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THE MARK

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



WELCOMING
THE UNKNOWN

EVOLUTION

BY PETER HAAS

The foundation laid down over the last thirty years at The Church of Conscious Harmony (CCH) is strong. In addition to the joyful and wise ministry of Tim and Barbara Cook, our foundation is built on a community of practice; of individuals living a Godward life grounded in Centering Prayer, the Work of Inner Christianity, Lectio Divina, and the Eucharist. This foundation has served us well. Just look around – CCH is a graced place, full of graced, joyful, radiating people. Experiencing our weekly community offerings together are weaving us into a harmonious chord in service to our evolution as Christ.

Given our enduring strong foundation, what can we possibly mean by the word *evolution*? The poet Wendell Berry wisely frames the process of the kind of spiritual evolution we envision for our 2018 Annual Aim “Evolving as Christ.” Be sure to read his winsome wisdom slowly, a few times:

No, no, there is no going back.

Less and less, you are the person you were.

It’s important to note the

spiritual evolution that we envision isn’t about supercharging our lives for power, success or popularity. The ancient Katha Upanishad inspires me and infuses our notion of evolution with deep, perennial insight:

May we light the fire that burns out the ego and enables us to pass from fearful fragmentation to fearless fullness in the changeless whole.

For us, the word *whole* and *Christ* are virtual synonyms. Such transformative evolution has more to do with an ascent to the depths. A consenting to the Presence of the Spirit of God, which gently, slowly and sometimes fiercely burns our ego away, and then our self, and calls us into a deeper Life, a broader Love, an elevated Joy and an enriched Being. It’s the kind of transformational Grace emerging in our lives and community that births:

Less self, more Christ.

Less fear, more faith.

Less opinion, more wisdom.

Less fragmentation, more wholeness.

Less division, more love.

Less addiction, more freedom.

Less chaos, more stillness.

The present moment is the nexus point of past and future – the confluence of foundation and evolution; the meeting of past and possibility – for each of our lives, our church and our planet. Admittedly, the evolutionary present-edge can be a creative and turbulent place to live. It’s a threshold space of potential fusion and flourishing. How will you choose to participate in this evolution – for yourself, for others and for the interconnected global community?

In the Christian tradition, the cross is the symbol of that holy meeting place – where the thin lines of past and present, here and there, one and the many, intersect with the Now moment – inviting us to let go more into God, to forgive, and surrender more completely into the Mystery of the Mystical Body of Christ, even amidst the suffering.

It’s easy to doubt. It’s normal to fear the unknowns of the future. And it’s understandable to stay in the comfortable places of life. Facing my own fears about following in the epic footsteps of Tim and Barbara, I was encouraged last January on retreat at St. Benedict’s Monastery,

when I heard a homily by Father Ed, who reminded me that “God’s power is our [evolution]. Our unbelief is God’s powerlessness.” In 2018, let’s agree to trust God, with whom all things are possible!

As astounding as the past has been at CCH, we can’t live there. Spirit calls us forth. All healthy systems are growing, and some are even radiating! As such, we find ourselves in the present moment faced with a choice. While time occurs for everyone, growth and evolution do not – they are chosen, wished for and worked toward.

One of my wishes for this new year is to support and serve our ongoing evolution as Christ. With you, I’m here to work and pray; learn and love; laugh and cry, worship and serve; listen and partake; be and become. I pray that any frictions, fears or suffering that arise in this season of ministerial transition and community evolution, will not be wasted – but rather, be used by the Spirit of God as fuel for our mutual flourishing.

Let’s sink deeply into our foundation and welcome the unknown. On a practical level,

I invite you to pray for God’s continued best blessings on our church’s year of transition and evolution. As for welcoming the unknown, none of us could have anticipated all the change that would occur simultaneously at CCH. While we all knew about Tim and Barbara’s retirement long before it occurred, none of us foresaw the unexpected death of our beloved Susan Boulden. Among the many gifts Susan shared with us, most knew her through sacred piano music. In her own words,

“... music touches the deepest part of man’s being. Music reaches farther than any other impression from the external world can reach. ... When I play *Pie Jesu*, I am praying ... the essence of the piece which I believe is “Grant us all eternal peace.” ... 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. ... 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. ... My wish is that the music at the Church of Conscious Harmony continues 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.” Susan Boulden, *The Mark*, November 2013

I know our community feels her absence, especially in worship. Let us be patient in waiting and discerning how the Spirit is calling to us to evolve and respond. Here’s one idea. With Ash Wednesday and Lent approaching, as a Lenten practice, I invite you to join with me in Lent for a Friday meal fast for the purpose of calling down God’s grace upon each of our lives, our church and especially the forthcoming Music Director search process. May we all experience the fruitful wilderness that Lent can lead us into, and the radiant community that Resurrection can raise us toward.

