

What the Mystics Know

April 21, 2024

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



An Independent Interfaith Community
Practicing the Possible Through Prayer

Taizé

Rev. Diana – we follow the bell to the stillness within... 3 Bells

Chris – 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 Mystic Heart Spiritual Center. We are an Independent Interfaith Community that teaches Universal Principles and Practical Spirituality. We open our doors in welcome, trusting that you will be led to the Guidance and Wisdom of your own Mystic Heart.

Rev. Diana, Chris, & Dalton – Taizé Chants

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

 **Nothing Can Separate Us, written by Linda Webb-Khakaba**

Rev. Diana – Grounded in a deep sense of gratitude for the many gifts of this day, let's settle into a moment of stillness...taking a couple of slow, deep breaths...letting go of all that has come before this moment...allowing the breath to dissolve any thoughts or concerns...relaxing the body...allowing your awareness to move into the heart space...allowing yourself to rest there giving yourself the gift of Presence...feeling content in this moment as you ground yourself in this moment...becoming Peaceful as we breathe together...sensing how the breath connects us to everything and everyone...all humans, all creatures...the plant life, rocks and sand...every drop of water...the stars and planets...each and every one, radiating with the One Light...an intricate and irreplaceable part of the One Life. Take a moment to see and feel our connection with all that is.

Each of us is growing in awareness...in our capacity to self-reflect...and as we gain in skillfulness, we rise to the challenges that face us. We begin within, allowing Inner Guidance to direct our actions in the world.

With each passing day, we walk in greater Integrity and Authenticity...experiencing more Peace, Joy, Love, and Beauty than ever before...and we use the gifts that we have been given for the Greater Good of All.

It is time to use our open hearts and discerning minds to choose and create Harmony, so that Wholeness might be revealed. We use our power of imagination consciously, creating the world we want to leave for future generations.

This morning, we reflect on the Mystical Traditions, and on ***What the Mystics Knew***. No matter the tradition, those who have known the Divine as an experience, and built their lives around the awareness of the Sacred, share some common Truth...they hold a shared understanding of how life works.

First and foremost, they understand that the enlightenment you seek is already within you. There's nowhere to go...nothing outside of yourself is necessary. There may be tools that are helpful...prayer, meditation, study. You may find teachers who inspire you...that help to open your heart and mind...that challenge all you think you know. All of these things are fine as far as they go. But the real growth comes from living...and living consciously.

(Pause)

The second thing that Mystics know is that God...the Sacred...is found in imperfection. As humans, we tend to want our God to be all Goodness and Light...we want the people in our lives to be kind...we aspire to being good friends and neighbors ourselves. But spiritual growth happens in the darkness, as well as the Light. Grace shows up as the beautiful *and* the ugly, the supportive *and* the hurtful, the delightful and the painful. The question is not how to get rid of the darkness, but rather, how can I use this darkness for good? How do I grow in discernment so that I can better navigate through the shadows when they come? (Pause)

The Mystics also realized that from profound suffering comes great wisdom and joy. As human beings, we have a tendency to think we are in control...don't tell me, I already know. When we get caught in this trap, Infinite Intelligence comes to the rescue. It may look to us like our world falling apart, individually or collectively. It might look like illness, or broken relationships, or the loss of a job or house. It is really Grace in disguise...Great Spirit shaking us up, trying to get our attention. From profound suffering comes great wisdom and joy.

(Pause)

The Mystical path is a celebration of paradox. Franciscan Priest Richard Rohr tells us that "True participation in paradox liberates us from our own control towers...Here, the paradoxes – life and death, success and failure, loyalty to what is and risk for what needs to be – do not fight with each other, but lie in an endless embrace. We must penetrate behind them both – into the mystery that bears them both. The Mystical path is a celebration of paradox.

