

Two Sides of One Coin...

Sunday, August 28, 2022

Rev. Diana Johnson, RScM, with Chris Johnson, RScP

Taizé



A Beloved Community
Practicing the Possible Through Prayer

Call to Awareness – 3 Bells

Chris – Opening Prayer

Rev. Diana – Introduction...Good morning and welcome

Chant – *Love, Serve, and Remember*, written by John Astin

Rev. Diana – (from *SOM Magazine*, Rev. Dr. David Ault, June 2022, page 42)

When Maharaj-ji, the Indian guru known as Neem Karoli Baba, was asked what the fastest way to enlightenment was, he simply replied, “Love everyone, serve everyone, remember God, and tell the truth.” These tenets appear too simple for those who look for the difficult. A committed undertaking of these directions is often met with complicated justifications for resistance. Doesn’t enlightenment come from a more arduous and lengthy sacrificial practice? What could Maraj-ji have meant?

To “love everyone” means to see them as they truly are – a soul, a divine emanation of the One. They are not their identity. That is but a costume worn for our karmic interactions. There is only one of us.

To “serve everyone” means to find what is yours to do and offer your abilities to feed, clothe, shelter, and support one another. As Jesus said in Matthew 25:40, “Truly I say to you as you did it to the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.” Again, there is only one of us.

“Remember God” means to reawaken to the one principle at lay. God is all there is. It is our perception that causes us to close our heart. The theme continues; there is only one of us.

And “to tell the truth.” Telling the truth contains all the elements of faith, trust, and unwavering knowing. There is no need to manipulate the other for there is no other.

We take a moment to acknowledge our Oneness with Spirit, with one another, and with our Global Community...

Envisioning a web of Consciousness that surrounds and infuses our planet...and accepting that each one of us is a radiant point of Light in that web...noticing that every human no exceptions... that every creature shines with an Infinite Light... ...every plant...every rock and grain of sand...the soil...the water...all alive with the Divine Spark...extending far beyond our planet into the cosmos...there are no boundaries, no

separation...the Light that *you* are is enmeshed with the Light that *I* AM...with the Light of all beings...with all of creation.

Sensing our oneness, we acknowledge our responsibility to our human family, to all life forms, and to our beautiful planet which sustains us all. (Pause)

Centered in our Oneness, we turn now to this month's theme, ***Six Paths to Deeper Connection*** and we shift our attention to the title for this morning's Gatherings, ***Two Sides of One Coin***. We may think back to the beginning of the month and remember that ***Prayer*** and ***Meditation*** can be compared to the Breathing In and Breathing Out of the Spiritual Life. Of the Six Pillars, they are the two foundational Practices that support the rest of the Journey...they help us to know and accept our humanity and our Divinity.

Last week we looked at the Sacred Practices of ***Circulation*** and ***Sacred Service***. The cycle of giving and receiving is forever at work, whether we know it or not. We start the cycle in motion by our giving. As we make the conscious choice to engage in Circulation or Sacred Service, we let go of expectations. We do not give in order to get. We do not give in exchange for what we have been given. We give for the sheer Joy of giving. We acknowledge that it is the Spirit of the giving that is returned to us a hundred-fold.

This week concludes our contemplations of the ***Six Paths*** by spending some time with ***Sacred Study*** and ***Celebration***, the two sides of the Conscious Opening Coin.

Many of us are so intellectually oriented that we can easily misunderstand the purpose of ***Sacred Study***...it is meant to inspire us to change and show us how to change.

Some spiritual books are written to be inspirational. They bring us the beauty and diversity of life, and the unchanging principles that stand behind the diversity, irrespective of time and place. Inspirational writings are uplifting and help us to find our Unity with Life.

Other books are intended to be instructional, to guide us in finding psychological exercises and reflections that might benefit us, or Spiritual Practices that suit us.

Sacred Study causes us to open our minds, or to witness where they are closed...where we already know what we know. It stretches our compassion, our empathy, our understanding. It offers us a Spiritual Education. What does the word *education* mean? From its Latin roots, it means to *lead out*. A Spiritual Education, or Sacred Study, offers our human self a chance to be led out of the misunderstanding that we are only human...it offers an opportunity to further explore its Divinity.

