

Know ThySelf

Sunday, September 10, 2023

Rev. Diana Johnson, with Lucinda Alton, RScP,
and Chris Johnson, RScP



An Independent Interfaith Community
Practicing the Possible Through Prayer

Taizé

Call to Awareness – 3 Bells

Lucinda – Opening Prayer

Rev. Diana – Welcome...if you're new with us here this morning, my name is Rev. Diana Johnson, and I am the Pastor and Spiritual Director of Mystical Heart Spiritual Center. We are an Interfaith Community that teaches Universal Principles and Practical Spirituality. I welcome you home to our Spiritual Community (should you choose it). I welcome you home to the Guidance and Wisdom of your own Mystic Heart.

Rev. Diana & Chris – Taizé Chants

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

 **Let Love Be the Guide**, written by Dennis Bryan, Kalyani, Diana & Chris Johnson

Rev. Diana – We begin by taking a long, slow, deep breath in...sensing a brief pause, and then letting it go...allowing the breath to carry us inward to the deep Peace and Wholeness that is always available...bringing awareness to the Presence, right here...right now...(Pause) grounding even more deeply into the silence, and sensing an opening, of the heart, of the mind, of the Spirit within...preparing the soul for deep listening...for receiving the gift of this time together.

We take a moment to honor our connection with all that is. Together, we envision a web of consciousness...an energetic field...a Holy Presence... that surrounds and infuses the planet...each of us, a point of Light, reflecting our Radiance to the many beings that share this space and time with us...every human, every other-than-human creature, every plant...the rocks and minerals, water and wind, stars and planets...and all the space between us...alive...in relationship...forever connected by our co-existence at this time, in this place...forever one in Spirit.

As we share time in prayer and meditation, we leave an imprint of Peace on the world...the Love that we feel and express brings a showering of Grace to the cosmos. Take a moment to feel into the atmosphere we are creating...

As we come together, we set an intention...that each of us is a beneficial presence on the planet...that each leaves a positive imprint on human evolution...and that as a

community, we use this time to move the world toward a more Generous, Compassionate, Harmonious expression...we walk as Love in action.

This morning we center our reflections and contemplations on what it means to ***Know Thyself***.

We often say that the human body is the vessel we are given...that the body is the house of the Spirit. I think this is not quite accurate...rather, the body *is* Spirit taken physical form. And the world we live in is not merely God's creation, "it *is* Divinity as presented to our senses."¹

Knowing Thyself means listening to the body, which includes our physical, mental and emotional states. Our physical being is not in any way separate from God...it is literally God experiencing Life as us. If Spirit is truly all-knowing...Infinite Intelligence, and everywhere present...the Presence in all that is, how can it be otherwise? Take a moment to allow that to really sink in...right here and now, you are God in form.

It is this Truth...I Am one form that God has taken...that leads me to seek the Highest Experience of humanity that I can. Because if it is True, then I have all of the Qualities of Spirit already present...within me...from birth. I may not be accessing them all in this moment, but my lack of awareness does not...cannot...change what is True. As I open myself to this Truth, and begin seeking the Qualities of Spirit within me, I Am coming to Know Myself as I truly Am.

One of the most beautiful ways that I have found to begin this search...this deep dive to know the God Self...comes to us as The Prayer of St. Francis. This Christian prayer is Universal in its language...it points us inward...asks nothing of us that we cannot do, if only we are willing to come to our knees.

Lord, make me an instrument of your Peace. Let us pause and take that in...Lord, make me an instrument of your Peace.

In the days of St. Francis, an instrument was a magical object:

What more hallowed object could have existed in such a world than something crafted by the skilled hand that could create such sounds and turn breath or touch into melody? To play an instrument would have been a divine skill. To be an instrument would have been a sacred thing indeed. When Francis asks to be made an instrument of God's peace, he is bowing down before God's skill as maker, as musician, as composer of our days, and offering himself up to be shaped into a form through which the voice of God can be heard. When we give ourself to his prayer, we are asking the same.²

From the first line of this prayer, we are submitting ourselves to a Deeper Wisdom, inviting God's Peace to flow through us as we draw upon the Guidance, Courage and Power of Spirit...we are offering a clean slate, an open mind, a willing heart. We are asking that our physical body serve as a vessel through which God's Peace may flow.

Lord, make me an instrument of your Peace.

Where there is hatred, let me sow love.

The paths we choose as we travel through our lives shape us. The longer we follow a particular path, the more it affects our heart and spirit. This prayer reflects an understanding...that walking in either hatred or love is a choice in every moment...and it does not make demands that are beyond our reach. Francis is not telling us that we must unceasingly manifest love in full bloom...

