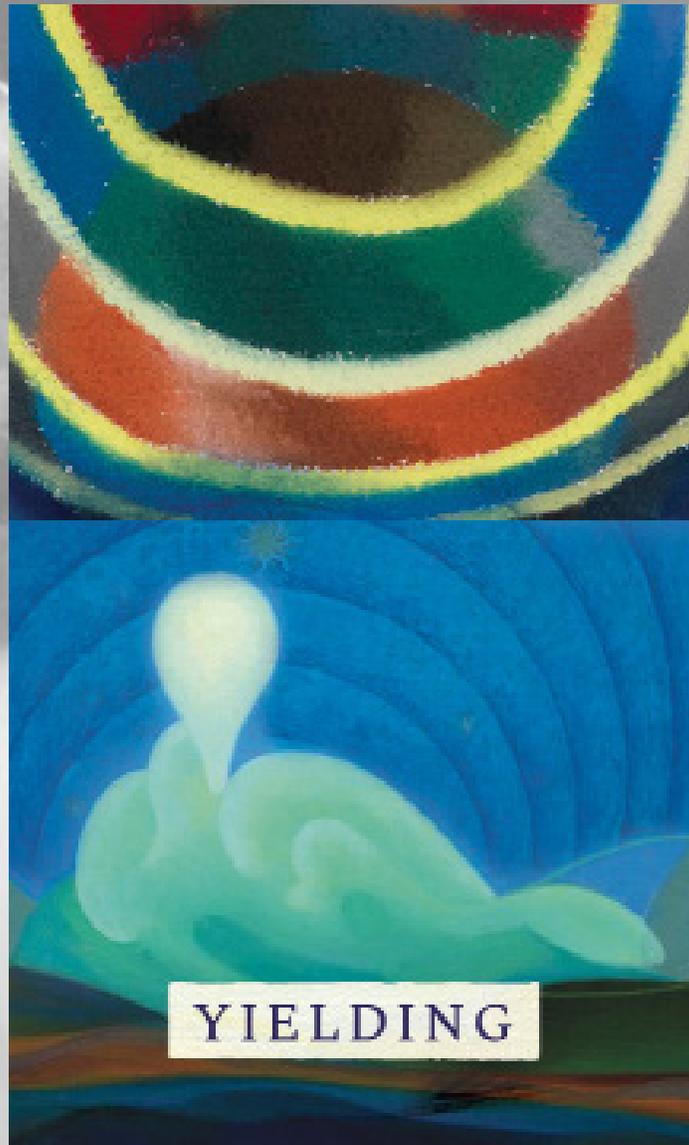


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THE MARK

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YIELDING TO THE LIGHT OF STARS, REPENTANCE AND MERCY

BY PETER HAAS

Last month our monthly practice was star gazing. Here in Central Texas, there were many clear nights to do so. I enjoyed the moments that I walked out into the darkness to look up into the starry night and wonder, feel and ask questions into the Mystery.

The great winter constellations of the Northern Hemisphere are midway in their journey toward summer solstice. There is still time to see such constellations as Orion the Hunter (or, if viewed sideways, the Hunter seems to transform into the outline of a monarch butterfly) with its triune belt, surrounded by Betelgeuse to the upper left and Rigel to the lower right, seemingly chased by the brilliant Sirius. To the north is the nearly vertical Ursa Major (Big Dipper). This section of the winter sky is called the Winter Hexagon; including the Pleiades, it contains seven of the brightest stars in the entire sky. No wonder Waldo Emerson said that watching the night sky is “the daily bread of the eyes.” And the theologian John

Calvin believed that “astronomy may rightly be called the alphabet of theology.”

One night, I paused and looked straight above me and saw the twin stars, Castor and Pollux, in the constellation Gemini. They glisten like a pair of eyes looking back at me. And I voiced quietly, “you are Pollux.” Then, a thought arose.

