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THE MARK

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TO DIE ON THE DAY OF RESURRECTION

BY PETER HAAS

One year before Pierre Teilhard de Chardin died, his nephew heard him say, “I should like to die on the day of Resurrection.” A year later, on April 10, 1955, Teilhard de Chardin did die. It was Easter Sunday.

That day, he had attended Easter Mass at St. Patrick’s Cathedral in New York City. Later that afternoon at a friend’s house, standing by the window looking out at the city, Teilhard de Chardin fell back to the floor. He finally had collapsed out of this life, into the next – his mystic heart giving out, making its final journey into The Omega, which was so incisively perceived and articulated in his writings.

Rarely has humankind had, as we have in Teilhard de Chardin’s writings, such a clear and creative witness to the necessity of the quantum and pithy enfoldment of matter and spirit. One instance will illustrate – ponder this prayer in his famous essay, *The Heart of Matter*:

“Lord, since with every instinct of my being and through

all the changing fortunes of my life, it is you whom I have ever sought, you whom I have set at the heart of universal matter, it will be in a resplendence which shines through all things and in which all things are ablaze, that I shall have the felicity of closing my eyes.”

With Christ, Teilhard de Chardin believed and now knows, that at death we find our fortune. At death, it is so very safe to close our eyes, forever. Perhaps this is one reason why fifteen hundred years prior, St. Augustine reminded the world that “one can know something only insofar as one loves it.” At death, we finally know what and whom we have loved.

Thinking spiritually, as we approach the subject of death and resurrection, we can begin to discover that if we love God and the resurrection of Christ, we will know that death is not the enemy, but the flourishing of life by way of the threshold of spiritual and physical surrender. Such logic

of the Spirit inspired the genius composer and organist J.S. Bach to write such compelling pieces as, “Come Sweet Death,” as well as inspiring countless martyrs of the faith throughout the centuries to joyfully surrender their self not for what they intellectually knew for certain, but for what they loved. And in loving, knew by faith.

This is different from naivete or denial. It is said of Teilhard de Chardin that he was as conscious as any of us of the tragedies that threaten the world and our human journeys. Nevertheless, despite great personal suffering as a stretcher-bearer in the major battles of World War I and in his hardships as a persecuted Roman Catholic priest / paleontologist, Teilhard looked both *ahead* of humankind and *above* humankind. His prayers bear witness to this. Here is an example:

“Lord of my childhood and Lord of my end – God complete in [Itself] and yet, for us, continually being born ...”

If God is continually being

born, why do we think it will be any different for us? Surely this is one way of understanding the biblical imperative to *be born from above* (John 3.3) – meaning not just spatially, but in time and quality of Being, again and again. That is to say: born from and indeed even for and on behalf of the future development of humankind and our planet by way of our own ongoing consent and participation in the evolution of a more complete creation as the Body of Christ. Recall that it is the voice of God in Revelation 21.5 that says, *Behold, I make all things new*, which beautifully echoes the Eucharist manifesto: *Behold, the Body of Christ. Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.*

To the point: in part, the essence of resurrection is the presence of the future and all its possibilities in our very midst, right now in this moment. Resurrection reminds us that we are not locked into the past, not limited by recurrence, nor even

constrained to the imperative to be present in the present moment. Resurrection invites us to recognize that Reality isn't limited to three dimensions. As important as this present moment is, especially in the silence, even the present moment isn't all of God or all of Reality. No one is locked into just the present moment, even the most conscious present moment. There is always more to God and Reality beyond time and human consciousness – and, to my understanding, that experience beyond time *is* resurrection.

The resurrection of Christ can open the door of our imagination ajar. We can begin to see the Miracle beyond time peeking through. Reality is never contingent upon our perception or experience of the dimensions of time or space. Any Ultimate Reality worthy of our attention is always *more than*, and resplendent to any of our very human perceptions, experiences or limited planetary dimensions.

As for us and our journeys, something can be gained by

remembering an insight novelist George Bernanos once penned: “every spiritual adventure is a Calvary.” Bernanos’ sentiment is understood, yet can also be expanded: Every spiritual journey is a recurring sequence of Calvary and resurrection. This is a grace, because through the patterned sequence of cross and resurrection, we are again and again lifted up and out of the ruts of our own making, and the pains of our lifetime.