All love in Christ. 

CCH COMMUNITY 2018 READING LIST

In 2018, our community reading list focuses on deepening our understanding of contemplative prayer, the Work of Inner Christianity, and the riches of the monastic tradition. We begin with Thomas Merton's *The Inner Experience*. Though it was published recently, it is perhaps Merton's most succinct and engaging summary of the contemplative dimension of Christianity. It is foundational for understanding just how much Merton has helped Christianity recover its contemplative roots – and will inspire us on our ongoing evolution as a contemplative community.

Next, we'll turn to Ted Nottingham's insightful exploration of the Work through the lens of Christian experience. Nottingham is a rare combination of wise pastor and Work teacher, and his practical summary of the broad Work tradition is invaluable.

In May, we'll delve into the new and exciting work of Greg Peters' who is helping the wider Christian church retrieve the lost riches of the monastic tradition. You'll find this book particularly helpful in strengthening your intention and practice of being a monk in the world. It will also help CCH continue to evolve its wish to be and become a monastery without walls.

For the summer months, we'll turn to the blazing insights of Goleman and Davidson, two of the world's leading brain and meditation researchers. Their findings are so profound and useful in our understanding of the dynamics of meditative prayer practices. Particularly, you won't want to miss their important emphasis on the shift from *states* to *traits*. You will also notice many practical connections to key Work ideas.

In September, we'll delve into Ilia Delio's groundbreaking book *Christ in Evolution*, which offers good influences for our development of knowledge and Being as we come to understand the new cosmology and its impact on Christian theology and spirituality.

Then, we'll conclude the year with our beloved Fr. Thomas Keating, whose recent book, *World Without End* provides an invaluable conversation on the spiritual journey. The conversation was recorded at St. Benedict's Monastery, along with Abbot Joseph.

Explore! Enjoy! Evolve! 

READING SCHEDULE

January - February	Thomas Merton, <i>The Inner Experience</i>
March - April	Theodore Nottingham, <i>Written in Our Hearts</i>
May - June	Greg Peters, <i>The Story of Monasticism</i>
July - August	Daniel Goleman & Richard Davidson, <i>Altered Traits</i>
September - October	Ilia Delio, <i>Christ in Evolution</i>
November - December	Thomas Keating, <i>World Without End</i>

2018 AIM: EVOLVING AS CHRIST AN INVITATION FOR YOU AND REFLECTION FOR ALL

At the beginning of each year, an annual aim is presented to the Church community.

All are invited to join in community ... to participate in intention and will to God ... to renew your commitment to

Evolving as Christ ... to move ever deeper together as a community of intention, practice and devotion ...

and, in so doing, manifest *conscious harmony* with all life.

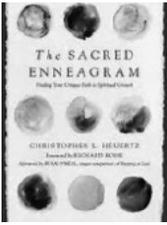
All glory to God!

As a part of the annual aim, a special theme is presented for each month to support a focused study of the annual aim.

This month, we reflect and look deeper at "Welcoming the Unknown," which is featured in the article on page 6.

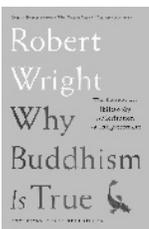
To learn more about the 2018 annual aim "Evolving as Christ" or to participate and receive a beautiful packet of the monthly themes, please contact the Church office. An invitation will be provided to you.

BOOK LOOK



THE SACRED ENNEAGRAM

Christopher L. Heuertz's stand-out book, *The Sacred Enneagram*, is a significant and welcome new contribution to the Enneagram conversation. One reason that's so, is the compelling way Heuertz reminds readers that the nine Enneagram personality types are also pathways "back home" – to our deepest relationship with God. Placing the Enneagram within the context of a "relationship with God" adds a powerful nuance to Heuertz's work, especially in the book's Part Three. There, Heuertz also connects the Enneagram with the core contemplative practices of solitude, silence and stillness; which seem to be an original contribution above and beyond much of the primary Enneagram resources currently available. For contemplatives, perhaps chapter Nine will be of particular interest. There, Heuertz connects the nine personality types with nine ways of prayer, with a focus on Centering Prayer. Finally, Heuertz also provides a succinct and honest introduction to the history and origins of the Enneagram. He does not shy away from its early connection to Gurdjieff, which some Enneagram teachers have done. So, let's give gratitude where it is due, and that belongs preeminently with Mr. George Ivanovitch Gurdjieff, whose living system of ideas introduced the modern world to the transforming grace of inner Christianity, especially through the meaning and movements of the Enneagram.