(Pause)

Another mystical Truth...Contemplation means practicing heaven now. By contemplation, I do not mean thinking about things...figuring things out. Rather, I am

talking about the act of raising our thoughts to the Divine...consciously placing attention on the Sacred. We might also call this Communion...practicing the Presence. How might my life be different if, through my contemplation...the conscious directing of my thoughts to higher ground... I was to practice bringing heaven to earth on a regular basis? (Pause)

To discover the Truth, you must become the Truth. For the mystic, Truth is a lived experience. It is embodied Practice. It is something we feel within our heart...that we sense intuitively...not something we learn with our brain. The Mystical Path is a journey of becoming...adapting...being transformed by experience...not so much discovering our true nature, but remembering what we've always known.

Rev. Diana, Chris, & Dalton – Musical Meditation

 ***Remember, written by Chris Johnson***

Finally, when you are transformed, others will be transformed through you. This is the way of things. We are all part of One Life...when I am changed, everything around me changes.

We are social creatures, born into families...meant to be in community. Modern science tells us that babies that are neglected cannot thrive, and will eventually die without intervention. The same is true of our elderly. And the same is true for each one of us.

But being in community is an art form. It takes work...authenticity...integrity...empathy...compassion...willingness. Building successful community requires the members to have an active interior life...to be self-reflective and willing to adapt and allow others to do the same. But it also requires the members to hold a shared vision...and a willingness to work towards that vision.

Building successful community requires a degree of emotional intelligence...a degree of control over one's words, facial and body language...a level of self-awareness and self-honesty...and the ability to accept people where they are, without criticism or judgement.

Building successful community requires a compassionate heart and the ability to set and communicate boundaries. It takes an ability to stand strong and the willingness to be vulnerable. And it takes a great deal of discernment and Inner Guidance.

When these pieces are in place, Community provides a safe space for beings to grow and thrive.

Chris – Guided Meditation

Whether we know it or not... whether we *like it* or not, human beings are interdependent... dependent on one another... on the plants, animals, air, water, and minerals with whom we share this planet... and on Grandmother Earth HerSelf... No one of us can survive – let alone *thrive* – alone...

Humans build communities for many different reasons... from survival of the tribe to social or economic networking, to time-share vacation homes... You and I have chosen

to build *this* community in order to support one another on our spiritual journeys... because *true* spiritual growth can only succeed in community...

Mystic Heart has chosen to be a *Beloved Community*... we have agreed to honor and respect each other *always* and *in all ways*... to support one another in hard times... to celebrate together in good times... and to gently, lovingly hold ourselves and each other accountable for keeping our shared agreements... We are *family*...

Why do we need community for our spiritual evolution?... Because *you* are the Face of Spirit for me... I love my Creator by loving *you*... I worship God by blessing and praising *you*... I forgive myself when I forgive *you*... I can only experience my Oneness with the Divine by feeling *our* Unity...

This Beloved Community challenges me to open my heart... to be vulnerable... to offer you my Authentic Self... shortcomings and all... and to love and accept you, just as you are... and just as you are *not*... As we share these three minutes of Silent Meditation, I invite you to think about the way you commune with the Divine Presence, however you conceive that... With your imaginal inner eye, envision members of our community as the Face of God... put *them* on the Heavenly Throne...

Silence – 3:00

Great Spirit, thank you for opening my heart to this community... Thank you for the kind words and loving embraces you give me through this Spiritual Family... Thank you for giving me the courage to share your Divine Love – however imperfectly – with these Holy People... May I never forget who and whose I am...

There is only One of us here... that One is the Divine Presence... present as you... present as me... as the music... as the message... as the stirring in our hearts as we are moved and transformed by our worship together...

Returning now to the wisdom and inspiration of Rev. Diana's Taizé message, we celebrate our Oneness with our Creator and with one another... We see Divine Light shining out through every eye... and *that's What the Mystics Knew*...