SILENCE – 1 Minute

Rev. Diana

Krishnamurti asks us to consider...What is the purpose of education? Is it to prepare us to understand the process we call life? He says, "...life is something extraordinarily wide and profound. It is a great mystery, a vast realm in which we function as human beings. (Pause)

The birds, the flowers, the flourishing trees, the heavens, the stars, the rivers, and the fish therein – all this is life. (Pause) Life is the poor and the rich; life is the constant battle between groups, races, and nations; (Pause) life is meditation; life is what we call religion, and it is also the subtle, hidden things of the mind- the envies, the ambitions, the passions, the fears, fulfillments, and anxieties. (Pause) All this and much more is life. But we generally prepare ourselves to understand only one small corner of it....education is meaningless unless it helps us to understand the subtleties of life – its extraordinary beauty, its sorrows, its joys.”

It is the function of education to cultivate intelligence in you. And what is intelligence? The “capacity to think freely, without fear, without a formula, so that you begin to discover for yourself what is real, what is true...

Krishnamurti goes on to say that “Most of us have fear in one form or another; and where there is fear, there is no intelligence.” We take this into the silence... *Where there is fear, there is no intelligence.*

Silence – 1 minute

Chris – Guided Meditation

Sacred Study has many benefits... We may receive instruction that deepens our spiritual practices... We may find a new understanding of a familiar spiritual principle... or perhaps a concept that is completely new to us... We may find meaningful phrases that we incorporate into our prayers... Or we may simply find Divine Inspiration...

Eknath Easwaran told us, “Mystical literature differs from other writing in that as our understanding deepens, we draw more from it... but there is no limit to the profundity of spiritual writings, because they have come from those whose consciousness has merged with the Infinite. We take away as much as we can carry...”¹

In reading the mystics, we draw upon the experience of those who have climbed the mountain before us... those who know the path, and the trials we may face... We hear from those who have committed to their journey... Their challenges and obstacles provide perspective on our own... and their victories give us hope...

When we read the writings of the mystics, any of the world’s Sacred Scriptures, or mystical poetry, we are given an atlas for our own journey... a choice of myriad paths into the Divine Mystery... Some may attract us... others may not... It is ours to choose a path with heart... the one that calls us most strongly... All paths lead to the same mountaintop...

Sacred Study also gives us phrases to contemplate in meditation... As we enter the Sacred Silence, I invite you to reflect upon one of these quotes: “Be still, and know that I am God...”² “What you seek is seeking you...”³ “You were never born; you will never die...”⁴ “Stand guard at the portal of your mind...”⁵ “Indeed, the mercy of Allah is near to the doers of good...”⁶ “With God all things are possible...”⁷

Silence – 3:00

Bringing our awareness back to the here and now, we celebrate our time together in the Silence... Grateful for the mystics and the inspiration they provide... the Truth they reveal... their example of the Spiritual Life... And grateful that their work is so readily available to us... Thank you, God, for everyone and everything...

I invite you to know with me now that Spirit is moving powerfully through each of us, and through our Beloved Community... Individually and collectively, we are a powerful spiritual influence on our world... As we evolve in consciousness, the benefits of our growth ripple out, blessing the entire world...

As Rev. Diana speaks to us of Celebration, we listen with open hearts and minds... Our Sacred Study has prepared us to Celebrate our Divinity together... They are truly Two Sides of One Coin...

Rev. Diana

We practice the discipline of **Celebration** inwardly when we take time to reflect on God's presence in our lives, when we acknowledge that every day is a gift from the Unseen hand. We recognize that the world we live in, the beauty we see, the food we eat, the companionship we enjoy, all the blessings we have, come from the One Source. We rejoice in the flow of Grace that moves through our lives. We live with peace in our hearts, knowing that our needs are always met

Our inward **Celebration**, rooted in our Faith, Joy, Peace, and Gratitude, also brings about outward **Celebration**. This outward display of devotion can take form as **worship** or **praise**. Some take part quietly while others may use words, music, dance, and the lifting of arms to express themselves.

Sometimes we celebrate outwardly by joining together with friends, family, or Spiritual Community to share the joys, victories, and milestones that we experience, or simply for the Joy of knowing and experiencing our Oneness.

The Practice of **Celebration** grounds us in a deep sense of belonging.

Closing with the words of Thomas Merton... "Let me rest in Your will and be silent. Then the light of Your joy will warm my life. Its fire will burn in my heart and shine for Your glory. This is what I live for. Amen, amen.

