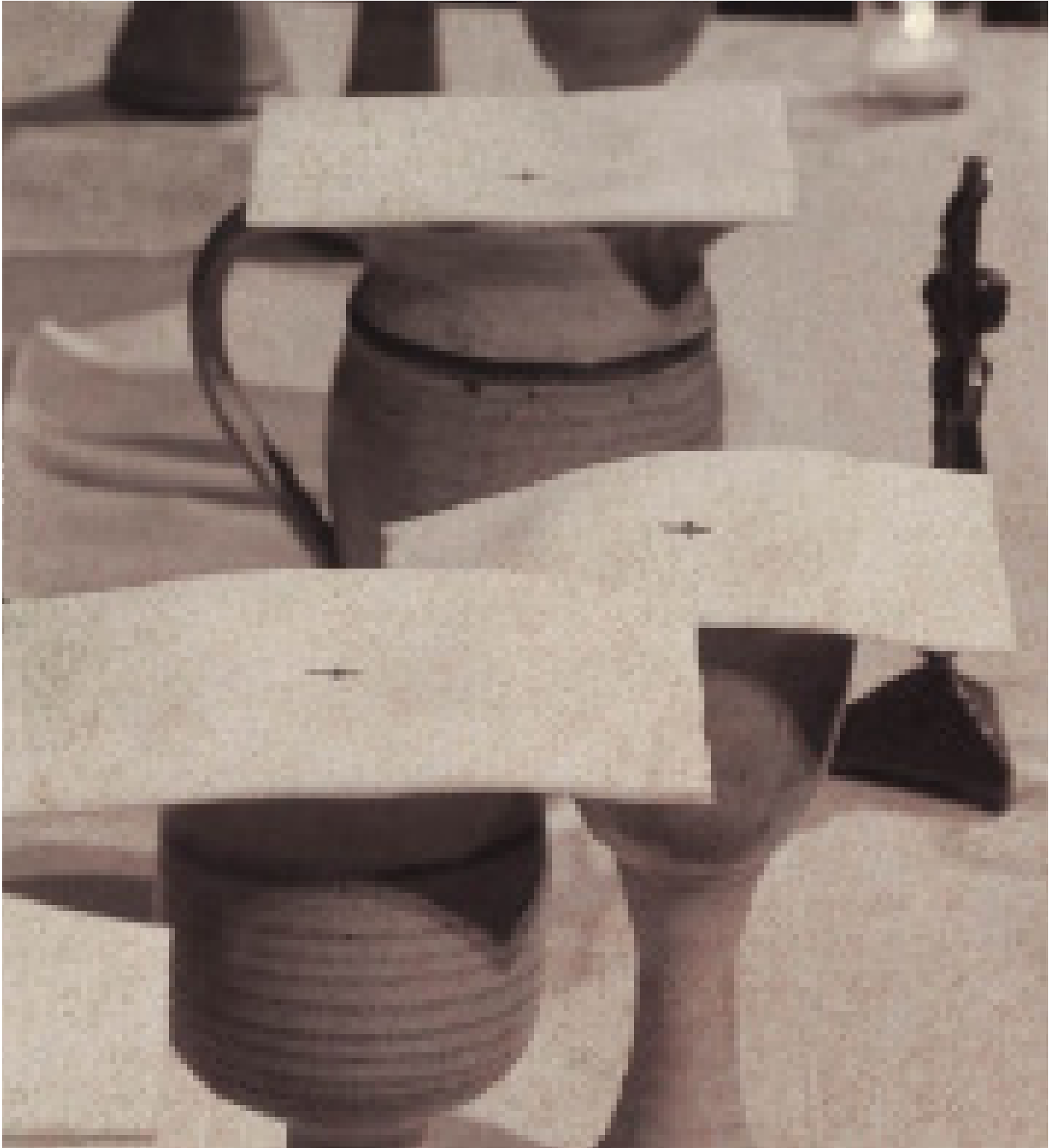




THE MARK

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Binding Us Back to God

by Tim Cook

For the first 10 years of my life, my family went to church in a small clapboard building on the corner lot of a not too prosperous area of Kenosha, Wisconsin. Mom and Dad sang in the choir and I sat next to Grandma on the hard wooden pews. Grandpa sat on the platform in one of the big chairs behind the minister, because he was one of the elders of the church.

