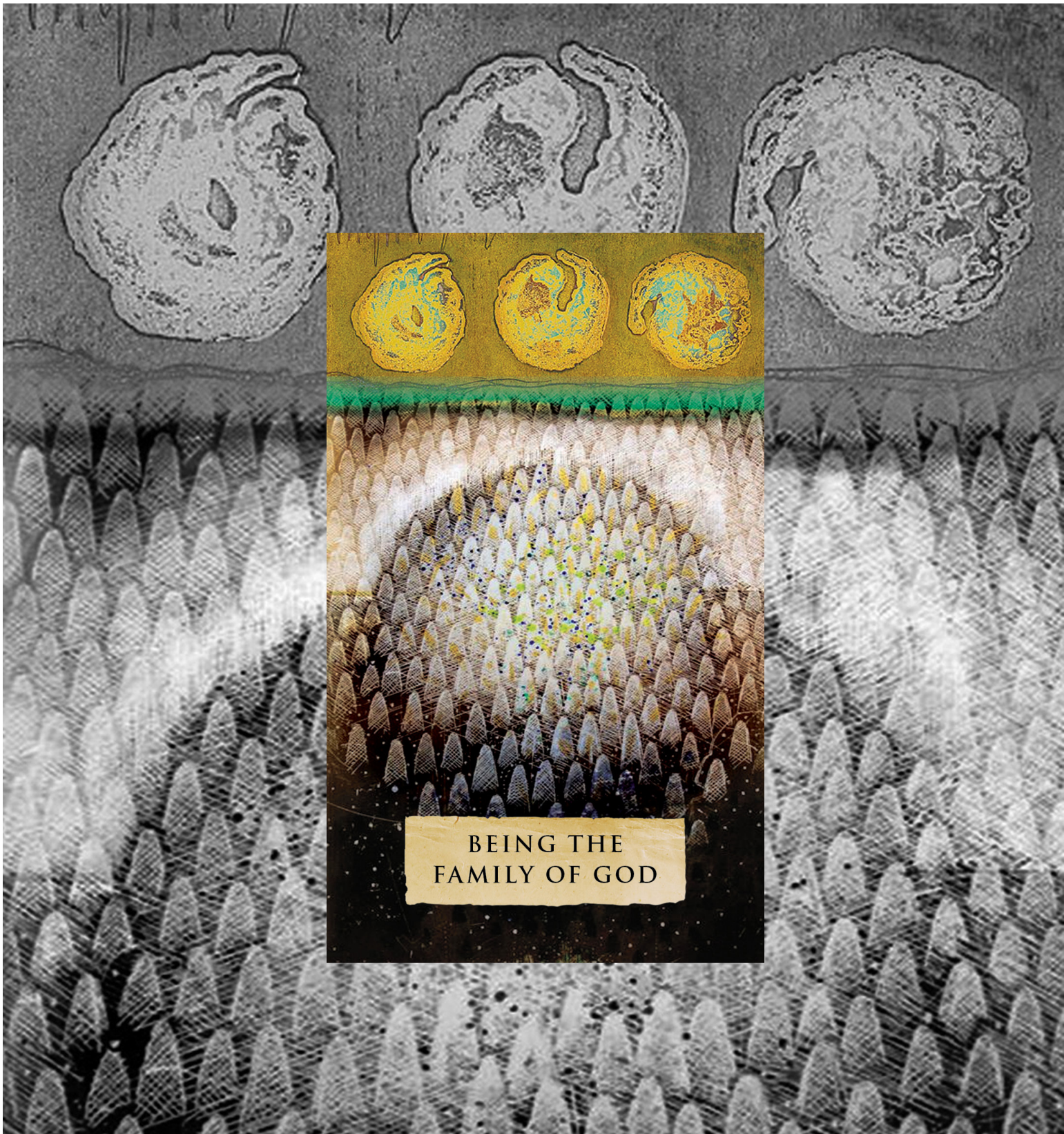


June 2023  
Volume 35  
Number 6

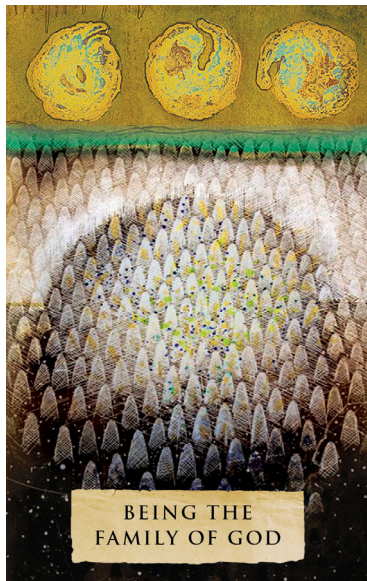


# The Mark

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



BEING THE  
FAMILY OF GOD



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*Holy, holy, holy ... the whole earth is filled with God's glory!* Isaiah 6:3

## ANNUAL AIM: HOLY REMEMBERING

BEING THE FAMILY OF GOD BY PETER HAAS

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External considering means  
to be conscious  
*in* the other person –  
to put your consciousness,  
so to speak, into the other person  
– so that you see *from him*  
what he feels *about you*.

Maurice Nicoll, *Commentaries*, "Further Note on  
Psychological Thinking," April 29, 1947

The only possible way to have  
a deeper relationship  
with other people  
is by making a real connection  
with what is valuable in them.

This is the beginning  
of conscious love.

Beryl Pogson, *The Work Life*

*Let love be sincere ...  
hold on to what is good;  
love one another  
with mutual affection;  
anticipate one another  
in showing honor.*

Romans 12:9-10

We are at the calendar mid-point of our annual theme of Holy Remembering. Our focus this month is Being the Family God, which is nested within Part Four "Remembering Others" of The Journey School curriculum. In Part Three "Remembering Our Self," we explored many aspects of what the Work of Inner Christianity calls Self-remembering. The order is important! It is our experience that as we Self-remember we are simultaneously enabled to externally consider others; to literally Other-remember.

One of the endearing qualities of the experience of Holy Remembering is that it is a blessing to both you and others. As Jesus taught, *love your neighbor in the same manner as you love yourself*. In short, when we truly remember thyself, we remember others.

Anne Morrow Lindbergh expressed this pairing of care of self with care of others in a poignant and simple way in her magnificent book