Rev. Diana

Upon entering a monastery or convent, a Benedictine Nun or Monk commits to living the rest of their lives in the same community. Challenges arise, as they do for all of us. The commitment is to work through the challenge... holding those who challenge us as Sacred Friend...honoring the Journey...and growing internally from the work.

The same can be true for the Buddhist Monk who enters a monastery. Or an Initiate who enters an Ashram. Deep Spiritual Growth happens most readily in consistent community. And the deeper the commitment to one's Community, the greater one's willingness to work through conflict, which brings growth. Conflict brings the need for resolution. Resolution requires humility, vulnerability, compromise, consensus...and when we simply cannot agree, coming to Peace with our disagreements.

Pray with me for the Humility, Strength, Courage, Discernment and Wisdom it takes to be in Community...and prayers of gratitude for our Safe and Sacred Community.

Taizé Closing Prayer

The Light of Spirit shines brightly in this place.

The Love of God fills our hearts, our minds, and our Sacred Space as we gather together in Community.

Coming to know one another, we experience the Presence of God.

We are the hands and feet, hearts and voices of the Divine.

And here is what I know...we need one another.

We are made to live together...to serve one another...and to receive the gifts offered us by others.

When we find a Community that fits...that loves and accepts us for who we are...that pushes us, but not too hard...stretches us, but not too far...we have found Home.

Thank you, Spirit, for my Spiritual Home...my Spiritual Family.

May we all be Peaceful, Happy, and free from harm.

May we come to know and live from the Truth of who we are.

And may we know the rich blessings loving relationships.

May we forever shine the Light of Love and Devotion into the world.

May we shine the Light of Integrity and deep Faith into every corner of our lives.

May we find within, the Humility, Courage, and Strength to walk in Truth.

Thank You, Spirit, for this day, and for Blessings too numerous to name...those gifts that I would call beautiful and graceful, and those that challenge me to grow in character, resilience, faith, and love.

I walk in reverence and gratitude for Your Masterful Creation, and for Your Powerful Presence and Guidance in my Life. Resting in Your Presence and knowing that my prayer is answered before it is spoken. I let it be. And So It Is! Amen!

Rev. Diana

I invite you to Come back into the awareness of your body...notice the atmosphere in the room, and when you feel ready, gently opening your eyes and allowing your 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.

Rev. Diana – Love 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 in the world. 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.

As a way of remembering our Vision for a Love-Soaked World, Dalton has a song for us this morning.

Rev. Diana, Chris, & Dalton – Offertory Music

 ***Circle of Fire Prayer, written by Cari Cole & don Miguel Ruiz***

Rev. Diana – Blessing for the Offering

Feel free to grab a cup of something warm next door and meet us back at 10:30 for a Conscious Conversation. We'll bless you on your way with

Rev. Diana, Chris, & Dalton – Taizé Closing Song

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

Conscious Conversation

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 here at Mystic Heart. We are an Independent Interfaith Community that teaches Universal Principles and Practical Spirituality. We open our doors in welcome, trusting that you will be led to the Guidance and Wisdom of your own Mystic Heart.

Opening Music

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

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

 ***One God***, written by Linda Webb=Khakaba

I invite you to once again, move into the imaginal realm, bringing all of your senses and feeling into the creation of a ***Love-Soaked World***.

Know with me now that we are creating a world where all humans embody and live from the Qualities of Spirit...Love, Kindness, Generosity, and Compassion...and from this way of being, I feel the presence of a deep sense of Joy, Contentment, and Sufficiency. It's palpable.

In this more conscious world, all people honor and care for one another, for all of the life forms that share this beautiful earth, and for the earth Herself.

We *remember* that we are connected to all of Life...that we are dependent on the planet to sustain us, and on one another.

Being true to our generous nature, we give of ourselves freely, offering the gifts that are uniquely ours. With all needs met for every person, each one is free to share time and talent in ways that feed the soul.