Seeing him in this role gave me a very different picture of him than the one I ordinarily had. Gramps was blind in one eye; he was missing parts of three fingers from his left hand, and one on his right and he was partly deaf. He used uncouth grammar like “ain’t” and “don’t” and had gone to school only as far as the eighth grade, because he had to drop out and go to work in the factories. All his missing body parts were the result of industrial accidents that came from being a child laborer. The real surprise for me, though, came from seeing him in church in his role as elder and deacon. When he led the community in prayer or in consecrating the Communion; he expressed beautiful Elizabethan English prayers of great eloquence and an obvious spiritual presence

radiated out from him.

I was nine years old when I walked up to the front of our little church, confessed my faith in Jesus Christ and made my request for baptism. When my big day came, the pulpit was pulled to one side and the curtains that covered the rear wall of the church were opened to reveal the baptistery; which had the Bible scene of John the Baptist baptizing Jesus painted on it. Rev. Chandler immersed me in the water and I, like countless Christians before me, received Christian initiation. All the Fruits and Gifts of the Spirit were communicated to my soul like a packet of graces waiting to be unpacked and received in the life of the man that I, as that boy, was to become.

I was then able to participate in Holy Communion; a small beginning to what would become the most important fact of my present Christian life. What touched me most in those days, though, were the hymns. After each Communion, our little family church sang the old hymn, “Blessed be the ties that bind our hearts in Christian love...” Even though I was just a boy; that moment and that song often made my heart

overflow and brought me to tears. I’m amazed now when I look back and see how profoundly grounded my present spiritual life is from those early experiences of Christ. I now see with an open mind and open heart just how profoundly those ties did, and continue to, bind our hearts in Christian love. It is clear to me today that it was those very early religious experiences and the sacraments of baptism and Communion, in that little church in Wisconsin, that bound me in relationship to God through the darkest and craziest times of my life during which it looked like I had abandoned my religion.

The word, religion, is derived from the Latin root word, *religio*, which means to bind back; as in binding us back to our Source. The Christian sacraments are a means by which that binding back is realized and accomplished. The sacraments are visible signs of inwardly experienced spiritual graces that come to each Christian directly from Christ’s Real Presence within us and through our personal outward history in the unbroken chain of living human beings through whom the sacraments have been passed, like Gramps and Gramma, Mom and Dad, Rev. Chandler, and all Christians of every confession and denomination who have ever shared in them. From the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan by John and the first Last Supper, there is a continuum of Spirit and tradition binding us together and binding us back to God, our Father, in real relationship.

At The Church of Conscious Harmony, our most frequent access to the sacraments is through the Eucharist. Like any relationship, our relationship to the Eucharist goes through stages as we grow deeper and more receptive to its offering. What is the Eucharist? It is first and foremost a Mystery that is the offering of a real relationship with the actual livingness of Christ and the Trinity. It is Food on countless levels of mystical relationship and Presence. It defies history. It defies time. It defies all of the ways we tend to divide ourselves and each other; bringing us into relational wholeness. It is truly a mystical wonder and the true heart of what we do here. It is essentially a meeting in a human being between time and eternity, between space and form, form and formless, between matter and spirit, between present and past, between human and human, and humans and God. All of these intersections represent what it means to be a fully human, human being, and that's what's represented in the Eucharist.

The use of bread and wine is highly symbolic. Someone had to plant the seeds of wheat and the grape. And then after God has grown them, they have to be harvested by a human being. The wheat must be milled to turn it into flour, that is in turn baked and made into bread. The grapes must be crushed and put through the mysterious process called fermentation. So there is an interplay in the creation of the Communion elements in which God

does part and human beings do a part. It's much like our lives, which God freely gives us and then requires us to do our part to bring them to their fullest possibility. As Jesus said, "I work and the Father works." So God works in creating and growing the wheat and grapes; and man works in planting, harvesting, refining, milling and fermenting. In a similar way, God gives us our bodies, our breath and our heartbeat. We give him our attention and friendship and he gives us transformation. It's a marvelous dance of perfection and wholeness in which there is no part left out of God's perfect Oneness.

