

Grateful By Design

November 1, 2020 Taizé

Call to Awareness – 3 Bells

Opening Prayer – Chris will set the intention to create a space for Communion

Chant – *So Many Blessings* by Steven Walters

SILENCE – Bell

Opening

Good morning. If you are new with us today, my name is Rev. Diana Johnson, Pastor and Spiritual Director of Mystic Heart Spiritual Center, and I want to welcome you Home... Home to our Community, and Home to your own Mystic Heart.

Our theme for the month of November is *All is Blessing*. And this morning, I am going to lead you on a meditative journey entitled *Grateful By Design*. Last week, I spoke about *sacred service* as an important form of Spiritual Practice. I suggested that when my heart is filled with Love, Compassion, or Gratitude, and from this heart space I choose to serve... *that* is Sacred Service.

Or maybe when an act of service is difficult... maybe not what I would normally choose to do, but what I know is the right thing...*and* I approach it from a place of surrender... *that* is Sacred Service.

And finally, when I dedicate my actions to God... the Ultimate Good of All... as prayer in action... *that* is most *definitely* Sacred Service. We looked at how all Sacred Service is a blessing to whomever we are serving, and it sets a cause in motion that sends blessings showering back in our direction.

I invite you now to get comfortable and settle into the stillness, allowing your awareness to move more deeply into this time and place... relaxing into this experience, feeling yourself grounded in the here and now... letting yourself be held... letting go of everything else for the next hour.

Let your body, mind and soul be completely at ease, becoming absolutely still as you allow yourself to be infused with the meditative tone of Taizé... no need to hold onto the words that are spoken... just allow them to wash over you...

Now let's take a couple of slow, deep breaths, inhaling through the nose and exhaling through the mouth, and if you feel comfortable doing so, allowing your mouth to open just a little bit, allowing the muscles in your face to relax... settling into an open-hearted state, where Peace is the dominant tone, where there is only here and now... feeling into this moment together, into the gathering of this sacred community.

As we move into the flow of meditation, we acknowledge our connection with all Life. Seeing with the inner eye, sense with me now a global web of consciousness, each of us a point of Light, all connected across the planet, all beings who in this moment, might be sitting in meditation or prayer, might be attending sacred services... acknowledging the Presence of the Divine...consciously connected by our common purpose... feeling the collective intention that brought us here... feeling the deep communion with that which is bigger than we are... feeling the impulse to grow and evolve that's awakening within us...

I begin with a reading from Carolyn Myss, as she speaks to the Infinite: "You are an eternal mystery, and impersonal Light with countless manifestations. And yet somehow, I know that you are lovingly aware of all you have created. All creation matters to You. I know that Truth from my observations of the perfection of Nature. Some perfect cosmic authority organized the system of Life. That had to be You... We are free to blend into the perfection of Your Holy design, to move with the cycles of life, to allow death and rebirth, sunrises and sunsets to happen again and again as You ordered these cycles, or we can choose to break away from the patterns of life and suffer... I can dwell in the comfort of that truth for the rest of my life... it is pure celestial music."

SILENCE – Bell

This idea that I am always at choice... to move with the flow of where Life is taking me, or to move against the flow, creating resistance... this is no quiet truth – "it is pure celestial music." This means that all creation matters. My life matters.

All creation is holy, sacred, meaningful. My life is holy... sacred... meaningful.

I am subject to the laws of nature. The laws of balance, cause and effect, and opposites... the laws of integrity, faith, and expectation, and more... work their authority into all of my choices.

And the effects of my choices ripple out to affect those around me... and those effects ripple out, and out, and out. We are all truly interconnected. My choices matter. And so, recognizing the power that I hold to make the world a better place, I make the choices in my life from a place of Integrity and Love. I allow Divine Love to breathe through me as I ask for Guidance... receptive and ready to receive.

SILENCE

Musical Meditation – *Love Breathes Through Me* by Narayan and Janet

SILENCE – Bell

Diana – (again from Carolyn Myss)

"The handiwork of co-creation is present in our every breath; in every action we initiate. We cannot act separately from the whole of life. So, rest in silence and observe your inner

balance. Note when and how you lose that balance, what choices serve to maintain it, and what actions and thoughts compromise it. Inner balance is the core magnet to the glow of your life force.”

Rest in silence and observe your authenticity, your Spiritual Authority... allowing choices to be made from a place of Peace and Power.

Be in awe at the workings of the Divine... at the creative process... at the spiritual principles that are forever working. Be in wonder at the Infinite Intelligence behind it all. Human beings are made for awe and wonder... it is part of our design... and it is in their absence that our lives become dull, we begin to take things for granted, become entitled... and we stop seeing the amazing beauty, abundance, and joy that surround us. It is the awe and wonder that lead to gratefulness.