By our every thought, word, and action, we're creating a world in which all beings are well-fed...have the safety and comfort of home and a deep sense of purpose. And belonging. We are so grateful that health, education, and healthy relationships are supported by social systems grounded in Integrity, Compassion and Wholeness.

Every being is finally valued for its uniqueness...we practice living Authentic lives where vulnerability is celebrated...there is no need to defend or protect. With Love, Generosity and Kindness guiding every human heart, our world is free of hatred and violence. We recognize the abundance that surrounds us...giving and receiving flow freely in every direction and all beings gratefully receive all that is needed to live physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually fulfilling lives.

The planet and its beings thrive like never before as we learn to see the sacred in everyone and everything...we walk in reverence and gratitude for all that we have been given.

We maintain this Vision day by day, moment by moment; we are not swayed by appearances. Each of us works to align our actions with our Vision, living these changes first in our own lives, with our families, friends, and neighbors...and a new world is being born. In this process of profound change, this Community stands as an open and welcoming place for all who seek support, belonging, Family.

By the power of our deep faith, this prayer is acted upon, answered even before it is spoken, as Spirit knows our heart's desire and intent. In full expectation of its Graceful unfolding...

...we release it to the Creative Power and Intelligence that I call God...to the One that gets it done...And so it is...Amen!

Bringing awareness back to the body, to the room, to this beautiful life, and to the amazing beings who share this space with us this morning...look around to say good morning to your Spiritual Family.

Our theme this month is ***Divine Union***, and the topic of Conversation this morning is ***What the Mystics Know***. Instead of offering a recap of the Taizé and using it as a springboard this morning, I'm going to dive more deeply into Chris's meditation from earlier this morning. He began with this message:

"Whether we know it or not... whether we *like it* or not, human beings are interdependent... dependent on one another... on the plants, animals, air, water, and

minerals with whom we share this planet... and on Grandmother Earth HerSelf... No one of us can survive – let alone *thrive* – alone...”

He said that “Humans build communities for many different reasons... from survival of the tribe to social or economic networking, to time-share vacation homes... You and I have chosen to build *this* community in order to support one another on our spiritual journeys... because *true* spiritual growth can only succeed in community...”

Those are pretty strong statements.

Do you believe that’s true? That on one of us can thrive alone? And *true* spiritual growth can only succeed in community...”

Why do you suppose that’s true? What does being in community bring us?

Mystic Heart has chosen to be a *Beloved Community*... we have agreed to honor and respect each other *always* and *in all ways*... to support one another in hard times... to celebrate together in good times... and to gently, lovingly hold ourselves and each other accountable for keeping our shared agreements... We are *family*...

When we began this community, we spent a lot of time coming to some shared Community Agreements. I’d like to share those with you...some of you might have been part of creating these.

1. We agree to always be respectful, compassionate, loving, honest, and authentic in our thoughts, words, actions, and communications, speaking our needs clearly. In doing so, we create a safe, loving, and supportive environment in which complete transparency is the norm, vulnerability is honored, and where people are free to evolve physically, psychologically, emotionally, and spiritually.

What are the important words here? (respectful, compassionate, loving, honest, authentic in our thoughts, words, actions, and communications...safe, loving, supportive environment)

2. We agree to take personal responsibility for our thoughts, words, and actions at all times. In doing so, we create a loving environment where spiritually mature individuals promote peace, joy, and celebration in all that we do.

What is most important in this agreement? (personal responsibility)

3. We agree to reverently seek Spirit’s Guidance, going directly to parties involved and seeking the help of a Minister if needed, when resolving conflict. In doing so, we trust that Love is leading the way, and that Peace prevails.

What about this one? (seeking the help of a Minister if needed, when resolving conflict – people hesitate because they don’t want the Minister to know...)

4. We agree that we are consciously choosing to create a Spiritual Family. In doing so, we are creating a space in which to belong, a place to call Home.