As I looked, I realized that all these stars and planets in view are named. Over the millennia, stargazers, cosmologists and astronomers have charted and named nearly every visible star in the sky. And yet, if we went to any of these stars or planets, and found conscious intelligence there and said to them, “you are Pollux,” or whatever we have named them, they would say: No, that is what you have named us, but that is not our name. Then, they would tell us the Truth of who or what they are, not just what our perspective and consciousness from planet earth has named them.

While it is true on planet earth

that every star we look at in the nighttime sky is named correctly, it’s probably not correct from that star’s perspective. The truth is, we have no idea what any star, planet or intelligence in the cosmos might name itself. Such a truth could only be discovered by revelation – from them to us. So too, those distant stars and planets might have named Earth something else. Maybe they call Earth something like “blue eye” in their own language. If we ever converse with intelligence from a different planet or star, we could inform them what our truth is, that our name is Earth.

This example can remind us of the way truth is related to scale and perspective. Scale reminds us that there is always more to the story, more to be discovered. Perspective reminds us that there is always a different way of experiencing and understanding the story. Sometimes we discover we don’t know or understand all of the truth or even part of it. While truth is many things, it is most certainly

always perceived, experienced, and disclosed to us through the lens of our consciousness and level of being. As philosopher Immanuel Kant proclaimed and physicist Niels Bohr verified: We don't see things as they are, we see them as they appear to us, and perceived by and through the lens of our consciousness.

So, this gets us to the vital importance of working on our level of being so that we can experience and understand the fullness of truth, not just its various parts or gradations. We wish that truth would open the eyes of our hearts so that we might understand and therefore be able to love all and everyone, all and everything, even beyond every shade of consciousness, which is, perhaps something akin to what we might call *having the mind of Christ*.

The season of Lent is an ideal time to wish to work on one's quality, state and level of being. It is a season of seeing the truth about your inner self more clearly

and fully – for the purpose of its transformation into Christ. This is the heart of repentance and the gift of tears: that we more deeply and clearly see how our programs for happiness drive us in unconscious ways, and to see it in such a way that we feel sorrow for how we have and have not shown up in the world. However, we do this in a non-critical way. We practice, as much as possible, objective seeing. And through this seeing, we ask for the grace to change the direction we are looking for happiness and discover where we have room to grow. As Leonard Cohen so poignantly envisioned, Lent is a season "... to kindle the light of repentance" (*Book of Mercy*, 34) – a repentance unto flourishing, not self-judgement.

Both our inner Work and invitation for the Presence and Action of the Holy Spirit of God kindle the light of repentance in our split-brain, three-centered beings. When this quickening occurs in us, we are set free from something

– a thought, a feeling, a mood, and judgment, a perception – and in that freedom (or space for Grace) we are often changed, re-wired, and re-taught anew the reality that nothing can separate us or anyone from the love of God in Christ (Romans 8:28).

Similarly, Lent is a season to kindle the light of charity. The 12th-century Jewish philosopher Moses Maimonides defines eight levels in giving charity, what the Jewish teachings refer to as *tzedakah*. Each level is "higher" or more comprehensive than the preceding one. Here's the list, descending from less to greatest:

8. When charity is given grudgingly.

7. When one gives less than he should, but does so cheerfully.

6. When one gives directly to the poor upon being asked.

5. When one gives directly to the poor without being asked.

4. Charity when the recipient is aware of the donor's identity, but the donor still doesn't know the

specific identity of the recipient.

3. Charity when the donor is aware to whom the charity is being given, but the recipient is unaware of the source.

2. Giving assistance in such a way that the giver and recipient are unknown to each other.

1. The highest form of charity is to help sustain a person before they become impoverished by offering a substantial gift in a dignified manner, or by extending a suitable loan, or by helping them find employment or establish themselves in business so as to make it unnecessary for them to become dependent on others.

In the light of repentance and charity, our personal Lenten journey can help others stand more at ease in the shade of light and the shadows of darkness. Our personal spiritual practice shades into communal spiritual action. Thus, I wish us a most light-filled Lent. A light that leads you to deeper freedom and broader charity, only in the way Spirit might lead you, and no other.

