



THE MARK

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I give thanks to my God at every remembrance of you . . . Philippians 1

A Certain Way of Life

by Tim Cook

During my twenties, I was a miserable young man and I had been miserable for as long as I could remember. I was so depressed and down that several years before a doctor of psychology, having interviewed me for 3 consecutive days of eight-hour sessions and tests, pronounced me the unhappiest man she had ever met. In 1968, I was living and working in Toronto and my emotional mood felt about like the continuously low overcast, grey skies that covered the city for more than six months of the year. And then one day, as a result of what seemed like a series of remarkable coincidences, I suddenly became deeply happy and filled with love.

Through the good hearted friendship and interest of a co-worker, who was himself well-along on the spiritual journey; I awakened from the self-bound sleep that is the ordinary and seemingly normal experience of the human race on earth. God touched my soul with his Spirit and I came to life with an aliveness and joy that I had never even suspected existed. It lasted for just about three weeks and then slowly faded away, but it left me forever changed and doggedly determined to find out how to feel God's Presence again, permanently.

During the seven years that followed, I went back to sleep but with a great difference. I now had an interest in God. I was searching all the spiritual bookstores in Toronto, buying every book I could find about the spiritual journey and feeling, for the first time in memory, hope. It was as though the overcast had parted and I could see a ray of light shining through a small hole. That small ray of hope became everything to me and it sustained me through some of the darkest and most difficult years of my life. I now know that I had entered into what is known in the Christian spiritual journey as the "night of sense," a time of reordering values and interests. So even though I often felt despair, isolation and loneliness, I now knew deep inside that there was more. And I lived to rediscover and live with that something more again.

In 1976 I finally hit bottom and found to my utter surprise that God, happiness and joy were there waiting for me. And then through another series of what seemed like remarkable coincidences, I found myself attending the services of a Christian church. I had not been in a church for over 20 years except to attend my father's funeral. So imagine my surprise when during

the first service I attended, I felt a distinct, clear and utterly certain knowledge that I knew what I was going to do with the rest of my life. I was going to be a minister. I knew that if I was ever going to "get it," I was going to have to think about it all the time

I kept attending church, learned to meditate, continued to read voraciously and I continued to have a better life than I had before. And there were moments of being very awake and aware of the immediacy of God's presence, but then there were weeks of going back to sleep; not as unhappily or depressed as before, but asleep, nonetheless. I felt wondrously alive when I was remembering God and feeling his presence and dead when I didn't. It literally felt like the difference between life and death. I longed to breathe the free air of spirit, but I didn't know how to keep the feeling alive.

Then one day the light dawned on me and I saw the root of my problem. Self-observation, one of the basic tools of the Work of Inner Christianity, revealed my situation with stark clarity. My entire life was basically aimless. I went to work, I had friends, I watched TV, I skied, went to movies, sporting events and


such; but it was all kind of random and unfocused. My studies had told me that my life follows my attention and now I saw clearly how true it is and how it worked. Since my attention was drawn randomly everywhere by whims, urges and desires of every sort; it was focused nowhere. And I was going nowhere spiritually because I had no spiritual aims except to gather increasing amounts of knowledge that I had no idea how to apply to my life experience.

And then one day while reading yet another book, I was given a simple yet profound insight that changed everything. I was reading a book called, "The Only Dance There Is" written by my spiritual hero Ram Dass. He pointed out the reasons that monasteries and ashrams have rules and practices and regular times for everything is exactly so that their members can keep their attention focused on the only thing that matters. Keeping them aimed at where they really want their lives to go.

But then, he gave me the real jewel. Just as I was about to lament the fact that I was not the kind of person who would go off to a monastery or an ashram he pointed out that householders, like me, could do the same kind of regular, daily devotional practices in their homes. I was desperate enough to heed his advice and began my own experiment with living a God centered life of daily spiritual practice all by myself in my home. I surrendered randomness and

opened myself to regularity and discipline of action and attention. The results of my efforts were astounding. So astounding, in fact, that I have continued to live that way ever since for 36 years now.

