

Inward/Outward: From the Warrior to the Butterfly

BY PETER HAAS

Soon, on the next clear night, take a moment to step outside around 9:30 p.m. and look up toward the southwest sky. You'll notice the majestic Orion constellation. Its three prominent horizontal stars form Orion's "belt," and four brilliant radiating "limb" stars seem to sketch the outline of an outstretched archer's stance. It's easy to see why in Paleolithic times this stunning constellation was named Orion the hunterwarrior. Half the year, Orion, like a talisman, dominates the nighttime sky in the Northern hemisphere. As I look up each clear night, I often wonder if the hunter-warrior will ever change?

Probably not, but the interesting thing is that if we shift our perspective a little bit, the hunter-warrior *is* transformed into a butterfly. Try it out and see what I mean. As you look at the constellation, tilt your head so that Orion is viewed from a sideways angle. Notice what emerges. Rather than an outline of the hunter-warrior, doesn't an outline of a monarch butterfly

appear to the imagination?

What's fascinating to realize is that the ancient Greek word for butterfly was psyche, which means "soul." The Greeks used the butterfly as a symbol of the immortal soul, capable of transformation and continuation after death. Poet Mark Nepo conveys the analogy perfectly: "just when the caterpillar thinks it's come to the end of its life, it becomes a butterfly!" So too with our lives, just when one level of being comes to its edge, a new level emerges; which brings me to wonder ...

What if humankind ceased projecting onto reality a warrior consciousness and instead began to connect with the soulconsciousness of the universe?

What would it say about humankind if more of us began to see the warrior's transformation into the butterfly?

What if the energy of the butterfly, with its message of gentleness, beauty and transformation, is at the heart of the universe and the

center of our life instead of the warrior, with its message of fear, violence and division?

Perhaps through the Work of Inner Christianity and through our twice-daily Centering Prayer periods, we begin to wake up to the possibilities of such a transformation in our lives. We begin to see how our inward life is being healed and transformed; and as a result, our outward life is radiating with less violence and more peace; with less annoyance and more kindness; with less gloominess and more joy. We are realizing more and more that Christ is becoming our all in all.

As a slow and slinky caterpillar can't begin to imagine what it would be like to become a winged butterfly, so too with us; we can't truly comprehend evolving as Christ. As we look within, we often can't begin to imagine our personal or family transformation. As we look without, we can't imagine a different world. We tend to feel and think that things will always be the way they are. In part, that's true. Without Wish, Will and Work,

things tend to remain the same. But Grace surprises us as beautifully as a butterfly alighting on our hand; and in a moment, new possibilities emerge. It's just like God to surprise us and reveal what we can't imagine and provide what we can't get on our own.

Ilia Delio is helping us understand the nature of how this shift of consciousness occurs and articulates the profound insight that "at the quantum level, mind and matter are united. Consciousness is at the heart of matter." This resonates with what Bernadette Roberts has shared in her writings: that Christ is the union of matter and spirit; human and divine.

This means that in Christ, our contemplative inwardness in silence can't be separated from our active outwardness in life. Authenticity and love are the essential bonding links between our inwardness and outwardness. Authenticity is another way of describing what we're moving toward on the spiritual journey, as we are increasingly transformed from the "false self" to

the "true self" and toward "no self." Love is another way of describing what is drawing us toward itself and consuming us as we partake and share in the fearlessness of Love's radiating, relational energy.

To be, is to love and be loved. Ilia says that love is the activating principle calling Reality into being and drawing us toward itself as the Alpha and Omega. Love unites the inward and the outward; consciousness and unconsciousness. The inward propels us outward. And the outward draws us inward.

And God said, let there be...

The Hebrew book of Genesis uses this phrase to convey the manifested emerging from the unmanifest by means of the living Word, which is *Da-Bar* in Hebrew and *Logos* in Greek. In Chinese Taoist cosmology, the symbols for the word "suchness" (*tzu-jan*) literally mean "occurrence appearing of itself." In Hebrew, Greek and Taoist cosmologies, such word-symbols describe how the "ten-thousand things" emerge from

the inexplicable generative Source of Absence.

Interestingly, I invite you to feel into the spiritual and phonetic similarity of the words Absence and Abba. Let's ponder what this unique Jesus-wisdom might be conveying. One possibility is that for Jesus, Abba is another word for love. The revelation of Christ through Jesus helps us literally realize that love, not just consciousness, is what is birthing the suchness of reality. Through the witness and teachings of Jesus, we begin to intuit that the Trinity helps conceptualize that the universe isn't appearing of itself, it's appearing by, in, through and for love itself.