*Gift from the Sea*. She writes, "When one is a stranger to oneself, the one is estranged from others too. If one is out of touch with oneself, then one cannot touch others ... Only when one is connected to one's own core is one connected to others ... and, for me, the core, the inner spring, can best be re-found through solitude."

Solitude like silence, helps us come to ourselves again, to re-set and be found by God's love and presence, and in this process of being found it feels like we are waking up again. We get reacquainted with what feels like higher energies – such as love, joy, and peace, and all this has significant positive implications.

For many, June is the start of summer. A season where we might be able to get away and take a retreat or vacation. It is a good season to spend time with your family and a powerful time to practice remembering others.

Family life is a microcosm of the family of God. Our church family life is a microcosm of our

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## THE WORKSHOP

Welcome to the Workshop, where we ponder a question submitted by a participant of The Journey School. Each month, the answers are experiential, applying the Work of Inner Christianity ideas to life in a practical way.

### QUESTION:

I have been in the Work for several years, but my spouse has no interest in the Work and doesn't understand or appreciate how much time I give to my Work studies. I'm not the only Work student who has had this experience and I wonder how others navigate this type of situation.


### REPLY:

Yes, there are many students of the Work whose partner, spouse or significant other does not participate in the Work or feel drawn to learn more about the Work. In fact, while there are many well-known couples in the Work, such as Maurice and Catherine Nicoll, there are frequently many individuals in the Work whose spouse or partner does not participate. This is mostly the case for The Journey School as well. So, your situation is common. That said, one of the most helpful approaches we have found in responding to the fact that one's spouse or partner is not interested in the Work, is to use that situation as an opportunity to give thanks for any and all ways they support you in doing your Work. Focus on the practice of gratitude for how they support your interests.