One of the last times I had a phone conversation with Bernadette Roberts came at the beginning of Lent. She said, in her then faltering voice, "have a Holy Lent." I took her words to mean to cease allowing myself so much latitude in doing whatever it wanted; to live more soberly, in integrity, and be less impulsive and pleasure driven.

GUIDELINES FOR CHRISTIAN LIFE, GROWTH AND TRANSFORMATION

Fr. Thomas Keating's *Open Mind, Open Heart* recommends reading this spiritual journey principle three times in the method of Lectio Divina.

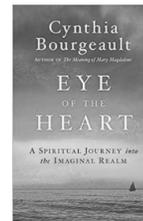
GUIDELINE 38

The disintegrating and dying of our false self is our participation in the passion and death of Jesus.

The building of our *new self*,
based on the transforming power of divine love,
is our participation in his risen life.

2021 ANNUAL COMMUNITY READING

Eye of the Heart by Cynthia Bourgeault



We invite you to slowly read this book with us in 2021 and participate in periodic community discussions about these meaningful ideas.

To come under the authority of the Grace, Presence and Action of the Holy Spirit of God, just as much as I stood consciously under the grandeur of the starry night-time heavens. To live more in the light of tears for my unconscious acting out from fear and more in the light of the fearlessness of giving consciously chosen, unconditional charity from a place of knowing the joy

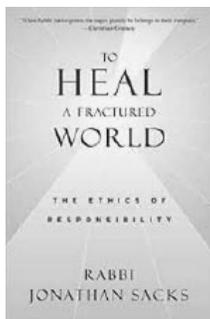
that each one of us is a part of the whole. That we can play our part, especially to those who have, temporarily, been broken and confused by life and all its lies, divisions, and fool's gold.

Sleep is strong, but death stands over it. What is stronger than death? Acts of charity. For it is written, Acts of charity deliver all from death. (Proverbs 10:2) 

BOOK LOOK

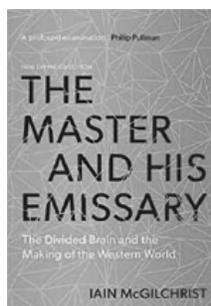
LENT

Here are three notable selections to choose from as companions on your Lenten Journey.

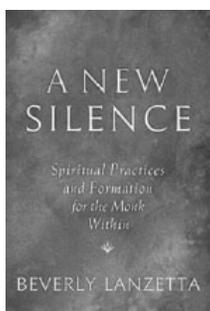


First, Rabbi Jonathan Sacks' *To Heal a Fractured World* embodies the voice of a wise, caring and balanced teacher. This is a helpful companion to our efforts of inward purification of the emotional center and how this healing unfolds outwardly into society.

Second, one of the most profound and important books of the last decade is Ian McGilchrist's illuminating work on rediscovering the lost wisdom of split-brain research and how the divided mind, left and right, has shaped much of Western civilization in detrimental ways. *The Master and His Emissary* is must reading for anyone who wishes to be intellectually and psychologically responsible in speaking about what the Work calls our Centers. This is a specific instance where current brain research can help update the Work teaching of Centers.



Third, Beverly Lanzetta's *A New Silence* is an invitation to inter-contemplative spirituality, by way of a comprehensive, in-depth and practical teaching on core spiritual practices. In many ways, Lanzetta is the Divine Feminine voice, arising forth from the masculine lineage of Keating, Merton, John of the Cross, and many other significant monks of trailblazing importance. May her fruitfulness of writing abound among us as wisdom and love. ☯



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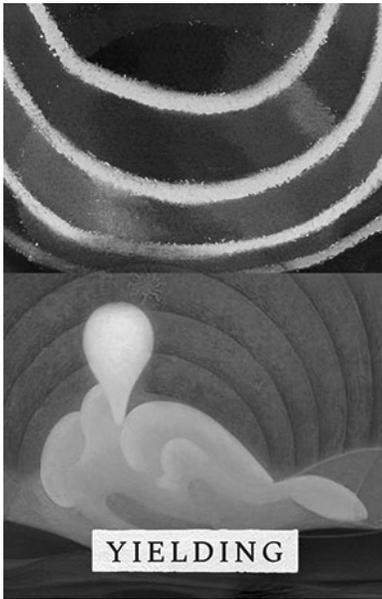
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Consecrate us in the Truth. Your word is Truth. John 17:17

ANNUAL AIM: TRUTH OPENS THE EYES OF OUR HEARTS

YIELDING BY SHARON JOHNSON

The fourth dimension of time
contains all one's life.