Our hope isn't in the past, nor the present, and not even in the future. It seems to me our deepest hope is beyond all time, in the energetic wave of the resurrection, still cresting over each of our lives like a half-formed chrysalis. The poet Robinson Jeffers reminds us that, “pained thoughts find the honey of peace in old poems.” I like that line very much, and also expand it to encompass something even deeper: pain finds the honey of peace in the empty tomb and full heart. Like Mary Magdalene’s passionate embrace of consolation

GUIDELINES FOR CHRISTIAN LIFE, GROWTH AND TRANSFORMATION

continued from page 3

and love. *My Lord! My mind thought you were someone else! But my body remembers and knows ... it's really you!*

When it comes to the honey of peace found in the empty tomb, and all that the resurrection of Christ points us toward in our hearts and minds, Wendell Berry reminds us that, “the mind that comes to rest is tended in ways that it does not intend. Is borne, possessed and comprehended by what it cannot comprehend.”

This Holy Week and Easter season let the mind be comprehended by what it cannot comprehend. With Teilhard de Chardin, join in the heart-wish to die on the day of resurrection. Die to the mind that thinks such miracles can't be. Die to any resistance to arising out of the tombs of your addiction, shame, fear or unfruitful choices. Die to a way of life that tells God what is possible and leaves the self in full control. Die to the jaded cynic who long ago gave up on the possibility of any new future for humankind and let Spirit rebirth you more fully into the Body of Christ, the joy of the journey and the magic moments of Magdalene Understanding. ☉

Fr. Thomas Keating, in his seminal work
Open Mind, Open Heart,

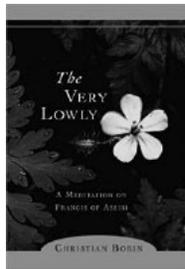
lists 42 principles underlying the Christian spiritual journey.

Fr. Keating asks that these principles be read according to the method of Lectio Divina.

One principle will appear in these pages each month.

GUIDELINE 15

God is not some remote, inaccessible, and implacable Being who demands instant perfection from His creatures and of whose love we must make ourselves worthy. He is not a tyrant to be obeyed out of terror, nor a policeman who is ever on the watch, or a harsh judge ever ready to apply the verdict of guilty. We should relate to Him less and less in terms of reward and punishment and more and more on the basis of the gratuity—or the *play* of divine love.



BOOK LOOK

The Very Lowly: A Meditation on Francis of Assisi

Christian Bobin's book *The Very Lowly: A Meditation on Francis of Assisi* is one of those special rare finds in life that come along out of the blue. The author is not well known in America, but is beloved in France. His writings offer a fresh and startling sense of rebirth that helps us awaken and see our spiritual journey anew, all modeled through the life of Francis of Assisi. The book is a lovely meditation for the season following Lent. It is full of a light-filled freshness grounded in humility, simplicity and joy – all fruits of Lent.

RITE OF PASSAGE 2019-2020

BY THE CCH YOUTH COUNCIL

The passage from adolescence into young adulthood is a critical milestone in development, yet in our society this transition is virtually ignored as a spiritual rite. Ritual is a physical representation of the unseen, of the spiritual or metaphysical realm of life, and rites of passage in other cultures have been powerful ceremonies that include educational, experiential and challenging elements.

The Church of Conscious Harmony, with the abundant and generous guidance of the Holy Spirit, has created such a Rite for its youth. The Youth Council was formed in 2001 to initiate, empower and honor our youth by ritually celebrating and blessing them as they move into their next stage of life. Our aim is to serve our youth by acknowledging them as sacred beings and to prepare them for the journey that lies ahead.

As we begin our eighteenth year of offering a Rite of Passage, we invite you to join our intention to bless the youth who have chosen this path. We pray that the Youth Council members may open their hearts to the movement of the Spirit within and that the initiates may be filled with the Light and Love of Christ as they cross the bridge from childhood into adulthood.

Interested?

High school seniors or college students who are active in CCH and who are interested in participating in next year's Rite of Passage may contact Don Hale, youthdirector@consciousharmony.org. 