However, if your partner or spouse is hostile or negative to you about the Work, that is a more challenging situation. In that case, perhaps it is best to *act as if* the Work is not a visible or external part of your life. Keep it internal and use the friction as a part of your Work. Transform the impressions and *like what the personality dislikes*. If you don't resist their negativity, and agree with them from a deep understanding, a meaningful reconciling third force will arise, which may give the space you need to do your Work without provoking irritation in your spouse. In sum, it is best to keep your inner Work inner and let the fruit of your Work bless your spouse or partner.

To submit a question for consideration to the Workshop, please email: [minister@consciouharmony.org](mailto:minister@consciouharmony.org). 

combined family lives. One could say that a healthy family helps create a healthy church, since the church community is comprised of many families. The scriptures are full of helpful guidance for family life – both our home life and church life. For example, here is a beloved passage with practical implication for all of us. It's been described as a household code, which is very good. And perhaps we can see it as a wish for our inner life and our family life, as well as our larger communal life as a church family gathered at 7406 Newhall Lane in Austin, Texas in the year 2023:

*As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. (Colossians 3). Amen. *

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

## REFLECTIONS ON THE WORK OF INNER CHRISTIANITY

### REMEMBERING OTHERS

BY NATHAN JONES

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He had a habit of squinting, taking off his glasses with one hand and rubbing his eyes with the other. If strangers were to engage in the same motion, it would certainly come off as irritation. In fact, no matter how many times I evoked the movement, there was always a small voice that whispered: “you’ve really done it this time.” But I knew better, we all did. Inevitably the class would go silent. There was a deliberateness to his actions. A pace that was never going to feel the need to catch up with life after the advent of the automobile. Let alone the sorcery of machines moving at the speed of light. A pause, a thought, an eventual response – more often than not posed in the form of a question – creating a sacredness to the moment. Honor given to the questioner. Nothing rushed. It was always about the question. Holding

the question. Oft repeating the big questions are not for us to know but can get us to the place of knowing. Ushering us to a higher arena of understanding. Why can’t we be good? Are we alone in the Universe? Why knowledge is inseparable from goodness? Who am I? Why do we suffer? Is death the end? Why is there evil? What can we hope for? What can we know? What ought we to do? How should we live? On more than one occasion, I was certain he had fallen asleep.

Many years have passed since I sat at those desks in that classroom. Professor Jacob Needleman (friends called him Jerry): author, religious scholar, student of Gurdjieff, American philosopher. The first *true* philosopher whose company I’d ever shared. It is hard to say what that even means, but to lean into a sentiment he implored us to

further explore, it was a *feeling*.

He would build something in those classrooms, developing a deeper conscious community. From ages 18-80 and beyond, a little bit of everybody was there. It took me years to realize that those were the first Work of Inner Christianity classes on this journey. He would weave in the teachings of Gurdjieff.

Nothing was ever overt or insincere, but I am still reminded of the subtleties that come from a life as a student of the Work. Something was alive and we all wanted a part of it. He would incite us toward observations of the head and heart. Knowing that truth or understanding is arrived at by coming from both directions. Encouraging us to remember those that came before and those that are yet to come.

He spoke to us of the

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*“I am curious if ...  
you could point me in a direction?”*

experience of *shocks*. We were asked to remember a time we were given news of a loved one passing and observe the intricate details we could recall of that moment in time. Not uncommonly, we could remember the clothes of the messenger, the weather, what we were doing prior and the slowing of time. These memories were posited on different reals inside of us. Couldn't we see it and feel it?

There were different qualities inside and finer parts of us. Longer, deeper memories. There was a higher and a lower. He drew it out of us. In so doing, he also built this community of seekers.

In a soft, unsuspecting way he chopped wood and carried water. All three lines, year after year: Work on knowledge and being, Work in community with others, and Work for the sake of the Work.

I stopped by his office the

week before graduating university. Though I had done it with some frequency over the previous years, this time was different. I held a question for the old philosopher and knew it could be the last time I'd speak with him. I entered the office and sat across from him. He tended to a few things, eventually looking over at me with his disarming smile.