We experience it
moment by moment.

It runs very fast
and is only halted
by the feeling of now.

Our life lying extended
in this dimension,
inaccessible to our senses,
is all there –

in this invisible dimension.

For this reason everything we do

now affects the past
as well as the future of our life.

One act of non-identifying now
influences your past
as well as your future.

Your relation to people
in the past will change,
by work on yourself now.

Not only will you change your
own past, but possibly theirs.

Maurice Nicoll, *Commentaries*,
"Time-Body," September 28, 1946

Keep some vision of recurring events.

Remember that tomorrow will be like today
because today is like yesterday, unless something changes.

Beryl Pogson, *The Very Next Thing: A Guide to Real Conscience*

What we shall be has not yet been revealed.

We do know that when it is revealed we shall be like him...

1 John 3:2

Yielding requires deep listening with the inner ears of the heart, mind, and body. It is a delicate dance to yield to the Spirit in order to allow energy to be moved through this vessel by transforming impressions, by meeting them in the moment with inner quiet, affirmations, prayers and the Work of Inner Christianity. Silence and stillness are required to allow my central nervous system to calm down by moving out of the sympathetic response (fight

or flight) to the parasympathetic response (rest, digest and heal) on all levels. For me, the unloading process of Centering Prayer in the silence by the Divine Therapist and the purification of the emotional center through the Work have been and continue to be the catalysts for unpacking and unlayering a lifetime of events.

The body has a crucial role to play in the opening to transformation and forming what is referred to as our second body.

This sacred vessel, my body mind, is akin to an urn bearing the precious animating life force, emotional and psychological materials, such as memories, the potentiality for real love, faith, spirit and soul. At whatever point we intersect with the Journey (the awakening of the truth of the situation we find ourselves in), we may see that our bodies have patterns of behavior, dammed up areas of stagnation, habits, poor posture and/or dis-ease.

“Begin with the body. Begin by feeling the existence and behavior in the body ... by constantly self-remembering this fine matter accumulates, crystallizes and forms a permanent vehicle.” Rodney Collin Smith

A wish to incarnate can aid as one begins listening to the clues, the discomforts, the pleasures, the pains, and so forth that our self-observations begin to unpack. I see my body is here, and explore where is my consciousness? I find it takes time and patience to allow its unfolding. I have often pondered: Why do we even have bodies, when we could have easily been disembodied spirits? Christianity gives us a model to

follow in Christ Jesus.

The moving center seems to be a vital, mortal coil formed in our mothers’ wombs. Even with possible awareness of its powerful sacrifice and the limited time for its potential sacred work, it somehow affirms a big yes. My vocation of being a body worker is not lost on me: I explore these ideas on myself, of course, and with others every day. The innate intelligence, instinctive workings, and physical abilities to adapt, study movement and to warehouse all the information in our cellular matrix in this space called my body is a mystery. It is a lifelong journey of discovery that can awaken the inner world (my sanctuary) and realize the power and potential that we all live in.

These precious bodies are sensitive detectors. The idea of “the issues are in the tissues” reveals there is direct feedback if we are tuned in, deeply seeing, listening, and sensing the shifting and releasing of the “issues” in the body mind. There are communications that are broadcasting conversations and switching the subtle nature of my cells. Knowing myself on all levels requires time and effort in concrete, tangible ways such as conscious movement, body

work, intentional breathwork, the Welcoming Prayer, etc. to gauge the triggered responses from the “undigested materials of a lifetime” (Fr. Thomas Keating) in order to empty my cup, so it may be filled with something higher/deeper in Christ consciousness and real love.

