



THE MARK

March 2013
Volume 25
Number 3

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

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

The Silence That Is God's Presence by Tim Cook

When I was a boy my family took vacations out West every summer. One year as we were heading for Yellowstone, we were driving across the vast prairies of Western Nebraska and as evening drew near we were still over 100 miles from the state park where we had planned to camp. Since our map showed no other possibilities for camping, Dad decided to try driving straight through, even though he was worn out from driving all day. That prospect worried Mom, but it worried her a lot less than the only seeming alternative, which was to sleep in the car on the shoulder of the road. We were all feeling a bit tense as we drove on in the gathering twilight. Then, an unexpected road sign appeared in the headlights. It pointed down a dirt road to a recreation area 4 miles away. Even though it wasn't on the map, Dad decided to chance it, so we drove on through the now pitch black open prairie over a rutted washboard dirt road that looked like it was going nowhere. When we finally reached the place, we found a brand new campground next to an enormous, newly finished reservoir. It was utterly deserted; we were the only ones there. Mom did not like the stark isolation at all and I wasn't sure how I felt about it, but Dad was exhausted so we decided to stay. When we shut down the engine, turned off the headlights and stepped

out of the car, we were all stunned by what we heard. Nothing! We heard absolutely nothing! There were no roads nearby, no planes overhead, no bird or animal sounds of any sort. It was so totally silent that we could actually hear silence. The stars felt so close we could almost touch them and they were certainly magnificent to see, but it was the profound depth of infinite silence that touched all our hearts with unspeakable wonder. This grand silence was not simply the absence of sound; it was an actual presence that was so powerful and attractive that none of us wanted to speak. We were mostly silent, speechless, as we set up our tent in that palpable, silent presence.

That 10 year old boy could never have imagined how essential that silence would be to the man he was to become, but I am still powerfully drawn to it today. In fact, it has become the single most important aspect of my life, because it is where I meet God. I have learned to listen for it, to hear it and appreciate it even in the midst of a busy day in an urban life. That fathomless silence is the absolutely alive and full to overflowing background from which all things and beings emerge and to which all return.

As my life unfolded through my teenage years and into young adulthood I grew further and further distant from that silence. Loud music, fast paced entertainment and

a busy life drew me into an endless momentum that I became afraid to stop. I became afraid of silences. They felt threatening and disturbing. I turned on my television, my stereo or my radio the first thing every morning and they were the last things turned off at night. Sometimes I felt so lonely and afraid of my loneliness that I even kept the radio on while I slept. Silent pauses in conversation felt agonizing and embarrassing. I felt an overpowering need to keep thinking, speaking or hearing sounds. I did not know what actual threat seemed to be in the silence and I did not want to find out. Silence was forbidden territory for my mind; it felt like it would kill me. But it was actually my fast-paced life that was killing me, and when it almost did and I called out for help, God was there waiting to lead me back to the silent home that had moved me so deeply many years before and from which I and all of us originally emerged and to which all of us eventually return.

If there is anything scary about the great silence it is that it seems empty and we are afraid that we will lose ourselves in it. But it's really just the opposite. Far from losing ourselves we find them in the silence, and far from being empty the vast silence is actually the very fullness of existence itself. It just takes a moment of clear self observation to prove this to ourselves. Observe

closely and notice that just before and just after each thought and word there is silence. Before and between each note and sound of music there is silence. Every created thing rises from the fullness of silence and returns to it. The silence is the constant and ever present background that supports, sustains and gives meaning to all the facts of existence. Astonishingly, we find endless joy, infinite trust and peace that passes understanding when we learn the graceful art of abiding in the great silence. We never find these in the busy world because they are not there.

I now understand why, for thousands of years, women and men who sought the deep meanings of life have sought out and founded communities and monasteries where silence was the basis of daily life. They were not running away from the cities. They were running toward the touch of God which they had discovered was the meaning of life. And they were not, as I once thought, selfish; far from it, because these people have discovered that when they enter the great silence they are praying with and for all of humanity. They are the specialized organs and cells of the Body of Christ, who hold the truth for all of us.