And A Celtic Prayer of Joy

As the hand is made for holding and the eye for seeing,
You have fashioned me for joy.

Share with me the vision that finds that joy everywhere.

In the wild violet's beauty; In the lark's melody; In the face of a steadfast man; In a child's smile; In a mother's love; In the purity of Spirit.

**10:02 Read "Honoring Curiosity," *Prayers of Honoring Voice*, by Pixie Lighthorse.
Continuing with our deep knowing...**

There is only the One...one Source, one Life, one Heart, one Divine Intelligence...and I Am, you are, a perfect, intentional, and irreplaceable expression of the One. As I allow this Truth to infuse every aspect of my being, I Am at Peace. I commit myself to a life of Sacred Study and Celebration that I might come to know myself as the God that I AM...that I might come to know all beings as the Divine Spark that They ARE. I seek only to Love, to Serve, to Remember, and to tell the Truth, knowing that this is what I'm here for. It's really that simple. I am ready to offer myself in ways that serve the Highest Expression of Life...my life, the lives of family and friends, and ultimately the lives of my global community. It can only be this way because there's only one of us here. I willingly express myself in all of my Radiance as I grow and evolve to become ever more mySelf. I Am so grateful...And so it is. Amen!

Musical Meditation – *Hands of Grace*, written and performed by Jack Fowler

Rev. Diana – Offertory

It is time for us to close our Taizé Meditation. As we do, we offer the opportunity for you to share of your financial good in support of the work we do should you choose to do so. If you're joining us online, you can find a Donate Button and our mailing address at mysticheart.org. And we thank you in advance for your gifts.

Offertory Music – *Thank You God*, written and performed by Eddie Watkins, Jr.

Rev. Diana Blessing for the Offering

We'll be donating our lunch donations to ***Farmer's Footprint***, a coalition of farmers, education, doctors, scientists, and business leaders aiming to expose the human and environmental impacts of chemical farming and offer a path forward through regenerative agricultural practices.

Closing Song – *A Soul's Blessing*, written by Chris Johnson

Conscious Conversation

Two Sides of One Coin...

Call to Awareness – 3 Bells

Chris – Opening Prayer

Opening Music

 ***Welcome to the Mystic Heart***, written by Diana & Chris Johnson

 ***One Big Family***, written by Robin Hackett & Gary Lynn Floyd

 ***Chant – Spirit, Run My Life***, written by Rev. Andy Anderson

Rev. Diana – Good morning/Welcome

Each week we begin our Conscious Conversation by acknowledging our oneness, with all that is, and by recognizing the Power of that Unity. Take a moment to take a nice deep breath in...hold it...and let it go. As we take another breath, let's stand up and use the breath to gather our creative juices...to embody the very Power of Creation...to connect with Divine Intelligence...to know that this is where a new story for our world is being written. Hold with me the Vision of a **Love-Soaked World**, where Peace, Joy, Abundance, Generosity, Justice, and Freedom are the living principles that guide our lives...where all humans practice loving kindness and care for our planet as the Sacred Home that she is.

We are creating a world where all needs are met...where all beings have plenty of nourishing food, the safety of a warm and comfortable home... medical care, education, healthy relationships, right livelihood, creative contribution, and a sense of belonging...a world in which all beings are valued for their inherent Goodness and Light...where the Peace we cultivate within shows up as a world free of hatred or violence.

We are creating a world that knows no greed, where there is abundance in simply having *enough*...where every being deserves and receives all that is needed for a full, rich, and contented life.

In this more conscious and conscientious world, every member of the human family serves as a vessel through which God's blessings flow, and so **there is no reason we cannot have such a world**. We call it forth knowing that it is taking form, right here and now, as we hold and speak our Powerful Vision. Moving forward, we align our actions to support and nurture its Graceful unfolding. We call it Good...we let it be. And so it is! Amen!

One of the powerful tools we have at our disposal when we set out to create anything new is **Conscious Conversation**...a conversation that includes deep listening in all directions; a conversation that uses words to build up rather than tear down; where we THINK, then speak; and where we remember that conversation is creative, whether we know it or not.

This morning our topic has been **Two Sides of One Coin**, and in our Taizé Meditation we spent time contemplating the idea that **Sacred Study** and **Celebration** can be seen as the two sides of the **Conscious Opening Coin**. In **Sacred Study**, we're opening to new concepts, ideas, practices, and ways of viewing life...opening our minds. And in **Celebration**, we are opening our hearts to one another and to God. If you missed it, you can check it out on our website.

