

In Service to the Whole...October 22, 2023 – Taizé

9:30 Bell – Call to Awareness – 3 Bells

9:31 Chris N - Opening Prayer

9:34 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). Even more, I welcome you home to the answers that lie within your own Mystic Heart.

And so now, letting go of all that has come before this moment, we begin by taking a slow, deep, cleansing breath, fully arriving in the here and now. Gently close your eyes and allow yourself to relax...body, mind, and spirit...allow yourself to be completely still. There is Beauty in stillness. Can you feel it? Nowhere to go, nothing to do...There is nothing missing, nothing that needs changing...all is well. (Pause) Feel and know the Wholeness, the Completeness of this moment as you allow yourself to be carried by the meditative tone of Taizé...allow the music to take you deeper as you allow the Beauty and Wholeness of this moment to sing through you...

9:36 Chant – *Welcome Home to Your Mystic Heart*

9:38 Chant – *Pour Yourself in Me*

9:40 Diana –

We take a moment to honor our connection with all of Life. Together, we envision a web of consciousness...a Life Force...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 network of life that lives beneath the soil's surface, invisible to the naked eye...microbes...mycelium...the Light of Spirit at work...the rocks and minerals, water and wind, stars and planets...alive...in relationship...forever connected by our co-existence at this time, in this place...forever one in Spirit.

9:41 As we share time in prayer and meditation, we are leaving an imprint of Beauty on the world...a ripple of Wholeness whose effect we may never know...but we feel its presence. (Pause)

As we come together, we set an intention...that each of us is in Sacred Service as the hands, feet, heart, and voice of God...that each feels, embodies, and lives from this intention...and that as a community, we use this time to move the world toward a more Kind, Just, and Loving expression.

This morning we use our shared time to experience the Truth of who we are... We begin by asking, what does it mean to be ***In Service to the Whole?*** Each of us wants to know,

when this particular parenthesis in eternity is done, that we left the world more beautiful than it was when we arrived...Beauty is a Quality of Spirit. It is the natural state of all beings everywhere...the Divine Spark shining in and through all that is, expressing and experiencing Its own Radiance as all of creation...constant, and yet ever-changing. It is *that* Beauty, *that* Perfection, that is expressing and experiencing Itself as you...as me. As each of us comes to know our inherent Beauty, we recognize the unique gift we have to offer the world.

Dr. Ernest Holmes was a spiritual evolutionary who lived and taught in the early-to-mid 1900's. His teachings contributed to the development of the New Thought Movement and helped to pave the way for the Universal interpretations of Sacred Scripture that are emerging and gaining momentum today. He, among others, encouraged us to delve more deeply into the mystical aspects of our lives and our world. And he encouraged us to question all we thought we knew.

From his book *Can We Talk to God?*, I offer you these thoughts:

“I believe that God is Universal Spirit, and by Spirit I mean the Life Essence of all that is – that subtle and intelligent Power which permeates all things and which, in each individual, is conscious mind.”

9:44 So from this standpoint, God is not an entity, but an Essence...the Life Essence, the Power, and the Intelligence at the heart of all that is. (Pause)

He continues...

“I believe that humankind is the direct representative of this Divine Presence on this plane of existence...that the relationship between God and the individual is a direct one and that the avenue through which the spirit expresses Itself to us is through our minds. Our ability to think, to know and to act are direct channels through which the Universal Spirit flows.”

In other words, Source shows Itself differently in each and every form...in human beings it expresses through the self-reflective quality and capacity of the conscious mind, through the intuitive and feeling senses, and through the capacity to take direct action inspired by our thoughts and sensations.

(Pause)

“I believe that God is to each one what that person is to God. The Divine Nature must be Infinite, but we know only as much of this Nature as we can embody. And in no other way can God be known to us.” God, or Intelligence, requires the material plane to experience Itself as physical. It requires the human form to experience Its humanity. And it is through our bodies, our senses, our physical, mental, and emotional selves that we

begin to discover our Divine Nature. God needs us to experience Its Wholeness...and we require an awareness of Spirit to experience ours.

(Pause)

Fast forward nearly 100 years from the words of Dr. Ernest Holmes...we look now to the spiritual teaching of modern evolutionary teacher Craig Hamilton.

Craig invites us to awaken to our Interdependence...to realize that (paraphrased) there are no private moments...that we all impact each other and the whole in countless visible and invisible ways...that we are inextricably interwoven. Therefore, our life is not really our own to do with as we please. In all of our actions, we are beholden to one another and to the whole.

9:48 He invites us to relate to Life from God's Point-of-View...to look at life from the vantage point of the Creative, Intelligent Impulse that infuses, surrounds and contains the cosmos. If we understand this *God* as an *Impulse* rather than an *omnipotent being*, we can see that it doesn't have any power to change the world without our willingness to align with It. So, in this sense, "God needs us more than we need God." (Craig Hamilton) We are literally the hands, feet, hearts, and voices of God in human form. And as self-reflective, choice-making beings, it is only we that can create heaven on Earth. We are, in fact, ***In Service to the Whole***. And so we are called to be conscious in how we serve.