The most silent of all the monastic orders that I am aware of are the Carthusians. Those of us who saw the movie, *Into Great Silence*, got a rare peek into the profound world of these servants of the human race. Here is what one anonymous Carthusian had to say about silence:

“Silence and memory go well in hand. We know that silence is not void, but on the contrary by its very

nature a fullness; but a plenitude in which our thoughts are made known. Speech that is the result of bustle and noise is bound to be superficial. The seat of silence should be the depths of our being, and that ‘being’ only offers something true and profound when it comes from that silence, and is its expression.

That is why the world’s speech—conversations, the press and so on—is so fatuous and wearying, instead of being restful and beneficial. That is why, on the other hand, in Charterhouse one experiences such peace. There, everything emanates from the calm depths of the soul, where all is recollected and silent. That is where God abides and where we infallibly find Him, if we abide there too. Not everyone, obviously because of the circumstances of their lives, can experience that same recollection that exists in a Charterhouse, but they must not be afraid to set aside as far as possible at least some moments, however short, for recollection, and to give some time to Him Who is within them. It is in that silence that He speaks to us, and bids us listen to Him.”

In her landmark book, *The Path To No-Self, Life At The Center*, our friend Bernadette Roberts, a contemporary contemplative, speaking from her own experience, summarizes the findings of the great contemplatives of all time and invites us to join them.

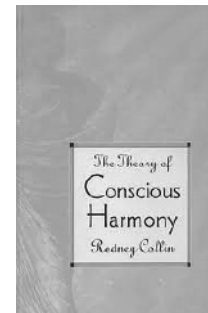
“... it is as if we had come upon an interior treasure so great that everything outside holds no value for us; we desire nothing because we already possess everything. We are utterly content within

New in the CCH Bookstore

Letting Go by David Hawkins

Letting Go describes a simple and effective means by which to let go of the obstacles to Enlightenment and become free of negativity. During the author’s many decades of psychiatric practice, the primary aim was to seek the most effective ways to relieve human suffering in all of its forms. The inner mechanism of surrender was found to be of great practical benefit and is described in this book.

The Theory of Conscious Harmony by Rodney Collin



An enlightening compilation from Rodney Collin’s letters to people all over the world about the pursuit of a spiritual path within everyday life. “There is so much to do in preparation for the future, so many different fields in which harmony must come, and all by means of ordinary everyday men like ourselves...”

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


ourselves and need nothing outside ourselves—the inner treasure is sufficient unto itself. No experience in life has the depths of this center; it is a depth that belongs to God alone; it is His domain that remains untouchable to all outside. At this level, only God can touch or affect us. When living at this level becomes a habit of soul—when nothing can draw us out—then there is no division remaining; all is conformed to this inner silence....

... once the deepest center of being opens to us, its silence becomes increasingly accessible as a refuge of peace. We are subtly lured into this center by infusions of joy and love which increase our desire to remain in this dimension. In itself, this dimension is both a conscious awareness and a subtle feeling of deep interior space, a space so deep it seems at times to go through our being and out—beyond ourself. As we acclimate to living in the center we lose the old habit of being swayed by thought and feeling because they can no longer draw us out, disturb our peace, or reach to this deeper dimension. Thus, the process of learning to live at the center is the process of unification and transformation, otherwise known in contemplative literature as ‘transforming union.’ It means we are losing the old ways of acting and responding in order to learn how to live at the center in union with God.”

We were created for this very union. It is the meaning of life and our lives. Anything less falls vastly short of the mark and is in the end totally without the deep satisfaction our souls are yearning for. And

because we were made for this union, God has given us an unfailing way to come to it. Our church was founded on the very methods that provide a way of access to the graceful gifts that God is always offering to everyone. CCH is a monastery without walls, a community that offers the gifts that lead to the healing silence for people who wish to remain in the world but who do not wish to remain of it. Here we teach two mutually supporting methods for healing ourselves from the madness that ensues from living as though we were separate from God. The Work of Inner Christianity offers us tools to use during the busy and active parts of our daily lives; tools that help us stay free from the subtle seductions of our ordinary thoughts and feelings. Centering Prayer gives us a profound means of entering the silence of God. Together they offer each of us access to the deeper life that we all hunger for.