When we consecrate the Eucharist, we're not acting as priests possessing special knowledge. We're human beings standing on the stage of history calling out to the Living Presence. And we know through rock-solid faith that this Living Presence is alive, active and responsive – and It's going to answer our request. So when we call down the Spirit to bless our communion, we fully expect that that is exactly what happens. We expect that we will recognize, receive and respond to this offering exactly as it was intended by the historical Jesus at the Passover meal over 2,000 years ago.

Christ, the Logos – the very Creative Principle Itself standing on the stage of history in the person of the man Jesus – utters the words "Do this in remembrance of me." One man utters words in a closed room with a dozen friends in a Palestinian country and they go out and they

do just that; and they teach others to do that...and others, and others, and others. Now, I do not know how many times the globe has spun since the day Jesus uttered those words; but, I do know that the stark witness of the ongoing Eucharist that's still on tables and alters all over

continued on page 4

One day
I humbled myself
before Him,
and like a child I said,
"I believe."
I went beneath
the blessed waters...
and inwardly
the water of the Spirit
cleansed away
the grime of my past,
as if a stain
were removed from fine linen.
And something more occurred.

A light fell upon me,
as if from above.
I was bathed in gentle peace.
All at once I was clean.
My darkened heart
was infused with His presence,
and I knew...I knew...
that the spiritual barrier
between myself and God
was gone.
Our two hearts were reconciled.
Presently,
I was aware of the Spirit –
the very breath of the Father –
coming into me
from beyond this world.

And in that moment
I was made a new man.

Cyprian, Epistle I

A longer version of this Epistle is read as part of the CCH celebration of the Holy Sacrament of Baptism, which is held this year on May 19.

the world is simply astonishing. If each Eucharistic host had a little light on it, and we had a camera set up in space, there would be just a few little lights going out from that first room, the Upper Room. And then we would see more lights going out as the globe turns, creating trails of lights...around and around as the dawn moves over continent after continent, year after year, day after day, people wake up and participate in the Eucharist. Soon the entire globe would be covered in a cocoon of light. And that's just what has happened.

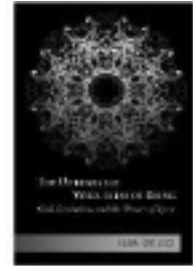
This is an astonishing Mystery, and it's an invitation to each of us to let this Host come into our bodies and be assimilated into our flesh and to allow that assimilation to reveal the literal truth that these are all God's bodies. "This is my body." Matter is my body. There is no personal "my" body. There has never been one. They are all His bodies. The spirit which flows in us is His spirit. And the cup

is a beautiful gift of Covenant, a covenant that is unbreakable from God's point of view. The human race is forgiven – completely, utterly, zero-balance forgiven. From God's point of view, there is nothing wrong with you or me. It's we who hold grudges against ourselves and project them onto others. In the Eucharist, this beautiful rite of union and forgiveness, we are reminded of what Jesus said to the woman caught in adultery – "Where are your accusers?" She replied, "They are gone." And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn thee." Condemnation and judgment are human. God doesn't do that. God invites us to enter into His experience of us, rather than our experience of us. This is what we've been offered – to allow the Holy Repast to enter into us and be an agent of transformation into our own Real lives. Then we become the Good News, standing on human feet.

Blessed be the ties that bind... 

New in the CCH Bookstore

*The Unbearable Wholeness of Being
(God, Evolution, and the Power of Love)*
by Ilia Delio



A convincing case for love as the source and goal of the evolutionary process makes it clear that we need to become increasingly conscious of ourselves as "love creatures" and how this might contribute to the healing of violence in, among and around us.

*Peace Be With You
(Monastic Wisdom for a Terror-Filled World)*
by David Carlson



A personal and at times difficult journey in search of a new, yet ancient, basis for genuine peace between Christianity and other religions—especially Islam.