But I'd like to begin the Conversation by asking...

What is the purpose of spirituality?

You mean it's not so that we become so enlightened that all unwanted circumstances disappear?

If we look at the mystics and masters of every age and tradition, their spiritual connection is what helped them to walk *through* unwanted circumstances *as the Light of the world*. Sacred Study and Practice help us to walk through *unwanted* circumstances the same way we walk through *wanted* circumstances, shining the Light of Truth, Love, Equanimity, and Wisdom.

What does it mean to study something? (To learn more about it.)

So what is Sacred Study? (To expose ourselves to a variety of concepts, ideas, and practices that people use to connect to the Divine. To deepen our understanding/practice of our chosen Spiritual Path.)

Earlier this morning, we said that it is the function of education to cultivate intelligence in you, and we defined intelligence as the “capacity to think freely, without fear, without a formula, so that you begin to discover for yourself what is real, what is true.

We took this quote from Krishnamurti into the silence: “Most of us have fear in one form or another; and where there is fear, there is no intelligence.” I’d like to talk about that.

What do you suppose he meant by that quote...where there is fear, there is no intelligence?

(Fear causes us to see through distorted lenses. When we are looking through distorted lenses, the facts can get scrambled, the truth can be blurred.)

Does spiritual study help to dispel fear? How?

So is it building your intelligence?

Scott Edmund Miller, in *The User’s Guide to Being Human*, suggests that there are three levels of Study, whether Sacred Study or otherwise.

First there’s *basic study*. What do you think this might be? (It’s where you simply read the material, including any questions, exercises, and practices, and let them float around in your mind.)

Then *intermediate study*...How might this be different than basic study? (This is where you take time to actually *answer* the questions and *engage* in the exercises and practices. This deepens your understanding of the material.)

The author says that “You will develop greater effectiveness in using your innate capacities and will empower yourself to more consciously shape your own life” when you engage at an intermediate level.

And finally, *collaborative study*. What might this look like? (You’re sharing, listening to other people’s experiences and views, seeing yourself reflected in others, which can only deepen and enrich your Sacred Study.)

Miller says that “By milling about through various daily experience and interacting with other people and things, our inner thinkers continually ponder everything under the sun, including the nature of self, relationships, competition, cooperation, values, spirituality,

the laws of the universe, and so on. These thoughts lay the groundwork for every detail of how we live our lives.”

Three more quotes from this book that serve as reminders where Sacred Study is concerned:

“To know something in-and-of-itself is of little value. To apply what you know is to give your knowledge actual, concrete value.”

“We tend to get overly caught up in the “truth” of a thought or idea, making it rigid and inflexible, halting its development. The real value of any idea is not in its degree of truth, but rather in its degree of *usefulness*...”

And “The best thinking...is the kind of thinking that is always evolving.”

Okay, enough about Study...let’s talk a little bit about the Spiritual Practice of **Celebration**, shall we?

We spent time contemplating this morning...What is Celebration?

(Inward – gratitude, seeing the Divine in everything, all is Blessing)

(Outward – praise and worship, celebrating life)

What does the Practice of Celebration do for our faith?

What are some ways we can practice Celebration?

Be grateful. Henri Nouwen said that “*Gratitude goes beyond the 'mine' and 'thine' and claims the truth that all of life is a pure gift. In the past I always thought of gratitude as a spontaneous response to the awareness of gifts received, but now I realize that gratitude can also be lived as a discipline. The discipline of gratitude is the explicit effort to acknowledge that all I am and have is given to me as a gift of love, a gift to be celebrated with joy.*

Don’t take yourself so seriously. Laugh a lot. See the humor in any situation. Laugh at your mistakes. Laugh when something is funny. Laugh when you're happy.

Worship fully...get into it. Sing like nobody’s listening. Dance like nobody’s watching!

Smile! Celebrate everything and everyone. When something good happens in the world, celebrate it. Show your joy for even the small things.

Here’s what it comes down to...each one of us is a perfect and intentional expression of the Divine. Each of us is God in form. When we Celebrate, we are allowing Spirit to Celebrate through us. If we refuse to find the Joy in living, there is no way for God to experience what it feels like to be a Joyful human.

The Sacred Scriptures encourage us to Celebrate. In the Psalms...