Since we are all products of our busy and noisy Western culture it may seem strange to us at first that silence could be so attractive. But anyone of us who enters will find the very same thing as all the beings who have entered before. We find to our delight and amazement that we can personally “taste and see that the Lord is good.”

Listen between the words, between the thoughts and between all the sounds. It is like the paper that is behind and which unites and makes possible all the letters and words on the page you are now holding. The silence is the ocean of being in which we are now and always arising. Right now, listen, really LISTEN to the great silence and it will become the touch of God’s Presence. 



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

MINISTERS

Tim and Barbara Cook

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Michael Begeman
Pamela Begeman
Mary Anne Best
Eric DeJernett
Donald Genung
Wally Huck
Lauri Raymond

MUSIC

Susan Boulden, Director
musicdir@consciousharmony.org
Sue Young

YOUTH EDUCATION SERVICES

Deborah Hale, Children’s Director
childmin@consciousharmony.org
Jacque Botto, Assistant Children’s Director
Don Hale, Youth Director
youthdir@consciousharmony.org

OFFICE

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

BOOKSTORE

Sun 9-9:50 am & 11:30 am-12:30 pm
Mon-Fri 8:30 am-3:30 pm
Thom Temperli, Manager
bookmgr@consciousharmony.org

NEWSLETTER

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

Silence, the Womb of Transformation

by Barbara Cook


Centering Prayer is the threshold for silence, God's first language. That language is God's fullness and possibility. That silence restores us, heals us and makes us new. One of the things that I have observed on multi-day retreats is that those sitting in the closing circle often look years younger than they did when they arrived. There are a couple of reasons for that. First, we let go of ourselves and our life situations. Secondly, we open to the right now love and presence of God. I have sometimes lovingly referred to retreats as the "God Spa."

To open to God's presence for five or ten days, to let go of our ordinary worries, concerns, desires and self pictures is indeed the best

kind of spa; because we are being immersed in silence, the presence of God and the fullness of God. Fr. Thomas reminds us that doing a 10-day retreat is the equivalent of doing a whole year of daily Centering Prayer practice. The results of that immersion are obvious visually, physically and spiritually. It is also cumulative; so if you are doing daily practice and annual retreats, the awareness and presence of God and the feeling of his intimacy becomes more and more a reality and an awareness to our ordinary consciousness. As we regularly let go of ourselves for our twice daily 30 minutes and then do annual multi-day retreats, something new grows in us, the Mind of Christ with the fruits

and gifts of the Spirit. These are love, peace, joy, patience, fortitude, wisdom, counsel, understanding and more.

Silence is the milieu of God; and although we live and move and breathe and have our being in God, we are usually unaware of it and can't readily access it. The gift of Centering Prayer gives us a very simple method to open daily for a short period of time to the place where God is, here and now.

Silence, all that is not self, is the womb of the development of the Christ in us, our hope of glory. This is not just for ourselves, but also for our world; and so that God, our loving, creative, Father might be glorified. May it be so for all of us. 

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

26th Guideline



Contemplative prayer, in the traditional sense of the term,
is the dynamic that initiates, accompanies and brings the process
of transformation to completion.



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

Annual Aim

Silence is Everywhere Present

by Jeanette Norris

There is a better way of prayer,
a greater gift from God,
in which we pass through our
prayer to Him,
and love Him.

We taste the goodness
of His infinite mercy.
... There we communicate with
Him alone,
without words,
without discursive thoughts,
in the silence of our whole being.
... A lifetime of silence is ordered
to an ultimate declaration,
a declaration of all
we have lived for.

Thomas Merton, *No Man is an Island*

*When you pray,
go to your inner room,
close the door,
and pray to your Father in secret
and your Father whose eyes are in secret
will reward you.*

Matthew 6:6

The entrance sign to The Church of Conscious Harmony reads, “Welcome All Who Enter Here”...