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

In the Eucharist,
we are not only joined to Christ,
whom we believe is present with his whole being under the symbols of bread and
wine,

but 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.

... In the Eucharist all creation is transformed into the body of Christ,
transformed again into his divine person,
and thrust into the depths of the Father for ever and ever.
Even material creation has become divine in him.

The Heart of the World, Thomas Keating

Growth Into the Full Sonship with Christ

by Barbara Cook

Every morning, I read from *The Daily Reader for Contemplative Living* by Thomas Keating. It is just a paragraph and a scripture passage that relates to what he is speaking about. These readings were beautifully compiled and creatively edited by Stephanie Iachetta, with the obvious assistance of the Holy Spirit. Each reading offers just enough to help me remember the contemplative path on which I walk and sets a tone for the day.


I was recently reminded that there is usually a crisis before each period of growth, both in the natural world and in the spiritual world. Fr. Thomas uses the example of growth from childhood to adolescence or from adolescence to young adulthood, which I'm sure we can all recall. Having just relived the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus at Easter, we also have a clear concept of that crisis and its outcome – the Risen Christ and a new creation.

Fr. Thomas reminds us that we can't stay the same and grow, it is impossible to change into something new and be the same, and that is what creates a crisis of faith. We don't know what our new creation is going to be from the point of

view of our old selves, so how can we possibly know how to become that something new.

We can, however, have radical trust in God's love for us and in his plan to grow us. Fr. Thomas lovingly reminds us that, of course, God's not trying to do away with us; he is making us into his loving plan for us. Though sometimes in the resulting upheaval it may feel like that, it remains just that – a feeling.

We can recall the turbulence of our own teen years, to see in retrospect, a plan that we could not see at the time as it unfolded in us, through us, and even in spite of us in the natural world. In Christ, we have been told of that plan and invited to follow Him in the resurrection. On the contemplative path, we are following Him dying daily to our small separate selves to be born again as Christ in us; Sons of God and sons of man. We have faith in the Risen Christ and in the Father and His love for us. And when the time comes for us to grow into our next stage, we can trust that divine plan more than we can trust our senses reporting on the outer appearances. Fear and death have been overcome in Christ Jesus.

Amen alleluia! We know how the story ends. 



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

Annual Aim: Gratitude Celebrating 25 Years of Grace

The Sacraments by Michael Begeman

From the beginning
of the Messianic preparation,
up till the Parousia,
passing through the historic
manifestation of Jesus
and the phases of growth
of His Church,
a single event has been
developing in the world:
the Incarnation, realized,
in each individual
through the Eucharist.
All the communions
of a life-time are one communion.
All the communions of all men
now living are one communion.
The communions of all men,
present, past and future,
are one communion.
Have we ever sufficiently considered
the physical immensity of man,
and his extraordinary relations
with the universe,
in order to realize in our minds
the formidable implications
of this elementary truth?
Teilhard de Chardin, *The Divine Milieu*

*This is my body,
which will be given for you;
do this in memory of me.*
Luke 22:19

As a child, I was trained in the doctrine of the Catholic Church. But doctrine was never quite satisfying. I had questions about baptism, grace, the Trinity, the Eucharist, the soul, resurrection, and of course about God. Being curious, I asked these questions – for a while. A common response I got was that I was asking about a “mystery of faith” and that we were just called to believe in these things. I began to suspect that was nun-talk for “I don’t really know.”

Most of my questions remain to this day. Since those childhood days, I’ve learned something of the Church Councils, the development of the church doctrines and creeds, and the different beliefs that are held on these topics across Christian denominations (not to mention across religions). My conclusion after all of this is that nobody knows...*really* knows. But an interesting thing has happened along the way: my understanding of *mystery* has changed. In the old days, mystery was put to me as if God was deliberately concealing something, and either it hadn’t been revealed to us [yet] or we just hadn’t figured it

out [yet]. But like the search for the Higgs boson, sooner or later, we’d have it nailed down – case closed, mystery solved.

Today, however, mystery is a much more nuanced thing for me. It’s not that a thing, i.e. the mystery, has a *hidden* meaning, but rather that it has *layer upon layer* of meaning that will never be exhausted. But if I enter into a contemplative relationship with the mystery, it begins to unfold. And like fractal geometry, *Lectio Divina* and love itself, the deeper I go into the mystery, the more will be revealed.