“Then I will go to the altar of God, to God, my joy and my delight...Clap your hands, all you nations shout to God with cries of joy,” and in the book of Philippians, “Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!”

I'd like to close today with a short piece by author Shauna Niequist:

"I want a life that sizzles and pops and makes me laugh out loud. And I don't want to get to the end, or to tomorrow, even, and realize that my life is a collection of meetings and pop cans and errands and receipts and dirty dishes.

I want to eat cold tangerines and sing out loud in the car with the windows open and wear pink shoes and stay up all night laughing and paint my walls the exact color of the sky right now.

I want to sleep hard on clean white sheets and throw parties and eat ripe tomatoes and read books so good they make me jump up and down, and I want my every day to make God belly laugh, glad that he gave life to someone who loves the gift."

And we second that, closing in prayer:

There is only One Source of all of Life. By whatever name I call it, I know that I Am That...that each one of us is a perfect expression of Spirit. And so as God's hands, feet, heart, and voice, I choose a life of Sacred Study, that I might be in a constant state of conscious evolution. I choose a life of Celebration, that I might know that I Am blessed...that I Am a blessing...as is each one of us. I give thanks for my growing awareness...my growing willingness...and it serves me well. And in serving me, it serves the world. In humility and with passion, I release my Word, trusting it to the Loving and Lawful Presence. I let it be...it is done. And so it is! Amen!

Rev. Diana – Affirmation for the Offering

Each Sunday, we invite you to join in the celebration of the work we are doing in the world by sharing of your financial Good, should you choose to.

If you are at home, you can go to **mysticheart.org** to use our Donate Button or to find our mailing address.

We also have a Gracious Giving Program for those who would like to make a heartfelt monthly commitment of support so that we can more effectively plan for our growth. You can find more information on our website.

As we move into this time of giving, hold these words close to your heart and know how much we appreciate your gifts:

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 offer this gift freely in the spirit of Love, blessing and 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!

11:07 Offertory Music – *Celebration*, by Playing for Change

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Lu41LulQos>

Chris – Blessing for the offering

Invitations

Wednesdays 3:00-5:00 pm. *The Power of Myth: A Video Discussion Gathering* with Prayer Practitioner Chris Johnson. Drop-ins welcome!

Mark your calendars now...

Thursday, September 8th, 3 – 5 pm, Metaphysical Bible Study reconvenes with Prayer Practitioner, Chris Johnson. Drop-ins welcome. Donations gratefully accepted.

Saturday, September 10th, 10 am – 1 pm-ish: *Praying in Color...Prayers in the Wind* with Ellie Thompson. Make a personalized set of prayer flags. Lunch will be included. Suggested donation is \$20. Contact Ellie ahead of time to make your reservation.

Tuesdays, 3-5 pm – Michael Bordeaux’s Book Club will be starting up again on Sept 13th. He will begin a light-hearted, thought-provoking, and moving novel, *Breakfast With Buddha* by Roland Merullo. Drop-ins welcome. Donations gratefully accepted.

Wednesday, September 14th – November 30th from 2:00 – 5:00 pm, Rev. Diana will be offering *Divine Audacity*, the first of her *Conscious Evolution Series*. This class will be offered in-person and on Zoom and is appropriate for anyone wanting to grow! Suggested donation: \$95/or \$10 per class. Contact Rev. Diana to register.

Fall Church Family Campout at Sue-Meg State Park. September 24th – 27th, 2022. Children’s program with Traci included.

We need 8 more paid adults or 3-4 families with children are still needed to sign up with payment in full by September 4th in order to cover the costs of the campsite and food. Please get the word out to family and friends. All are welcome!

As always, more details are in your bulletin and on our website.

Prayer Invitation

Also, We’ll be contributing our Lunch Donations to *Farmers’ Footprint*, a coalition of farmers, education, doctors, scientists, and business leaders aiming to expose the human and environmental impacts of chemical farming and offer a path forward through regenerative agricultural practices.

Closing Songs: *Love Be with You*

Close of Service

¹ *Meditation*, by Eknath Easwaran

² Psalm 46:10

³ Jalāl ad-Dīn Muhammad Rūmī

⁴ Bhagavad Gita, 2.20

⁵ Ralph Waldo Emerson

⁶ 7:56 Quran

⁷ Matthew 19:26; Mark 10:27