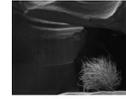


WHY BUDDHISM IS TRUE

The title of Robert Wright's new book, *Why Buddhism Is True*, is a bit misleading. Perhaps a more accurate title would have been: "Why Meditation Works." Nevertheless, this book is a very useful resource for contemplative Christians and Centering Prayer practitioners, in part because it provides very accessible and up-to-date information on the science of meditative prayer practices. Students of the Work of Inner Christianity will also find in Wright's book insightful and practical connection points. For example, the idea of "multiplicity" is developed in Chapter Six, perfectly titled, "Your CEO is MIA." The idea of "centers" is also updated from a neurological perspective, with what Wright describes as "Modules that Run Your Life." The book is full of similar treasures – useful for stoking the fire of understanding and broadening the connection points with other global wisdom traditions.

CCH BOOKSTORE

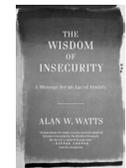
SUGGESTED TITLES FOR FEBRUARY



Welcoming Prayer – Consent on the Go
by Contemplative Outreach



Show Me the Way
by Henri Nouwen



The Wisdom of Insecurity
by Alan Watts



Healing and Recovery
by David Hawkins

Bookstore and Library Hours
Open Monday-Friday 9:00 am-4:00 pm
Sunday 9:30-10:00 am & 11:30 am-noon



In Your light, we see light. Psalm 36:10

ANNUAL AIM: EVOLVING AS CHRIST

WELCOMING THE UNKNOWN BY PAMELA BEGEMAN

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 sister],
and embracing God's will
in its naked,
often impenetrable mystery.

Thomas Merton, *Contemplative Prayer*

Edith Stein once wrote:

“Things were in God's plan
which I had not planned at all.

I am coming to the living faith and conviction that
– from God's point of view –
there is no chance and that the whole of my life,
down to every detail, has been mapped out
in God's divine providence and makes complete
and perfect sense in God's all-seeing eyes.”

excerpted from The Vatican News Service, October 12, 1998

“There are no accidents.” This wisdom, which I have heard and read from several different spiritual teachers, is worth pondering in the wake of the motor vehicle deaths of two of our community members in the period of a month – Lance Trewitt and Susan Boulden. Does this mean the accidents were meant to be – destined, fated, scripted, anticipated perhaps from the very

beginning of their lives? Dr. David Hawkins, MD, Ph.D., through his consciousness research and experience, says that the time of each person's death is known from the beginning, written into the very make-up of our being.

On the heels of these events, this month's quote from Edith Stein makes a similar startling claim, “There is no chance ... the

whole of my life has been mapped out in God's divine providence." The all-important caveat is "from God's point of view ... [it] all makes complete and perfect sense in God's all-seeing eyes." This affirmation comes from someone who was persecuted by the Nazis and ultimately put to death in a concentration camp.

Alternatively, The Work of Inner Christianity teaches there is a law of accident and a law of fate. In our unconscious and negatives states, we are prone to the accidental and are not in alignment with our fate. People and situations come to us that do not belong to us, to our journey on this plane of existence. With metanoia, practice and consent – all under the guidance of Grace – our being and consciousness can evolve to connect us to the flow of our fate, which is our unique and essential purpose for being and manifesting.

This teaching acknowledges the accidental. Perhaps another way of taking this in is that we experience events differently at different levels of consciousness – on our way to "God's point of view." The exact same event that may have been devastating at one level of being can be graciously accepted on another level of being. "*In Your Light, I see only Light.*" (cf Psalm 36:10)

In my lived experience, while

the accidental may be a state of consciousness, it isn't Reality. It's just a point along my process of growing. Now I can say for myself, along with Edith Stein, that the whole of my life has been guided by the hand of God, guided by the Spirit, unfolding and evolving in ways I never could have imagined or concocted. There were and are no accidents. Even in the midst of my life falling apart as I knew it – in the crises, the unraveling of all my scripts and programs, and the so-called mistakes – when things absolutely did feel chaotic, dark, difficult and full of pitfalls, I now see divine providence at work. Now, over the arc of time and inner growth, I marvel how I was always lovingly guided to my highest good. Invisible to me at the time, it is now crystal clear.