The Eucharist

“The Eucharist is the celebration of life: the coming together of all the material elements of the cosmos, their emergence to consciousness in human persons and the transformation of human consciousness into Divine consciousness. It is the manifestation of the Divine in and through the Christian community.”

Thomas Keating, *Open Mind, Open Heart*

The mysterious nature of the Eucharist has been haunting me

recently. Despite what I just said about an unfolding contemplative relationship to mystery, as someone with a strong intellectual approach to life, I tend to dive into questions head-first. We could fill *The Mark* for years with essays on the Eucharist, ranging from Wikipedia articles to an apostolic exhortation from Pope Benedict XVI (emeritus) in which he discusses the Eucharist as a mystery to be believed, celebrated, and lived.

But after all the reading, there are still questions, and the most fundamental is: *What do I think the Eucharist is, really?* I took that question into the Lenten 10-day retreat and let it work on me in the deep silence. Many things were revealed, most of which I can't put into linear form. But a clear certainty came to me that *is* easy enough to communicate: The Eucharist is a direct feeding/nourishing of my spiritual body from that of Christ. Here's how this understanding came.

One morning, I was sitting in the silence after Centering Prayer and the words "the four bodies of man" came to me as a clue. Different traditions have teachings about the different bodies that we might possess – bodies beyond the physical one we see in the mirror. Some enumerate two bodies, some give us four, some have seven, and others have nine, eleven or twelve. Some eastern traditions have created elaborate multi-headed statues and artwork that represent these different bodies.

The Work of Inner Christianity (that we study at CCH on Thursday nights) teaches that we have four possible bodies composed

of substances which gradually become finer and finer, mutually interpenetrate one another, and stand in a definite relationship to one another (refer to Ouspensky's *In Search of the Miraculous* and Nicoll's *Psychological Commentaries* to research this further on your own). Pondering this, I was led to St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, where in his discourse on the resurrection he paints the picture of two bodies: one terrestrial, the other celestial; one sown in corruption, the other raised in incorruption; one sown in dishonor, the other raised in glory; one sown in weakness, the other raised in power; one natural, the other spiritual. While the traditional Christian interpretation of resurrection is that the spiritual body is "raised" after the death of our physical (natural) body, the model from the Work and other traditions is that the spiritual body/bodies (or *higher being-bodies* as Gurdjieff calls them) are developed *during* our terrestrial lifetime as a result of our spiritual work, and subsequently survive the death of the natural body.

Pondering this, I saw the Eucharist in a new way – as a communication between Jesus' higher being-body and my higher being-body, i.e. my spiritual body ... that the Eucharist is literally spiritual food, and is serving quite literally to build up the Body of Christ in me and on this planet.

I had formerly viewed the Eucharist in one of two extreme positions. The first position is the strict interpretation of the Catholic dogma: that the Eucharist is literally the flesh (body) and blood of Jesus

Christ, as professed by St. Justin (165) and refined up through the Lateran Council IV (1215) and the Council of Trent (1551). While it's sometimes comforting to have a good, solid definition to lean back on, this kind of certainty doesn't leave much room for ongoing or personal revelation. A strict application of the dogma doesn't allow for a mystical interpretation of the words "this is my body; this is my blood" – even though we aren't expected to literally interpret many other statements of Jesus where, for example, he refers to himself as a door, a vine, the bread of life, a light or a shepherd.

The second position is taking the Eucharist in the broadest, most mystical sense imaginable. Here, the entire created universe is the mystical body of Christ. As Fr. Keating says in *The Heart of the World*:

"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. ... In the Eucharist, all creation is transformed into the body of Christ, transformed again into his divine person, and thrust into the depths of the Father for ever and ever. Even material creation has become divine in him."

Taking this Eucharistic revelation to the extreme, one could argue that there is no real difference between the Eucharistic elements (bread and wine) and any other bit of creation. It's all divine, it's all part of the

mystical body of Christ, and the purpose of the Eucharist is merely to reveal this universal divine reality to us again and again.

