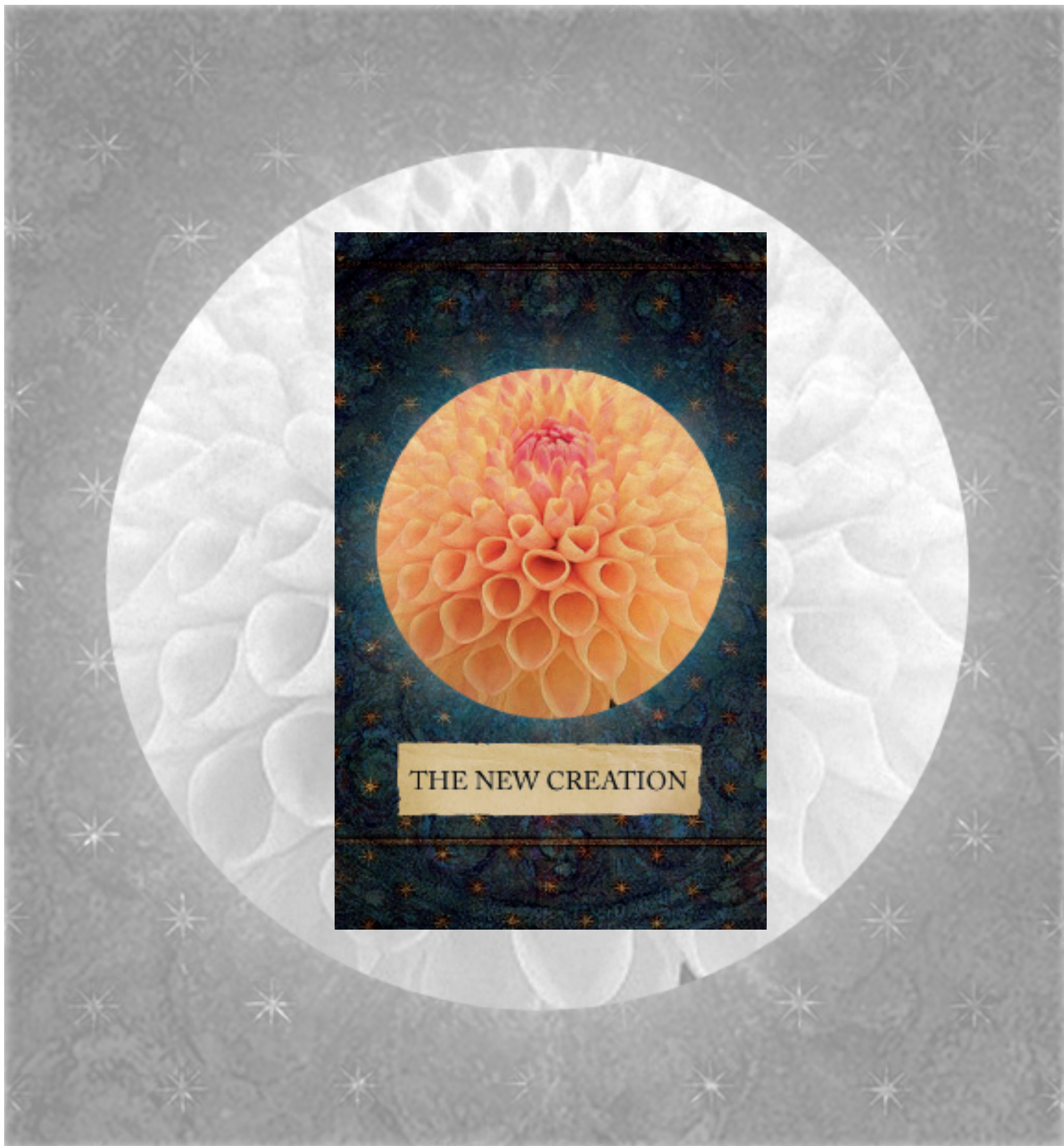


November 2018
Volume 30
Number 11



THE MARK

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



SURRENDER DEEPER INTO CHRIST

BY PETER HAAS

As I review my life, I can see many moments when I've been confronted by my expression of negative emotions or unconscious and unkind reactivity. Confronted and squirming in the light of this inward seeing, I ache for something new to be born within me – for a new creation to emerge out from the destruction of the emotional bombs I've thrown into conversations or arguments; for a new creation to arise out from the fragments of seemingly broken relationships, especially when I see just how much I have contributed to their breaking. Perhaps you've observed similar patterns in your own life.

