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THE MARK

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External Food

by Tim Cook

Among the most blessed experiences of the spiritual journey are those eye-opening moments of revelation when we see something we never saw before and never even suspected was there, or suddenly know something we hadn't known before. In the same moment, perhaps we realize that we hadn't even known that we hadn't known it, even though it had always been available to be known and had, of course, been known to others before us. There is always more and more to learn about God's astounding Creation and our place in it. These grace-given moments of deep seeing help us remain open-minded and expectant, aware of our limited understanding, and willing to have our minds opened ever further.

One of those mind-stretching moments that I remember clearly came to me in relation to food. Until that moment, food had simply been food. Farmers grew it, you cooked it, you had plenty of it or you didn't, you liked it or you didn't; but you needed it, you ate it, and that's all there was to food. But in becoming aware of the transforming ideas of the Work, I was introduced one day to a whole new dimension of awareness in regard to food. The Work teaches that in addition to the physical food we must eat to survive, there are two

additional types of food required for our continued existence. Just as the quality of this first food affects our physical health, so do the quality and nutritive aspects of these other two foods affect the quality of our lives and our overall well-being.

These two additionally required foods are the air that we breathe and the impressions we take in through our five senses. Perceiving air as food seems pretty obvious when you stop to think about it, but seeing impressions as food was a brand new and amazing idea for me to ponder. The food of impressions includes all of our sensory input from the external world around us as well as the automatically generated impressions of our interior world, including imagination, emotions and internal sensations. We can't live without all three of these foods and the capacity to digest them well. Neither good digestion and bad groceries nor bad digestion and good groceries will permit us to thrive. Neither good lungs and polluted air nor sick lungs and good air will prosper our lives. It is just so with impressions too. We need good quality impressions and the right psychological digestive capacity to organize and make them meaningful in order to live psychologically and spiritually healthy and balanced lives.

Even good news can seem terrible to an unbalanced or depressed psyche. Likewise, a personal consciousness grounded in prayer, awake to Christ and centered in His Mind is able to see the good in even the most seemingly disastrous circumstances.

The digestive apparatus for transforming our meals and the air we breathe are the stomach and lungs and their associated systems. They are handled by life automatically and, in most cases, most of the time they do their jobs well and without any effort or even awareness on our part. To digest incoming impressions, though, requires something conscious and intentional from us if we want to experience spiritual and psychological vitality. If we simply judge by appearances and take incoming news and experiences as we are automatically inclined to by our education, enculturation and family conditioning, then we are not digesting them at all.

The dictionary tells us that the word, digest, in this context, is a verb that means that we "understand or assimilate (new information or the significance of something) by a period of reflection." If we want to digest incoming impressions and transform them into different and more useful forms, as we do with groceries and air, then we will have to

take them in a new way. Automatic, mechanical and unaware intake of the world around us can leave us with a bad case of the blues unless we learn to understand and assimilate all our experiences through the Mind of Christ. That digestive process is instituted by building our entire lives on daily practice of Centering Prayer, times of quiet reflection, Lectio Divina and the study and practice in everyday life of the great, transforming ideas of the Work of Inner Christianity.

Another of those mystical moments of wonder and amazement, where I saw what I had never seen before and knew what I had never known before, also happened in regard to food as impressions. It came to me as a complete and staggering surprise over 15 years ago at the moment of reception of Holy Communion. I'll try to share it in words, though I know they are far too inadequate to communicate the true enormity of the experience as it struck me in the moment. Perhaps, though, if you digest the words through your own personal reflection on them, they will become spiritual food for you, too – more than just words as you read them in this newsletter.

I have been participating in serving and receiving Communion

for over 50 years and as might be expected, the experience of sharing in it has deepened over time as I have grown in understanding and spiritual maturity, pondering it and reflecting on it. It grew for me from a simple observance in ritual form to an ever-deepening participation in the very life of Christ in his continuing historical Presence with us. It was a growth that truly fed my soul and increasingly enriched my awareness of Christ in my life and mine in his. But I was totally unprepared for the unexpected spiritual nutrition that God's grace fed to me on one otherwise ordinary Sunday.