As one begins their entrance down the Path of Intention into the monastery without walls, one can feel the greeting of silence. Twenty five years of silence built upon centuries of contemplative tradition is accumulated here. It settles over you in a sense of peace. If you listen, you can hear the silence, and you can see the effects of silence on the faces you meet, the smiles on lips, the light in eyes and in the unhurried, purposeful walk of those who have made contemplation a way of life.

How did Silence come to be so tangible in this hilltop sanctuary?

Twenty five years ago, Tim and Barbara Cook wished for it. As Unity ministers, their spiritual paths had been rich with meditation and prayer – both Eastern and Christian – a blending of traditions, always turning their attention and hearts to God. According to Barbara, they wished for a community, a community of

like-minded people with whom to practice and who would join them in their wish for transformation and divine union through God-centered devotion. Intuitively, they knew that meditation was fundamental.

A group of 24 friends began meeting weekly in the living room of Bill and Margaret Browder. They studied the teachings and practice of the esoteric Christian Fourth Way known as the Work and they prayed. As God would have it, a book made its way to Tim that would change their method of prayer to Centering Prayer. That book was *Open Mind, Open Heart – The Contemplative Dimension of the Gospel* by Thomas Keating. The teachings and practices of the contemplative Christian tradition as presented by Fr. Keating became one of the two legs, the other being the Work of Inner Christianity, upon which Tim and Barbara founded The Church of Conscious Harmony.

The Church was founded as a five year experiment. The group of

24 soon grew to 60, moving to the home of Tim and Barbara, and then to larger spaces. As the meditation practices turned into Centering Prayer practices, obvious changes continued happening in the lives of those who practiced. Tim called Fr. Keating to tell him how important his book had been to the community and to establish a dialogue. Fr. Keating quickly responded, offering to come to visit the church.

That was the beginning of a relationship with Fr. Keating and his organization, Contemplative Outreach, which has flourished over the years. Fr. Thomas has become our Spiritual Abba.

The contemplative life with its attraction for transformation is now practiced daily by the members of The Church of Conscious Harmony. Silence is everywhere present. How do we access it? By deepening our relationship with God through the practice of Centering Prayer, engaging the Word of God in *Lectio Divina*, and resting in God at Centering Prayer silent retreats.

Centering Prayer

Twenty years ago, while visiting in Austin, I came to a Tuesday evening showing of a Spiritual Journey videotape by Fr. Keating. He talked about Centering Prayer being a method of consent to the presence and action of God. He spoke of the dismantling of the false self and our programs for happiness that do not work. He said that centering prayer prepared us for the gift of contemplation. All that

was said seemed to be answers to questions deep within me.

The viewing was preceded by 20 minutes of Centering Prayer and followed by a time of sharing. The experience touched me deeply. I immediately bought a copy of *Open Mind, Open Heart*, took it home to Mexico with me, and began my practice of Centering Prayer. My hunger for a deeper relationship with God grew, and a few years later, I moved back to Austin to become a part of the community of the monastery without walls. Twice daily I have consented to God's presence and action within in the silence.

In all these twenty years of being with the prayer, I have read and heard the following words of Fr. Keating many times. Each time I hear them, they thrill me and fill me with hope.

“Contemplative prayer is the world in which God can do anything. To move into that realm is the greatest adventure. It is to be open to the Infinite and hence to infinite possibilities. Our private, self-made worlds come to an end; a new world appears within and around us the impossible becomes an everyday experience. Yet the world that prayer reveals is barely noticeable in the ordinary course of events.

Christian life and growth are founded on faith in our own basic goodness, in the being that God has given us with its transcendent potential. This gift of being is our true Self. Through our consent by faith, Christ is born in us and He and our true Self become one. Our

awakening to the presence and action of the Spirit is the unfolding of Christ's resurrection in us.”¹

I ponder, and I take the words in deeply. “God can do anything ... greatest adventure ... open to the Infinite ... infinite possibilities ... impossible becomes an everyday experience ... faith in our own basic goodness ... the being that God has given us ... transcendent potential ... is our true Self ... through our consent ... Christ is born in us ... He and our true Self become one ... presence and action of the Spirit ... is the unfolding of Christ's resurrection in us.”

Words cannot convey the richness of the discovery of truth, they can only attract. The discovery happens deep within, in the silence.