...only that “we must sow a seed of love, because he knows that if we plant a seed...it will grow if it is tended, and will soon become strong enough to stand”³ on its own.

Hatred is one of the most frightening of human emotions. It is willful...even predatory...and if left to its own devices, will consume everything around it. Francis invites us to meet hatred with love. If we run from it, we are only allowing it to take root in our lives. Francis knows that although hatred seems to have a will of its own, it has grown from a deeper hurt or sadness that has been buried and calcified...and so it lashes out at all things good, kind, and gentle. Hatred is not a power of its own...Love is the only True Power.

It is tempting to focus only on the goodness of life and ignore the hatred that does not touch us directly.

But Francis, who saw beauty and brightness everywhere, challenges us from the very outset of his prayer to stare hatred in the eye and trust in the power of our own love to stand against it. This is no small challenge. It asks us to overcome our fear and to have faith in the power of goodness. It asks us to believe that our own halting love is strong enough to take root in a field that seems choked with the weeds of hate...he reminds us that love is a habit of the heart, an inclination of the spirit.⁴

Each day is filled with opportunities to choose Peace...to sow seeds of Love. May we stay mindful in our choices.

Chris – Guided Meditation

Two and a half millennia ago, the phrase *Know ThySelf* was inscribed on the Temple of Apollo in Greece... Countless human beings have spent the time since then unpacking its terse wisdom... and have arrived at various interpretations... These different understandings seem to depend on what constitutes the *Self*...

We have been exploring four main aspects of the Self... the Heart, or the emotional Self, Mind or intellect, the physical Body, and Spirit – our Divine Self... To truly know ourselves, we must enter into a balanced inquiry of all four of these facets of our Being... using our reason, our physical sensations, our emotions, and our intuition...

To know our physical Self, we listen to our Body... to what it needs in terms of shelter, nutrition, exercise, hygiene, and so forth... We listen to our Heart for its needs... Love, acceptance, belonging, worthiness... Through prayer, meditation, and therapy we learn the content of our Mind... both conscious and subconscious...

Empowering this Self-inquiry is our Spiritual Self... our Divine Ground of Being... that within us which remembers that we are, in microcosm, what God is in Macrocosm... Infinite Wisdom and Unconditional Love flow through us revealing all that we are... all that we need... all that our Heart, Mind, and Body are revealing to us...

I invite us into that inquiry now, as we share our three-minutes of silent contemplation this morning... Breathing gently and regularly... relaxing the Body... quieting the Mind... inviting the Divine Presence... and encouraging our heart to radiate Love... We remain open and receptive to all that wants to reveal itself to us... and through us... Deep in the stillness, we ask our Mind, our Heart, our Body, and our Spirit each in turn, "Who am I? ... *What* am I?" ... And as our question is enveloped in the Silence, we *listen*...

Silence – 3:00

As the music gently ushers our awareness back into the present time and place, we find all aspects of our Self fully integrated – Heart, Mind, Body, and Spirit... We are grateful for this communion with our Self... and with our *outer* Self those who make up our Beloved Community... Thank you, God, for everyone and for everything...

Our journey of Self-Inquiry has just begun... it is an ongoing process of alignment, realignment, and integration... One Self with four modes of expression... all working together and activating the One Divine Creative Power of the Universe...

We return now to the inspirational words of Rev. Diana fully open to receive the Gifts of Divine Wisdom and Love... We have the spiritual tools we need to follow the ancient sage's advice: *Know ThySelf*...

Rev. Diana

Lord, make me an instrument of your Peace.

Where there is hatred, let me sow love.

Where there is injury, let me sow pardon.

Does this mean that we are to forgive all manner of crimes and transgressions, no matter how harmful? This is not the message that I receive. Rather, Francis is inviting us to seek healing and reconciliation, not approval, or even acceptance. As we continue in our spiritual work, we may come to a place of acceptance, or even forgiveness, for the hurts that we have experienced. I pray that we do, because acceptance and forgiveness free us as we offer it...it has nothing to do with the one it is directed toward.

Once again, Francis is speaking of sowing seeds of pardon...he recognizes that if we don't sow the seeds of healing and reconciliation, we will never experience Wholeness. Healing rises above the question of right and wrong...good and evil. It has to do with restoring health, restoring life. Sowing seeds of pardon is required before we can restore health to the body and mind, and Life to the spirit.

Musical Meditation – *Into Your Hands*, by Jami Lula

Into Your Hands I commit my Spirit...I commit my soul...and by this powerful act of surrender, I Am coming to know myself as I was meant to be, I invite, accept, and receive the Strength, Courage, and Power of the Creator, that I might walk as Peace in action, Love taken form. I trust and know that as I sow seeds of pardon...allowing healing and reconciliation to flow powerfully through my life... I can recognize and accept my own Divinity.