As my hand, holding the Host, raised it toward my mouth, I suddenly saw that my hand could have been anyone's hand. It was as if I could see young hands, old hands, black hands, yellow hands, red hands, white hands, large hands, small hands, arthritic hands ... all at once! At the very same moment I was given to see not just the Host that I was holding in my hand right then; but all the Hosts, of all the forms and shapes and substances and sizes, that all those countless human hands had brought slowly toward all the mouths, at all the altars and tables of all shapes and sizes, of all the Christian

denominations, for all of Christian history and for all time to come. It wasn't "my" hand at that moment. It was simply and profoundly the hand of *a* human man, the hand of Man carrying the Body of Christ toward *a* human mouth, the mouth of Man, noticed by the eyes of *a* human yet the eyes of Man. I became utterly aware that everyone who has ever received or will receive Communion saw or will see exactly the same the same simple scene that I was seeing; a hand, a Host and Christ feeding his church with his Body. They were obviously one hand, one host, one Christ and one Church.

It was the same when I held the Cup and brought it toward "my" face. I "saw" that whether the cup was large, small, fancy, simple, ceramic, silver, gold or brass, it was utterly obvious that it had always been and would always be one chalice, bearing the one Holy Blood, cleansing the one humanity of all sin for all time, person by person by person.

That day, I was fed Eternal Food by a graceful gift of the Holy Spirit, and the impression it fed me has transformed the experience of the Eucharist for me to this very day. I am ever so grateful. Perhaps it will feed you that way too.

Glory to God! 


Forgiveness, Healing and Celebration

by Barbara Cook

What a delight when we can be in silence and prayer, to deeply connect with Christ, and be served by Spirit. When in this holy space, I tend to gain new insights and renew old traditions when I am together with other contemplatives.

One such tradition initially came from Father Carl Arico, a long-time friend of our community and a brother in Christ. His offering is to bring to mind anything in our lives that needs forgiveness, anything we want to bring up for healing, and anything that we want to celebrate. Those things are especially good to review and release, whether while on retreat or as part of our daily lives. It keeps our accounts current and debt-free. The part that always moves me is remembering what we have to celebrate in the last 24 hours, something that we might have overlooked or even something that was in the past that we took for granted or just forgot to celebrate. At times, I am surprised at how much I've not noticed.

As we approach Thanksgiving, which is a good time to remember and give thanks, it could also become an opportunity to remember that we need to have a daily practice of forgiving, asking for healing and celebrating. I am going to take that up for the month of November; will you join me?

I celebrate that we have a community of transformation in Christ; people who continue to say "yes;" people who pray daily and wish to be free of false self burdens that separate us; people who are not hesitant to ask God for healing when they need help, knowing that they can't do it without Him. I celebrate that we have such a dear friend in Fr. Carl who shares and magnifies Christ in us. I celebrate Centering Prayer and our worldwide community. I celebrate Father Thomas Keating and Bernadette Roberts and all the monastics who have kept this prayer alive for so many centuries. And I am so, so grateful for all God's blessings. 

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

34th Guideline



Obedience is the unconditional acceptance of God as He is and as He manifests Himself in our lives. God's will is not immediately evident.

Docility inclines us to attend to all the indications of His will.

Discernment sifts the evidence and then decides, in the light of the inward attraction of grace, what God seems to be asking here and now.



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The Magic of Music

Music penetrates deep into people's being. Some of it comes from another world, trying to tell its hearers, and perhaps the composer himself, about things which cannot be told in words.

The conductor with his baton, the instrumentalists blowing and scraping, are inside time, moving along time. But obviously the great music exists even when no one is playing it. So it must exist outside time. But what is music outside time? If we happen to catch that, is it not something which is not susceptible to improvement, something perfect and significant as it stands?

I have just been reading the Greek ideas about music. They are very interesting. Music for them was a way in which all parts of the organism could be united. It was supposed to contain three elements—*melos* or melody, developed in the throat; *rhythmos*, felt in the solar plexus; and *harmonia*, which was connected with the perception and the beating of the heart. These three elements, combining in the different ways, created the six or seven modes, which were an evocation of the six processes* we study. The chief instrument was the seven-stringed lyre, the center string representing the sun, the three above the inner planets, and the three below the three outer ones.