While at first this realization was retrospective; with faith and lived experience, it is now known, felt and trusted in the moment. Welcoming the unknown is completely safe, because there is nothing real at risk, nothing real to lose. And I don't need to understand what is happening to know this is true.

Thomas Keating has said that the start, middle and end of the spiritual journey is the conviction that God is always present. If we are never separate from God, how

could anything be accidental? Dr. Hawkins puts it this way in *I: Reality and Subjectivity*, "So-called accidents are an illusion of perception in the domain of form, which is based on linear expectations. ... The only hypothetical possibility for a true accident to occur would require that it 'happen' outside the Allness of Creation, which is an impossibility. ... Everything represents the consequence of the effect of the entire universe throughout all time. Nothing is outside the karmic, balanced harmony of the universe."

Thus, "everything is happening in the only way it can." This Work aphorism is true – literally true. There is an unseen, mysterious, intentional flow underlying the content of my life. For me, the **context** is now more important and interesting than the content.

As time and the repetition of ordinary life create the illusion of linearity, continuity and ongoingness, it's easy to be lulled into an unconscious expectation of consistency and stability of the people and happenings in our lives. The flow of time is hypnotizing. To counter this, Michael and I engage in a ritual at the threshold of every new year. Besides a burning bowl ceremony to let go of our attachments, resentments and unforgiveness, we also reflect back

“The ever-changing reality in the midst of which we live should awaken us to the possibility of an uninterrupted dialogue with God. By this I do not mean continuous ‘talk,’ ... but a dialogue of love and of choice. A dialogue of deep wills. ... We must learn to realize that the love of God seeks us in every situation, and seeks our good. God’s inscrutable love seeks our awakening. True, since this awakening implies a kind of death to our exterior self, we will dread this God’s coming in proportion as we are identified with this exterior self and attached to it. But when we understand the dialectic of life and death we will learn to take the risks implied by faith, to make the choices that deliver us from our routine self and open to us the door of a new being, a new reality.”

Thomas Merton, New Seeds of Contemplation

on the prior year, making note of all of the surprises, the shocks, the things we didn’t know were going to happen. Over time it’s become a practice of letting go of expectations for the future, of the sense that things will continue as they are, or manifest according to our plans. We practice being comfortable with not knowing and trusting the process.

The Welcoming Prayer, an *embodied* practice of being with all sensations and emotions in the awareness of God’s presence here and now, heals the stored energies and wounds in the time-body. I feel and Remember, without having to analyze, know or understand. The gut-punch of grief and shock, the heat of shame and guilt, the sweat and shivers of fear and anxiety – in the context of the Welcoming Prayer these experiences become the sacred process of a human being incarnating and evolving as Christ in the ordinary. Evolving as Christ is not about becoming a perfect human; it’s about becoming more fully human as I am, awake

to my dual nature, identity and my Source. To be clear, the Welcoming Prayer is not about welcoming events, but rather, sinking into my experience and reactions to these events in the body, in the moment, knowing with radical trust that God is always with me.

Tragic, horrible and cruel things happen. I do not know why or how. I don’t believe that we draw these things to us. And Thomas Keating affirms, there is no punishment in God. I no longer struggle to make these seeming paradoxes line up rationally. As Ilia Delio says, “One must stand within the tension of the paradox by being at home in the mystery.” (Omega Center blog, December 7, 2017). I know in every cell that God is Love and that ultimately, Love never fails for me or anyone.

My prayer is this: May I wake up to Wonder. May I remember that God is in all and all is in God. May the incarnation continue in me, as me, all for the glory of God. And may this be so for us all. *Amen.* 

THE WELCOMING PRAYER METHOD

There are three movements
of the prayer:

Feel and sink into
what you are experiencing
this moment in your body.

“WELCOME”
what you are experiencing
this moment in your body
as an opportunity to consent
to the Divine Indwelling.

Let go by saying
“I let go of my desire for
security, affection, control
and embrace this moment
as it is.”