I stuttered and stammered; I was a kid there looking unconvincingly like a man. I couldn't formulate the question. "I am curious if ... you seem to know something ... if there is a Path or a direction ... I am having a difficult time with what I am here to ask. I guess it seems you have something I am looking for. I know this may be off, but I am looking for something, a Way, and whatever you have is as close to what I think I am looking for. So... I guess I am curious if

you could point me in a direction?"

He leaned back and thought about the question for a long time. He looked like he was considering something that pained him. At last, he looked up, met my eyes and gently said: "There is a book called *In Search of the Miraculous* by P.D. Ouspensky. Thanks for coming in." He spun around in his chair, tending to other things and that was it. There was no explanation. It was a finger pointing in a direction ... just as I'd asked.

Needless to say, I got the book. Ouspensky and Gurdjieff were quite a mystery to me. It took me three runs at it and several months to get through. During which time I got engaged and moved back from California to Texas. There wasn't anyone in my Texas community that had ever heard of these two. For all I knew that was true of the entire state. The book

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tossed off sparks like a chain being dragged down the road. The ideas were both so far out and right at home. A treasure and body unlike anything I had previously explored. I hungered for more.


Late one evening, I stumbled into Whole Life Books on South Lamar where a movie theatre currently sits. Walking up to the counter, not unlike some time before, I worked through a question. "There is a book, maybe you've heard of it, probably not ... it is by a man with a different name, Ouspensky about a man with another off name, Gurdjieff." "Oh, of course, we have an entire section on them," Louis walked me back and left me alone. An entire section ... I marveled ... I couldn't believe it. Ouspensky, Gurdjieff, Pogson, Orage, Bennett, Pentland. I walked up with an armload of books and set them on the counter.

"This is really amazing! I recently moved back to town and wanted more of these ideas." "Yes,

of course. This interests you?" "Well, I am quite new to it. In fact, I have only read one book, but I would like to learn more." "There is a group that meets to discuss these ideas." "Ahem, excuse me. Here in this town?" "Yes, of course, are you familiar with Bee Caves Road where Cuernavaca runs into it?" "Yes, that's where I call home." "There is a place near there, The Church of Conscious Harmony, they have a group that meets on Thursday nights."

The following day, I drove over to this building I had passed for years. Wondered around the trails and trees and entered the bookstore. Mimi looked up, smiled her warm smile, and said, "Well how can I help you?" "I suspect in many ways, but I am just perusing." It took me a few minutes to find him but eventually I did. I picked up the book from the shelf, *Lost Christianity*, by Jacob Needleman. "You know I had a professor in San Francisco."

I said loudly enough and made eye contact to know she was listening. "He gave me a bread crumb of sorts that led me here. A couple miles from where I grew up." "Is that right? And what was his name?" "Professor Jacob Needleman. He teaches at San Francisco State." Smiling her infectious smile, she said: "Oh Jerry! We love Jerry here!" That was north of 15 years ago.

Heartbreakingly, Professor Needleman passed over a few months back. There's a hole, the depth of which has yet to be determined, a dimness to the day. In the memorial service, a story was relayed of a question he was asked during a book signing in Oregon. "What has the Gurdjieff teaching given you?" The speaker said a long pause that felt like minutes took place. (I suspect he squinted, took off his glasses and rubbed his eyes slowly and thoughtfully responded.) "Everything." 

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*But whenever you pray, go into your inner room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. Matthew 6:6*

## REFLECTIONS ON THE PRACTICE OF CENTERING PRAYER

STILLNESS AND RETREATS: REST, DIGEST, AND HEAL

BY STEWART JOHNSON

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Let's ponder this big question together ... Why go to a retreat?

Especially one at Cedarbrake Renewal Center or another out-of-town venue with all the fuss of gathering, packing, driving, settling, and sleeping in a different bed? Then, re-packing and driving back for reentry (which is a thing, and quite a thing at that). *That* doesn't sound relaxing.

For 5 days? 10 days?

More thoughts arise. "I can't be silent that long." "My workplace would fall apart." Or, even worse, they "don't need me." "My family would never allow me to be away that long." After all, I can go to a church campus retreat and return home afterwards, or even better, stay at home and participate online.

These are all great options. Let's look a little deeper ... Is more really better?