Melos, *rhythmos* and *harmonia*, realized on these seven strings, made a true image of the interaction of the Law of Three and the Law of Seven*. This was and is the magic of music. Whether they understand it or not, musicians are imitating cosmic laws—and (with help) the strangest things may happen. ⚠

Rodney Collin, *The Theory of Conscious Harmony*, pages 141-142.

*Words marked with an asterisk are further explained in the book and refer to concepts from the Work

Awe

Awe is an intuition for the dignity of all things,
a realization that things not only are what they are but also stand,
however remotely, for something supreme.

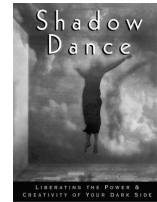
Awe is a sense for the transcendence,
for the reference everywhere to mystery beyond all things.
It enables us to perceive in the world intimations of the divine, ...
to sense the ultimate in the common and the simple;
to feel in the rush of the passing the stillness of the eternal.
What we cannot comprehend by analysis, we become aware of in awe.

Abraham Joshua Heschel, *I Asked for Wonder*, page 3.

CCH Bookstore

November Community Reading

Shadow Dance
by David Richo

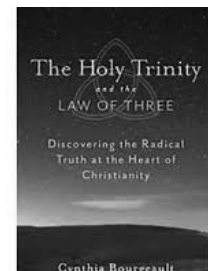


David Richo

The author looks for where the Shadow manifests in personal life, family interaction, religion, relationship, and the world around us.

He shows how to use the gentle practice of mindfulness to work with our shadow side, and he provides numerous exercises for going deeper. His work is easy to understand, and supremely practical for enhancing the quality of our lives.

The Holy Trinity and the Law of Three
by Cynthia Bourgeault



The author looks to the ancient concept of the Trinity in light of the ideas of G. I. Gurdjieff and Jacob Boehme to reveal the Trinity as the "hidden driveshaft" within Christianity: the compassionate expression of the Uncreated Reality in creation.

Bookstore and Library Hours
Monday-Friday 8:30 am-3:30 pm
Sunday 9-10 am & 11:30 am-12:30 pm



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

Annual Aim: Gratitude

Sacred Piano Music at The Church of Conscious Harmony

by Susan Boulden

In our time and culture,
we approach music variously
as entertainment, ambient background
to tune our environment,
aesthetic and intellectual delight,
sensual pleasure.
But music as medicine,
instruction manual,
prompter of conscience;
these are less common views of Music.

Also relatively uncommon is the notion
that the state of the listener
significantly determines the degree to which
music may enter our world.
Simply, music is only present in our lives
to the extent that we are present
to ourselves.
This implies that the discipline
of the listener
is as rigorous as that of the musician,
if honorably undertaken.

Music is a benevolent presence
constantly and readily available to all,
so wishing to be heard
that it calls on some to give it voice
and some to give it ears.

Preface by Robert Fripp, Gurdjieff,
Harmonic Development

*Come, let us sing joyfully to the Lord:
... Let us come before Him
with a song of praise,
joyfully sing out our psalms.*
Psalm 95:1-2

I find music mysterious. When I studied music at the college level, I longed for answers to the deep questions such as “Why or how does music affect us so?” Along this line, I can totally relate to the experience of Vitvitskaia who Gurdjieff wrote about in *Meetings with Remarkable Men*. She says, “I spent a whole year studying this so-called theory of music. I read almost all my books and finally became definitely convinced that this literature would give me nothing.... One day, out of boredom, I happened to take from the prince’s library a book entitled *The World of Vibrations*.... The author of this book was not a musician at all.... He was an engineer and a mathematician. In one place in his book he mentioned music merely as an example for his explanation of vibrations. He wrote that the sounds of music are made up of certain vibrations which doubtless act upon the vibrations which are also in a man, and this is why a man likes or dislikes this or that music. I at once understood this, and I fully agreed with the engineer’s

hypothesis.” (page 130)

