

The Declaration of Interdependence

July 30, 2023



An Independent Interfaith Community
Practicing the Possible Through Prayer

Chris Johnson, RScP, with Rev. Diana Johnson,
and musician Dalton Fitzgerald

Taizé

Call to Awareness – 3 Bells

Rev. Diana – Opening Prayer

Chris – Good morning, I am Chris Johnson, Prayer Practitioner here at Mystic Heart Spiritual Center, and I would like to welcome you home... To our Spiritual Home, and home to your own Mystic Heart – where Divine Wisdom dwells within you.

Let's begin our Taizé experience with musical prayer as we chant together.

Dalton – Taizé Chants

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

 **We Are One**, written by Linda Webb-Khakaba

Chris – If you are comfortable doing so, I invite you to gently close your eyes and take a few deep breaths... Allow all that has come before this moment to drop away, and center your awareness in this place and time. Here and now, we enter fully into the Divine Presence...

Now take a moment to expand your awareness to those around you... each one a spark of Light in the Global Web of Consciousness... Now spiral out to include family and friends... neighbors... all in our city... our county... our state... the world... Connected by Spirit, we celebrate our Oneness with all of humanity... with all of creation... We see all the animals... plants... soil... water... air... planets, stars, and galaxies... Each one a glittering jewel in Indra's Net... reflecting each and every other gem... shining with the same Divine Light that we are... One Spirit... One Life, expressing in infinite variety... I invite you now to remain grounded in the Truth of Who and Whose we are, and know that our consciousness of Unity uplifts the planet and her inhabitants, helping move human evolution into its next yet-to-be.

Our theme for this month is **Free to Be**, and in today's Taizé contemplation, we **Declare our Interdependence**... We tend to view the words *independence* and *freedom* as synonyms... but *are* they? Merriam-Webster defines independence as *freedom from the control, influence, support, aid, or the like, of others*. Can we really be free to thrive without

the *support or aid of others*? Or might it be that it is precisely the support and aid of others that *allows* us the freedom to express our unique gifts in the world?

And who are these *others* on whom we rely? Is it just other people, or might it be more than that? Consider the trees and other plants that convert the carbon dioxide that we exhale into oxygen that we can breathe... and in the process create food we can eat. Contemplate the water cycle, acting nonstop to circulate fresh water we can drink. Reflect on the animals, who provide nourishment for some of us, and companionship for many. And Mother Earth HerSelf, who provides a home for us all...

In her book, *the Soul of Money*, Lynne Twist tells of her work with the Hunger Project, and the birth of the Pachamama Alliance. Her team was invited to Ecuador by the Achuar, an Indigenous tribe of the Amazon Rainforest. In a dream, the Achuar were called to invite

12 people with global voice, with open hearts, people who know the rainforest is critical to the future of life, people who know that Indigenous people have wisdom that's vital for sustainability of the human family, people who would respect the ways of the shaman.

When they arrived, this was what the Achuar told them:

If you've come to help us, even though we invited you here, don't waste your time. But if you know your liberation is bound up with ours, then let's work together.¹

Our liberation *is* bound up with theirs, and with the salvation of all the Earth and her inhabitants. *That* is what Unity means... *that* is the true meaning of Oneness. What we do to each other, to the earth, to any individualized expression of Spirit, we do to ourselves...

The Achuar people may be described as a primitive culture, but as Nature Mystic Thomas Berry reminds us:

At present there is a devastating relationship between the human community and the Earth community. That humans, with all their intelligence, should be so destructive is something of an anomaly. Yet the disruption that is being effected throughout the planet is occurring through human agency. A remedy needs to be found.

The destruction is the result of scientific technologies whereby the resources of Earth are being exploited for human benefit without regard for the consequences on the life systems of the planet. A mystique of use as our primary relationship with the planet has been developed and is being deployed with ruthlessness beyond understanding.

This represents a great contrast with the earliest phase of human development when Earth and the solar system, with its planets and the stars beyond, were considered to be manifestations of sacred, even divine powers. In this period the human project was validated by ritual celebration of those great moments of transition in the ever-renewing

cycle when the numinous world was experienced as especially present to the human community.

The entire universe was experienced as a cosmic liturgy. There was the daily sequence when at dawn and at sunset the numinous presence was more available to human perception. Then there was the yearly cycle. The annual cycle of death and rebirth occurred as the sun declined to its nadir at the winter solstice and then was reborn in the springtime when a renewal of life came forth with dramatic manifestations. This was an ever-renewing seasonal sequence. What was born, died. What died was born again. If there was a never-ending tendency toward death, there was also the inevitable life-renewal...