Instead of getting up when I felt like it, I got up at 5 AM even though my body often didn't want to at first. Instead of meditating if I felt like I was in the mood, I did it every day, twice a day at regular times. Instead of meditating as long as I felt like, I did it by a timer and I didn't stop meditating until the timer went off. Instead of doing yoga if I felt like it, I simply did it every day at the start of the day. Instead of eating what I craved, whenever I craved it, I began to eat regular meals of healthy food. What had been a mostly irregular life of random and reactive isolation became a life of regularity and relationship. I had become an urban monk, a monk in the world.

The seasons, the months, the days and in fact all of natural life is regular, rhythmic and certain. In my previous way of life, I always felt uncertain. Then, I felt deeply certain. Because now, I live a certain kind of life; certain and regular; like Life itself. Of all the things for which I'm grateful is that discovery of and participation in regularity and certainty are the most basic. Everything else is based on that foundation. Our church is a witness to that certain way of life and an invitation for you to join us in that certitude. 

New at the CCH Bookstore

Living in Gratitude

by Angeles Arrien

Living in Gratitude



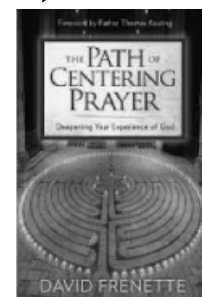
*A Journey That Will
Change Your Life*

Angeles Arrien

Integrating the latest teachings from social science with stories, prayers, and practices from cultures and traditions spanning the globe, Arrien presents a 12-month plan for making gratitude your foundation for daily living.

The Path of Centering Prayer

by David Frenette



In this lucid guide to centering prayer, David Frenette navigates a path for beginners and seasoned practitioners who wish to enter ever-deepening states of loving friendship with the divine.

Bookstore and Library Hours
Monday-Friday 8:30 am-3:30 pm
Sunday 9-9:50 am & 11:30 am-12:30 pm

PrayerIsRelationship

by Barbara Cook

Fr. Thomas Keating reminds us that when we say the words, "Let us pray," we are actually saying, "Let us have a relationship with God." Having a relationship with God is very different from knowing about God. In relationship we are opening ourselves to His Presence, His love and His healing activity within. It means that we are either beginning or deepening our relationship with God. So each time we pray, whether it be vocal prayers or silent, listening prayer, we are engaging in a relationship.

St. Paul reminds us that God dwells in inaccessible light. We can't know Him as He is even though we can know Him as His love, His light and His life; bits and glimmers of His true immensity and fullness. However, whenever we engage God in prayer, He can reveal himself to us and He can also reveal our own selves to us; our false selves and our true selves, both of which have always been known to Him. This direct, one-on-one communication is aided by our reading about God in Scripture and by reading the accounts of others who have had relationships with Him; like St. John in the New Testament or Fr. Keating or Thomas Merton or any of the saints and mystics who have taken the journey before us. As our relationship with God deepens, we learn to listen to His Spirit, to be guided by it and to lift our awareness to it so that we can "touch the hem of his garment."

So every time we sit in Centering Prayer with God we are

in relationship. At its deepest, this relationship is the most intimate communion in spirit, deeper than words, deeper than thoughts or feelings; we simply and directly know God, the Beloved. That deep communion begins the dismantling of the false self and its values. It imbues us with God's divine attributes, the fruits and gifts of the Spirit and with Christ Consciousness. This interpenetration of God and ourselves is happening when we pray no matter how we feel about or judge the value of any particular period of prayer.

The God who is love has given us a way to commune with Him intimately and completely in a relationship, which we cannot possibly mess up unless we simply don't do the practice or get up and leave during the period of prayer. He has given us everything and a foolproof way to receive it. How good the good God is.