While it's true that we can't know what God is, Bernadette Roberts reminds us that perhaps the best definition is that God is: Essence = Existence. In Christ, we realize that God's thatness is a primary wholeness of love. Primary, as in a prime number – an indivisible unity expressed in diversity. Christ reveals that relational love is at the heart of reality, and the Trinity is

the source of this love.

Such a shift toward the idea and experience of trinitarian relationality can make all the difference in our day to day life, as well as our understanding of life's deepest questions. We live in a world of relationships, *not* in a vacuum of isolation. We are not alone with the Alone. We are hidden with God in Christ. We are participants in the divine nature. We are daughters and sons of Abba called to live as shining stars of light and love in the world.

The Butterfly Effect

For millennia, the Bhagavad Gita has called humankind to similar wisdom: "If when someone leaves their body ... they keep the mind in the heart ... and remember me, they utter OM, the eternal word ... they go to the path Supreme." (8.12-13). This path Supreme is the way of love. It is also the Butterfly effect - we impact each other with our thoughts, feelings and deeds - and expresses the quantum interconnectedness of reality and relationships. The inward impacts the outward and the outward impacts the inward; until, there is no self to perceive the difference. Until then, we have a deep responsibility to live from the most authentic, loving and awake inward place; because when we don't, suffering often occurs.

As we become more skillful in

relating through love, we fulfill what the Work calls external considering. As we outwardly consider others, it's as if we no longer just see their outer "warrior," we also see their inner "butterfly." As it is above, so below. As it is within, so without. The Gospel of Thomas invites us to make this shift of perception very personal: "When you make the two one. And make the inside like the outside, and the outside like the inside, and the upperside like the underneath...then the kingdom of God is at hand." In truth, the reign of love is always at hand, but we probably aren't giving it our full attention.

Elizabeth of the Trinity reminds us that in such situations, we must "Go out of our self in order to adhere to God by a very simple, wholly loving movement which allows God to imprint Godself on you and to transform the soul into God." Such is the possible destiny of every human heart - the transformation from warrior to butterfly; self to no self; body to the Body of Christ - the eternal union of the inward and outward beyond what we can comprehend, at least looking up from this side of the stars.

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.

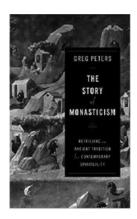
One principle will appear in these pages each month.

4th Guideline

The term *original sin*is a way of describing the human condition,
which is the universal experience
of coming to full reflective self-consciousness
without the certitude of personal union with God.
This gives rise to our intimate sense of incompletion,
dividedness, isolation, and guilt.

Воок Look

Our Community Reading for May-June



We are living in an emerging renaissance of contemplative and monastic spirituality. One indication of this is the writings of Greg Peters. This month we begin a new community reading focusing on Peter's exceptional survey, *The Story of Monasticism*. The book is a very accessible and readable history of the monastic impulse and how it has evolved over the last two-thousand years of Christian history. There is deep value of knowing the roots of our contemplative and monastic heritage. Christianity emerged from within a monastic lineage. The monastic impact can't be overstated and through *The Story of Monasticism* can be better understood.

Today, The Church of Conscious Harmony is a living contemplative-monastic community that exists for the sole purpose of supporting our Goddevotion as a monastery without walls. We mine the wealth of the monastic tradition for our ongoing edification and inspiration. There is much for us to learn. A deeper discovery of our monastic heritage can only infuse our current expression of monasticism with a supplement of wisdom and grace.

It turns out that contemplative spirituality isn't only accessible inwardly – hidden in the heart or in cloistered monasteries. The spiritual is also very physical. The inward propels us outward. And the outward draws us inward. It's on the ground and in the moment. It's amidst the common, ordinary messiness of life, relationships and work. Greg Peters' book helps us see both the monastic mistakes of the past and the extraordinary possibilities awaiting us in a more integrated monastic future.

CCH BOOKSTORE

Suggested Titles for May



Ascent of Mount Carmel God's Infinite Wisdom by St. John of the Cross



Talking With God
True prayer another name for
Love of God
by Francois Fenelon

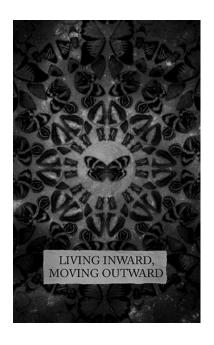


The New Man
Interpretation of Parables
and Miracles of Christ
by Maurice Nicoll



The Heart of the Matter
Spiritual Autobiography
by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

Bookstore and Library Hours Open Monday-Friday 9:00 am-4:00 pm Sunday 9:30-10:00 am & 11:30 am-noon



In Your light, we see light. Psalm 36:10

Annual Aim: Evolving as Christ

LIVING INWARD, MOVING OUTWARD

BY LAURI RAYMOND

Our task is to wake up to the truth of our reality ...