What is proposed here as a necessary development is to once again establish an awareness of the unity of human affairs with the functioning of the universe and Earth. This unity finds expression in the threefold cosmological cycles: daily, seasonal, and planetary. There is the daily cycle that passes from sunrise to sunset, the dawn and dusk bringing the community out of the mystical period of awakening consciousness when the dreams of the preceding night are narrated for the guidance that they might offer to the community. Then there is birth, maturity, and death in the seasonal cycle of each living form, reflected in the winter solstice, the springtime renewal, the summertime fullness, the autumnal harvest. Finally there is the planetary cycle of Earth's orbit around the sun. While no society had its full expression of these various moments of grace in which the human communed with the cosmos, they each had their intimacy with the larger community of life. Now we are called to our Second Exodus, our return to the universe as vibrant cosmic liturgy.²

Rev. Diana – Guided Meditation

Musical Meditation – *May Peace Prevail on Earth*, written by James Twyman

The time is now, the moment's clear...the last shall be the first.

For each one stands on sacred ground, may peace prevail on earth.

So long in dreams we have foreseen the path for which we thirst.

But now we claim what was our goal, may peace prevail on earth.

A world of love we all claim, and each one of us will light that flame.

May peace prevail on earth, now and always prevail on earth.

In each one of us, prevail on earth, may peace prevail on earth.³

As we come to accept our inseparability from one another, and from our planet and its resources...as we come to know our Oneness with all of creation, we begin to make different choices. More and more often, before taking action, we consider the effects of our actions on others...not just our families and friends, our neighbors, and acquaintances, but also on other people, elsewhere in the world...people we may never meet. What affect do my choices have on the animals...on the forests...on the

oceans...on the environment...on future generations? When each of us is walking through life, consciously choosing to do no harm, we will have created peace on earth.

Silence – 1 minute

We sometimes forget that doing no harm begins with taking care of ourselves.

Am I choosing healthy food and drink? Do I get enough rest? Enough exercise? Do I surround myself with supportive people? Do I feel valuable and valued? Is my heart at peace? And if not, what is causing the disturbance? Creating peace on earth does not end with taking care of myself...there is much that is calling for my awareness and attention. But it must begin within the heart and mind of every human.

Lao Tzu reminds us that:

If there is to be peace in the world, there must be peace in the nations.

If there is to be peace in the nations, there must be peace in the cities.

If there is to be peace in the cities, there must be peace between neighbors.

If there is to be peace between neighbors, there must be peace in the home.

If there is to be peace in the home, there must be peace in the heart.

Only when I am at peace within my own heart can I show up as a peaceful presence in the world.

Chris – Another term for interdependence is *interbeing* – my *beingness* is determined by how I show up for you. By myself, I have no *beingness* – or if I do, it has no context for meaning. We need one another to find our life's meaning, purpose, and significance. Like it or not, we *are* interdependent.

Living as One with each other and with all of Creation takes focus and attention. It requires that we maintain awareness of our tendency to slip into our habitual thought forms... rooted in the dream of separation... It compels us to regular spiritual practice: to meditation, where we experience our Oneness with Spirit and Her Creation; to prayer, where we ask God to remind us when we drift out of the Story of Unity; and to Mindful Action in the World.

To conclude Taizé this morning, I'd like to share The Declaration of Interdependence written by the David Suzuki Foundation for the 1992 UN Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro:

This we know

We are the earth, through the plants and animals that nourish us.

We are the rains and the oceans that flow through our veins.

We are the breath of the forests of the land, and the plants of the sea.

We are human animals, related to all other life as descendants of the firstborn cell.

We share with these kin a common history, written in our genes.

We share a common present, filled with uncertainty.

And we share a common future, as yet untold.

We humans are but one of thirty million species weaving the thin layer of life enveloping the world.

The stability of communities of living things depends upon this diversity.

Linked in that web, we are interconnected — using, cleansing, sharing, and replenishing the fundamental elements of life.

Our home, planet Earth, is finite; all life shares its resources and the energy from the sun, and therefore has limits to growth.

For the first time, we have touched those limits.

When we compromise the air, the water, the soil, and the variety of life, we steal from the endless future to serve the fleeting present.