When we do, it is a humbling and a sorrow. In those moments, I have often cried out to God for my “old” ways of being to cease and for a new Being to emerge in me. The Psalmist has given me, and all of humankind, affirmative words for such moments of reckoning with oneself, and the possibility of becoming a new creation, “*create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a new spirit within me*” (Psalm 51.10).

In real-time events, moods and situations, we can practice dying

to the old ways, and consenting to becoming the new creation by practicing the three-fold Work of Inner Christianity: (1) Self-Observation, (2) Non-Identifying and (3) Self-Remembering. Unpacking these three foundational practices of uncritical Self-Observation, Non-Identifying and Self-Remembering, I have found it helpful to evolve the wording of these Work ideas in the following memetic way:

See it. Uncritically observe the thought, feeling sensation, movement, energy, attitude, belief, event, etc. within.

Say its name. Be precise, be particular. Call it what it is. Call it how it feels. Call it by its name. Some examples are “This is called feeling jealous.” “This is called an ‘I’ of anger.” “This is old me.” “I see you. I know you. I name you.”

Separate from it. I am not what I see. If I can see it, that means, I'm not it. It may be a part of me, an aspect of me, a dynamic running on my system, but it – whatever I see and name – is not the totality of me.

Surrender deeper into Christ. Remembering and affirming that I

am a child of God! I am not what I see. I am not my “self.” I am not my personality. I am ultimately Essence remembering itself in Christ.

As we review our lives, looking into the layers of our past, we can probably begin to see our own psychological and spiritual development and maturing, as well as the moments or seasons of our devolving. In my experience, the process of becoming a new creation is rarely linear – but rather moves in a wave pattern, ebbing and flowing, perhaps even in spiral form. Two-steps forward, one step back.

Becoming a new creation also doesn't mean that we won't suffer, fail, get sick or die. The new creation doesn't equate to having all our dreams come true or acquiring supernatural strengths that ward off the ordinary laws of life on planet earth. It is more accurate to say that the new creation equates to a centered presence that takes shape in and through us no matter what is unfolding in life – including suffering, sickness and death. That is true in part because the new creation that is emerging includes, and also transcends, our body-life

and physicality.

The new creation, in Bernadette Roberts' writings, is another way of speaking about Christ: the union of human and divine that enfolds us. The new creation is not ours, *per se*. It happens to us, through us, but it is also something given. A no-thing, a decreasing self-state of Who-ness with an increasing What-ness of the new creation that emerges, is Christ. When there is more of Christ in and through us, there is *de facto* more new creation too. The point is, the new creation isn't a better self, a more conscious self, a higher self, a more true self, it seems to be *less self* and more Christ. This is the primary reason why I prefer the phrase "surrendering deeper into Christ" as a way of speaking about Self-Remembering.

The process of evolution as Christ can't be limited to our inner, private life, can it? Certainly, the new creation is also occurring in the cosmos, the solar system, our planet, our civilization, and our community too. Surely, everything is moving more and more toward an "Omega" of Wholeness; toward

Christ; toward becoming Love.

The liturgical year also enacts and reminds of the various moments and phases of the process of becoming a new creation. As we approach the season of Advent, which starts on Sunday, December 2nd, we are reminded that the new liturgical year begins on that day. Unlike calendar time, which begins the new year with January 1st, worship-time, sacred time, begins the year with the first Sunday of Advent. It is a poignant reminder that the church and our spiritual journeys are grounded in a season of waiting for the birth of Christ. Not just once – but annually, deeper, and deeper and deeper, moment by moment, year by year, decade by decade, lifetime by lifetime.