So what is Centering Prayer? How do we access the silence?

Fr Keating offers the wisdom saying of Jesus in Matthew 6:6 as “a formula for cultivating interior silence. ... The invitation that Jesus extends is to enter our inner room, symbol of the spiritual level of our being, which is the level of intuition and the spiritual will, the realm of true choice. ... Little by little we enter into prayer without any other intention except to consent. Consent becomes surrender. And surrender becomes total receptivity, as this process evolves. And total receptivity is effortless. ... The formula that Jesus gave us in Matthew 6:6, on which Centering Prayer is based, is a kind of cascading movement into

continued on page 8

Annual Aim continued from page 7

deeper levels of silence in which we first deliberately let go of the external tumult of the world and all our immediate anxieties and concerns and turn them over to God for the twenty minutes to a half an hour we agree to spend in Centering Prayer.”²

Centering Prayer is invitational and relational—friendly—with no way to mess it up.

Fr Keating has developed some guidelines, a method, as it were, to help us in our prayer periods.

1) Choose a sacred word as the symbol of your intention to consent to God’s presence and action within.

2) Sitting comfortably and with eyes closed, settle briefly and silently introduce the sacred word as the symbol of your consent to God’s presence and action within.

3) When engaged with your thoughts return ever-so-gently to the sacred word.

4) At the end of the prayer period, remain in silence with eyes closed for a couple of minutes.

There is a second part to this transformational prayer, that of the unloading of the unconscious. When we consent to God’s presence and action within, the Holy Spirit begins the evacuation of the emotional debris of a lifetime. We may enter into a Night of Sense, in which the Divine Therapist engages in our own deepest healing. As the Night ends, joy emerges.

I consent, and God, in his great love, holds me gently through the

process of transformation.

Retreats – Prayer in Community

...Call us, O Beloved, to spaces of solitude, and times to befriend the Silence...
Psalm 106³

What is a Centering Prayer Retreat? The retreat brochure which lists all the retreats offered by CCH each year explains it as follows: A Centering Prayer retreat is a “time away” with God – an opportunity to deepen your prayer life, to deepen your relationship with God, and to experience community in a new way.

The retreat offers time each day for resting with God in prayer, sharing in the experience of Contemplative Community, dropping into periods of silence and solitude, opening ever-more to God, learning the immediate conceptual background of the Christian Contemplative Journey as presented by Fr. Keating, and experiencing the Word of God through the liturgy or *Lectio Divina* in community.

Barbara Cook, working with Contemplative Outreach, began the retreat ministry at CCH in 1991. It was held at Eagle Lake with 40 people attending. Interest grew and two retreats a year were held for the next few years. Looking for a larger facility, Fr. Oliver Johnson suggested we visit Cedarbrake Retreat Center in Belton, TX to see if it might be adequate. In 1995, we held our first retreat there, and it has been home to the multi-day retreats ever since. The beauty of the grounds and the facilities has welcomed many of the CCH community and invites us back.

The retreat ministry has grown... We now offer seven multi-day retreats a year at Cedarbrake, as well as almost monthly one-day retreats and four commuter retreats per year at CCH.

When I moved back to Austin, I dived in the abundant offering of silence, attending at least one multi-day retreat per year and as many one-day retreats as I could fit into my schedule. What a blessing! Then, in 2002, I began working with Barbara and the centering prayer staff. I served at the introductory classes, attended centering prayer support groups and staffed retreats. It was in staffing retreats that I truly learned to let go and dance with the Holy Spirit. In contemplative service, I learned what Fr. Keating means when he talks about taking the prayer into action. It is one more offering on the path to transformation.

I attended the Advent Retreat as a retreatant this past December. I can only describe the deep rest in God as “delicious.” Sitting in prayer and daily sharing of the Eucharist in the small intimate setting opened space in my heart to receive the Light. To sit with brothers and sisters in community is described by Fr. Keating in the following way:

As we sit in silence, we come to realize our oneness with others, not only with those for whom we pray, but with everyone on earth – past, present and to come. What is deepest in them, their oneness with the Divine presence, resonates with what is deepest in us.⁴

continued on page 10

Heard at Retreats

...from some who have experienced the “time away” with God.