This waking up requires interiority and centeredness.

Hence the first step, toward justice is focusing the mind on higher-ordered levels of love.

Life in evolution requires living inward and moving outward, that is, living from an inner unified space of conscious awareness and presence whereby we see the divine light shining through every aspect of our world – even the ugly parts – because nothing is outside the embrace of God's love.

Ilia Delio, *The Omega Center blog*, August 17, 2017 We have been loved from the beginning. Julian of Norwich, *Showings, Long-Text*

We call The Church of Conscious Harmony a monastery without walls, because for the most part, our prayer and our work are in the outside world. We are monks in the world. Over the past two years, I have been on a journey that belies that stereotype of the peaceful life of a monk. Yet because of the rocksolid foundation of our teachings and practices, I have experienced the truth of Ilia Delio's statement, "nothing is outside the embrace of God's love."

First, like many other women and some men, events on the national scale triggered old memories of sexual assault and sexual harassment. These were not new memories, but now I experienced them emotionally as if they were in the present. For months, I was navigating waves of shame, anger, grief, fear, and feelings that the world was not safe.

Nor was the road smooth in my outer life. There were disturbing events that made my company's future seem precarious. I have wondered whether after 30 years, now was the time we would close our doors. There was a sense of hopelessness and even fatalism. What would happen to our

employees? Where would I work?

I've never used the word 'betrayal' to refer to my own life. It seems Old Testament in scale. But I've gained understanding of the timbre of that word as I experienced people that I trusted letting me down in shocking, unexpected ways. I felt stolen from, unfairly accused, abandoned, punished and misunderstood. Old, similar memories surfaced and, again, I was awash in painful emotions.

And perhaps most difficult has been the piercing sadness over the sudden loss of dear friends.

I share all this, not because I think I am in any way exceptional. There's an old Ella Fitzgerald song that goes, "Into each life some rain must fall, but too much is falling in mine." Like Ella, I know that the suffering of my life this past two years has been no worse than so many others, but at times it has seemed too much. It has felt as if I were falling apart.

Perhaps I *am* falling apart. And that is to be expected; inner and outer disruptions and loss are an inevitable part of contemplative life. Fr. Thomas Keating has often pointed out, "the spiritual journey is not a magic carpet ride to bliss."

Our practices and devotions do not insulate us from the difficulties of life; instead they give us context for these difficulties. I sit in silence, partake of the Eucharist, and engage with the Work of Inner Christianity, the Gospels and our community. Over time, I see that my reaction to the 'Job events' that arise in my life is much different than it used to be. I see life as learning and God is my precious teacher. And I see that I am given everything I need.

As Ilia Delio says, when we 'focus the mind on higher ordered levels of love,' that very love brings us precisely the events, people, circumstances, opportunities and assistance we need to heal old hurts – personal and collective. Our understanding of the purpose of life shifts from acquisition and avoidance of pain to love and service to God, each other and all of creation.

What is this new life?

In my experience, this new orientation draws us forward into a new kind of life – life in evolution, where we move even beyond healing to oneness with the creative, divine flow. This movement

is countercultural and often out of character. What unfolds is not what we would normally want. In fact it's often messy, chaotic, humiliating and always on the edge of risk. It's not about perfection or completion. It's hardly ever on my timetable and yet it's always miraculously, maddeningly just in time.

It is unknown, stepping out into the void.

In living inward/moving outward, I am evolving to become like the Apostles after the Pentecost, who, once the Spirit was lit in them, would travel, speak and heal from a certainty of God's presence and action in them. They didn't know what they would find in the next city or across the sea. Moving outward means radical trust in God. I may have a plan, but I hold it lightly and with a sense of humor.

It is co-creational – my presence matters.

The old way of being was to hide, play small and stay safe. Again and again, I see that my willingness to step into the life I've been given, though I have no idea what I'm doing, makes a difference to the situation and everyone involved. It's

humbling to realize that though I don't know my lines or my blocking, I have a divinely ordained part to play in all of this – not a bigger, better part than anyone else, but an important one, because only I can play it.

It is Trinitarian, non-dual and relational.

In living inward and moving outward, Presence is a part of every relationship, so the dualistic model is transcended by a Trinitarian model. In every interaction there is you, me, and God. Every manifestation is a flowing synthesis of what Gurdjieff called 'Holy Affirming, Holy Denying and Holy Reconciling,' which expresses the idea that in an evolving universe, everything is needed. I can testify that in all areas of life, I am being called toward ever-expanding connection, communion and collaboration with others. Where before I imagined I was going it alone and often felt overwhelmed, now I get to hang in there with people. I am listening more deeply - stretching toward understanding. I get help; I get surprised. I recognize God's manifestations in my life because they are new, fresh and surprising.