We thank you dear God for this simple prayer and for the desire to consent to it. We thank you for our blessed Abba, Fr. Thomas Keating, who introduced us to this simple prayer and taught us its conceptual background. We thank you for our spiritual companions, the members of our community, who help to ground us in this new reality we are discovering. We thank you for retreats, days apart, and for deeper communion with you. We thank you Lord for loving us into Oneness with you. May your love for us and your vision of us and for us be fulfilled in our lives. ☸



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Live 'In Conspectu Domini'

External serenity—that is to say, the necessary time—is needed for writing; interior serenity is not. So we must make it by acting in times of stress just as we would in a state of perfect tranquility. This is where error and danger lurk for souls nowadays. It is obvious that we can write, and speak and act much better when our whole being is at peace. Activity, when we are tired and upset, is, it is quite certain, much more trying; it calls for much greater and often more painful effort. But strength of soul consists precisely in overcoming this difficult and in making the effort, however painful; in acting, in a word, as if all were well. Nothing develops our moral character so much as effort of this kind, in which we pay no attention either to our sufferings, or to the pathetic poorness of the results. For even if the immediate results are poor, the long-term issue is worthwhile; for by forcing ourselves to act, despite the obstacles raised by our trying pre-dispositions, we acquire the habit of doing so almost always, and that saves an enormous amount of time. Always remember,

then, that if we waited until we felt fit before acting, we would spend half our life-time waiting.

No, don't wait any longer for what, for some of us, will never come. With the energy that each day brings, do the duty of the present moment, paying no heed to the result. That depends upon God; what depends upon us is the effort, and it is this effort which will gradually build up for us a strong will, and a coordinated and useful life.

Meanwhile pray very much, no matter what your dispositions or the circumstances. The trouble with all of us is that we fail to live in close, intimate and living contact with the source of the only true Life. Our sorrows come from that. Our helplessness discourages us, because we forget the all-powerfulness of God, Who is always ready to come to our aid. The evil in others as well as in ourselves, and the sad state of our times, all affect us only because we do not know how to keep ourselves in the presence of God, Who is infinite Goodness and overwhelming Joy. We do not know how to live in conspectu Domini [in

the sight of the Lord]. Fortunately, God is drawing us and wants at all costs to possess Himself of us: it is His answer to our secret longing for Him. It is He Himself Who excites these secret longings and in due time satisfies them. It is in this sense that we can say that for souls of good will God does everything for them, so far as their spiritual life is concerned. Their will may be weak but it is good, really good (such a will always has been, and always will be good). We fail to think as much as we should do how God's good Will (and that is His infinite love) has always overshadowed us, and always will. Don't expect to see the temptation or the weakness disappear, just because you have received the sacraments: the life of the soul is a slow growth. Keep in close touch with God, drawing on the resources of divine strength. A child eats and takes food, but does not turn into a man in a single day. Leave everything, therefore, to Him Who has the directing of your life, and is Himself your life. 

Pages 128-30, *They Speak by Silences*, by a Carthusian



I give thanks to my God at every remembrance of you ... Philippians 1:3

Annual Aim

Seva: Participate, Serve, Grow, Transform

by Pamela Begeman

Work with your hands and feet
and keep your mind joined with God.

Work is a form of meditation
if your mind
is in a state of love.
If your mind is attuned in dedication,
you are with the Creator
as you are doing seva.
If your mind is far away –
if you are thinking of
your family or friends, for instance
– then you are not able to do
the dedicated work
you are supposed to do.
When you combine work and worship,
you can work harder and see more.
... If we love God,
we will be happy
while we are doing seva
and we will remain with Him.