Furthermore, Haznat Inayat Khan writes in *The Mysticism of Sound and Music*, “Many in the world take music as a source of amusement, a pastime; to many music is an art, and a musician an entertainer. Yet no one has lived in this world, has thought and felt, who has not considered music as the most sacred of all arts...music touches the deepest part of man’s being. Music reaches farther than any other impression from the external world can reach. The beauty of music is that it is the source of creation and the means of absorbing it. In other words, by music the world was created and it is again through music that the world is withdrawn into the source that has created it.... In support of this you may read in the Bible that first was the word, and the word was God. That word means sound, and from sound you can grasp the idea of music.” (page 5)

Pie Jesu

I have received hundreds of comments about this sacred piece

over the 23 years of my service here. Andrew Lloyd Webber, a prolific composer, wrote this piece in 1985 for *Requiem*, a requiem mass written in memory of his father. I was told more than 10 years ago that in an interview with Barbara Walters he said that this was his favorite composition.

The English translation of the Latin lyrics are:

‘Merciful Jesus, who takest away the sins of the world, grant them rest. O Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, grant them eternal rest.’

Of the many touching comments I have heard about the effect this piece has on congregants, one stands out. Over 15 years ago I was asked to record *Pie Jesu* as a personal favor for a friend. This person played it as he and his wife conceived a child. They played it to the child in utero. When the child was born, they played it and the newborn immediately calmed. Such is the power of this sacred music alone.

I have composed my own lyrics to this piece (which will remain personal) and when I play *Pie Jesu*, I am praying those lyrics. When congregants comment on the impact this piece has on them, I always ask them to pray with me the essence of the piece which I believe is “Grant us all eternal peace.”

Our Offertory Song

Years ago, Tim and I agreed that it was important to acknowledge Mr. Gurdjieff in some way during the service. As you know, he is at the

foundation of one of the legs of our church. Gurdjieff’s *Chant Grec* or *Greek Song* was chosen because it was upbeat and could be stopped at several points depending on when the collection ended. There are no original lyrics to this song. In fact, there are no lyrics to any of G’s “concert pieces.”

However, I believe that what I am thinking about when I play is important and gets somehow transmitted to the congregation in the form of vibrations. So, rather than thinking about my lunch plans, I choose to think about the gratitude I feel when God’s Love meets all our needs. I have written personal lyrics to this effect and sing them internally when I play. I invite you to feel this gratitude also.

Amazing Grace

Wikipedia writes, “‘Amazing Grace’ is a Christian hymn with words written by the English poet and clergyman John Newton (1725-1807), published in 1779. With a message that forgiveness and redemption are possible regardless of sins committed and that the soul can be delivered from despair through the mercy of God, ‘Amazing Grace’ is one of the most recognizable songs in the English-speaking world.”

In late 1986, Paul Simon hosted a TV Gospel Special taped at the First Presbyterian Church of Hollywood. I was guided to videotape it. Every performance was outstanding and thrilling! As I recall, the Edwin Hawkins singers sang *Amazing Grace*.

I replayed that tape tens of times to capture every note Edwin Hawkins played on the piano because it was so inspiring to me. Needless to say, when I play it, I feel every word of this legendary, powerful song and give thanks for the Grace that pours into my life. “I once was lost...but now I’m found...was blind...but now I see.”

The Church of Conscious Harmony in all of its teachings and in its people has given meaning and purpose to my life. I am found. Now I see.

Gurdjieff Music

Among all the sacred music I am privileged to play, it has been an especially rare privilege to play the music composed by G. I. Gurdjieff and Thomas de Hartmann. G wrote approximately 100 “concert” pieces between 1924 and 1927. Dushka, G’s daughter, told me that he would have one played before a reading of his latest chapter of *Beelzebub’s Tales to His Grandson*. Apparently after he finished writing a chapter, he would gather some students, have Mr. de Hartmann play one of these pieces, then have the chapter read aloud.

Years ago, Lisa Matthews reported on her first experience of a Tuesday enrichment night of Gurdjieff Music. “I felt the music on a very deep level. At times, my body was literally humming or vibrating for the duration of the performance. I found Tim’s readings to be very interesting and helped to increase my understanding of Gurdjieff the man and how he came to develop

the Work [of Inner Christianity]. In short, I felt different aspects of the music and readings in all three centers.”