This we believe

Humans have become so numerous and our tools so powerful that we have driven fellow creatures to extinction, dammed the great rivers, torn down ancient forests, poisoned the earth, rain and wind, and ripped holes in the sky.

Our science has brought pain as well as joy; our comfort is paid for by the suffering of millions.

We are learning from our mistakes, we are mourning our vanished kin, and we now build a new politics of hope.

We respect and uphold the absolute need for clean air, water, and soil.

We see that economic activities that benefit the few while shrinking the inheritance of many are wrong.

And since environmental degradation erodes biological capital forever, full ecological and social cost must enter all equations of development.

We are one brief generation in the long march of time; the future is not ours to erase.

So where knowledge is limited, we will remember all those who will walk after us, and err on the side of caution.

This we resolve

All this that we know and believe must now become the foundation of the way we live.

At this turning point in our relationship with Earth, we work for an evolution: from dominance to partnership; from fragmentation to connection; from insecurity, to interdependence.⁴

Chris – Closing Prayer - Please join me in the Mother Earth Prayer, from KiiskeeN'tum – She Who Remembers

Mother Earth, hear your child. As I sit here on your lap of grass, I listen to the echoes of your voice in my brother, the Wind, as he blows from all corners and directions. The soft and gentle raindrops are the tears you cry for your children.

Teach me the Lessons you offer: To nurture my children, as you nurture yours, to learn the Lessons of the Four Kingdoms, that make up this World of Physical Things, and To Learn to Walk the Path chosen so long ago.

Mother Earth, hear your child. Be a bond between the Worlds of Earth and Spirit. Let the Winds echo the Knowledge of the Grandfathers, who await, unseen, yet visible if I only turn my eyes to their World. Let me hear their Voices, in the Winds that Blow to the East.

From the East: I seek the Lessons of Childhood. To see with the trusting innocence of a small one, The Lessons of Spirit, Given in Love by our Creator.

From the South: to Learn the Ways of Questioning – The Fire and Independence of adolescence, the Truths, and how they help us grow along this Path.

From the West: where the Grandfathers teach us Acceptance of Responsibility that come during the years of Marriage and Family. That my own children grow Strong, and True.

From the North: where the Elders, who by their long lives have learned and stored Wisdom and Knowledge, and Learned to Walk in Balance and Harmony with our Mother, the Earth.

Mother Earth, hear your child. Hold my hand as I Walk my Path in this World. Guide me to the Lessons I seek, bring me closer to Our Creator, Until I return to the Western Direction, to once again Enter the World of Spirit, Where the Sacred Fire Awaits, and I rejoin the Council of the Elders, In the Presence of the One Who-Created-All. Aho.⁵

Returning our awareness to this moment, to this place, we open our eyes, our hearts, and our minds. Look around at who is here supporting your spiritual growth this morning. This is Beloved, Community, this is Spiritual Family... one of your support systems. These are some of the people who care about you, who are there for you if you need anything.

Offering – At this time 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 or our mailing address, if you prefer to write a check, at mysticheart.org. And we thank you in advance for your gifts.

Dalton – Offertory Music

 **Earth**, written by David Roth

Chris – Blessing for the Offering

Dalton – Taizé Closing Song

 **A Soul's Blessing**, written by Chris Johnson

Conscious Conversation

Rev. Diana – Opening Prayer

Chris – Good morning, and welcome back! For those joining us for the first time, my name is Chris Johnson, and I am a Prayer Practitioner here at Mystic Heart. We are an Independent Interfaith Community that teaches Universal Principles and Practical Spirituality. We welcome you home to our Gathering Place and to the Guidance and Wisdom of your own Mystic Heart.

I invite you to join us in our opening songs – the words are on the screen. Feel free to stand up, dance, or do whatever gets the Spirit moving in you!

Dalton – Opening Music

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

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

 **Womb of the Earth**, written by Sasha Butterfly

Chris – If you're comfortable doing so, I invite you to remain standing if it helps you to feel the Divine Presence in your physical being, as we embody our vision of a **Love-Soaked World...**

Centered in our awareness of ourselves as avatars of the One Creative Source, we focus on our deep desire to establish Heaven on Earth... A world characterized by peace, love, generosity, compassion, and freedom... A world in which poverty, hunger, homelessness, violence, fear, and greed are things of the past... Where all have access to medical care, education, comfort, and creative expression... A world where healthy relationships, dignified work, and a sense of belonging are universal... where mental, emotional, and physical health, education, and loving relationships are ensured by social systems grounded in Compassion and Wholeness...