Baba Virsa Singh, *Loving God:
The Practical Teachings of Baba Virsa Singh*

*Give and gifts will be given to you,
a good measure, packed together,
shaken down, and overflowing,
will be poured into your lap.
For the measure with which you measure
will in return be measured out to you.*

Luke 6:38

A commitment to *seva*, the Sanskrit word for “selfless service,” has been a foundational aspect of this community since its inception 25 years ago. Father Thomas Keating underscores the need for service, describing the spiritual journey as a river, with the banks consisting of devotion on one side and service on the other. He says in *Open Mind, Open Heart*,

“Dedication to God is developed by commitment to one’s spiritual practices for God’s sake. Service to others is the outgoing movement of the heart promoted by compassion. It neutralizes the deep-rooted tendency to become preoccupied with our own spiritual journey and how we are doing. The habit of service to others is developed by trying to please God in what we do and by exercising compassion for others, beginning with those with whom we live. To accept everyone unconditionally is to fulfill the commandment to *love your neighbor as yourself* (Mark 12:31).”

Almost since the moment I walked through the church doors 15 years ago, I’ve been a member of one of its *seva* teams, which serve the community every week by consciously preparing the church for the day’s activities, serving an average of 80 congregants home-cooked breakfast, and cleaning and closing the church after everyone has left. But it wasn’t until I went to India in both 2003 and 2006 that I really understood and received the gift that *seva* offers.

In 2002, Tenzin Choeygal (TC), a younger brother of His Holiness the XIV Dalia Lama, participated in a Buddhist-Christian dialogue here at CCH with Tim Cook and Brother Wayne Teasdale. TC was so impressed with our community that he suggested some of our students come to the public teaching offered by His Holiness every spring in Dharamsala, India. I was one of six who embarked upon a month-long pilgrimage to India, where we not only attended the life-changing

teaching, but also an ashram suggested by Tim where he had friends and teachers for us to meet.

Gobind Sadan, on the outskirts of New Delhi, is built on the site of a former garbage dump where its founder and teacher, Baba Virsa Singh, had a miraculous encounter with Jesus. Through the devoted work and prayer of its members, the garbage dump has been transformed into a beautiful village-like community, with lush gardens and cultivated farmland. But not only is it an oasis in the midst of poverty and chaos, but it is also sacred and holy ground where prayer and devotions have been happening continuously, around the clock, since 1968. Eternal sacred fires, or havans, surrounded by chanters and meditators, burn continuously to purify the world, promote world peace, and bring the Light of God into the world. Everyone rises early and works hard, all the while chanting the names of God. At lunch time, the community gathers for a simple meal, sitting on the ground together eating off of trays with their hands. The poor come for food, assistance of various kinds and prayer. And every evening, the community gathers at a special pristine garden called Jesus Place, the exact location where Babaji had his personal encounter with Jesus. Hundreds of candles are lit around a special wooden statue of Jesus that is adorned with clothing and flowers. Children run around, excitedly waiting for the ceremonial prasad (sweets) to be passed around

after the prayers. When all the preparations are complete, the community says The Lord's Prayer repeatedly, in as many languages as are spoken among the people present. And when we returned in 2006, a special chant to Mother Mary had been added to this prayer time. The beauty of this daily evening service is indescribable.

The deep devotion, hospitality and pure hearts of this community break your own heart wide open. After a few days in this orderly, harmonious atmosphere thick with the manifestations of the two greatest commandments, the Western mind and heart are forever imprinted with a new way of living and being. God indeed has come to earth in the form of Jesus Christ and this community lives out this truth in their own hearts and bodies every moment of every day.

We were treated like kings and queens. Special dinners were arranged, spontaneous late-night celebrations with treats that were painstakingly chosen from New Delhi's bakeries and markets were gathered and presented, and special performances were hosted by other travelers from around the world. The outpouring of love was never-ending. As Fr. Thomas says in *An Invitation to Love*, "This must be the way God is! When someone treats you in such a way that it makes you think of God, that person clearly is a sacrament of God's presence."