APRIL COMMUNITY READING

Be Still and Listen

by Amos Smith

CCH BOOKSTORE

SUGGESTED TITLES FOR APRIL
REBIRTH



*The Mind Illuminated:
A Complete Meditation Guide of
Buddhist Wisdom and Brain Science for
Greater Mindfulness*
by John Yates



The Essential Spirituality Handbook
by Wendy M. Wright

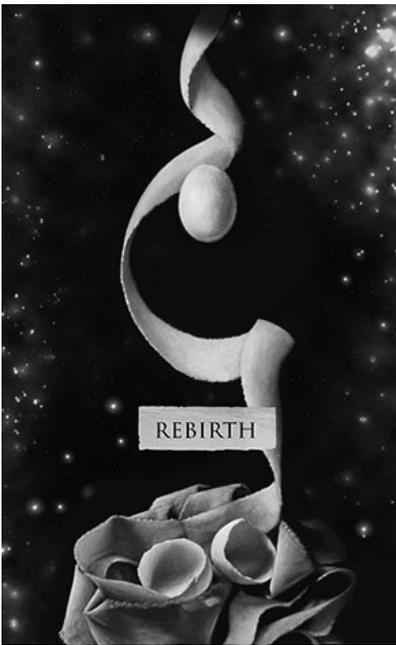


Bringing Your Shadow Out of the Dark
by R. A. Masters



*Come of Age
The Case for Elderhood
in a Time of Trouble*
by Stephen Jenkinson

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



Whoever is in Christ is a new creation ...

behold, new things have come.

2 Corinthians 5:17

ANNUAL AIM: A NEW CREATION

REBIRTH BY TAMARA AND MARTIN FIELD

O Spirit,
command my soul
to arise from the sepulcher of
littleness into Thy
vastness of everywhere-ness.

Lift its matter-caged consciousness
into omnipresent freedom in Thee.

Teach me to resurrect my wisdom
from beneath the debris
of ignorance.

... Awaken my divine sympathy
from beneath the shroud
of selfishness.

Resurrect my divine love
from beneath the mound
of attachment

... Resurrect me in Thee.

Paramahansa Yogananda, "Resurrect Me
in Thee," *The Second Coming of Christ, The
Resurrection of the Christ Within You*

“Every seeker of Ultimate Mystery has to pass through
interior death and rebirth, perhaps many times over.”

Fr. Thomas Keating

Martin: In my 20s, I thought I had my life all figured out. I would work as an engineer in the shipbuilding industry, marry a hometown girl, start a family, hang out with all our local friends, and experience a true homegrown family life with my parents and my brother's family. In this world, I was successful, charming, smart and in control of my life. I had our weekly church service to hear the message and play the part.

I soon found out that my eyes were shut and my ears clogged. My wife, at the time, met a work partner of mine from business school, and somehow their alluring

possibilities meant the end of us. This new reality derailed me, not having that elusive path to “lead” me. There was no turning back, as the deed was done. The divorce was indeed a death within me.

Empathy began to fall towards me, as my cousin's husband took me under his wing to help keep my spirit moving forward. I met new friends and various “candidates” from all walks of life. I felt lost, not knowing if I could love or be loved again.

So looking back, meeting Tamara was as simple as waiting for God's Grace. She knew that school group member and informed

me of the backstage infidelities at hand. With my guard in full defense, I replied “no thank you” to her offer to get acquainted. A couple of days later, I called her pretending to initiate this offer.

Tamara: God’s grace works in mysterious ways. The taking away and the bringing in.

When Martin & I first met, we were pretty “broken.” We were both going through divorces, and we felt like failures. Not only were we dating and trying to get to know one another, but we were simultaneously helping the other recover from the “death” of our former marriages.

On one of our first dates, I remember telling Martin that I wanted to “get a graduate degree, start my own business and start a family.” He asked me “all at the same time?” and I said, “yep.” Well, that was his first peek into my “level of being” at the time. I had a powerful “personality,” as it were, and I was very selfish. I had a tiny lens and no patience for anything other than what would help me succeed. I had already wasted so much time and had nothing but a failed marriage to show for it. I was very driven, but by what?

Martin: Our journey of triumphs and failures in the line of money, our relationship, our devotion to

religion and our children began. Looking back, I can see the passion that drove our energy into each of these life pursuits, as if there was something for us to prove to others. Such emptiness could only be seen once I slowly realized that my island, my sense of self, was a concoction of absorbed ideas from this world, each decorated with the preference and prejudice to keep the game going, to keep me interested in the next somewhat narcissistic endeavor. Most of these endeavors would help squelch my fear around money and accepting love, even the Love from God. Rejection avoidance propped up my almost gregarious personality around people, my tolerance and adaptation to altered mental states, and consequently my bouts of depression.