You nourished your people with food of angels and furnished them bread from heaven. Wisdom 16:20

What could this body and blood that is spoken of be, if more specific than “all of creation,” but not components of the literal natural body of Jesus? The insight of the four bodies gives a clue. Jesus’ *spiritual* body was temporarily revealed to Peter, James and John at the Transfiguration, just as Moses’ was when his skin shone after speaking with God. Perhaps this spiritual body, fully possessed before death, is one and the same as the “raised” post-resurrection body – and markedly distinct from the natural body. Scripture reveals that Jesus’ post-resurrection body clearly had different properties from the natural body we are accustomed to: on different occasions, it startlingly appeared, vanished, and passed through locked doors. Sometimes it looked like the familiar Jesus, complete with bodily wounds, and at other times it apparently did not. Perhaps the words spoken at the Last Supper were intended to confer Jesus’ spiritual body, i.e. his spiritual essence, to the spiritual bodies of those present ... conferring something that survives the death of the natural body, something eternal.

The new insight that came from my retreat experience has deep significance to me. It points

to a middle way between the literal body-blood and the mystical all-of-creation. It reveals a real and ongoing relationship wherein the resurrected and ascended spiritual body of Christ (i.e. the higher being-body of Jesus of Nazareth) is literally feeding my higher being-body (i.e. spiritual body) through the Eucharist.

This insight would undoubtedly land me in a debate (or worse) with the Church Fathers, theologians, and popes down through the ages. But all that is on top of what my whole being now knows as a certainty: The Eucharist is a direct feeding/nourishing of my spiritual body from that of Christ.

While this insight satisfies me at the moment, I know even more deeply that it is incomplete at best. The nuns were right all along – the Eucharist *is* truly a mystery. And as I said above, nobody knows... *really* knows, and that layer upon layer of meaning waits as yet to be revealed. What has been written here is likely to be replaced with a new understanding as my spiritual journey continues. While none of us fully grasps the mystery, I believe the Holy Spirit answers those who hunger for knowledge of – and relationship with – God. Maybe the *process* of what happened on retreat is more important than the *result* of the process. The contemplative dimension of Christianity asks us to directly engage and dialogue with the mystery, moving beyond dogma and the known, venturing into a more free and creative space with the Divine. And there, the Divine

can respond.

Some Uncommon Sacraments

The diversity of denominational opinion on the Eucharist extends to the overall topic of the sacraments in general. In addition to the Eucharist, most denominations acknowledge Baptism as a sacrament and some denominations include Confirmation, Matrimony, Divine Orders (priestly ordination), Reconciliation (confession), and Unction (the anointing of the sick/dying).

There are two uncommon sacraments, absent from any denominational dogma, which have been of personal inspiration and value to me.

The first is called the Sacrament of the Empty Hand. Introduced, as far as I know, in a homily by a Baptist minister in Austin, this refers to the liturgical story of the woman caught in adultery (John 8). In the story the crowd wants to stone the woman, and Jesus answers them with *He who is among you without sin*, let him first throw a stone at her. And at those words, as we know, the crowd dispersed.

The Sacrament of the Empty Hand is available whenever I’m overtaken by anger, judgment or righteousness, whenever I want to punish or exact payment for a wrong, whenever I can feel that I’ve figuratively picked up a “stone” to hurl at another. In a moment of grace, my hand opens, the stone drops to the ground, and I remember and then become Jesus’ words to the woman: *Neither do I condemn you.*

It may seem odd at first to call

this a sacrament, as sacraments are generally defined as external rites that confer grace upon us. The commonly held belief through the ages is that God outside us – “up there” somewhere – is bestowing grace to us “down here” through the sacrament. In contemplative Christianity, however, we keep opening to the presence and action of God *within* us. And when I examine a moment when my hand opens and the stone falls, I know like Paul in Galatians that it is not I, but Christ in me that is operating. It is truly and unmistakably a moment of conferred grace when my habitual thoughts and reactions are suspended in mid-stream and a response that could only be inspired by God comes through.