Rev. Diana – Closing Prayer

Coming back into the awareness of our bodies...our senses...the atmosphere in the room, we open our eyes and allow our gaze to take in whatever is before you.

Feel free to look around and say good morning to everyone who is here celebrating with you this morning. This is your Spiritual Family...one of your support systems. These are some of the people who care about you and are there for you if you need anything.

Offering

As we close our Taizé Meditation, we offer the opportunity for you to share 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.

Enjoy this video as a reminder to support your local farmers...and maybe plant a few seeds of your own.

Offertory Video – *The Prayer of St. Francis*, by Sarah McLachlan

<https://youtu.be/agPnMxp5Occ>

Rev. Diana – Blessing for the Offering

Rev. Diana & Chris – Closing Song

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

Conscious Conversation

Lucinda – Opening Prayer

Rev. Diana – Good morning and welcome, or welcome back...welcome to those joining online. If you're new with us here this morning... my name is Rev. Diana Johnson, and I am the Pastor and Spiritual Director of Mystic Heart Spiritual Center. 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.

Rev. Diana & Chris – Opening Music

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

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

 **Opening Up** written by Rainbow Spirit, Oregon

Rev. Diana – Calling Awareness to the Presence of Spirit in the body...join me in the co-creation of a **Love-Soaked World...**

...where all humans embody Compassion, Generosity, Love, Peace, and Justice...where all people everywhere honor and care for one another, for the earth that sustains us, and for every life form that shares this beautiful planet with us.

We are creating a world where all needs are met gracefully...easily...where all beings are well-fed, and have the safety and comfort of home...where mental/physical health, education, and healthy relationships are promoted and supported by social systems grounded in Wellness and Wholeness...

...where all beings Serve the greater community doing whatever feeds their souls and are well supported for their time and talent...and by their Service, each one finds meaning...belonging...

A world in which all beings are valued and respected for their uniqueness...where Authenticity and Integrity are the norm...where the Peace and Kindness we cultivate within shows up as a world free of hatred or violence.

With our growing Awareness, and by the Power of our collective intention, we are writing a new story...a story in which there is no greed, and abundance means having all that is required for physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual thriving.

We *do not* lower our Vision, no matter the appearances in the world, knowing with our whole hearts that such a world is *inevitable*. We align our actions to support our Vision, and a new world is being born.

Our hearts, minds, arms, and doors are open in Radical Welcome. All lines and feelings of separation have been erased. In keeping with the Vision, our community is open and loving...all people who seek belonging find it here.

With deep faith in the Great Mystery that I call God, we trust that our prayer is acted upon...we prepare for its Graceful unfolding in the world...we feel a deep sense of gratitude...we give thanks and release it to the Living, Loving, Lawful Source of all that is. It is done...And so it is...Amen...Sathu... Ashay...Aho!

Let's take a moment to look around to say good morning to your Spiritual

Family...some of the people who care about you...people you can count on when you need a hand.

If you were with us at Taizé this morning, you know that our topic this month is Connections, and our Conversation this week revolves around **Knowing Thyself**.

We used a little different approach in our self-reflection, looking deeply to the Spiritual Qualities that are factory equipment through the lens of The Prayer of Saint Francis and its Universal call to submission. I'm feeling brave this week...can you tell? I got in big

trouble talking about *repentance* (turning around, changing our hearts and minds, thinking again), and now I'm adding submission to last week's discussion of discipline and obedience.

Do you remember what the word discipline meant?

How about obedience?

How many of us are comfortable with the word submission...to submit?

What does that word mean? (from the Latin, *to put or send under*)

Do you remember last week when I said I wondered who would be contacting me in the week ahead regarding the Sunday Conversation? Well, it happened. This time someone challenged me to think further about our topic and consider whether or not submission might be the missing piece...the third leg of the stool, if you will. I love this community...I love that y'all are paying attention and that you take these conversations home with you and chew on them...and that you feel safe challenging me. This is what keeps me on my growing edge.

So let's talk about the first three lines of the Prayer of St. Francis.

What is the first line?

(Lord, make me an instrument of your Peace.)

What does it mean to be an instrument for God's Peace?