And now to the fine point of

it all:

What part are you playing in Love's Great Work of birthing this new creation?

Where are you resistant to its path through you?

Where do you think you are exempt from its claim upon you?

And how do you numb out from hearing its call to partake in the process?

Yes, how are you hindering wisdom, love and transformation by simply pretending, or worse, lying to yourself that you'll get to it later?

The wisdom of Jesus urges us on: *let the dead bury the dead*. And, *Can't you stay awake with me for one hour? Watch and pray*. So too St. Paul: *Sleepers awake!* Why the urgency? Maybe there's a new creation groaning to be born in and through you and all. ☸

REMEMBERING BERNADETTE SUNDAY SERMON TEACHING THEMES

October 28

God & Trinity

November 4

Self & Consciousness

November 11

No Ego & No Self

November 18

Eucharist & Mary

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.

GUIDELINE 10

The Eucharist is the celebration of life:
the coming together of all the material elements of the cosmos,
their emergence to consciousness in human persons
and the transformation of human consciousness
into Divine consciousness.

It is the manifestation of the Divine
in and through the Christian community.

We receive the Eucharist in order to become the Eucharist.

COMMUNITY READING FOR NOVEMBER-DECEMBER

WORLD WITHOUT END
BY THOMAS KEATING

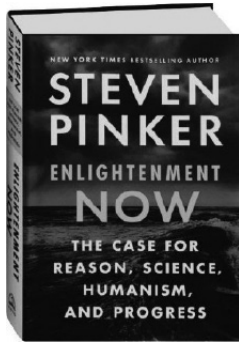
We conclude the year with our beloved Fr. Thomas Keating's
book, *World Without End*, which provides an invaluable conversation
on the spiritual journey. The conversation was recorded at St. Benedict's
Monastery, along with Abbot Joseph. Explore! Enjoy! Evolve!

ENRICHMENT WEEKEND

JANUARY 12-13, 2019

The Real Christ:
*Honoring & Exploring
the Witness & Writings
of Bernadette Roberts*

Save the date
for this historic gathering at
The Church of Conscious Harmony
of Bernadette's
primary students and friends,
who will share topics with us
in panel discussions such as
The Spiritual Journey,
The Trinity, Christ, Eucharist
and their personal stories
of how God used
Bernadette's friendship, teachings
and writings in their lives.
Look for further publicity and
registration opportunities
beginning in mid-December.




BOOK LOOK: ENLIGHTENMENT NOW

If you happen to find yourself feeling down or depressed about the state of the world, read Steven Pinker's recent book *Enlightenment Now*. While it is not technically a "spiritual" book, it can infuse you with a deep spiritual gratitude for the gift and goodness of life in the modern world *now*. Pinker's writing, though from a completely secular, scientific and sociological perspective, is an affirmation of just how "new" and very improved our world system is, that we get to live in today, as compared to the rest of recorded human history.

Enlightenment Now is a marvelous book full of meaningful stories and indications similar to the kind of hopeful awareness that Ilia Delio is calling us toward, from her spiritual and theological perspectives. Pinker's perspective supplements Ilia's teaching with an extensive sociological gravitas, and demonstrates in detail just how much our civilization is evolving and improving, even exponentially so, since the 1700s.

Of particular importance, are the chapters in Part II, which with detailed precision and narrative arc tell a compelling story of how life, health, food, wealth, peace, knowledge, equal rights and quality of life, to name a few, have soared in quality over the last few centuries, and all the more in the last one-hundred years. It is a very positive aspect of the story of human life on planet earth that is easy to miss and forget when focused on what Mr. Gurdjieff called "the terror of the situation." Yes, much of what Pinker speaks of is on the horizontal level of life – however, one might ponder what all this horizontal "evolution" might mean for us.