The second uncommon sacrament is the Sacrament of the Present Moment. While there are parallels in many eastern traditions, this was originated in the Christian tradition by Jean Pierre de Caussade (1751) who believed

that the present moment itself is a sacrament from God and that self-abandonment to it and its needs is a holy state. While God certainly pours out graces in miraculous ways, the principle of this sacrament is that such grace is constantly available to us through the ordinary in our daily lives. De Caussade writes in *The Sacrament of the Present Moment/ Abandonment to Divine Providence*:

“The present moment holds infinite riches beyond your wildest dreams but you will only enjoy them to the extent of your faith and love. The more a soul loves, the more it longs, the more it hopes, the more it finds. The will of God is manifest in each moment, an immense ocean which only the heart fathoms insofar as it overflows with faith, trust and love.”

Our Abba Fr. Keating would agree, and further, gives us the method of Centering Prayer as an on-ramp to this way of seeing reality. The present moment is

only experienced as a sacrament, however, if we see it that way. That is, the holiness of the moment, like beauty, seems to be in the eye of the beholder. In the introduction to *Open Mind, Open Heart*, Fr. Keating writes:

“Contemplative prayer is a process of interior transformation, a conversation initiated by God and leading, if we consent, to divine union. One’s way of seeing reality changes in this process. A restructuring of consciousness takes place which empowers one to perceive, relate and respond with increasing sensitivity to the divine presence in, through, and beyond everything that exists”

May we all consent to the presence and action of God in our lives, experience the restructuring of consciousness that Fr. Keating speaks of, see the divine presence in all creation, and actually become living sacraments of love. ☉

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

28th Guideline



The goal of genuine spiritual practice is not the rejection of the good things of the body, mind, or spirit, but the right use of them.

No aspect of human nature or period of human life is to be rejected

but integrated into each successive level of unfolding self-consciousness.

In this way, the partial goodness proper to each stage of human development is preserved and only its limitations are left behind.

The way to become divine is thus to become fully human.

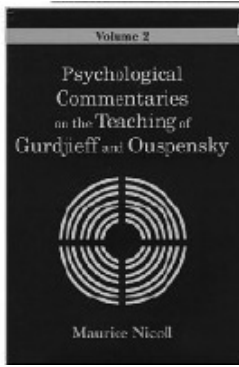
Eucharist Credo

The Visioning Committee is a subset of four Board of Trustees and meets periodically to deeply ponder different issues together. A recent focus area has been the development of a Eucharistic Credo for CCH – a statement of what we, as a Church community, believe about the Eucharist.

Knowing that the sacrament is an unfolding mystery and that we do not apprehend “divine truth,” it is still useful to make a statement of our current understanding, acknowledging in advance that it must be incomplete and contain error. You are invited to read these statements slowly in the spirit of *Lectio Divina*, not to see what you agree or disagree with, but rather to see what God wants to reveal to you about the Eucharist through the ferment of these statements.

We believe...

- ✘ Jesus broke bread with His disciples drank wine with them, and said words like those represented in the Gospel that inaugurated what we today call the Eucharist.
- ✘ The sharing of bread and wine in a sacred way became a way of connecting early Christians to each other, and to the risen Christ.
- ✘ Jesus wasn't changing the bread and wine; rather, as Christ He was claiming them – and claiming all creation at the same time. Through this ritual, Jesus was revealing a pre-existing fact in a way to communicate it to His disciples.
- ✘ The Eucharist is part of a long chain of God feeding His children in different ways: the living and seed-bearing food in the Garden of Eden, manna in the desert, Jesus' appearance as an infant lying in a manger (a food trough, hence He's the food), providing wine at the wedding feast, multiplying the loaves and fishes, and eventually, mystically feeding us Himself.
- ✘ Our celebration of the Eucharist is not priestly transubstantiation, but the creation of a prayer, a wish, a context, an opening into community for God to interact with and feed the recipients through the elements.
- ✘ The Eucharist is an opportunity to see ordinary matter in an extraordinary way.
- ✘ The Eucharist has the power to open hearts, change minds, forgive sins, heal broken lives, dissolve separation, transform beings, and create conscious union.
- ✘ The Eucharist invites us to perceive the mystery of Christ everywhere and in everything.
- ✘ The Eucharist is bigger than we can imagine, and we are smaller than we know. The Eucharist has preceded our bodily arising by millennia, and will survive long after our bodies are dust again.
- ✘ The Eucharist is an unbroken transmission of God's love for us and Presence with us.
- ✘ The impulse that Jesus transmitted through the bread and wine at the Last Supper is present in full in every celebration of the Eucharist.
- ✘ You are what you eat. As we take in the Body of Christ, we become the Body of Christ. This is true at the material and the mystical levels of existence. Receive what you are to become (St. Augustine).
- ✘ In the Eucharist, we are joined to Christ, whom we believe is present with His whole being under the symbols of bread and wine and we believe that we are joined with the whole of creation.