Tamara: When Martin and I got married I felt like my life plans were finally falling into place. I was in love, and we were going to start a family right away. We dealt with infertility for two long and agonizing years before choosing to try IVF (In Vitro Fertilization). Back in 1996, IVF had a bad reputation in many religious circles. “If God wanted you to have a child you would be pregnant,” some people would say. However, we didn’t believe

that. We imagined a loving God who wanted only the best for us. So, with all the faith in the world that things would work out, we went forward with the procedure.

I spent six weeks in the hospital, just barely pregnant with our son after hyper-stimulating from the IVF procedure – a dangerous situation. One of my doctor’s said that I should “abort” because the pregnancy was “killing me.” I had gained 40 pounds of water weight that had to be drained multiple times so that I could breathe. My body was attacking itself, and if it didn’t resolve, my organs would start shutting down. Thankfully, my organs did not shut down, and our son and eventually our daughter came into our lives.

Looking back, it certainly felt like I had experienced a Rebirth. Although my ego wanted me to believe that I was in control of my life, I knew that there was something else at play. This mystery was the Grace of God. I had fallen, but (again) was lifted. Through failure, infertility, hospitalization, God’s Grace was there, helping us make the right decisions and keep the faith that things would work out. So through this experience, and through many more along the way, I was being transformed.

“Your rebirth is a gift of the Spirit ... predicated on your being reborn of Truth which is something only you can do for yourself. You can receive knowledge and information from many sources, but they only become spiritual Truth when you apply them to your Being to create understanding at the higher level of Holy Spirit Truth.”

Rebecca Nottingham, *The Work*

Martin: When I informed Tamara that my father had promoted me (finally of course), she called me about an hour later to give me the “great” news that she had just quit her cushy job as an IT professional. At that time, this news came as quite a shock as I was overcome by fear. What? She didn’t consult me first? By the Grace of God, I have come to accept that God’s Will is working through Tamara, and such shocking events have initiated many cascades of death and rebirth in my life, carrying me to a more awakened reality. Part of that awakening is to understand that my weaknesses have been fortified by her strengths, which indeed picks me up from a fallen place. Yes, the “master” can be asleep to the nurturing and devotion from the human who sees and knows me like no other. Perhaps we are the perfect misfits seesawing through life. This back and forth helped draw us to the Church of Conscious Harmony to witness a slow dismantling of our programs for happiness then and to know now that God loves every hair on our bodies.

My fears around money and rejection have been slowly melting

away with the knowledge that God will give me the answers I need when I need them. I have been reborn living that faith, remembering that it feels SO good to experience my being as a part of the human family, as a part of the body of Christ.

Tamara: I started our first family business in 1999 in Virginia and Martin soon joined me. We grew the company and decided to move to Austin due to family ties and a more abundant source of high-tech talent. We relocated into a large home, sent our kids to private school, drove fancy cars, bought vacation homes, and went on exotic vacations. We worked long hours and were becoming what I would consider successful, but I wasn’t happy. I knew somehow that this was not really me – not my True Self. Also, I began to realize that my drive was not based on love, but something else. Consumed by a feeling I had carried within me since childhood of “not being enough,” my pursuits were being motivated by my false personality. In observing this, I felt the Holy Spirit inside being lifted, and I was becoming more conscious. So, after watching my

children being dropped off by the nanny one day, I asked, “God, please don’t let these sweet children grow up corrupted by all this money.” Well, God works in mysterious ways!

In 2008 after some bad business and investment decisions, Martin and I lost almost everything we had. We were put in a position where we had to be scathingly honest with ourselves, accept the situation, and have faith that things would work out. We were humiliated. Our kids had to change schools, we had to move, and we lost most of our friends; but, God had plans for us! As Fr. Keating says: “The divine light cuts across all darkness, prejudice, preconceived ideas, prepackaged values, false expectation, phoniness, and hypocrisy. It presents us with the truth.” I was participating in my rebirth into a Higher Consciousness. The breaking down was humbling, but a necessary part of my transformation.