As we live and act from our highest intentions, we create a world where all people, animals, plants, and Mother Earth herself are valued as Sacred

Creation... A world in which God's unlimited abundance is allowed to flow freely to all... Where all are recognized as deserving of all the blessings Life has to offer, and are free to receive them gratefully.

God is a Spirit... No feet... no hands... no hearts but ours... As we work together to be the change we wish to see in the world, there is no reason we cannot have such a world... Knowing that nothing can stop a Divine Idea whose time has come, we join together in consciousness, in prayer, and in active service to the creation of Heaven on Earth... We hold to our Vision regardless of conditions or appearances... knowing with our whole hearts that such a world is not only possible, but inevitable.

We open our hearts, our minds, our doors, and our arms in Radical Welcome. As we speak our Powerful Word of creation, we affirm that our Vision is taking form here and now. We accept it... we release it... we let it be so... And so it is... Amen.

Let's take a moment to look around and see who's here with us today. This is your Beloved Community, your Spiritual Family, here to support you on your Soul's Journey... These are the people you can count on when you need a hand. We had a great group last Wednesday helping Amanda move – it was a very joy-filled, loving experience. *That* is what church is for!

In Taizé this morning, we debunked the fiction that we are completely independent beings. We are *not* separate – we are part of an Integrated Wholeness that includes all of Creation. We cannot thrive without the support of Mother Earth and all her inhabitants, and they cannot thrive without our conscious contribution to Life. Our liberation, our individual wellbeing is “bound up” with the wholeness of all beings.

We talked about how so-called “primitive” societies held the natural world as sacred, as a manifestation of the Divine. How early humans celebrated their oneness with Nature, Spirit, and all of Life with ritual ceremonies at the solstices, equinoxes, at dawn and at dusk. And how many humans now see the Earth as something separate from which we can extract resources at will.

We explored the concept of *interbeing*, the idea that our life only has true meaning within a context of relationship – with one another, with the planet, and with all her inhabitants. And we read the David Suzuki Foundation's Declaration of Interdependence, a call to build a new way of life on the foundation of our essential Oneness with all of Creation.

So, what do you think?

How are Independence and Interdependence related?

(We depend on others for our basic needs – once those needs are met, we are free to express ourselves more fully. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs)

How do our behaviors affect others? the Earth? How far-reaching are the effects we create?

(We may never know. The ripples go out, creating responses or reactions in others.)







What then is our responsibility to the other beings we share this planet with?

(“At the very least, do no harm.”⁶ Yeshua: “as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.”⁷)

When the Achuar spokesperson said, “If you’ve come to help us, even though we invited you here, don’t waste your time,” what did he mean?

(Don’t help us out of charity, guilt, or because you think we can’t do it without you. We are not separate from you – helping us is helping the whole world.)

In his book, *The More Beautiful World Our Hearts Know Is Possible*, Charles Eisenstein describes the principles of Interbeing:

-  That my being partakes of your being and that of all beings. This goes beyond interdependency—our very existence is relational. That, therefore, what we do to another, we do to ourselves.
-  That each of us has a unique and necessary gift to give the world. That the purpose of life is to express our gifts.
-  That every act is significant and has an effect on the cosmos.
-  That we are fundamentally unseparate from each other, from all beings, and from the universe. That every person we encounter and every experience we have mirrors something in ourselves.
-  That humanity is meant to join fully the tribe of all life on Earth, offering our uniquely human gifts toward the well-being and development of the whole.
-  That purpose, consciousness, and intelligence are innate properties of matter and the universe.⁸

Are we *really* that connected? What might living the principle of interbeing require of us?

(More mindful interactions with people, plants, animals, soil, water; awareness that everything we say, think, feel, and do creates a chain reaction of cause and effect – who knows where it ends?)

Thomas Berry talked about the rituals of primitive peoples that connected them with their environment. What kinds of ceremonies do you take part in to connect?

(Solstice celebrations, Full and New Moon Circles, baby showers, funerals, Bar & Bat Mitzvahs, Quinceañeras, all celebrate cycles of life; gardening connects us to the Earth & Life.)

How do these rituals affect the way we interact with people and Nature?

(They are a form of prayer or meditation that reminds us of our connection to all that is.)