Answers might be "yes and no" or "it depends." Maybe it's not the best question, but a good pondering. Better for what? Is 5-10 days at a Centering Prayer Retreat really value added, when I don't have any idea how it might fit into my life? All this is "head-heavy." I can Wish, and move into my heart.

Let's explore for ourselves ... What do I want?

A good question to begin. Maybe I want to be more peaceful, less stressed. Be a better parent, spouse, child, co-worker, etc. Maybe I have high blood pressure, or whatever. Maybe a meditation practice will serve that end. All this sounds nice. More and more people that I admire and look up to practice meditation.

A pretty good list, but let's continue ... Why do I want that? To be better? To live a more

spiritual life? Maybe it's not just to appear spiritual, or whatever, but to change, from within? For what do I really Wish?

I want to get behind these wishes and desires ... "What" wants that?

I find it useful that Fr. Thomas Keating spoke, over and over, of how mysterious is the Work of the Divine Therapist. He says we are not aware, in our *ordinary awareness*, of most of the Work of the Prayer in us, in our beings, in our psyches, in our bodies. Just like in the Work of Inner Christianity, I see the temptation to "work for results." I remember to let it go, and simply Be Still.

I learn of the different types of meditation, a spectrum from directed/discursive to contemplative/receptive. I see how meditation has its place

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on a spectrum of Prayer and Relationship, from petitionary/formal to absorption/intimate, from praying *for* to being prayed *through*. I see that a Centering Prayer practice can cultivate this most receptive possibility on the spectrum of prayer.

I begin to understand that the Work of the Therapist, distinct from our Work in Inner Christianity, is deep, thorough, and requires only my consent, and making myself available to the Silence.

Many times, on retreat (and in the ordinary activities of my life), there is inner criticism that this prayer time isn't "as good as" that other time. Or, my head is so full of business and activity that this can't possibly be actual Centering Prayer. "It be like that sometimes," as I hear my young friends and co-workers say.

I can feel a place in my being move back behind, as if I am on the back porch, or in a back room, a more "inner" room, and the television is blaring in the front room. I see that the blaring TV, the activity and noise, isn't necessarily relevant or adverse to the Work of the Prayer, except as I allow it with my attention, which displaces my intention. There is more space

*within and behind* the part of this machinery where the noise and activity seem to persist. I become vaguely aware of Transformative energies at work, and trust more in the subtle and dynamic Work of the therapist. I linger in the Silence after the bell and allow Her Work to settle in, informing me that while this Work both transcends Time, it also permeates. So, Time is a factor as much as it's a non-factor.

Experience informs me that all forms and lengths of retreat serve me, in different ways. They do not replace each other. All are necessary and indispensable – from the concentrated Work of short, campus retreats to the deep, life changing Work of 10 days at Cedarbrake, or another renewal center.


I just sit, be still, and ever so gently return to my sacred word. No resistance, no response, I simply rest.

Resting in the Silence, especially extended Silence of Centering Prayer Retreats, allows me to rest and to digest the Work of the Divine Therapist, my inner Work, and the shocks that feed me. The more time I spend in the Silence helps shift my disposition

towards these shocks, and incoming impressions of Life to realize new possibilities on a higher scale, a higher order.

The more I rest in stillness, doing nothing, simply consenting, allows for more healing of the wounds of a lifetime. This feeds my Wish for a deeper, more essential awareness – an experience and a cultivation of a more collected, interior, essential place to know the inner and outer worlds – and to respond to life from this deeper place.

What is behind this Wish? I can feel and taste the difference between these states and my ordinary states. I realize that these states are not the end, but a means to the end. I feel and begin to know my relationship with All That Is. It becomes clear that it is very simple. I choose this thing called a Life in Christ, and make efforts to be in that flow, as often as I can, and make efforts to not feed the other flow of sleep and taking ordinary life as all there is.

I want this transformation. I want to live into the possibility of what I am created to be. I feel that it is the only game in town. And, I let this (and all else) go, and surrender in the Silence. 