It is incarnational.

The body is the landscape for awareness and healing of energetic knots. As I welcome the sensations, there may be a lot of burning, sweating, trembling, tears and snot. There has been nausea and, on occasion, seemingly random vomiting. At times I have felt illogical weight on the top of my head and pressure against my throat and face. The heart burns and there may be heat and density in my gut, shoulders and back.

As I accept and allow these clouds of sensations to move on through with awareness of God's presence, I begin to sense subtler, higher vibrations in the body. There may be a sense of spaciousness, stillness, and luminous aliveness or an evanescent, vibrating, cellular awareness of God's presence. At times, there is no awareness of even having a body that is separate from the surroundings and the unfolding is-ness. This new spiritual body has its own mind and its gift is knowingness and intuition. It moves without need of thought.

There is no separation.

It is not just that our monastery has no walls. The walls that separate

us as persons begin to shimmer and become less substantial. It is as if our skin no longer defines us as individuals. We see and we hear each other in a new way. The struggles of the most vulnerable (and even the jerkiest-acting person) among us are suddenly immediate in a way they never had been. I am unable to look away from accounts of injustice, oppression and atrocity and the pain is visceral. It is my own pain and suffering.

I do not "solve" it in the way my former self would have wanted, yet as my heart is stretched open, its ability to witness and hold the suffering of my sisters and brothers, animals and the planet expands. I bear what is, knowing that on some unperceivable level All is becoming; and therefore, All is well. Despite all the seeming wrongness, there is an underlying rightness. Creation is evolving and there is infinite possibility.

Forgiveness happens.

Forgiveness happens as a natural consequence of living in this way. In my experience, we begin to experience God's extravagant love and mercy – how our lives are intricately, personally constructed

for our unfolding – we Wish to let go of old accounts against God, others and ourselves.

The Wish to forgive is a very high Wish. Even when I forget and get caught in the small motivations of the parts of me that don't want to forgive, this profound Wish is working inside and takes me on a journey toward its fulfillment. I begin to consciously own that I was hurt, which is the beginning of letting go of the hurt. I learn to be patient and honor God's process through victimhood, anger, guilt and sadness. Finally, one day I wake up and realize that while I can still recall the events, the charge is no longer there. It has all the immediacy of a black and white movie I once slept through. We recognize that in each and every moment – given the available information, awareness, receptivity, support and love - all of us were doing the very best we could.

Admittedly, over the past two years, there have been moments when I have related to the Psalmist's anguished prayer: "How long, O Lord? Will You forget me forever? How long will You hide Your face from me? How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having

sorrow in my heart all the day?" To have such an intimate, confident relationship with God as to demand attention and relief, is fully human. When Jesus cried out on the cross, he showed us once again that God is here, though we can't feel it. God is here, though the Divine plan does not match up with our agenda. Though there is no map and we may be engulfed by the cloud of unknowing, God is still here.

So each day I get up from my prayer and walk out, carrying something of the wisdom and transforming silence into the world. We are ordinary human beings, living ordinary lives, sometimes placid, sometimes chaotic. Peter, in his Easter talk said, "What if it's all true?" I am so grateful to have been guided to a place where I can live from the understanding that the teachings of Jesus are real, true and alive, beyond comprehension.

It's not just that Jesus was fully human and fully divine. The literal truth he kept trying to tell us is that for you and for me, *becoming* fully human is *becoming* fully divine. There is no other way for us.

With great gratitude for inspiration from Ilia Delio, Cynthia Bourgeault and Mary Anne Best.



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LIVING THE WORK OF INNER CHRISTIANITY IN DAILY LIFE

Work Idea: Inner (or psychospiritual) transformation is a foundational idea in the Work of Inner Christianity. While the work has a somewhat complex, chemicalized way of talking about transformation, a simpler image of such transformation is symbolized externally by the metamorphosis of a caterpillar into a butterfly. Transformation begins by transforming how and what we see. We call this the work of transforming incoming impressions.

Work Source: There are many places in multiple Work writings that clearly articulate this idea. Maurice Nicoll writes a masterful introduction to this key idea in the *Commentaries* on pages 50-62. This excerpt is taken from page 51: "Most people think that external life will give them what they crave and seek. Life comes in as impressions ... The first realization of the meaning of

this work is to understand that life, coming in as impressions, must be transformed. There is no such thing as 'external life.' What all the time you are receiving is *impressions*. You see a person you dislike – that is, you get *impressions* of their nature ... Life is impressions, not a solid material thing such as you suppose and believe is *reality*. Your reality is your impressions. I know this idea is very difficult to grasp."