The Declaration of Interdependence drafted by the David Suzuki Foundation has three headings: *This we know*, *This we believe*, and *This we Resolve*. Why do you think they used these phrases to organize this document?

(We should start with what we *know* to be true, let that inform what we *believe* to be true, and then *resolve* to *act* from what we know and believe.)

So, is it really possible to stay that mindful in *all* of our interactions? How do we do that?

(Spiritual practices – Prayer, Meditation, Sacred Service, Circulation, Sacred Study, and Celebration – the Six Pillars of a Spiritual Life.)

Actually, Rev. Diana found a Seventh Pillar in her practice this month, but you'll have to come back next week to find out what that is!

Closing Prayer

Please join me in this knowing: that there is only One Thing going on here, and that is the action of the Divine Source pouring ItSelf out into all of Creation. Every thing, every person, every plant, every rock, every animal is an expression of Spirit. Every lake, stream, river, pond, or ditch is filled with Holy Water. All of it Sacred, all of it interconnected.

We ourselves are part of that Oneness, that intricate web of consciousness expressing in form. As we identify with our Divine Nature, with the Spirit within us, we see that same Essence in each and every other being. With the Gift

of Spiritual Sight, we see God in every face, in every situation, in all of Creation.

This prayer establishes us firmly in a consciousness of Unity with all Life, maintaining that awareness throughout each day. May we be ever mindful that what we do to other people, to the Earth, and to any of her inhabitants, we do to ourSelves. May we feel the pain when a species succumbs to extinction, and may we feel the joy when a farmer's soil is regenerated by sustainable practices. May we evolve into better and better co-creation partners for one another and for our planet. May we fully honor this Divine Gift of Life that Spirit has entrusted us with.

With profound gratitude, I release this prayer, knowing that it is acted upon by an immutable Law that is compelled to bring our heartfelt intention into our experience. Thank you, God, for everyone and for everything. Amen.

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!

Dalton – Offertory Music

 ***What a Wonderful World***, written by George David Weiss & Robert Thiele

Rev. Diana – Blessing for the Offering

Invitations

♥ The Mystic Heart Book Club is reading *The Essential Path* by Neale Donald Walsch, Tuesdays from 3-5 pm. **Drop-ins welcome.**

♥ **Metaphysical Bible Study** is meeting with Chris Johnson on Thursdays from 3 – 5 pm. **Drop-ins welcome.**

Looking Ahead...

♥ **Please join Mystic Heart on Friday, August 4th for a joyous time of drumming and spiritual togetherness.** All are welcome! Drumming will begin at 6:30pm. Please arrive early for parking and set up. Bring your drum or favorite instrument, a chair for outdoor use and your open heart. Drumming led by April Jimenez; hosted by Laurie Buckman and James Massengale. **Please RSVP for address. Contact April @ 562-440-3785 or Laurie @ 530-440-2924 for more info.**

♥ ***The Rainmaker, a romantic comedy.* Wednesday, August 9th, 7:00 pm, curtain at 7:30. Tickets are on sale today for \$25.** We are being invited to bring appetizers to share, and beverages will be for sale at the theater.

♥ ***Praying in Color – Kindness Rocks!* Join Rev. Diana on Saturday, August 12th, 1:30–4:00 pm at the Mystic Heart Gathering Place, Suite H.**

♥ **Saturday, August 19th, 10 am – noon,** Laurie Buckman will present a ***Culinary Herbs Workshop***, including how to mindfully grow and use a variety of herbs to create a varied and healthy range of recipes. More details to come. **Suggested donation: \$20. All materials provided.**

Prayer Requests, Practitioner available after service, Information Cards if new people

Dalton – Closing Song

♥ ***Love Be With You***, written by Lainey Bernstein, RScP, & Gary Lynn Floyd



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¹ Lynne Twist, *The Soul of Money*

² Thomas Berry, *The Christian Future and the Fate of Earth*, 2009

³ James Twyman, *May Peace Prevail on Earth*

⁴ <https://davidsuzuki.org/about/declaration-of-interdependence/>

⁵ KiiskeeN'tum, *Mother Earth Prayer*, <https://www.ya-native.com/prayersandblessings/MotherEarthPrayer.html>

⁶ Hippocratic Oath

⁷ Matthew 25:34-45

⁸ Charles Eisenstein, *The More Beautiful World Our Hearts Know Is Possible*