Amy Bradfield recently wrote, “The Gurdjieff music is so extraordinarily different from anything I’ve ever heard. It arrests and awakens the heart, boggles the ordinary mind so that one can’t ‘think about it.’ The body becomes quiet as I listen. It touches me in a deep place within that isn’t often accessed. I love it, especially when I hear it played live and by musicians who play it with their whole being!”

The sheet music was published in Europe much later after it was written—two volumes in 1996 and another two volumes in 2005. Along with many others, I have noticed a “certain something,” a “special mysterious quality” about this music. What is it? I know it is beyond the Middle Eastern melodies and the “uneven” rhythms. I searched the literature and for a long time found nothing until I discovered *Gurdjieff and Music* by Laurence Rosenthal, a composer and pianist who adapted the music for the film *Meetings with Remarkable Men*.

Rosenthal, who has won seven Emmys, is one of only three pianists who play the entire body of Gurdjieff/deHartmann *Music for the Piano* in the Wergo/Schott CD series. Here is what he had to say about the music in the Summer 1999 issue of the *Gurdjieff International Review*:

“That Gurdjieff was a composer of music is in itself a remarkable fact.

A spiritual master who, in addition to the main body of his teaching, has created forms of art, which can be viewed as essential expressions of that teaching, is certainly a rare phenomenon.

Gurdjieff’s sacred dances, or movements, and the 200 or so musical compositions he left attest to the importance he attached both to disciplined bodily movement and to the vibrations of sound in relation to spiritual practice.


Gurdjieff’s views on the subject of music, and indeed on art in general, stem from his differentiation between what he terms subjective and objective art. Most of the music we know, he says, is subjective. Only objective music is based on an exact knowledge of the mathematical laws that govern the vibration of sounds and the relationship of tones... In most art, this power of vibration is used with only partial knowledge of the process and its consequences.

Conversely, objective music is based on a precise and complete knowledge of the mathematics determining the laws of vibration, and will therefore produce a specific and predictable result in the listener. G gives as an example of a nonreligious person going to a monastery. Hearing the music that is sung and played there, the person feels the desire to pray. In this instance, the capacity to bring someone into a higher interior state is given as one of the properties of objective art. The effect, depending on the person, differs only in degree.

In *Beelzebub’s Tales*, G cites another example of the objective power of music, which certainly does not belong to the realm of art as we usually think of it, but shows the capacity of sound to produce a specific, externally visible result. He describes a remarkable old dervish repeatedly striking a certain series of notes on an ordinary grand piano tuned according to a special system. These notes soon produce a boil on the leg of one of the listeners on the exact spot the master had predicted. Shortly thereafter, a different series of notes quickly makes the boil disappear. On another scale, could we consider the possibility that the legendary destruction of the walls of Jericho may be not simply an imaginative tale of miraculous events? Perhaps Joshua knew the specific properties and potency of sound vibrations.”

So, it seems to me that the “mysterious something” many of us hear in this music is due to the fact that “something of the mystery of sound was known to” Gurdjieff. One wonders...is the music you hear during G Night objective art? I don’t know and I don’t think anyone does. It’s a question for the listener to answer.

My wish is that the music at The Church of Conscious Harmony continue to aid us in our spiritual development. I give thanks for all the musicians that make that possible here. I am very grateful to serve in this very special community.

Amen. 



Icons Open the Eye of the Heart

by Nancy Rebel

Icons are created
for the sole purpose
of offering access,
through the gate of the visible,
to the mystery of the invisible.
... to bring us into the inner room
of prayer ... and bring us closer
to the heart of God.
All icons are holy places,
not decorations.
Enter these holy places,
make them your own,
and ultimately see for yourselves
the beauty of the Lord.
Find meaning that speaks
directly to your soul.
And then the gaze into an icon
becomes prayer.

of Henri Nouwen,
Behold the Beauty of the Lord

The following is excerpted from a longer, three-part article by Nancy Rebel that appeared in *The Mark* in March-May 2009. Nancy is a professional artist who has done much liturgical work, including the creation of both icons in Theosis Chapel. She is Tim Cook's sister.