It gave me enough silence, space, and time to finally let go of my agenda so that I could listen.

Being safe in the silence in fellowship with God – perfect.

The commuter retreat is valuable because it demonstrates how to weave ‘endless praying’ into everyday life.

I experienced balance between time in the silence, meals, walks, Lectio Divina, and the videos.

The hospitality was excellent and fed me on many levels.

I have been away from CCH for quite some time.

This retreat confirmed and reassured that Centering Prayer is vital to my life and emotional stability.

Listening to everyone’s experience (in the sharing circle) was very informative.

One of the experiences shared ... made me realize/learn what I have been looking for.

I feel a longing to stay in the silence for a longer time.

In being still for 6 days, I see that Abba wants to do so much more with me.

Mary Dwyer gave us tools we can start using today to heal the areas within;

finally releasing the dark areas so more light can come in.

I came with the same old questions. Why am I here? How did I get here? What should I do?

Then Sunday morning sitting in Centering Prayer ... the answers to my questions have always been there—
beforeIcouldshapetheword,beforeIcouldeverwrite,somethinginmeknew.It’slove.Lovebroughtmehere.Iamheretolove.So
simple it seems, but so very big. God is Love! I learned this again.

The 2013 retreat schedule is available at www.consciousharmony.org/calendar.

Daily Crosses

Try not to be unduly disturbed by the tiny incidents of life. There is nothing permanent in them.

Our soul is immeasurably greater than all these things.

Part of its greatness is precisely its power to pass beyond all these ephemeral disturbances
and to reach out and touch the eternal through what is merely passing.

The causes—or occasions rather—of our troubles are only instruments;

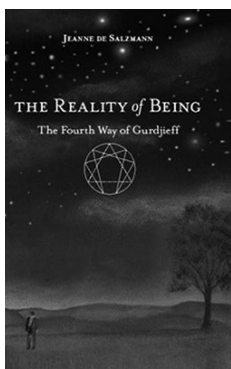
what we must try to do is to see the One Who is handling them—the God of Love.

It is the spirit of faith that sees this Love in suffering, and turns its darkness into light.

This light of love—in reality the light of the Holy Spirit—

is what imparts sweetness and goodness to everything.

Our daily crosses are the disciplinary exercises
by which the Holy Spirit develops in a soul the habit of using this light.



The Work

of Inner Christianity

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

Toward the Unknown Through Silence

It is the quiet itself that is important, silence as the fact itself, not what one obtains through it. We need to discover the nature of silence, when thought, feeling and body are all silent. What takes place when thought is really quiet, and also feeling? The silence... does it become awake to itself? In being attentive to the nature of silence, I feel an intelligence awaken. What is important is its appearance, not what it illuminates. This intelligence is sacred and cannot be at the service of my ego, my ambition. The silence that appears when I see myself taken by illusion is revealing, but only if I do not wish for it. I feel the action of reality on me, but I do not give myself up to it. I learn to let my thought flower and thus come to an end. The field is free; I offer no opposition. Thinking becomes a light for itself and no longer seeks experience. It is necessary to pass through the world of the known to enter the unknown, the void, the real.

I begin to understand that silence does not come because I seek to become silent. It comes when the mind sees the process of thought and its conditioning by the known. For this it must observe as one watches a beloved child, without comparing or condemning. One observes in order to understand. It is only when I know this conditioning that silence and tranquility are sought not for security but for the freedom to receive the unknown, the truth. Then the mind becomes very quiet. This opens the door to a state that is reality, with immense possibilities. The mind is no longer an observer of the unknown. It is the unknown itself.

The wish to be conscious is the wish *to be*. It can only be understood in silence. ☸

Pages 166-167, *The Reality of Being – The Fourth Way of Gurdjieff*, by Jeanne de Salzmann, a long time student of G.I. Gurdjieff. 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 8

The invitation is there. Retreat. The silence awaits.