The Work of Inner Christianity

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

The Meaning of Faith

“. . . it is impossible to please God without faith.” That is, it is impossible without the basis or foundation of faith, which makes it possible for a man to think beyond the evidence of his senses and realize the existence of invisible scale and understand psychological meaning. To realize scale means to realize that there are different levels of meaning. Literal meaning is one thing, psychological or spiritual meaning is another thing—although the words used are the same. For example, we saw that the word yeast used in Matthew xvi indicated two levels of meaning. The disciples took it on the lower level and were told it was because their faith was little. Their thinking was sensual. They had difficulty in thinking in a new way on another level. And their psychological thinking was so weak just because they were based on sense and not on faith. Thus *sense and faith describe two ways of thinking, not opposites, not antagonistic,*

but on different levels. For without the perception of scale and levels, things are made to be opposite when they are not so, and Man’s mind is split into “either”—“or”, which leads to endless confusions and mental wrangles and miseries. The writer of Hebrews goes on to say: “Nobody reaches God’s presence until he has learned to believe that God exists and that He rewards those that try to find Him.” It is apparent that if scale is behind all things, if *order* is scale, and if to set in order is to set in scale, then what is higher and what is lower must exist. A man who cannot perceive scale will be shut to the intuitions that only faith opens out to every mind that hitherto has been asleep in the senses and the limited world revealed by them. 

Maurice Nicoll, *Psychological Commentaries on the Teaching of Gurdjieff and Ouspensky*, pages 1624-1625. 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.

May Calendar

Visit consciousharmony.org for a complete listing of events

Special Events

Two-Day Commuter Retreat
May 18-19 8 am-5:30 pm
Cost: \$100 Food is provided.
Pre-register with the office.

HYPED Spaghetti Dinner & Fundraiser
Sunday May 26 11:30 am-1:30 pm
Dinner tickets sold in advance.
To donate an item for the Silent Auction,
please contact the office by May 19.

Monthly

Food Bank Collection
Sunday May 5

Community Workday
May 11 9 am-12 noon

Tuesday Enrichment 7:30 pm
May 21 Gurdjieff Music

Weekly

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

Prayer Circle
Wednesdays 9:15 am

Contemplative Lunch
Wednesdays 12 noon

Mid-Week Communion Service
Wednesdays 6-7 pm

Yoga
Thursdays 6-7:15 pm
Cost \$14 each session

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

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*I will see you again, and your
hearts will rejoice,
and no one will take your joy away
from you.*

John 16:22

Gloria in Excelsis Deo!

The Grace of the Ascension

By becoming a human being Christ annihilated the dichotomy between matter and spirit. In the person of the Divine-human Being, a continuum between the divine and the human has been established. Thus, God's plan is not only to spiritualize the material universe, but to make matter itself divine. The grace bestowed on us by the Ascension of Jesus is the divinization of our humanity. Our individuality is permeated by the Spirit of God through the grace of the Ascension . . . Our life is a mysterious interpenetration of material experience, spiritual reality and the divine Presence.

The key to being a Christian is to know Jesus Christ with the whole of our being.

It is important to know His sacred humanity through our senses and to reflect upon it with our reason, to treasure His teaching and to imitate Him.

But this is only the beginning . . .

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

Thomas Keating, *The Mystery of Christ*

