake Retreat and Renewal Center.

**Single rooms available for an extra \$15/night on a first-to-register basis.

Contact the office for further information and registration.



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

THE WORK OF INNER CHRISTIANITY

THE SPHERE OF BEING

It is necessary to understand that the conception of being is not easy to grasp. In one of the formulations about being given by the Work it is said that your being attracts your life, but this formulation, like most of the other formulations in the Work, has great density of meaning—that is to say, one cannot understand it superficially, because meaning after meaning will appear to you, the more you reflect and study what being is and especially in yourself. The study of your own being is essential to working on yourself. I mean, you cannot ignore your being and take it for granted and yet say that you are in the Work and doing your best to work on yourself. Such an attitude is sheer nonsense. As O. said, quoting Solovyev: “Everything has its being, a stone has its being, a flower has its being, an animal has its being, etc.” That is of course quite true, but what do we mean when it is said that a stone, a flower, an animal, has being peculiar to itself? Then again, what do we mean when it is said that our being

attracts our life?

... In the Fourth Way it is knowledge that must precede change of being. That is, through knowledge of one’s being one can begin to separate from certain elements in it, so that eventually one has changed being so that it does not attract the same things as formerly ... because, if there is no change of mind or new knowledge, there can be no metamorphosis or change of being. ... It is only Man that has not an intelligent sphere of being and that is why he must study his being and learn to attribute to himself any unpleasant things that recurrently happen to him and not blame other people, which is the mechanical thing to do.

... And remember that you do not change by being told what to do. You can only change through seeing what you have to do when you realize what your being is like. ☉

Maurice Nicoll, *Psychological Commentaries on the Teaching of Gurdjieff and Ouspensky*, pages 1440-1442. 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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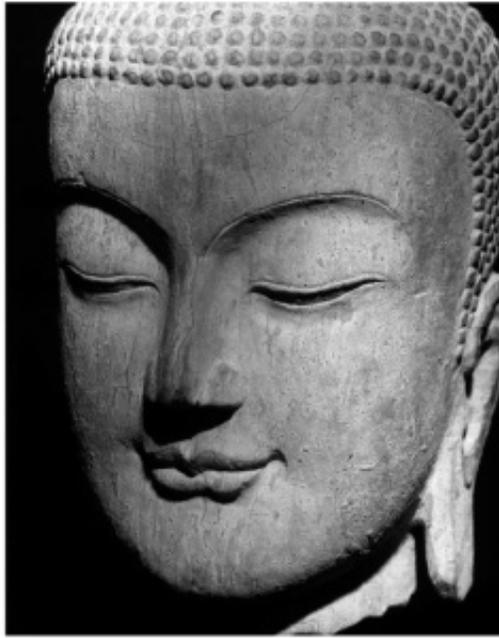
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THE ULTIMATE EXPRESSION

There is a shrine in Sri Lanka
that Thomas Merton visited just before his death
and where he received what he describes in his *Asian Journal*
as the crowning grace of his Asian trip.

He had gone to the east to seek Asian wisdom
in order to enhance his contemplative Christian journey.

He received at that shrine
a remarkable enlightenment experience.

He saw epitomized in that work of art
the ultimate human achievement
and the full realization of enlightenment –
the possession of all knowledge in perfect freedom,
peace and serenity – captured by the smile of ineffable peace.

The smile was not one of indifference,
but of utter compassion without emotional involvement.

The delicate smile transmits the Buddha's experience
of unity to His disciples.

Now let us look at another image: Jesus dying on the cross,
his lips contorted in the agony of thirst and suffocation.

From those lips comes a cry of almost infinite despair,

'My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?'

'Me!' that is, 'Your Son!'

continued on back cover

JUNE CALENDAR

Visit consciousharmony.org
for a complete listing of events

SPECIAL EVENTS

ONE-DAY CENTERING PRAYER RETREAT
June 10 8:30 am-4:30 pm
\$15 Bring a potluck dish to share.
No need to pre-register.

Ten-Day Centering Prayer Retreat
June 16-25 Call the office to register.
\$725 Cedarbrake Retreat Center

MONTHLY

1st Sundays
Bring non-perishables for Caritas

Gurdjieff Music
June 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 10:15-11 am
Contemplative Lunch noon-1 pm
Contemplative Communion Service 6-7 pm
Yoga 7:30 pm-8:30 pm \$10

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

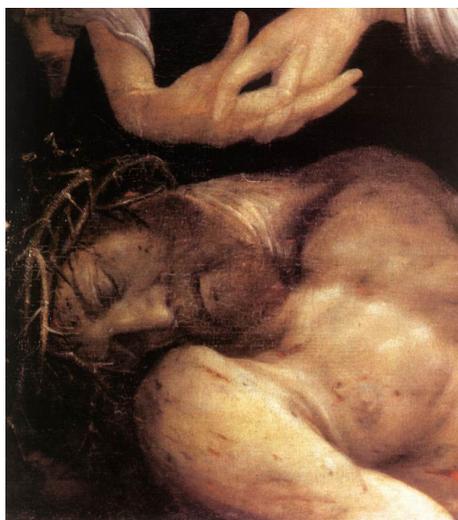
Recordings of services are available
through the Bookstore and online at
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*For God so loved the world that He gave
His only Son, so that everybody
who believes in Him might not perish
but might have eternal life.*

*For God did not send His Son into the world
to condemn the world, but that the world
might be saved through Him.*

JOHN 3:16-17

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... Who is this God who can be expressed in two completely opposite ways?

Each expresses the Ultimate Reality

in a way that no other human expression could manifest ...

When Divine love enters the human condition ...

it becomes total vulnerability.

God is present not just in serenity, not just in spiritual achievement;

God is also present in failure and the utmost suffering,

and He manifests Himself equally in each expression.

This, of course, is not the end of the story.

Though Jesus died with the ultimate question still on His lips,

He moved into a new and inconceivable reality.

He is in unity with the Father and with everything that exists.

His gloried humanity shares the Divine attributes.

He is present everywhere, in everyone, in everything,

and at the heart of all reality. Jesus is the Divine human being

through whom everything returns to the Father.

Thomas Keating, *Awakenings*