My personal story began with emotional and physical woundings from childhood that urged me to throw my heart out and follow it – to seek, explore and to risk. My searching sent me along various cathartic mediums and spiritual teachings. The heart’s urgent longings for something higher/deeper was met 24 years ago in finding (or being found by) The Church of Conscious Harmony. I knew I had found home and family. I feel so blessed and grateful to have been fed such amazing teachings from centered, loving teachers and mentors.

As I reflect on my horizontal time-line, I see that everything I had worked through up to meeting the inner Work, had prepared the soil for allowing both the purification of the emotional center and the re-patterning of thoughts, as well as an ongoing healing of this time-body. I entered fully into the Church teachings, the School and the Gurdjieff Movements, and

have since grown exponentially.

In recognition, Kierkegaard's idea "of willing the repetition of things – a special way of meeting life" resonates within. I have found that memories and ideas recur and recycle until they are released (or not). It is a daily choice. As my teacher, Tim Cook, would say, "Work like your house is on fire," because it is. We are not promised tomorrow, so I try to hold the Work aphorism within me "Hold your death in front of you," which teaches me to live in this present moment as fully as one can remember. Remembering to embody this moment is an acquired taste. There is no limit to avoiding the discipline required to be still and quiet, to inwardly scan, non-identify and remember God in the body. I am the body of Christ.

It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. Galatians 2:20

If we yield to the unpacking of the dammed up areas of stagnation and poison, it opens up space within us. It feels like cleaning the inner house, reorganizing furniture, redecorating so to speak, not for the sake of a better appearing body (which may happen), but for the level of our Being. The opportunity to enliven the body down to the subatomic cells and materials is

motivating. The vertical moments of now can be taken all the way down – like water that seeps down into the lowest places and can transform us from within. According to Dr. Masuro Emoto's scientific findings, the water in our bodies responds to our thoughts, words and incoming impressions. The cells he studied appeared like cancer cells in negative energies and beautiful snowflakes in positive affirming energies. What am I expressing to my body-mind silently or out loud?

"If you descend, you must descend with me all the way down; there to die, that you may be born." Hieromonk Damascene, *Christ the Eternal Tao*

Cellular matrix memory stores our trauma and experiences. In my experience, I have found I do not need to push or strain, the issue will bubble up for healing when it is ready. One strong memory bubbled up around 10 years ago, and I chose to bear the fear and the pain, to keep going toward this memory, and really be present. It felt as though my cells were imploding, but through my tears and crying out, something was able to stay the course. It subsided and has not returned. This non-resistance to feeling our pain forges

us like steel, changes our patterns and emanates something new, so I can now Be what I know. In feeling this reality deeply, I can learn to "hermetically seal" and place a protective barrier around my vessel and try not to leak out this precious energy and life force that I have gathered and understand with greater fortitude as my water changes, my blood changes, my heart energies shift, my vibrations change and my emanating energies change.

"If we are quiet and listen and feel how things move, perhaps we will be wise enough to put our hands on what waits to be born and bless it with kindness and care." Wayne Muller, *Sabbath*

Conscious movement and breath teach us to be here, to recognize our now, our own presence and Presence. As Gurdjieff said, "Time is breath." My breath is the physical manifestation of my potential yielding to reality or what is. It is a physical act. How I breathe is how I am. Am I holding my breath? The moment I have the thought, it shifts. May I open to a deep inhalation and slow, complete exhalation? The breath in is stimulating. Let go of the breath, bless it and send it forth with whatever it was holding.

INTRODUCING OUR MONTHLY PRACTICE MARCH: LIFE REVIEW AND AMENDS

When breath fills my body, there is no room for thoughts. Negativity shortens the breath and stunts change. Whereas,

“Positive thoughts are perceived instantly. They charge your cells with vital energy ... Our cells have a secret life. They are in love with you, it behooves you to not let this love go unrequited.”

Robert B. Stone Ph.D., *The Secret Life of Your Cells*

I can feel this vibratory connection when taking in the host and wine at Holy Eucharist. There is something ready to receive. The yielding or bearing fruit of this spiritual Journey on the Way continues to unfold.