For more information, go to:
<https://www.contemplativeoutreach.org/category/category/welcoming-prayer>

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

LIVING THE WORK OF INNER CHRISTIANITY IN DAILY LIFE

EXPLORING TRANSFORMING INCOMING IMPRESSIONS

Work Idea: An important aspect of all spiritual evolution is our willingness to participate in the process of psychological transformation; to keep growing, maturing, and developing. By way of analogy, we can understand such evolution on a literal level when we see oil transformed into gasoline through a refining process. We can also see physical transformation occurring more closely related to our day-to-day interior experience each time we eat a healthy meal. After we eat the food, our digestive process transforms the food into physical energy. Indeed, when the digestive system is working correctly, we grow and stay healthy.

On the spiritual level, the Work of Inner Christianity speaks of this aspect of healthy evolution as the psychological transformation of oneself. Particularly, the transformation of one's personality into deeper Being. In our context at CCH, we define this new Being, in part, as conscious love – or, in a word, as Christ. Whereas physical

food is transformed in our digestive system, “psychological” food is called the “food of impressions,” and these impressions – are “digested” by one of our Centers (intellect, emotions, body). Impressions are continually all around us.

For example, the impression of getting into an argument, meeting a new person, hearing unexpected news, or visiting with family members. As long as there is a self that perceives, transforming impressions is a life-long practice. A story of the Buddha illustrates this well. Once on a journey, the Buddha met a young, strapping soldier. The soldier rudely said to the Buddha, “You look like a fat pig.” The Buddha gently replied, “And you look like God.” The soldier was shocked, and responded in bewilderment, “How can that be?” “We see what we think about,” said the Buddha, “I spend my time thinking about God. You obviously spend your time thinking about something else.”

Work Source: In Volume 1 of

the *The Psychological Commentaries on the Teaching of Gurdjieff and Ouspensky*, Maurice Nicoll beautifully summarizes the idea of transformation over a twenty-five-page section. Here are a few choice highlights: “The idea of the Work is psychological transformation – the transformation of *oneself*. Transformation means the changing of a thing into a different thing... But this idea did not always have a literal meaning, because the language of alchemy was sometimes used...as referring to the possibility of the transformation of a [person] into a new kind of [person]...In the Gospels, the idea of mechanical man as a seed capable of growing has the same significance, as has also the idea of re-birth, of a [person] being born again...The first realization of the meaning of this work is to understand that life, coming in as impressions, must be transformed. There is no such thing as ‘external life’. What all the time you are receiving is *impressions*. You see a person you dislike – that is, you



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get *impressions*...Life is impressions, not a solid material thing such as you suppose and believe is *reality*. Your reality is impressions...Life comes in as impressions and it is here that it is possible to *work on oneself*— but only if you realize that what you are working on is not external life but the impressions you are receiving. Unless you can grasp this, you will never understand the meaning of what in the work is called the First Conscious Shock.” (*Commentaries*, 50-51).

Practical Application: On a very practical level, our spiritual evolution or development can occur in how we “see” other people, especially those we live and work with. In a world and culture that seems to run on judgement by appearance, we are surrounded by opportunities to evolve in this area of our life. So we are invited this month to work at transforming incoming impressions of just one person, without them knowing you are doing *your* internal work with them. Perhaps you don't like how they look or how they talk or something else about their manner or behavior. When you notice your typical negative reaction to them – and to the impression(s) of them that arise within your mind and trigger an affliction in you – remind yourself of a deeper truth with a simple phrase such as: “This perception is not the fullness of their truth. I wish to see

[name] through the lens of Christ. I remember that how I see this person says more about my internal state of perception than anything else. I see what I be.” Then, offer a prayer such as: *Cleanse my heart O God, and help me see the Essence of who [name] is, and not get caught in my perceptions of their external form or personality. Free my seeing from all misperception based in fear, judgement or negativity. Amen.*

Further Resources: For another voice on the subject, or to explore the related ideas of influences, transformation and development, see Boris Mouravieff, *Gnosis*, Volume 1, 46-53. 

Join the Next

Multi-Day Centering Prayer Retreat

at Cedarbrake Retreat and
Renewal Center

Feb 23-Mar 4 10-day
Lenten \$875

Single rooms, if available,
are an additional \$10/night

Contact the church office to register.