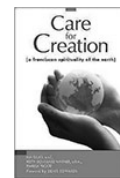
The wisdom saying of Jesus might give a clue what all this abundant horizontal evolution might mean: *to whom much is given, much is required* (Luke 12.48). Pinker helps us remember just how blessed we are, and how much we have been given on the horizontal level – and how much is required of us. As you celebrate Thanksgiving this year, you might take twenty minutes and read to your family Pinker's Chapter Seven on "Sustenance." It is a startling reminder of our unprecedented abundance. 

CCH BOOKSTORE

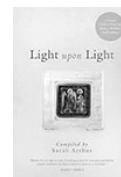
SUGGESTED TITLES FOR NOVEMBER The New Creation



View from the Center of the Universe
Our Extraordinary Place in the Cosmos
by Joel R. Primack



Care for Creation
A Franciscan Spirituality of the Earth
by Ilia Delio, Keith Douglass Warner,
Pamela Wood

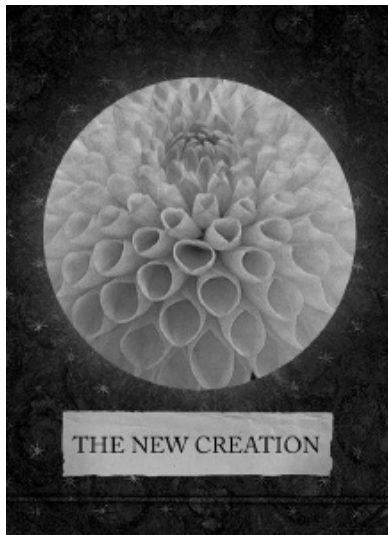


Light Upon Light
Guide to Prayer for Advent,
Christmas, and Epiphany
by Sarah Arthur



My Yes Is Yours
Contemplative Daily Companion
for Advent
by Peter Traben Haas

BOOKSTORE AND LIBRARY HOURS
Monday-Friday
9:00 am-4:00 pm
Sunday
One half hour before and after service



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

ANNUAL AIM: EVOLVING AS CHRIST

THE NEW CREATION BY KEN ELY

We were born to recapitulate
Christ's incarnate life
And ultimately share Christ's
same glorious heavenly state.
This is what the Incarnation
was all about –
what Christianity was all about –
Each individual
must reproduce
what took place in Christ,
each must die to his former life
and receive the Logos in [oneself].
Thus Christians
are so many Christs,
or rather they are but one Christ
for the Logos unites Itself
with them all. ...
Salvation is transformation
into Christ.

Bernadette Roberts,
The Real Christ

As God brings the "new creation" to life
in interior silence, that is to say, the new you,
with the worldview that Christ shares in deep silence,
his view of things becomes more important than our own.
Then God asks us to live that new life
in the circumstances of everyday life,
contradicted by turmoil, opposition and anxieties of all kinds.

Thomas Keating, *Open Mind, Open Heart*

I woke up in the intensive care unit disoriented and afraid to move. I could not see because my eyelids were swollen from being sewn shut and I had IVs in both arms. I had just undergone 14 hours of emergency surgery to remove a plum-sized tumor attached to an artery in my nasal passage and had lost a lot of blood. Throughout the night I experienced extremes of burning fever and bone shaking chills. The nurse's bedside manner aggravated the situation. It seemed

to take hours for her to come after clicking the call button. One time after covering me back up with the blanket, she said sarcastically, "First you're hot. Then you're cold." Another time, my mouth was as dry as sandpaper. After she arrived, I could barely speak from all the swelling and simply asked, "Water?" Again in a sarcastic tone she said, "The least you could do is say please!" I remember the fear turning to anger and with an energy rising from nowhere I was able to

force open one eye to look at her intently. I was 17 years old.