The rental home we moved into was around the corner from CCH, and we felt mysteriously drawn to it. The first time we attended a service we were hooked. We had frequented other churches since marrying, but it felt like this is what we were searching

for all along! Through practicing Centering Prayer, studying *The Work of Inner Christianity*, serving in Seva, attending workgroup classes, attending silent retreats, not to mention the fantastic people that we met, I could feel my soul being lifted. I remember my first seven-day retreat, and after some unloading, I cried up to the skies “God, do you love me? Because it sure doesn’t feel like it!” After that, I was calm. After that bit of unloading, I felt better, more peaceful and more conscious. I was in love with everything around me!

Our children attended CCH as well and are now in college; but they still practice meditation and contemplation – things they learned while attending CCH. Our son became a Yoga instructor while

in high school, and our daughter reads books like *The Experience of No-Self* by Bernadette Roberts with fascination and engagement. They are both much more grounded and humbler than they might have been had we not gone through that very transformative experience together.

Tamara and Martin: Rebirth is a lifelong process that has no schedule. Through the openness to the endless possibilities in our lives, we can grow in new directions towards God. This faith which has allowed us to let go and fall to the ground has been essential to our spiritual growth.

We have shared our song, and the music plays on. God bless our human family, and we wish to know that our faith allows us to evolve as God intends us to evolve. ☸

Join the Next

HALF- AND TWO-DAY CENTERING PRAYER RETREATS

at The Church of Conscious Harmony

Apr 20
8:30 am-12:30 pm

May 17-18
Fri 8:30 am-4 pm & Sat 8:30 am-4 pm

Half-day ~ \$10 love offering
Two-day commuter retreat \$100
(sleep at home; meals included)

Contact the CCH office or website to register.



THE CHURCH of CONSCIOUS HARMONY

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LIVING THE WORK OF INNER CHRISTIANITY IN DAILY LIFE

AWAKENING

Work Idea: The spiritual experience and process of rebirth connects with the Work idea of Awakening.

Work Source: “We seek ultimately to be *born*, but in order to be born we must die, and in order to die we must first awaken. Christ in the words attributed to him, says simply: ‘One must be born again before one can enter the kingdom of God.’ ... If you think for a moment you will see how impossible it is to *die* to oneself unless one *awakens to oneself*, however painful the awakening may be ... Now I would like to read you something that G. said many years ago: ‘A person may be born, but in order to be born, one must first die, and in order to die, one must first awake. In another place it says, when a person awakes one can die; when a person dies, one can be born. We must find out what this means. To awake. To die. To be born: these are three successive stages. If you study the Gospels actively, you will see that references are often made to the possibility of being born; several references

are made to the necessity of dying, and there are very many references to the necessity of awakening. ... Watch, for you know not the hour ... and so on ... We have already spoken enough about the meaning of being born; this relates to the beginning of a new growth of essence – the beginning of the formation of individuality, the beginning of the appearance of one indivisible ‘I’. But in order to be able to attain this, or at least to begin to attain it, a person must die, that is, one must free oneself from a thousand petty attachments and identifications ... We are attached to everything in our life, attached to our imagination, attached to our stupidity, attached to our sufferings ... We must free ourselves from this attachment. Attachment to things, identification with things, keep alive a thousand useless ‘I’s in us. These ‘I’s must die, in order that the big ‘I’ may be born. But how can they be made to die? They do not want to die. It is at this point that the possibility of awakening comes to the rescue. To awaken means to

realize one’s nothingness, that is, to realize one’s complete and absolute mechanicalness, one’s complete and absolute helplessness. And it is not sufficient to realize it philosophically in *words*. It is necessary to realize it in clear, simple and concrete *facts*, in *one’s own facts*.” (Maurice Nicoll, *Commentaries*, Vol. 1, 349-351).

Practical Application: This month, Work on seeing and acknowledging your most confronting and unrelenting “facts.” Observe where you are free from them, and where you are identified with them. Perhaps there is a particular freedom or attachment you see arising through your Lenten journey. Ask for God’s help in releasing you more completely from this attachment. During Holy Week, read the Gospel account of Christ’s Suffering, Death and Resurrection not just as history, but also as a spiritual template for your own process of Awakening, Dying, and Rebirth. Where are you awakening? Where are you dying? Where are you being reborn? What in you is arising? What in you is