“All the life is there – in the time-body. But by work now things can be changed in the past and the time-body connected in a different way ... Every act of work vibrates through the whole time-body and alters things in it.” Maurice Nicoll

I have a Real Wish and deep gratitude for the fabric of consciousness (the time-body) to create in me a soul that loves deeply eternally in the now. Here I am Lord. May the processing and distillation of the fragments of my life and Work become I am. ☉

Our monthly practice for March combines Step 4 and Step 9 in the famed Recovery process. Both practices are ideally paired for our Lenten journeys, as well as the season of waiting and birthing that is associated with March.

There are many ways to do a life review. One suggestion is to take a day or a few days during your Lenten retreat to ask the Spirit of God to reveal to you what needs to be seen about your life more clearly. Take a long walk, actively remember and write about what comes up. Seeing is freeing, and remembering is often times understanding.

Making amends is often much more difficult and demanding, since it may pull us out of the inner life into the social life of relationships with others, and sharing with another what we have seen about our self. This step is for those who can no longer avoid facing the harm we have caused others. We aim to fix what can be fixed, and love and bear what cannot. Ask for the spirit of humility and creativity and see what unfolds for you through this month’s practice. This is all in service to our annual aim of purification of the emotional center by scathing honesty and truth so that *the eyes of our hearts might be opened.*

Mark your calendar for life review and amends
and let’s practice together. ☉

MARCH SERMON THEMES

March 7	3rd Sunday of Lent	A Deeper Seeing: The Passionate Self
March 14	4th Sunday of Lent	A Deeper Seeing: The Eternal Self
March 21	5th Sunday of Lent	A Deeper Seeing: The Liberated Self
March 28	Palm Sunday	A Deeper Seeing: The Journey

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

LIVING THE WORK OF INNER CHRISTIANITY IN DAILY LIFE

EMOTIONS AND THE BODY BY NATHAN JONES

Work Idea: Consider that each one of us has an accumulator of energy. Another way to think of this is that we each have a battery and a daily finite amount of energy. Transformation requires a certain amount of stored and sustained energy. As things are, we tend toward significant leakage of vital energy primarily through identification with negative emotions. Negative emotions have numerous small and large manifestations in the body, from the tightening of the small muscles of the face to the onset of debilitating diseases. Through observing the manifestations in our body of negative emotions, we are better able to become more conscious of the negative emotions themselves.

Work Source: “As we have seen,

on the one hand we require a great deal of energy, and on the other our machine is so constructed that it cannot produce more. Where is a way out of this situation? The only way out and the only method and possibility is to economize the energy we have. Therefore, if we wish to have a lot of energy when

“Waste no energy.”

we need it, we must learn to practice economy wherever we can. One thing is definitely known: one of the chief leakages of energy is due to our involuntary tension. We have many other leakages, but they are all more difficult to repair than the first. So, we shall begin with the easiest: to get rid of this leakage and to learn to be able to deal with

the others.” *Gurdjieff: Views from the Real World*, p. 117.

Application: With the knowledge of the *accumulator* and *leakage* we can better observe them in the moment throughout our own day. Start by feeling your body when you are in a state of anxiety, a state of stress or late to something. Are your hands clinched? Is your stomach tense? Sometimes we are able to work backwards from these observations. By relaxing the hands, releasing the tension in the stomach, and focusing on the breath, we can untangle ourselves and move through, up, and out of the negative state.

Further Resource: David Hawkins said: Waste no time. The Work might say: Waste no energy. 

CENTERING PRAYER AT CCH

We offer several opportunities throughout the week
for joining others in Centering Prayer.

You may find the links to join these services on our website as well as
in the *CCH Weekly Announcements* email that is sent each Friday.
Please contact the office if you wish to be added to the distribution.

Daily 7-7:35 am
Centering Prayer Service

Wednesdays 6:30-7:15 pm
Contemplative Worship Service

Sundays 8-9 am
Lectio Divina Service

Sundays 10-11:30 am
Worship Service

Visit consciousharmony.org for the latest information
about Centering Prayer Retreats.