In the Hindu Tradition, the concept of Seva Yoga, or Karma Yoga, refers to the art of selfless service. When one performs Seva, she is renouncing her own desires and, instead, giving her time and energy to the greater good, with no expectation of result. When one offers this Sacred Service, he is offering his Service to God by serving other human beings of society with no expectation of recognition or reward.

From the Carmelite Order of the Catholic Tradition, we find Brother Lawrence *Practicing the Presence of God*. He served his monastery as a dish washer. Through his devotion in attending to this task, he discovered some insights into the spiritual disciplines. The most effective way Brother Lawrence had for communicating with God was to simply do his ordinary work, obediently and out of a pure love of God. He believed it was a serious mistake to think of our prayer time as being different from any other. He often taught that "we ought not to be weary of doing little things for the love of God, who regards not the greatness of the work, but the love with which it is performed." (The Practice of the Presence of God)

In offering Sacred Service, we are not jumping from *spiritual* things to *nonspiritual* things. From this heartfelt perspective, prayer is no more worthy than taking out the garbage...rather, whatever we do *is* our prayer.

10:51 Chris – Guided Meditation

Our self-inquiry last week flowed from the question, “Who am I?...” Today I invite us to ask, “Why am I here?... What is my highest purpose?...” Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote, “The fact that I am here certainly shows me that the soul had need of an organ here...”¹ Each of us is indispensable... essential to Spirit’s full expression...

It doesn’t seem likely that we are given Life simply to fulfill our own needs and desires... All of Creation is interdependent... we rely on each other in countless ways... and we co-create our experiences together... Knowing that, doesn’t it make sense to seek to do what is best for *all* of us, rather than acting selfishly?...

In the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna says, “At the beginning, humankind and the principle of sacrifice in selfless service were created together, in order to convert worldly pain into happiness... Strive constantly to serve the welfare of the world. By devotion to selfless work one attains the supreme goal of life...”²

Rabbi Yeshua put it this way: “Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me...”³ Each of us is absolutely necessary to the establishment of a Love-Soaked World... beyond hunger, greed, war, homelessness, poverty, and fear... *We* must be the ones to build Heaven on Earth...

As we move into our three minutes of shared, silent contemplation today, I invite you to consider a decision you are facing... a choice that has implications for other people or other beings... one in which you may have a strong preference as to the outcome... Now look at it from a distance... impartially... as a Divine Cosmic Parent who loves all their children equally... What are the possible consequences for all concerned?... what are the mutual benefits?... What *is* the Highest Good for All?...

Silence – 3:00

As our attention gently shifts back to our surroundings... into this present moment, we retain our expanded awareness of our essential unity... and our impact on others in our lives... on the Global Web of Consciousness... and on Mother Earth HerSelf... Thank you, God, for everyone and for everything...

Choosing the Highest Good actually brings about *our* own best outcome... if it is not the best for all Beings, it cannot be the best for us, either... If only out of *enlightened self-interest*, it behooves us to serve the Highest Good always...

As Rev. Diana continues her Taizé message this morning, we allow ourSelves to be moved... to be transformed into Something New... to see the Marvelous Possibilities of a world in which we are all *In Service to the Whole*...

9:59 Rev. Diana –

Wherever it is that I show up consciously *In Service to the Whole*, I bring my *intention* and the whole of my *attention*. My heart, mind, and thoughts are fully focused on being

in Service to the One through the activity before me. Again, from Brother Lawrence: “I have abandoned all particular forms of devotion, all prayer techniques. My only prayer practice is attention. I carry on a habitual, silent, and secret conversation with God that fills me with overwhelming joy.” (*The Practice of the Presence of God*)

Truly, it is a blessing to have a Spiritual Community in which to Serve. It is my way of serving something greater than myself, of touching other beings and being touched in return, even with no expectation of anything given in return. Every relationship we are part of presents an opportunity to be in Sacred Service. Each task we engage in throughout the day offers yet another chance to “carry on a habitual, silent, and secret conversation with God” and to be filled with “overwhelming joy.”

10:01 Closing Prayer

10:03 Musical Meditation – *Love, Serve and Remember* by John Astin

10:07 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.

10:08 Diana – Offertory

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.

Please enjoy Ricki Byars Beckwith's Musical Devotion:

10:09 Offertory Video – *Use Me* by Ricki Byars Beckwith

<https://youtu.be/CXLCKBuP128>

10:13 Diana – Blessing for the Offering

10:14 Closing Song (Soul's Blessing)

Chris N – 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. Welcome home to our Gathering Place, to our Spiritual Family, and to the answers that lie within your own Mystic Heart. I invite you to get on your feet and join the music.

Rev. Diana & Chris J – Opening Music

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

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

 **How Can I Serve** written by Ricki Byars Beckwith

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...

...a world where every being Serves 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 release it to the Holy Presence and give thanks that it is done...And so it is...Amen!