APRIL SERMON THEMES AND HOLY WEEK WORSHIP

April 7	Fifth Sunday of Lent 10:00 am Worship	<i>A Lenten Arising</i> John 8.1-11
April 14	Palm Sunday 10:00 am Worship	<i>A Lenten Arising</i> Luke 23.1-32
April 16	7:30 pm Gurdjieff Music	
April 18	Maundy Thursday 7:30 pm Taize	<i>Suffer</i> John 13.1-15
April 19	Good Friday Noon Worship Easter Prayer Vigil* 1 pm-6 am Easter morning	<i>Die</i> John 18.1-19.42
April 20	Holy Saturday 8:30 am-12:30 pm Centering Prayer Retreat	<i>Wait</i>
April 21	Easter Sunday 6:30-7:00 am Sunrise Service 8-9:00 am Lectio Divina 9-9:30 am Fellowship Breakfast 10:00 am Easter Worship	<i>Rise</i> Luke 24.1-12
April 28	Second Sunday of Easter 10:00 am Worship	<i>Know</i> John 20.19-31

*Sign up for a 30-minute prayer time on the board at CCH.

falling asleep? What in you is dying or released?

Supplemental Resources: The Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous charts a straightforward process for supporting the discovery and realization of one's "facts" – and the power of acknowledging one's

absolute helplessness. Chapter Five, "How It Works" is a good place to start. Then read the personal stories of others who have admitted their facts and awakened to their mechanicalness or addictions, not just in words, but in concrete, scathingly honest facts. ☺

APRIL CALENDAR

Visit consciouharmony.org for a complete listing of events

SPECIAL EVENTS

Intro to Centering Prayer
Apr 13 8:30am-1:30pm
\$75 Lunch included.
Preregister with the office.
+ 6 consecutive Mondays 7:30-9pm

Holy Week
Apr 18-21 See events listed to the left.

Annual Meeting
Board of Directors & Community
Apr 28 11:30am-12:30pm

MONTHLY

1st Sundays
Bring non-perishables for Caritas

Gurdjieff Music
Apr 16 7:30pm

WEEKLY

Sundays
Lectio Divina 8-9am
Prayer Circle 9:15-9:45am
Worship Service 10-11:30am
Youth Program 10-11:30am
Fellowship 11:30am

Wednesdays
Contemplative Lunch noon-1pm
Contemplative Communion Service 6-7pm

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

Saturdays
Scriptorium noon-12:50pm

DAILY

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

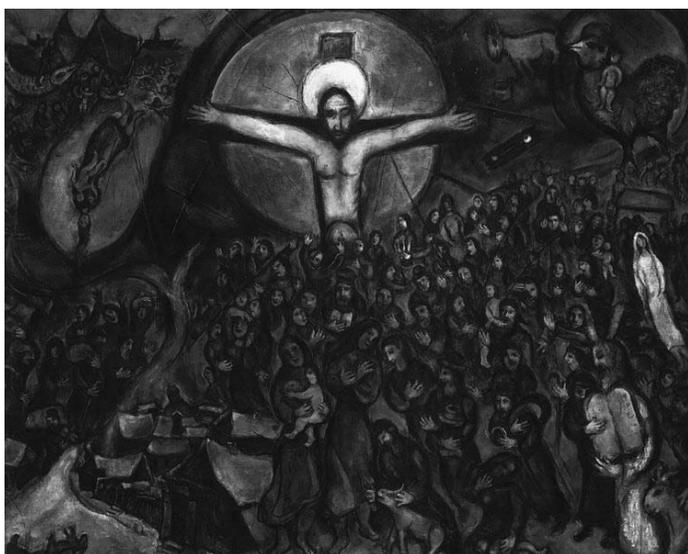
Recordings of services are available through the Bookstore and online at www.consciouharmony.org



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Exodus, Marc Chagall 1952

*And it happened that, while He was with them at table,
He took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them.
With that their eyes were opened and they recognized Him,
but He vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other,
'Were not our hearts burning [within us]
while He spoke to us on the way
and opened the scriptures to us!'*

Luke 24:30-32

DO THIS IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME

This 'burning' brought them to a high level of concentration and attentiveness. Suddenly, as Jesus broke the bread, the data of their external senses and their interior alertness connected. The intuition of faith saw through the outward appearance of the stranger to the Reality. In front of them was the risen Christ!

When we let go of our private and limited vision, He who has been hidden from us by our preconceived ideas causes the scales to fall from our eyes. He was there all the time. Now at last we perceive His Presence.

Thomas Keating, *The Mystery of Christ*