Twenty years later, almost to the day, again I awoke in a hospital. This time, my face was so swollen from major jaw surgery that I resembled Neanderthal Man – or so I imagined – there were no mirrors in the room. Since my jaws were wired shut and I could not speak, the nurse gave me a small whiteboard to communicate any needs. I wrote quickly, “I can’t breathe.” Although the difficult procedure to remove blood clotting in my airway helped, I was still struggling to breathe. Not being able to take a full, deep breath that fills the lungs has always given me a claustrophobic feeling. Again, I wrote “Can’t breathe!” The nurse looked at me kindly, put a hand gently on my shoulder and said softly “I know it’s difficult, but our instruments say you are getting plenty of oxygen.” I felt panic arising, mixed with anger at the nurse. I wanted to scream “I don’t care what your [expletive] instrument says, I can’t breathe!”

Then, I remembered and said to myself, “Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner. Please make haste to help me in this time of need.” Almost

instantly a peace came over me like a warm blanket, my body relaxed completely, all thoughts dissipated and I drifted asleep. That same scene played out two more times over the next day, except there was no more panic or anger, just peace as I affirmed that simple prayer and drifted asleep.

That prayer was shared as a tool for self-remembering in the Work of Inner Christianity class that I attended on Thursday nights at The Church of Conscious Harmony. I had said that prayer thousands of times over years as I struggled to be present and let go of the habitual reactions to daily life. I would say it headed into meetings, driving to work or during interactions with my family as a reminder to observe myself in the moment and remember that I am a child of God, not the thoughts, feelings and sensations I am experiencing at the moment; that I can act on purpose, not react to the situation. But that prayer is more than just a reminder, it is also a conscious call for help, an admission that I need help in this moment, now. By calling out for help in each of those many little moments of life a space was created to take in

new knowledge, to observe the situation differently and sometimes to respond differently or not at all. These small moments, added one upon another, established a reservoir of knowledge and experiences that over time formed into a foundation of faith.

When I prayed the first time in the hospital room, it was from a place of desperation and utter dependency for help. I had nowhere else to turn, no one that could help me, except God. The next two times it came from a place of deep understanding; a Faith born from experience. In those moments something new was created.

The Work teaches that we mostly make decisions moment to moment reacting to what just happened. Those reactions are simply habits we’ve acquired over the years and are so ingrained in us we are not conscious that they are actually running our lives. This reactive posture to life creates uncertainty. In my experience, uncertainty leads to fear of the unknown, which can be outwardly expressed as procrastination and indecision. Indecision leads to further uncertainty, feeding the cycle of fear. One of the areas where

uncertainty led to fear in my life was around money and my career. As a kid, I'd always work hard to save a certain amount toward a specific goal, like a camping trip to Maine with the Boy Scouts, or buying a moped and then my first car. I delivered newspapers, raked leaves, mowed lawns, washed cars, made pizza – I did anything I could to earn the money to achieve the goals. The work I did and the earnings were toward a specific purpose, money itself was never the goal. I got a sense of satisfaction from achieving these goals that were mostly short-term in nature, maybe a few months out at most.

Then I went to college with big dreams of designing and leading spacecraft missions and even being an astronaut. I directed all my efforts toward these dreams – earning two degrees, developing and building spacecraft and designing spacecraft missions during internships, spending time at NASA plotting my path to the astronaut corps and even starting a space-oriented company after graduation.

There was one problem though. I had amassed a large debt through my college years and it was time to start paying. I did not have a plan.

I see now how this uncertainty clouded my focus and introduced fear. I put the dreams on hold, landed a good job and began paying down this debt with the intention to come back to the dreams, someday. While I attacked the debt with a fury, I lived my life somewhat worry-free, day by day, week to week. Paying off the loans would take years and it became my primary goal. Without a goal on how to direct my time beyond this aim, I lost sight of the dreams. I continued to work, pay bills, go out with friends, travel, and basically do whatever I wanted to do except dream long term and set goals toward those dreams. The “dream energy” and passion for solving big problems was still alive and was redirected into my new career. I had fun learning new things and solving problems and my career advanced. Soon I met my soul mate, married and started a family. Long after the college debts had been paid off and replaced with a mortgage, advancing my career and making more money was still somehow the goal. That dream energy searched for other outlets in an ever increasingly busy life.