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 of Conversation this week is ***In Service to the Whole***. For those who are just joining us, we spent time this morning contemplating the idea that we are the hands, feet, hearts, and voices of God – without us, Spirit has no way of experiencing what it is to be human and no way to serve humanity.

We considered the idea that we are always in Service to God as we serve one another, so why not do so consciously? We also spent time reflecting on Practicing the Presence of God...bringing absolute attention and awareness to the task at hand and complete it in conscious Service to the Whole. This is our jumping off point for this morning's Conversation.

I'd like to begin by sharing a quick story from the Hindu tradition.

A monk and his student sat on the banks of the Ganges River. As the water flowed by, a large scorpion fell into the water and began to struggle and drown. Without hesitation, the monk reached in and pulled the scorpion from the water. As he placed it on the bank, it stung his hand. Several minutes later this same scorpion fell again into the river and commenced to drown. Again the monk reached in and again was stung. A third time the scorpion fell and a third time was retrieved with the same results.

The student could no longer restrain himself. "Master," he asked, "why is it that you keep saving that beastly scorpion from drowning? Can't you see that it is just going to sting you?" "Yes, I know," laughed the monk. "It is the dharma of the scorpion to sting. But it is my dharma to save."

Does anyone know what Dharma is?

(the word is Sanskrit for *right direction* or *rightful duty*; one's inherent purpose, or true calling in life; it is what you were born to do, what was written on your soul from the moment you were conceived)

What are some other words for *Dharma*? Does your preferred tradition have a way of expressing a similar idea?

From your perspective, what is human Dharma? What are we here for?

Are we here to serve?

Who or what are we here to serve?

How do we know this is true?

What is the difference between service and Sacred Service?

Who are some people that you admire for their service? For their Sacred Service?

What are the qualities you admire in these people?

If you can see these qualities in others, then they must also reside in you. Can you recognize and acknowledge them in yourself?

When Mystic Heart began, we talked about the Six Pillars to a Spiritual Life, and we have since added a seventh. **Does anyone know what those pillars are?**

(Meditation, Prayer, Study, Circulation, Celebration, Self-Inquiry, and Sacred Service)

These are all forms of Spiritual Practice, and the idea of the Seven Pillars is that if you spend some time engaging in each of these, you will have a well-balanced spiritual life. Seven is a number that represents spiritual completion in many of the world's traditions.

So, looking at these Seven Pillars, where is your Practice the strongest? Is it balanced? Is there a Pillar that you feel called to strengthen at this time?

Rev. Diana – Closing Prayer

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 budget and plan for our growth. Those who engage in committed giving are helping to create stability to our community, and we are most grateful. You can find more information on our website...please consider pledging your support.

As we move into this time of giving, I want to express my gratitude for each one who takes part in the Mystic Heart Family, and for all that is offered here today and every day. And thank you, Beloveds, for dedicating your lives to growth and evolution, peace and unity. We'd like to offer one last song as the basket is being passed...it's a song that reminds us that each of us is unique and can only be what God meant us to be...perfect expression of Divinity, an individual expression of Divinity.

Offertory Music Video – *Be Where Your Feet Are*, by Jason Mraz

Chris N – Blessing for the Offering and Invitations

- ♥ **The Mystic Heart Book Club** is reading *Soul Boom* by Rainn Wilson. Tuesdays, 3-5 pm. Drop-ins are welcome.
- ♥ **Fast Track to Wellness is now meeting on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays 12:30-2:30 pm. The next meeting will be this coming Thursday, October 26th.** This is a support circle for physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health.
- ♥ **Metaphysical Bible Study** with Chris Johnson, Thursday from 3 – 5 pm.
- ♥ **12 Days of Kindness is underway for 2023! Please bring socks, instant coffee packets, and toothbrushes for the month of October.**
- ♥ **Mark your calendars...**
- ♥ **Saturday, November 4th, *Music is Medicine Circle* and a house warming for Amanda and River Hunter...circle led by April Jimenez- WinterSky, blessing ceremony by Rev. Diana, and hosted by Amanda.**
- ♥ **Sunday, November 19th, 7:00-8:30 pm, *Shasta Interfaith Thanksgiving Service* at St. Joseph's...Rev. Diana will be presenting for the first time on behalf of Mystic Heart. Please consider joining us for this beautiful Interfaith Experience of Gratitude in the Season of Thanksgiving.**

Save the Date!

- ♥ **Saturday, December 2nd, 11:00 am – 1:30/2:00 pm, Dr. Sharon Brisolaro** will be leading a poetry workshop. Snacks will be provided.
- ♥ **Saturday, December 9th, 1:30 - 4:00 pm, Ellie Thompson** will be leading a ***Wreathmaking Play Shop***. Snacks will be provided. Suggested Donation: \$20 – RSVP required to attend.
- ♥ **Wednesday, December 20th , 6:30 - 8:00 pm, Mystic Heart Holy Day Candle Lighting Service...more information to come soon!**

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 J – Closing Song

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

¹ Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Spiritual Laws*

² Bhagavad Gita, 3.10 & 3.19

³ Matthew 25:40