Lord, help me to lead a life which warrants my existence¹

¹ John Fuchs, *Forty Years after Gurdjieff*

I came back from India with this life-changing experience of service and serving and felt a new call and dedication to service along what the Work of Inner Christianity calls "the three lines of the Work" – work on my own purification and awakening; work for the sake of other's awakening; and work on behalf of the Work, Awakening itself, or all that is Good and True. Passages like these read during my daily devotions would burn in my heart:

"... We must know ourselves much better than we do in the running stream of life: and out of that knowledge we must become responsible to one another and to ourselves. Otherwise, we do not really exist individually."

and

"What have you done *beyond* yourself? ... What situations have you transformed?"²

and

"We do not exist for ourselves alone, and it is only when we are fully convinced of this fact that we begin to love ourselves properly and thus also love others."³

I also understood more deeply what Tim and Barbara had originally intended by including seva as an important component of community membership and participation, and I dedicated myself to making that vision come alive in me and our community.

Service is devotion ... a manifest

² Both quotes from Maurice Nicoll, *The Psychological Commentaries on the Teaching of Gurdjieff and Ouspensky*

³ Thomas Merton, *No Man Is An Island*

form of love of God.

In committing to some form of service, whether it is a seva team, regular participation in Saturday work days, the youth program, serving retreats, or any number of the church's service opportunities, I give my will in the form of my attention, efforts and affections to something other than my own desires and needs. If I am a student of the Work of Inner Christianity, I practice what is called "putting myself under more laws to come under fewer," which means I purposely put the false self under constraints, difficulties or extra efforts knowing that the purifications will yield a deeper experience of God, the true self and others. Said another way, I pick up my cross aiming for a deeper relationship with the living Christ. At first, my service commitment might feel like a "law," a duty, or a rewarding way to feel good about myself. But if the commitment is sustained, I am moved past these initial experiences and the inner observer comes alive during engagement in ordinary activities. Then, I get to see my personality in action through identifications, attachments, self-love and limiting ways of engaging or not engaging. I can see that I mostly participate from the most shallow, mechanical parts of myself. Over time, through effort, wish and grace, participation in seva opens me to "give freely," to let myself flow out to others, and to practice stewardship for my church, for my community and for others.

I release the limits on myself and my life. "Me and mine" move to "we and our." Self-love transforms to self-less service. In the spirit of kenosis, I give myself away and yet find myself receiving much more than the little I give – packed down and overflowing. I'm now living and moving and experiencing my being – and the world – from an inner depth. The will has submitted to the law of Love. Seva becomes a form of devotion, a choice-less choice, a way of deepening my relationship with the living Christ.

Christ moves among the pots and pans⁴

Seva begins with the simple and the ordinary: sweeping the pathways, washing dishes, taking out the garbage. In learning to engage these activities intentionally and devotionally while at our church community, over time we are able to transfer this conscious engagement to our homes and workplaces and then larger efforts on behalf of humanity. The invitation is not to work hard and do tasks perfectly; rather the aim is *ora et labora* – the union of work and prayer, of awakening to the reality of God's presence in all that we do, in everyone we meet and in all that we are. Jean-Pierre de Caussade describes the invitation in *Abandonment to Divine Providence* this way: "The duties of each moment are the shadows beneath which hide the divine operation." Brother Lawrence of the Resurrection had experiences like this one described in *The Practice of the Presence of God*:

⁴ Teresa of Avila

"At the beginning of my duties I would say to the Lord with confidence, 'My God, since You are with me, and since, by Your will, I must occupy myself with external things, please grant me the grace to remain with You, in Your presence. Work with me, so that my work might be the very best. Receive as an offering of love both my work and all my affections.'"

Members of the Sunday morning seva teams practice the presence of God in the ordinary all morning. As one example, they bring home-cooked food for the community breakfast. Intentionally preparing food to share in community is a sacrifice of praise to our beloveds and the Beloved. In this simplest and most ordinary of acts, we glorify God by consciously attending to the chosen recipe, to the selection of ingredients and to manifestation of a new creation from disparate elements. We participate in creation and through this conscious participation, we offer ourselves as Food in the food; being feeds being.