Fear around money came back

to the surface during the Great Recession. Like the fearful slave in the parable of the talents, I buried mine for fear of losing what I had. That fear of loss extended into other areas of my life and clouded my view of reality.

Through the blessings of Grace, the many offerings from CCH, the examination of this life and extended times in the silence of Centering Prayer, I became aware of this deeply rooted fear. I've come to realize that the uncertainty of where I was headed created an underlying anxiety, which often left me in indecision. My indecision left others in uncertainty, propagating a mutual mistrust and anger. Many things were left unfinished in both my personal and professional life. Making decisions around how to direct my attention, resources and efforts became a priority to breaking this cycle.

One of the foundational ideas that reshaped my money consciousness was the law of reciprocal maintenance, specifically the act of tithing. I can see now that I was looking for a plan, some structure to begin to make financial decisions. The ideas behind tithing were so clear to me and it was a

simple “rule” that we could follow. Even more important, over time I came to understand the direct connection between God and my attention, effort, time and money. Everything comes from God and returns to God; it is God’s time and money. It is my choice how I direct my attention and effort. I’m not working for some company or for things, I’m working for God. It was a choice that I could make not in reaction to life but as a proactive affirmation of the gift of Life. Just like the Jesus prayer, it was a choice that became a habit, one that added to the foundation of trust and Faith in God.

Experience on the journey gave me the wisdom to realize that knowledge was the key to overcoming my fears around money. I began educating myself on what it really is, where it comes from, how pervasive the fear surrounding it is in the world and why, and how to most effectively direct it and my time to transform ideas into reality. The Work teaches us that when we apply the knowledge we’ve gained to our being, or we put knowledge into conscious action, we gain understanding. As I put knowledge into action and began making

decisions, the uncertainty in my life was replaced by a rock solid Faith in God. Faith loosened the grip of fear and I started planning further out and making longer term decisions that I had put off for years.

Reflecting back on the most difficult moments of this journey like the one in the intensive care unit has shown me that my experience of those moments was filtered through fear. I understand now that I was simply projecting the fear that I was feeling in that moment onto the nurse and unconsciously experiencing that fear reflected back to me as “sarcasm.” I can hear those same words today differently, in her way trying to lighten the mood of a difficult situation. Those moments have become markers along the journey, reminding and revealing to me what that fear really is – a lie. It was never true. God has always been the rock solid foundation of my life; there is nothing to fear.

The more I make decisions about the future rooted in that Faith, those past moments are redeemed and the future is drawn into the present - a new creation is emerging in me. My view of reality is becoming clearer, new dreams are coming into focus and someday is today. ☺



THE CHURCH of CONSCIOUS HARMONY

A CONTEMPLATIVE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

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

MINISTER
Peter Haas
minister@consciousharmony.org

Tim and Barbara Cook
Ministers Emeritus

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Michael Begeman
Pamela Begeman
Mary Anne Best
Eric DeJernett
Ken Ely
Donald Genung
Jim McCune
Lauri Raymond

MUSIC
Billie Woods, Director
musicdir@consciousharmony.org
Sue Young

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

OFFICE
Mon-Fri 8:30 am-4:00 pm
Donald Genung, Business Mgr
bizmgr@consciousharmony.org
Lisa Genung, Office Mgr
officemgr@consciousharmony.org

BOOKSTORE
Virginia Maxwell, Manager
bookmgr@consciousharmony.org

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

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

LIVING THE WORK OF INNER CHRISTIANITY IN DAILY LIFE


Work Idea: This month, we focus on a Work idea that closely parallels the more theological phrase “new creation.” The Work idea is: *Work on the side of Being*. The Work reminds us that there are two sides to our Work on ourselves: Work on the side of Knowledge, and Work on the side of Being. There is no separation between the two. Knowledge and Being are intertwined and integral. One can grow in Knowledge by reading a book or listening to a teacher, etc. One grows in Being by suffering, by doing something, by experiencing something, by making an effort, or doing an exercise, etc. There are endless ways in which we can Work on the side of our Being. Many of the practical exercises in the Work, including our weekly and monthly “homework” here, are intentionally formulated to serve our growth in new Being.