An icon is considered a visual theology, to be used as a window to open the worshiper to the holy and the eternal.

“When you look at an icon, the icon looks back. Icons are doors, gates, windows, but not in the Renaissance sense of a painting as a window into another world. The saint depicted is on, or in front of, the picture plane. Icons are thus places where the Divine enters the space of the beholder.”
(Icons from Sinai 121)

As a sacred pictorial language, icons are said to be ‘written’ rather than painted. The forms are the result of collective interpretations of the Church’s teaching by anonymous artists throughout its two thousand year history. Each artist writes an icon according to the canon, but is allowed to be an intuitive participant in the evolution of the form.

Every element of the icon has meaning and precedent, nothing is simple decoration. Every icon has a surrounding margin, usually a raised border to isolate it from the temporal world.

“The icon’s function is to aid contemplation. Byzantine icons...are invitations to pilgrimage, asking for an ‘existential reading’ on our part and demanding purity of heart and spirit. Their proper function is initially didactic and eventually anagogical

(spiritual, mystical). They are meant to probe man’s soul, to incite him to transcend the maelstroms of the surrounding reality, and to ascend into the realm of higher truths.”
(Byzantium 336)

Sinai Christ

The CCH Blessing Christ icon is a rendition of a 6th century original still kept at Saint Catherine Monastery at Mount Sinai. The Sinai Christ is well known for its enigmatic expression. The face is clearly asymmetrical and seems to change expression. One side of His face is serene, contrasting with the unexpected raised eyebrow of the other. Much has been written about this, many agreeing that it expresses His dual nature. He is both human and divine at the same time.

Christ’s right hand is upraised in a blessing gesture. The two raised fingers signify His dual nature: fully God while fully Man. The three lower fingers together signify the Trinity. In His other hand is the Book of the Word. The CCH Christ holds the CCH sanctuary Bible in His arm.

The Virgin of Snowmass in the Hills


This Virgin and Child is of the prototype of the Virgin of Vladimir, an icon of 12th century Constantinople, now found in the

Tretjakow Gallery in Moscow. She is called the Virgin Eleousa, (mercy or loving kindness), the Virgin of Tenderness. Holding her Son closely, her sorrowful gaze into the infinite registers a foreshadowing, and acceptance, of her Child's calling, seeing beyond to spiritual transcendence. The poignancy of the figures has made this an often-copied image, one being the Virgin of Snowmass of St. Benedict's Monastery, Snowmass, Colorado, of which this Virgin of Snowmass in the Hills is the direct descendant.

The stars on her cloak symbolize her virginity before, during and after the birth of Christ, (only two of three are visible in this rendition). The Christ is a child, but bearing infinite wisdom. Intimately held in His mother's arms, He IS the Incarnation of the Word. This rendition of the Christ Child is derived from a 15th century icon by Sano di Pietro.

In discussions about the creation

of these two new icons, their dedication to CCH and connection to the Snowmass Monastery is acknowledged. To signify the relationship of CCH to St. Benedict's Monastery, the Christ Child in this new icon holds the steeple of the Snowmass Chapel. The representation of the CCH altar Bible in the Blessing Christ's arms marks its grounding in Austin.

The decision was made to refrain from any inscription on the images, to keep the relationship on a preverbal level. This varies from a common tradition that an icon is completed by inscription. In taking this permission, the figures were untrammelled, open to each viewer's vision. 

References

Byzantium, Faith and Power (1261-1557), Helen C. Evans, editor, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Yale University Press, New Haven and London 2004.

Holy Image Hallowed Ground, Icons from Sinai, Robert Nelson and Kristen Collins, editors, The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles 2006.

November Calendar

Visit consciousharmony.org for a complete listing of events

Special Events

Half-day Centering Prayer Retreat
Nov 9 12:30 - 5 pm
\$10 No need to pre-register

Commuter Retreat
Nov 10-11
\$100 Register 512.347-9673

Thanksgiving Potluck Dinner
Nov 28 2 pm - 6 pm (doors open at noon)
Bring your own place setting, Sign up in kitchen.