Practical Application: Try to see the butterfly, not the warrior. Make efforts to see someone's Essence, beyond their personality – especially if their behavior, perceived through your perceptions and personality, is difficult for you to deal with. Practice this new way of seeing and perceiving silently, without anyone else knowing. Keep it to yourself. No one else needs to know that you are working on transforming

incoming impressions. Start with an easier situation and expand to more challenging impressions; perhaps ones that seem to have a kind of spell over you - such as the substances, images, experiences, thoughts or moods we are seemingly addicted to (at one moment in time). One way to do this is to look into their eyes and replace their adult face with the face of a child. See their innocence. See them before they became this way. Such seeing is freeing, and also contributes to our transformation from our habitual ways of perceiving them as other.

Further Resources: A very readable and creative summary of wisdom on the broad Work idea of transformation, can be found in John G. Bennet's slim but illuminating book *Transformation*.

For more 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.

Join the Next

Multi-Day Centering Prayer Retreat at Cedarbrake Retreat and Renewal Center

July 27-Aug 1	6-day	\$545
Sep 14-19	6-day Welcoming Prayer	\$545
Nov 30-Dec 6	7-day Advent	\$675

"These retreats have been transformational for me...there is simply no other way to experience this level of quiet and intimacy with God!

Everything in this lovely place is thoughtfully placed and designed with simply loving God. Driving into the entrance, I feel peace and I am so grateful."

-from a retreatant's feedback survey

Double room prices. Single rooms, if available, are an additional \$10/night on a first-to-register basis. Contact the office for further information and registration.



HYPED Spaghetti Luncheon & Fundraiser

Harmony Youth Practicing Evolving Devotion, the HYPED group,

is fundraising for their annual pilgrimage to The Lama Foundation this June.

You're invited to support their annual fundraiser (featuring lunch with gluten-free options and music by our teens) at CCH on May 27 after the Sunday service.

Luncheon tickets are sold in advance and can be purchased at the event.

For more information about our Youth Programs, please visit www.consciousharmony.org.

May Calendar

Visit consciousharmony.org for a complete listing of events

SPECIAL EVENTS

Two-Day Commuter Retreat
May 11 8:30 am - 5:30 pm
May 12 7:00 am - 4:30 pm
Cost is \$100. Pre-register in the office.

One-Day Centering Prayer Retreat May 19 8:00 am - 4:30 pm Cost \$15 Pre-register - brown bag lunch

HYPED Spaghetti Luncheon & Fundraiser May 27 11:45 am-1:30 pm (See sidebar)

MONTHLY

1st Sundays
Bring non-perishables for Caritas

WEEKLY

Sundays

Lectio Divina 8:00-9:00 am Worship Service 10:00-11:30 am Youth Program 10:00-11:30 am Fellowship 11:30 am

Wednesdays

Contemplative Lunch noon-1:00 pm Contemplative Communion Service 6:00-7:00 pm Infusion 7:15-8:25 pm

Thursdays 7:30-9:00 pm Work of Inner Christianity Class

Fridays 7:30-8:45 pm Devotional Service

Saturdays

Conscious Movement 7:45 - 8:15 am Scriptorium noon-12:50 pm

DAILY

Sunday-Saturday 7:00-7:35 am Centering Prayer Service in Theosis Chapel

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

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy away from you. John 16:22

THE GRACE OF THE ASCENSION

By becoming a human being Christ annihilated

the dichotomy between matter and spirit. In the person of the Divine-human Being, a continuum between the divine and the human has been established. Thus, God's plan is not only to spiritualize the material universe, but to make matter itself divine. The grace bestowed on us by the Ascension of Jesus is the divinization of our humanity. Our individuality is permeated by the Spirit of God through the grace of the Ascension . . . Our life is a mysterious interpenetration of material experience, spiritual reality and the divine Presence. The key to being a Christian is to know Jesus Christ with the whole of our being. It is important to know His sacred humanity through our senses and to reflect upon it with our reason, to treasure His teaching and to imitate Him. But this is only the beginning . . . It is to the transcendent potential in ourselves – to our mind which opens up to unlimited truth,

It is to the transcendent potential in ourselves – to our mind which opens up to unlimited truth, and to our will which reaches out for unlimited love – that Christ addresses Himself in the Gospel with particular urgency.

Thomas Keating, *The Mystery of Christ*