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# SCRIPTORIUM

## BEYOND OUR FAMILY OF ORIGIN

BY PETER HAAS

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Centuries of Christian faith and reflection have focused on the family nature of the church. Many have seen the spiritual community as a type of family. Though, in the case of our church, we can choose which family of faith we participate with on the spiritual journey. In contrast, we had no say, as far as we know, in our family of origin. We were born into that family. But we are re-born by conscious choice and intention into our spiritual community. All of us, at some level, choose to partake in one way or another in the life of our spiritual community at The Church of Conscious Harmony. That said, all around the world, there are likely hundreds of thousands of other spiritual communities that gather in fellowship like a spiritual family.

In light of this, our scripture for this month's scriptorium is taken from St. Paul's letter to the church at Ephesus, one of the many spiritual families in the Mediterranean region that St. Paul ministered to. The scripture can be found in the letter to the Ephesians chapter 2. Here is our scripture in view this month's theme:

*So then you are no longer*

*strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus as the cornerstone. In Christ Jesus the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling-place for God.*

As we ponder this scripture, notice the various social categories mentioned: strangers, aliens (refugees), citizens, members of the household of God. These were real social categories and there were many foreigners and refugees in the Roman empire, both of which were on the lowest rung of the social ladder, including slaves, convicts, and lepers.

The point of this powerful passage is captured by the question: What activated the transformation from a social outcast to a member of the household of God? How could this be true? And if it were true, it would be life transforming! What

would it mean to no longer see yourself as an outcast, an undesirable, a failure? Can you imagine the joy of realizing you had been adopted into a new spiritual family, regardless of your family of origin, or social status or even your moral worthiness?

One of the reasons Christianity was so fruitful in the first several hundred years of its movement, was because the message of Christ Jesus was radiating outward including all – anyone, anywhere. The good news was good because it invited all to partake in a new quality of relationship with God – a foundational relationship that transformed all other relationships, socially and familial.

Whatever your family of origin dynamics or situation, we can be encouraged to see ourselves as members not just in our family of origin, but also integrated into the family of God, being formed into a larger dwelling place for the manifestation of the presence and qualities of God. At heart, this is the mission of every church and every Christian and every spiritual family. ☸

## BOOK LOOK A MOST BEAUTIFUL FAMILY BIBLE



Some families include their genealogies in the front of their Bible. If you don't have a cherished Bible or are looking for one to read with your kids or grandkids, you will be blessed to explore *The Word on Fire Bible* in two volumes.

This new version of the Christian Scriptures is aesthetically designed, with many beautiful works of art and literary explanations of those pieces, along with the power of the written word. If you are looking for a Bible, this is an exceptional resource and gift for others in your life. ☺

## CENTERING PRAYER 6-DAY RETREAT

with Forgiveness/Welcoming  
Prayer Presentations  
led by Mary Dwyer

June 9-14

These additional Prayer practices  
are transformational!

## COMMUNITY READING MAY-AUGUST

Grounded in the Work, Jeanne de Salzmänn's profound book invites us to go beyond knowledge alone and into self-discovery. The descriptions, self-observations and wisdom in *The Reality of Being: The Fourth Way of Gurdjieff* aids us in finding the Real in each of us. You might consider reading it slowly like poetry or prayer, and keeping notes as insights or questions arise. We will aim to enjoy a community sharing on this book in early September. ☺

## COMMUNITY PRACTICE MAY-JUNE EXPLORE YOUR GENEALOGY

Our community practice for June is connected to The Journey School's curriculum of exploring the themes of being awake and being in the family of God. The invitation is to become more aware of the family dynamics and patterns that have shaped your life. To observe what calls you to awaken. To see what you need to Work with. Let the Spirit lead. In pondering how to do this time body work, one suggestion is to talk to your parents and grandparents about their understanding of their life and spiritual journey. Ask other relatives as well. See what is revealed. Self-observe in the spirit of non-critical, non-judgmental kindness at the level of your family system. This practice is not about judgment; it is about understanding that everything belongs and all is well. ☺

## JUNE SERMON SERIES REMEMBER OTHERS

June 4	Remember the Saints
June 11	Remember the Suffering
June 18	Remember the Imprisoned
June 25	Remember the Hungry

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# JUNE CALENDAR

For more details, visit [consciousharmony.com](http://consciousharmony.com) or call 512-347-9673