Do not neglect hospitality, for through it some have unknowingly entertained angels. Hebrews 13:2

The Christ Project⁵

From practice with the simple and ordinary, we can then be called by the Spirit into greater and greater participation. The principles and evolutionary theology of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin expansively speak of the next level of seva:

⁵ The following paragraphs are excerpted and referenced from Louis M. Savary, *The New Spiritual Exercises in the Spirit of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin*


that of serving the evolution of humanity and of all creation. His teachings invite people to freely give themselves to this evolutionary work, beyond concerns with their own journey and transformation. For de Chardin, it is God's "Christ Project" on Earth that must be of primary importance to those who want to be co-workers and therefore, co-creators with Christ. To participate this way, we are invited to see ourselves as interdependent parts of a greater whole, team players, community-builders, peacemakers. We are all joined together for the success or failure of the divine project. We are all one species. What happens to another human somehow affects me and vice versa.

Those dedicated to the Christ Project are "not satisfied with the status quo, but are intent on maximizing potentials and stretching the horizon, envisioning what does not yet exist and making it happen", like Tim and Barbara are doing with the great experiment of CCH, one step at a time. De Chardin calls this "loving the not-yet." Each person has work to do as part of this grand project. My work is connected to the efforts of my brothers and sisters and theirs to mine. In this view, it becomes part of my work to support and encourage others, since the success of the great project depends on the success of its members. The mystical body of Christ is both individual and cosmic, and includes all creation. De Chardin invites us "to love creation with a generative love, a love that wants

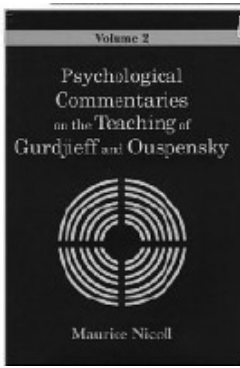
continued on page 10

New Impressions

We can regard impressions as all that which enters from the outside world through the five senses. Only these impressions may just reach us without affecting us internally in any way, or they may enter us very deeply, their innermost meaning may be seen, and they may become transformed into intense emotion. For instance, one walks on the street and receives an impression of a beggar—one day it will be just a vague face which one takes as part of the scenery and which has no more significance for one than an old piece of newspaper. Another day one may actually see the man, see all he has been through, see what he is, see all that he can expect to become. Such a perception may suddenly connect with many pictures, memories and experiences, and give a flash of new understanding. It need not be a beggar. The same thing can happen through the simplest scene or object. The impression may be the same that one receives every day, but one day it is digested, that is, transformed into higher [light]. And this transformation is directly or indirectly connected with the possibility of self-remembering. Such moments may come as a result of efforts to self-remember; and they may in turn make a new level of self-remembering possible.

In the chapter on 'Experimental Mysticism' in *A New Model [of the Universe]* by P.D. Ouspensky] it is described how in certain mystical states 'what is ordinarily objective becomes subjective, and what is ordinarily subjective becomes objective'. In self-remembering, one takes the first step towards this, and it may happen that inner voices, arguments, thoughts, emotions, hopes, fears, aspirations, which in the ordinary way are felt as subjective, and 'I' and 'mine', suddenly become objective, become 'he' and 'his'. In this way one begins to find different people within one. One's own inner life becomes the object of observation, gives one new and important impressions. And one comes to perhaps the deepest question of all, 'Who am I?' 

Pages 2-3, *The Theory of Conscious Harmony*, from the letters of Rodney Collin, a long-time student of P.D. Ouspensky.



The Work of Inner Christianity

Karma Yoga


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

Karma Yoga is the science of action with non-identifying. The phrase must be remembered by everyone. It must not be changed into “the science of action without identifying.” The essence of the idea of Karma Yoga is to meet with unpleasant things equally with pleasant things. ... Nothing can change *being* so much as this practice – namely, to take the unpleasant things in life as an exercise. And anything that acts on being at once increases our force. To take life with non-identifying does not mean empty acting; it means to act from a real basis, from aim and from understanding the ideas and

meaning of the Work.