Monthly

Caritas Food Bank
1st Sunday of each month
Bring non-perishable items

Community Workday
Nov 16 9 am-noon

Tuesday Enrichment 7:30 pm
Nov 19 Gurdjieff Music

Weekly

Prayer Circle
Wednesdays 9:15 am

Contemplative Lunch
Wednesdays 12 noon

Mid-Week Communion Service
Wednesdays 6-7 pm

Work of Inner Christianity Class
Thursdays 7:30 pm

Daily

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

Thanksgiving Holiday
Closed Nov 28-29

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

SEEDS

To Create from Within

Am I sure that the meaning of my life is the meaning God intends for it?

Does God impose a meaning on my life from the *outside*, through event, custom, routine, law, system, impact with others in society?

Or am I called to *create from within*, with him, with his grace, a meaning which reflects his truth

and makes me his "word" spoken freely in my personal situation?

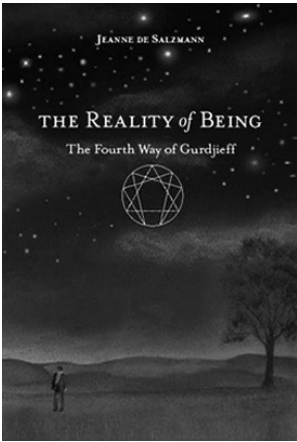
My true identity lies hidden in God's call to my freedom and my response to him.

This means I must use my freedom in order to *love*, with full responsibility and authenticity,

not merely receiving a form imposed on me by external forces, or forming my own life according to an approved social pattern

but directing my love to the personal reality of my brother, and embracing God's will in its naked, often impenetrable mystery.

Thomas Merton, *Seeds*, page 132.



The Work

of Inner Christianity

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

“I Am” in Movement

From where do our actions, our movements, come? When the centers are not related there can only be reaction. In our usual state the centers do not have the same associations, the same aim, the same vision. Real action belongs to a state beyond our ordinary functioning.


There is in us a perpetual movement of energy that never stops but that gives birth to all kinds of other movements of energy. Every movement is a displacement from one position or attitude to another position, another attitude. We never see both the position and the displacement at the same time. Either we concentrate on the position and ignore the movement, or we focus on the movement but lose sight of the position. So we can foresee a movement and set it in motion, but we cannot follow it.

To follow a movement requires a certain inner vision. Usually the energy of my look is passive, my attention not free. I look through an image, an idea, and consequently

do not really see. I may have a sensation of my body, but I do not feel the movement of the energy that is contained in it. In order to feel this movement, the state of the body must change. And the state of the thought and feeling must also change. The body has to acquire great sensitivity and a power of action wholly unknown to it. It must recognize that it is here to serve, that it is the matter, the instrument, through which forces act. The body must see that it needs to obey, and that an understanding between it and the thinking is absolutely necessary. Then a new kind of movement can appear—a free movement. It will not take place without me, without my attention. And the more total my attention, the freer the movement will be.

To maintain a relation between our centers, an action has to be performed at certain tempo, a certain speed. But we always move at our habitual speed, which is a tempo of inertia, a tempo without vivifying

attraction. The action is not lived by all of me. Either the body does not wholly take part and the thought loses its freedom, or the thought is not active enough and the body follows its own habits. So our action creates nothing new, nothing alive, no “sound.”

In the Gurdjieff Movements, which can show a new quality of action, the tempo is given and we have to submit to it. In our work, we ourselves need to find the right tempo and then equally submit to it. Otherwise, the work will not transform us. I need to feel that my body and my thought have equal participation, the same force, the same intensity. Then the sensation of the energy contained *in the body* can be stronger than the sensation *of the body* itself. I can follow the movement. “I am” the movement. 

Jeanne de Salzmann, *The Reality of Being – The Fourth Way of Gurdjieff*, pages 272-274. 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.



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

Psalm 27:4

To Gaze on the Beauty of the Lord

It's a journey that never ends, because what is home?

It is "to live in the house of the Lord
all the days of our lives." And that house
is our participation in the divine life through grace.

... We are talking about a communion
and a unity that is incomparable,
that is oneness.

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