“Gratitude is a way of life; a continual living in an awareness of the blessings we have and the grace we are given each and every moment of the day. Simply put, gratitude is a life of awe. It’s a place where we are acutely aware of the incredible life we are given, from the air that we breathe to the food that we eat. It’s more than an attitude or a platitude – it’s a state of being.”

SILENCE – Bell

Diana – Practices to Cultivate A Grateful Day

In looking at some ways that we can actively practice our gratitude in the coming week, I was reminded of a book called *99 Blessings* by Brother David Steindl-Rast.

For 99 days, Brother David found one unusual thing to be grateful for each day, and he wrote a prayerful journal entry about it. I would like to share a couple of these unusual expressions of gratitude with you. I encourage you to give this a try it for yourself. I found it to be a powerful Practice.

Here is the first one: “Source of all blessings, You bless us with departures – for they are a necessary part of our journey, necessary for arriving. May I be always ready to take leave, always aware that every arrival is a prelude to departure, every birth a step toward dying, and may I thus taste the blessing of being fully present where I am.”

Another of my favorites: “Source of all blessings, you bless us with kitchen noises – with the sound of chopping carrots, the rumbling from washing pots and pans, the clinking of silverware, the clang of glass on glass, the whistling of the tea kettle, and all the homey rattle and clatter produced by preparing food and washing dishes. May I drink deeply of the blessing of being at home that rings in these sounds and make all whom I meet today feel a bit more at home in the world.”

And finally: “Source of all blessings, you bless us with humor – our marvelous ability to smile at the incongruities of our existence. May the fissures in the structures we build

never make me anxious or glum, but rather, attentive to the light that shines through the cracks and ever ready to humor others through that contagious humor, which alone makes us truly human.”

Musical Meditation – *And So It Is* by Karen Mitchell

SILENCE – Bell

Closing

I speak my Word in the first person, knowing it as the Truth for each and every one of us... those who are listening, those who are connected by the global web of consciousness.

And so it is, that in this blessed silence, I am grateful for all that is before me, no matter the appearance...for I know that there are blessings in all of it. There are the obvious joys, and there are also growth opportunities, which grow and evolve my soul. I am built for gratitude... gratefulness is my natural response to the blessings that are showered down upon me. It is mine to choose how I will express my gratitude in my life, and to the Source of All That Is... for the many gifts in every moment.

I mindfully acknowledge and give thanks for the abundance of Life... knowing that there is One Source of all that is, pouring Itself forth as all of Creation... expressing Itself intentionally and perfectly as each and every being. It has ever been so and will forever be.

As I turn to that One and only Source, I know that Its Presence, Power, Intelligence, and Wisdom is what I Am... and this is True for all of creation.

In my Oneness with the Divine, I experience the Awe and Wonder that surrounds me. And this, too, leads me to gratefulness.

As I ground myself whole-heartedly in the Practice of giving thanks for all that I have been given, I am showered with blessings... ever-growing, always multiplied by my gratitude... by the attention given to acknowledging the One in all that I have, in all that I see.

In knowing this Great-Fullness, feeling deep gratitude, and offering thanksgiving, I am a beneficial presence on the planet, I am lifted up; and as I Am lifted, so are we all lifted... for truly, we are One.

As I lean into the Radiant Light, the Infinite Intelligence, Divine Wisdom, Powerful Presence, and Limitless Love that is God, I cannot be led astray; for it is by God’s Grand Design, It’s Loving and Lawful Presence, Its infallible Action and unbounded Love, that my life unfolds.

As I choose to know with all that I Am that all is well, I align myself with God... I Am at Peace.

And so we, as part of a global web of gratitude, give thanks for all of the blessings of this day. We give thanks for the presence of mind that allows us to live each moment fully and

mindfully... that allows us to be in Awe and Wonder so that we might experience a Great Fullness.

We acknowledge the Goodness of Life... and we consciously stand in the flow of Grace that lifts us and carries us on our way.

In deep faith that Divine Order guides the cosmos and all of Creation, I release this prayer... to continue its Good Work... and knowing it is so, I let it be. And so it is. Amen!

Offertory/Blessing for the Offering

As I awaken to the God within me and all around me, I see Abundance everywhere I look. I consciously step into that flow of Abundance by this act of giving. I bless this gift, sending it forth to heal and prosper. It is evidence of my deep faith. It does good work in the world and blesses all of Creation. I give from a consciousness of Abundance! And so it is! Amen!

Video – *I See God in Everyone* – by Gary Lynn Floyd and Jami Lula

Closing Gratitude, Brief Invitation, and Benediction