Karma means roughly Fate, and the Yoga refers to those who by Fate cannot change their outer conditions. ... Karma Yoga teaches the right relation towards people and the right action in ordinary circumstances of life ... Karma Yoga is always connected with the aim of inner development, of inner improvement. It helps man not to fall asleep inwardly amidst the entangling influences of life, especially in the midst of the *hypnotizing influence of activity*. It makes him remember that nothing external has any significance, that everything

must be done without caring about results. ... Acting and feeling in this way, a man can never meet with failure in anything, because the greatest failure, the greatest unsuccess, may further success in his inner work, in his struggle with himself, if he only finds the right attitude towards this unsuccess.

When a man realizes this and feels it constantly, life itself becomes his “teacher.” 

Pages 88, 250-51. *Psychological Commentaries on the Teaching of Gurdjieff and Ouspensky*, by Maurice Nicoll. For more information and experience with these teachings, you are invited to attend the Introduction to the Work classes held every Thursday at 7:30 p.m. at The Church of Conscious Harmony.

Annual Aim continued from page 9

to produce something new with the materials that surround us. Creation is something that wants to be continually re-created. It needs us to re-create it. It needs our human spirit to image what that transformation will be and to love it generatively into being.”

How do I begin to participate in the Christ Project? I begin

with the first line – work on myself in service to deepening my relationship with God and incarnating Christ in me. But it doesn’t stop there; I take the next step and the next and the next, ever deepening my consent and surrender to All That Is. The Spirit knows what to do with each “yes” we offer.

Seva:

Participate, Serve, Grow, Transform

If you are interested in joining a Sunday seva team, please call or email the church office. Participation on a team entails serving Sunday morning once every five weeks, from 7 am–12:15 pm

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

25th Guideline



The spiritual radiation of a community depends on the commitment of its members to the inward journey and to each other. To offer one another space in which to grow as persons is an integral part of this commitment.

SEEDS

His Instrument

The requirements of a work to be done can be understood as the will of God.

If I am supposed to hoe a garden or make a table,

then I will be obeying God if I am true to the task I am performing.

To do the work carefully and well, with love and respect for the nature of my task and with due attention to its purpose, is to unite myself to God's will in my work.

In this way I become His instrument. He works through me.

When I act as His instrument my labor cannot become an obstacle to contemplation, even though it may temporarily so occupy my mind

that I cannot engage in it while I am actually doing my job.

Yet my work itself will purify and pacify my mind

and dispose me for contemplation.

by Thomas Merton, *New Seeds of Contemplation*, page 19

February Calendar

Visit consciouharmony.org for a complete listing of events

Special Events

Ash Wednesday Service
Feb 13 12-1 pm
no Contemplative Lunch

One Day Centering Prayer Retreat
Feb 16 8:30 am-4:30 pm Cost \$15
No need to pre-register. Potluck lunch.

Two Day Commuter Retreat
Feb 17-18 8am-7pm / 7am-4:30pm
Cost \$100 Food is provided.
Please pre-register with the office.

Monthly

Community Workday
Feb 9 9 am-12 noon

Tuesday Enrichment 7:30 pm
Feb 19 Gurdjieff Music

Weekly

Yoga
Thursdays 6-7:15 pm
Cost \$14 each session
Prayer Circle
Wednesdays 9:15 am
Contemplative Lunch
Wednesdays 12 noon
Mid-Week Communion Service
Wednesdays 6-7 pm
Introduction to the Work
Thursdays 7:30 pm

Daily

Weekday Centering Prayer Service
M-F 7-7:35 am in Theosis Chapel

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



The Church of Conscious Harmony
A Contemplative Christian Community
7406 Newhall Lane Austin, Texas 78746

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Temptation of Christ, J. Kirk Richards

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

Romans 7:18-25

LENT

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

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

Thomas Keating, *The Mystery of Christ*