What about this one? (Safe space)

5. We agree to welcome all who come, gracefully honoring each individual as a unique child of God, accepting all faith paths and levels of awareness as a sacred part of the Spiritual Journey. In doing so, we attract a vibrant group of diverse members who practice this teaching to live in the consciousness of Oneness each and every day.

What jumps out at you with this one? (*honoring* each individual as a unique child of God; accepting all faith paths and levels of awareness as a sacred part of the Spiritual Journey)

6. We agree to respect one another's personal space. In doing so, we create a comfortable community experience in which everyone feels safe and honored.

This means honoring one's physical space...mental and emotional space...for me, it means not only asking if I may hug you, but it means giving you the space and time to process for yourself...to know that I am not going to solve your problems for you; rather, I am here to listen and reflect back so that you can put the pieces together for yourself.

7. We agree to live from a consciousness of Wholeness and Abundance. In doing so, we create personal lives and a Spiritual Home that are radiantly healthy and free from limitation of every kind.

Are we walking this path perfectly as a community? (Yes and no)

What do I mean by that? (we all make mistakes AND we are here on purpose)

Chris continued his beautiful meditation with this question:

Why do we need community for our spiritual evolution? (Because *you* are the Face of Spirit for me... I love my Creator by loving *you*... I worship God by blessing and praising *you*... I forgive myself when I forgive *you*... I can only experience my Oneness with the Divine by feeling *our* Unity...)

What does this Community challenge you to do...or to be?

(open my heart... to be vulnerable... to offer you my Authentic Self... shortcomings and all... and to love and accept you, just as you are... and just as you are *not*)

Sometimes it feels easier to 'go somewhere else' than to work through what this community brings. Let's face it...it's easier to run than to face the challenges, especially when we might be part of the problem. But we miss out when we do this...

What do we miss out on?

Let's close in prayer, knowing the Truth for each one of us.

Closing Prayer

The Light of Spirit shines brightly in this place.

The Love of God fills our hearts, our minds, and our Sacred Space as we gather together in Community.

Coming to know one another, we experience the Presence of God.

We are the hands and feet, hearts and voices of the Divine.

And here is what I know...we need one another.

We are made to live together...to serve one another...and to receive the gifts offered us by others.

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May we find within, the Humility, Courage, and Strength to walk in Truth.

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I walk in reverence and gratitude for Your Masterful Creation, and for Your Powerful Presence and Guidance in my Life. Resting in Your Presence and knowing that my prayer is answered before it is spoken. I let it be. And So It Is! Amen!

Take a moment to allow your awareness to return to your body, to this space, to this beautiful gathering...welcome back.

Love Offering

I 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.

We're going to share a couple of songs this morning, just because we're here and we can...

Rev. Diana, Chris, & Dalton – Offertory Music

 ***Promised Land, written by Diana Johnson***

♥ *Oh Yes, I'm Free, written by Diana Johnson*

Chris – Blessing for the Offering and Invitations

♥ *The Mystic Heart Book Club will start up again on May 7th.*

♥ *Rev. Diana's World Religions class is taking one week off as she and Chris enjoy a 'Work at Home Sabbatical.'*

♥ *Fast Track to Wellness will be taking a week off and will return with a Community Cooking day on May 2nd.*

♥ *Metaphysical Bible is taking a week off and will return on May 2nd.*

Looking Ahead...

♥ *Prayers in the Wind with Ellie Thompson, Saturday, May 4th, 10:00 am – 1:00 pm. This is a Prayerful Play Shop where each participant will create a unique set of Prayer Flags. Contact Ellie for more information, or to reserve your seat. Suggested Donation: \$20 – Snacks provided.*

There is more information available in the March Bulletin...take one home with you. And check out our amazing website.

Information Cards if new people

Prayer Requests: I am available after service – We invite everyone to help us make a private space for prayer here in the Sanctuary by joining us next door for lunch

Rev. Diana, Chris, & Dalton – Closing Song

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

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