5-DAY LENTEN RETREAT

March 12-16

Please join us for a dual track retreat,
with the opportunity to attend in-person at Cedarbrake
or online at home.

The retreat will be streamed from Cedarbrake led by Barbara Cook.

For more details and to register, go to:
consciousharmony.org/centering-prayer-5-day-lenten-retreat

MARCH CALENDAR

For more details,
visit consciousharmony.org
or call 512-347-9673

SPECIAL EVENTS

5-Day Lenten Retreat
March 12-16 led by Barbara Cook
See details to left

MONTHLY

Caritas Donations
To continue our long standing partnership,
please consider making a donation of food or
money directly to caritasofaustin.org

*Godly Play Parable Cartoon Show
Mar 13 11am

Gurdjieff Music
Mar 28 6pm (see CCH website for details)

WEEKLY

Sundays
*Centering Prayer & Lectio Divina 8-9am
*Intercessory Prayer 9am
*Worship Service 10-11:30am
**Youth Program 1pm

Wednesdays
*Contemplative Worship Service 6:30-7:15pm

Thursdays
*The Journey School Class 7-8:30pm

Saturdays
*Scriptorium 11am
*Compline 9-9:15pm

DAILY

*Centering Prayer Service 7-7:35am

*Please join these services, groups, and classes via
online video conferencing. Contact the website for
accessible links and more information.

**All our youth are invited to participate. Contact
youthdir@consciousharmony.org for details.

Recordings of services are available online at
www.consciousharmony.org



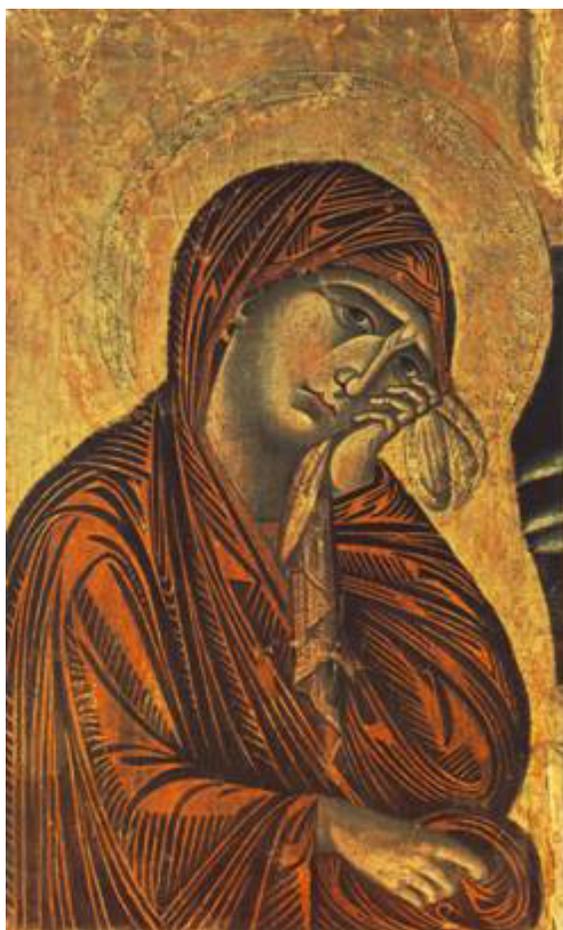
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LENT

*I will give you a new heart and place a new spirit within you,
taking from your bodies your stony hearts and giving you natural hearts.*

*I will put my spirit within you and make you live by my statutes,
careful to observe my decrees.*

*You shall live in the land I gave your ancestors;
you shall be my people, and I will be your God.*

Canticle of Ezekiel

Repent means 'change the direction
in which you are looking for happiness.'

The call to repentance is the invitation to take stock
of our emotional programs for happiness
based on instinctual needs and to change them.

Year by year, as the spiritual journey evolves,
the destructive influences of these unevaluated programs for happiness
become more obvious and the urgency to change them increases.

Easter, with its grace of interior resurrection,
is the radical healing of the human condition.

Lent, which prepares us for this grace, is about what needs to be healed.

Thomas Keating, *The Mystery of Christ*