Deeper

Each of us has a story about how the Holy Spirit brought us to The Church of Conscious Harmony, how we were drawn by the teachings and the silence. Each story and each person is a part of the vision given to Tim Cook 25 years ago, to form a community of like-minded people with whom to practice and who would join them in their wish for transformation and divine union through God-centered devotion.

In Tim's words: "There is a deeper us, a deeper spirit than any thought or feeling could ever get to and it is only by parting the curtain of our thoughts and deepening into the silent spiritual presence that we find ourselves and are transformed by that silence. And then we realize this silence is what we've been hungry for the whole time. We need to support each other in satisfying that hunger." Amen. ☸

¹ Thomas Keating, *Open Mind, Open Heart*, page 13

² Thomas Keating, *Heartfulness, Transformation in Christ*, pages 59, 63, 65

³ Nan C. Merrill, *Psalms for Praying*, page 225

⁴ cf. Thomas Keating, *The Better Part, Intimacy with God*

Sundays at CCH

Lectio Divina 8 am
Community Breakfast 9 am
Worship Service 10 am
YES Program 10 am
Fellowship 11:30 pm

You are invited to participate,
grow and transform.

SEEDS

Sharing Contemplation

Therefore the best way to prepare ourselves for the possible vocation of sharing contemplation with others is not to study how to talk and reason about contemplation, but to withdraw ourselves as much as we can from talk and argument and retire into the silence and humility of heart in which God will purify our love of all its human imperfections. Then in His own time He will set our hand to the work He wants us to do, and we will find ourselves doing it without being quite able to realize how we got there, or how it all started. And by that time the work will not absorb us in a way that will disturb our minds. We will be able to keep our tranquility and our freedom, and above all we will learn to leave the results to God, and not indulge our own vanity by insisting on quick and visible conversations in everyone we talk to.

... in actual practice one of the last barricades of egoism ...
is this insistence on doing the work
and getting the results and enjoying them *ourselves*. ...

And therefore although contemplation like all good things
demands to be shared and will only be perfectly enjoyed
and possessed by each one of us
when it is possessed in common
by all who are called to it, we must not forget
that this perfect communion belongs only to heaven.

Thomas Merton, *New Seeds of Contemplation*, pages 273-274.

March Calendar

Visit consciousharmony.org
for a complete listing of events

Special Events

Song & Silence
Mar 23 10 am - 3 pm
Cost \$20 Pre-register with the office.

Holy Week

Gurdjieff Music
Mar 26 7:30 pm

Taize Service
Mar 28 7:30 pm

Good Friday Service
Mar 29 12 noon

Half-Day Prayer Retreat
Mar 30 8:30 am - 12:30 pm
Cost \$10 No need to pre-register.

Easter Sunday
Sunrise Emmaus Walk 6:30 am
Lectio Divina 7:30 am
Easter Brunch 8:30 am
Worship Service 10 am

Monthly

Community Workday
Mar 9 9 am-12 noon

Weekly

Centering Prayer Support Group
Mondays, Tuesdays 7:30 - 9 pm

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.consciousharmony.org



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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Non Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Austin TX
Permit # 3386



Sacred Heart, Odilon Redon

*Jesus said to him,
'Have you come to believe
because you have seen me?
Blessed are those that have not seen
and have believed.'*

John 20:29

The Grace of the Resurrection

The two great gifts of Jesus to His disciples on the day of His resurrection, the first day of the New Creation, were the forgiveness of sin and the restoration of divine union. But a still greater gift is implied: He gave them the Holy Spirit, the Source of the forgiveness of sin and of divine union.

... The Resurrection of Jesus is not only an historical event. The words of Jesus to Thomas suggest something more.

They might be paraphrased as follows:

'You based your faith on seeing me, Thomas, but there is greater happiness – to believe in my Resurrection because you experience its effects with yourself.'

This, of course, is an important message for us.

It tells us that it is far better to relate to the risen Christ on the basis of pure faith that rests not on appearances, feelings, external evidence, or what other people say, but on our personal experience of the Christ-life rising up and manifesting its fruits within us. This is the living faith that empowers us to act under the influence of the Spirit – the same Spirit that Jesus breathed upon the apostles on the evening of His Resurrection.

Thomas Keating, *The Mystery of Christ*