## SPECIAL EVENTS

Online Introduction to Centering Prayer Class  
Jun 3 10am-noon & 4 consecutive Mondays 7-8pm  
Preregister online \$15

Online Half-Day Centering Prayer Retreat  
led by Sheri Banek  
Jun 3 1-4pm Preregister online

6-Day Centering Prayer Retreat (at Cedarbrake Renewal Center)  
Focus: Welcoming & Forgiveness Prayers led by Mary Dwyer  
Jun 9-14 \$800 Preregister online

## MONTHLY

1st Sundays Caritas Donations  
Bring non-perishables to CCH or donate to [caritasofaustin.org](http://caritasofaustin.org)

## WEEKLY

Saturdays  
Online Centering Prayer Support Group 7:35am

## Sundays

†Centering Prayer & Lectio Divina 8-9am  
❖Intercessory Prayer in Room 211 9:15-9:30am  
†Worship Service 10-11:30am  
❖Youth Program (preK-12) 10-11:30am

## Wednesdays

❖Contemplative Lunch noon-1pm  
(on pause for summer, resumes in September)

## Thursdays

\* The Journey School Class 7-8:30pm

## DAILY

†Centering Prayer Service 7-7:35am  
\* Centering Prayer 6-6:20pm



THE CHURCH of  
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\*Please join these services, groups, and classes via online video options.  
Contact the website for accessible links and more information.

†In person and online ❖In-person only at CCH



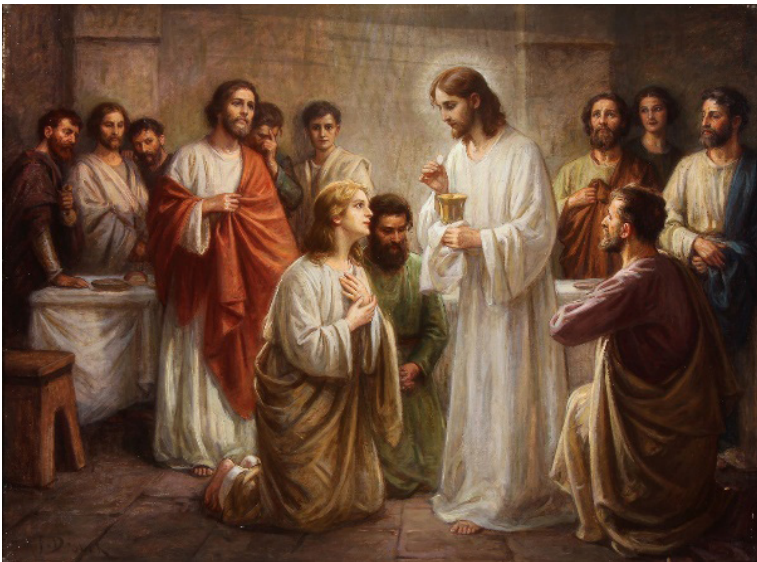
# THE CHURCH *of* CONSCIOUS HARMONY

A Contemplative Christian Community

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*Christ Instituting Holy Communion, František Dvořák*

## CORPUS CHRISTI

*Receive what you are to become.*

St. Augustine

In the Eucharist we are not only joined to Christ ... we believe that we are joined with all other Christians, with every member of the human race, and with the whole of creation. Christ is in the hearts of all men and women and in the heart of all creation, sustaining everything in being. This mystery of oneness enables us to emerge from the Eucharist with a refined inward eye, and invites us to perceive the mystery of Christ everywhere

and in everything. Christ who is hidden from our senses and intellect becomes more and more transparent to the eyes of faith – to the consciousness that is being transformed. The Spirit in us perceives the Spirit in others. The Eucharist is the celebration of life, the dance of the divine in human form. We are part of that dance. Each of us is a continuation of Christ's incarnation, insofar as we are living Christ's life in our own lives – or rather, *instead* of our own lives. The Eucharist is the summary of all creation coming together in a single hymn of praise, surrender, and thanksgiving. In the Eucharist all creation is transformed again.... Thomas Keating, *The Heart of the World*