In Taizé we reflected on the idea that in the days of St. Francis, a musical instrument was a magical object. I would like to repeat the quote I shared from author and teacher Kent Nerburn:

What more hallowed object could have existed in such a world than something crafted by the skilled hand that could create such sounds and turn breath or touch into melody? To play an instrument would have been a divine skill. To be an instrument would have been a sacred thing indeed. When Francis asks to be made an instrument of God's peace, he is bowing down before God's skill as maker, as musician, as composer of our days, and offering himself up to be shaped into a form through which the voice of God can be heard. When we give ourself to his prayer, we are asking the same.⁵

We said that from the first line of this prayer, we are submitting ourselves to a Deeper Wisdom, inviting God's Peace to flow through us as we draw upon the Guidance, Courage and Power of Spirit...we are offering a clean slate, an open mind, a willing heart. We are asking that our physical body serve as a vessel through which God's Peace may flow. We are asking to know ourselves as an instrument of Peace.

Okay, who knows the second line? (Where there is hatred, let me sow Love.)

What do you think St. Francis meant by this?

(Walking in either hatred or love is a choice in every moment; we must sow a seed of love, because if we plant a seed and take care of it, it will grow into full bloom; hatred is the result of deep hurt or sadness that has been buried. It is an effect, not a cause...not a power in and of itself. This prayer challenges us to look hatred in the eye and to sow a seed of Love in response.

Again, Kent Nerburn says: "This is no small challenge. It asks us to overcome our fear and to have faith in the power of goodness.

It asks us to believe that our own halting love is strong enough to take root in a field that seems choked with the weeds of hate....he (St. Francis) reminds us that love is a habit of the heart, an inclination of the spirit."⁶

Okay, who remembers the third line? (Where there is injury, let me sow pardon.)

What do you suppose Francis means by this line?

(Approval, acceptance, forgiveness? Not necessarily, only healing and reconciliation.

Does healing have anything to do with right and wrong, good or bad?

What does healing point to?

Healing rises above the question of right and wrong...good and evil. It has to do with restoring health, restoring life. Sowing seeds of pardon is required before we can restore health to the body and mind, and Life to the spirit.

Lord, make me an instrument of your Peace.

Where there is hatred, let me sow love.

Where there is injury, let me sow pardon.

I invite you to really chew on those lines this week. Maybe ask for Guidance...how can I know and express myself as an instrument of Your Peace? Where can I respond to thoughts and feelings of hatred by sowing seeds of Love? What does that even look like? Where in my life can I meet injury by sowing seeds of pardon? And what might *that* look like?

Thank you all for being such good sports...for listening, caring, doing your work. It's not for my benefit, it's for yours. But I do feel happy when I see it. Your willingness to be with the uncomfortable, and to grow through it, is commendable.

And thank you for challenging me to grow, to think, to feel, and to pray.

Join me as we close this Gathering in prayer.

I invite you to bring your awareness back to your body, to your senses, to the atmosphere in the room. And when you are ready, open your eyes to re-enter the space. Welcome back.

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!

Offertory Music Video – *Thank You, Lord*, by Bob Marley

https://youtu.be/z9DDDj_JdMA

Blessing for the Offering – Lucinda

Lucinda – Invitations

-  **Core Council Meeting, Tuesday September 12th, 12:30-2:30 pm.**
-  **The Mystic Heart Book Club** is reading *Soul Boom* by Rainn Wilson. Tuesdays, 3-5 pm.
-  **The Universe is Calling...**Rev. Diana is beginning a new class this Tuesday evening from 6-9 pm. This is the last week to add.
-  **Living the Four Agreements...**Chris Johnson is beginning a new class this Wednesday from 2-5 pm. This is the last week to add.
-  **Thursdays, 12:30-2:30 pm, *Fast Track to Wellness*.** We're focusing on the importance of building the immune system and other topics.
-  **Metaphysical Bible Study** with Chris Johnson, Thursday from 3 – 5 pm.
-  **Join Laurie Buckman for** an exploration of Nutritional and Medicinal Herbs. Saturday, September 16th from 10:00 am – 12:00 pm.

Looking Ahead...

-  **Join Rev. Diana for *Mandala Meditation: a Journey into God*,** a prayerful time of creativity and sharing. Saturday, September 23rd from 1:30-4:00 pm.
-  **Mark your calendars...Saturday, October 7th, another Mystic OAKS Adventure to the Abbey at New Clairvaux.** More details will be sent out this week via email.

There is more information about all of our events and activities in your Bulletin and on our website.

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

Rev. Diana & Chris – Closing Song

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

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Diana Johnson's music is ©2023 by Barefoot Angel Publishing, ASCAP.

Notes:

¹ Charles Eisenstein – *The Yoga of Eating*

² Kent Nerburn – *Make Me An Instrument of Your Peace*

³ ibid.

⁴ ibid.

⁵ ibid.

⁶ ibid.