Work Source: “In order to work on oneself it is necessary to circumscribe the field of work – that

is, not to dream idly of working in the future on some grand occasion but to work today – to circumscribe practical work today, to this very day with its events, and not think in terms of tomorrow ... To get to know yourself, begin with observing your behavior towards the events of a single day in your life. Notice how you react – that is, notice your *mechanical reactions* to all the little events that happen and to other people and notice what you say, feel, think and so on. Then try to see how you can change these reactions.” Maurice Nicoll, *Commentaries*, p. 26.

Practical Application: Make an aim this month to Work on the side of your Being. Use the holiday season, including the common Thanksgiving gathering of family and friends, as opportunities to Work on your Being. For example, if there is someone in your family that you haven’t forgiven or who irritates you, or who you ordinarily try to avoid, Work at

expressing forgiveness, acceptance or unexpected kindness to them. Even a small effort and gesture will reveal more of yourself to yourself in an instructive way. It may also open a “new creation” in your relating with this person. Simple efforts and conscious Work like this exercise, over time, begin to serve the further growth of our Being – which is perhaps another word for Christ.

Supplemental Resources: The YouTube videos of Byron Katie are a very useful resource to see firsthand how other people, in real time, literally confront their old ways of being, and begin to be transformed through inner Work. There are many videos available to watch, and they reveal a deeper glimpse into the all too common human condition, and the power and grace of what happens when someone Works on oneself. 

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.

ANNUAL THANKSGIVING POTLUCK DINNER

Served with Music, Poetry Readings, Prayer & Pie
(Not necessarily in that order!)

Thursday, November 22, 2018
11:30 am-1:30 pm
CCH Fellowship Hall

All are welcome to celebrate the Thanksgiving holiday
in this conscious and loving way as a church family.

Simply sign up to bring an entrée or pie to share.

Come when you can. Leave when you must.

Doors open for music & mingling at 11:30 am on Thanksgiving Day.

Dinner is served at noon,
followed by more pie, music, poetry readings and prayer.
Farewell benediction at 1:30 pm.

The sign up sheet is posted on the CCH kitchen doors.

UPCOMING CENTERING PRAYER RETREATS

Multi-Day at Cedarbrake Retreat and Renewal Center

Nov 30-Dec 6 7-day Advent \$675*

Double room prices. Single rooms, if available,
are an additional \$10/night on a first-to-register basis.

Half- and One-Day at The Church of Conscious Harmony

Nov 10 1:00 pm-5:00 pm \$10

Dec 15 9:00 am-12:30 pm \$10

Cost is a suggested love offering. Scholarships are available as needed.

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

Contact the church office to register.

NOVEMBER CALENDAR

Visit consciousharmony.org
for a complete listing of events.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Half-Day Centering Prayer Retreat
Nov 10 1:00-5:00 pm
Register in the office or website. \$10

Advent Centering Prayer Retreat
Nov 30-Dec 6
Cedarbrake Renewal Center
Contact the office for information.

Thanksgiving Potluck Dinner
Nov 22 11:30 am-1:30 pm

Office & Bookstore Closed
Nov 22-23

MONTHLY

1st Sundays
Bring non-perishables for Caritas

WEEKLY

Sundays
Lectio Divina 8:00-9:00 am
Prayer Circle 9:15-9:45 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

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

Fridays 7:30-8:45 pm
Devotional Service

Saturdays
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



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

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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



TO GAZE ON THE BEAUTY OF THE LORD

*One thing I ask of the Lord;
this I seek:
to dwell in the Lord's house
all the days of my life,
to gaze on the beauty of the Lord,
to visit His temple.*

Psalm 27:4

It's a journey that never ends,
because what is home?
It is "to live in the house of the Lord
all the days of our lives."
And that house
is our participation
in the divine life
through grace.
... We are talking
about a communion
and a unity
that is incomparable,
that is oneness.

Thomas Keating,
*The Gift of Life: Death & Dying,
Life & Living*