NEW!
**EXPANDED DAILY MORNING
CENTERING PRAYER
IN THEOSIS CHAPEL**

For years, Barbara Cook has faithfully led the Monday through Friday 7 a.m. community Centering Prayer in Theosis chapel. With her retirement, rather than scaling back, we are expanding daily Centering Prayer seven days a week, led by a rotating team. This is one very practical way the CCH family can continue to evolve deeper into a living contemplative monastic community, and how we can support one another in deepening our devotion to God on the spiritual journey. Plus, as our world-culture continues to experience complexity and chaos, Theosis Chapel becomes an ever more vital epicenter of silence and stillness for our growth in love and peace. Why not begin your day in prayer at least once a week in Theosis Chapel, and be a part of the spiritual evolution-solution?

**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.

1ST GUIDELINE

The fundamental goodness of human nature,
like the mystery of the Trinity, Grace, and the Incarnation,
is an essential element of Christian faith.

This basic core of goodness is capable of unlimited development;
indeed, of becoming transformed into Christ and deified.

FEBRUARY CALENDAR

Visit consciousharmony.org
for a complete listing of events

SPECIAL EVENTS

Ash Wednesday Service
Feb 14 noon-12:30 pm

One-Day Centering Prayer Retreat
Feb 17 8:30 am-4:30 pm
\$15 Bring a potluck dish to share

Two-Day Commuter Retreat
Feb 18-8:00 am-5:30 pm
Feb 19 7:00am-4:30pm
\$100 Pre-register in the office.

10-Day Centering Prayer Retreat
Feb 23-Mar 4
Contact the office to register.

MONTHLY

1st Sundays
Bring non-perishables for Caritas

WEEKLY

Sundays
Lectio Divina 8:00-9:00 am
Worship Service 10:00-11:30 am
Youth Program 10:00-11:30 am
Fellowship 11:30 am

Wednesdays
Prayer Circle 10:15-11:00 am
Contemplative Lunch noon-1:00 pm
Contemplative Communion Service 6:00-7:00 pm
Infusion 7:15-8:25 pm
Yoga 7:30-8:30 pm \$10

Thursdays 7:30-9:00 pm
Work of Inner Christianity Class

Fridays 7:30-8:45 pm
Devotional Service

Saturdays noon-12:50 pm
Scriptorium

DAILY

Sunday - Saturday 7:00-7:35 am
Centering Prayer Service in Theosis Chapel

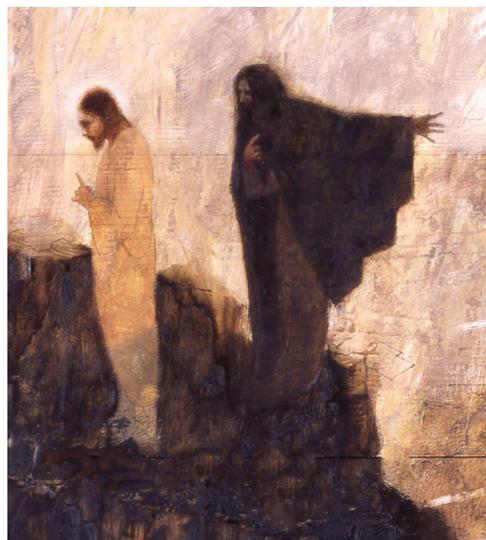
Recordings of services are available
through the Bookstore and online at
www.consciousharmony.org



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Temptation of Christ, J. Kirk Richards

*The willing is ready at hand, but doing the good is not.
For I do not do the good I want, but I do the evil I do not want.*

*Now if I do what I do not want,
it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.
... For I take delight in the law of God, in my inner self,
but I see in my members another principle at war
with the law of my mind, taking me captive to the law of sin
that dwells in my members. Miserable one that I am!*

*Who will deliver me from this mortal body?
Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Romans 7:18-25

LENT

The struggle between the old and the new self is a constant theme in the New Testament.

The false self easily adjusts to the circumstances of the spiritual journey as long as it does not have to change itself.

Thus, it manifests its radical self-centeredness in various expressions of human activity:

in material pursuits such as wealth and power;
in emotional satisfactions such as relationships;

in intellectual goals ... in social goals ... in religious aspirations
... and even in spiritual commitments such as prayer,
the practice of virtue and every form of ministry.

... No amount of theological, scriptural or liturgical study can heal the false-self system, because as long as our emotional programs for happiness are firmly in place, such studies are easily co-opted by them.

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

Thomas Keating, *The Mystery of Christ*

