

WISDOM CALLS
Spring 2021 • Vol. 28 No.1



“Wealth of Spirit”

Wisdom Calls is the quarterly bulletin of the Queen of Heaven Gnostic Church

Chief Editor: Steven Marshall

Clergy:

Rt. Rev. Steven Marshall, Bishop
Rev. Linda Dies, Priest
Rev. Joseph Wolf, Priest
Rev. Ali Azizi, Deacon

Web Design:

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Queen of Heaven Gnostic Church

5815 NE Everett St.

Portland, OR 97213

Email:

Portland@gnosis.org

Phone:

503.233.0854

Web:

gnosticchurchportland.org

Facebook:

QueenOfHeavenPortland

Regular Events

Gnostic Holy Eucharist

High Mass with Homily, Rt. Rev. Steven Marshall, Celebrant

Every Sunday 11 AM

Our real nature is divine. Because we are divine, we have infinite strength and wisdom at our command, provided we can free ourselves of the obstacles in our personality, which stand in the way of our conscious union with the indwelling God.

The Holy Eucharist [or Mass] is so designed that it may remove the barriers separating the human and divine natures in ourselves. The Queen of Heaven Gnostic Church of the Ecclesia Gnostica invites all who seek this mystic union, to partake of the Eucharist, and of the other mysteries [sacraments] which it administers. No barrier of creed, race, or status is erected around the altar of the Gnosis. Please join us for this traditional and inspiring service.

ALL EVENTS THIS QUARTER, UNLESS STATED OTHERWISE WILL TAKE PLACE AT THE CHURCH ADDRESS

Note: Due to the Covid 19 restrictions on social gatherings, in-person attendance is limited and wearing of masks is required. My intention is to continue to stream Sunday morning services via Zoom to those unable to attend in person. We are observing the restrictions of local businesses in the area, according to the phase I reopening criteria.

WATCH EMAIL ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR SCHEDULE CHANGES OR CHECK FACEBOOK: www.facebook.com/QueenOfHeavenPortland/



*A Homily for the First Sunday
after Easter*

Wealth of the Spirit

By Rt Rev Steven Marshall

As delivered in Hollywood on Low Sunday 2002.

The first Sunday after Easter has been called “Low Sunday”, so as to distinguish it from Easter Sunday, which has been called “High Sunday”. Ecclesiastics facetiously explain the title supposedly because attendance is typically so low on this Sunday in comparison to Easter Sunday. This phenomenon, not always born out in my experience, is in a certain way symbolic of the dichotomy of how the success of a religion, church or person is measured when contrasting a worldly versus a spiritual view of the matter.

The Gnostic point of view expresses this dichotomy most often in the contrasting of material wealth and an exterior, visible growth in the world with spiritual wealth and an interior, invisible growth in the Spirit. One can appreciate this dichotomy in the contrasting of the two parables of the rich man in the *Gospel of Thomas*:

“Jesus said: There was a rich man who had much money. He said, ‘I shall put my money to use so that I may sow, reap, plant and fill my storehouse with produce so that I lack nothing.’ Such were his intentions, but that same night he died.”

Now, contrast the previous saying with the following parable of the wise merchant:

“Jesus said: The Kingdom of the Father is like a merchant who had a consignment of merchandise and who discovered a pearl. He sold the merchandise and bought the pearl alone for himself. You, too, seek this enduring and unchanging treasure where

no moth comes near to devour and no worm destroys.”

The pearl here is symbolic of the priceless treasure of the spirit, the seed of the Light within us, our authentic and immortal Self.

Acknowledgment of the value of the pearl by the wise merchant, as opposed to the rich man who thought only of the temporal wealth of the world, signifies a recognition of the true value of knowing our authentic Self, often obscured by the material and psychological obfuscation of the world, but which is a recognition of our authentic Selves as sons and daughters of the Light. The rich man who put his value in the things of this world is contrasted with the wise merchant who gives up all to obtain the single pearl. As stated in the *Gospel according to St. Luke*, “Likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple.”

There is a great treasure of the Light within us of whose nature most of are only temporarily or vaguely conscious, yet it is of a reality that is truly enduring, that is incorruptible and immortal. Such a treasure of the Light is so powerfully obscured by the overvaluing of material things and psychological and social preoccupations that very little of it shines into everyday consciousness and out into the world. The hidden nature of our authentic Self, most tragically occulted even from our own awareness is further amplified by the following passage from the *Gospel of Philip*:

“No one will hide a large valuable object into something small, but many a time one has tossed countless thousands into a thing worth a penny. Compare the soul. It is a precious thing and it came to be in a worthless body.”

This passage exhorts us to avoid identification with anything that falls short of our authentic

spiritual Self, the true treasure of the Light. Do not put our value, our authenticity, into anything less than our true pneumatic Self; do not compromise our spiritual integrity. If we identify ourselves, our value, our wealth, with any of the myriad, worthless things of the world, we become eaten up by that. As stated in the Gospel according to Thomas, "Blessed is the man who eats the lion and the lion shall become man, but cursed is the man whom the lion (world) eats and he will become a lion." If we identify our value with material things and the body, we are eaten up by that and fall into the snare of the Hyletic. If asked who they are, they answer, "I am the possessor of such and such in material wealth or status," or, "I am the possessor of such and such physical attributes of my body." If we identify with what we think or feel, we are eaten up by that and fall into the prison of the Psychic. If asked who they are, they answer, "I am a believer or unbeliever in such and such," or, "I am a lover or hater of such and such." We get stuck in these false identities and become blind to anything greater. In the logion from the *Gospel of Thomas* recited for this Sunday, Jesus further explains this blindness:

"And my soul was afflicted for the sons of men, because they are blind in their hearts and do not see that empty they have come into the world and that empty they seek to go out of the world again."

Many coming from a secular, socio-economic paradigm of salvation continually complain about the problems of material poverty. Indeed, there is much suffering due to conditions of poverty in the world, and we should help to alleviate it to the extent that opportunities avail themselves to us on a personal level. But material poverty pales in comparison to the spiritual poverty, the spiritual emptiness that afflicts the vast majority of people, both the rich and the poor. As the *Gospel of Thomas* explains, "They do not see that empty they have come into

the world and empty they seek to go out of the world again."

For such dispirited people the phrase, "wealth of the Spirit," is an oxymoron. They cannot acknowledge even the existence of the things of the spirit, let alone assign any value to them. In the portion of the *Gospel of Thomas* read today, Jesus points out what is truly important to consider in this regard:

"Jesus said: If the flesh has come into existence because of the spirit, it is a marvel; but if the spirit has come into existence because of the body, it is a marvel of marvels. But I marvel at how this great wealth has made its home in this poverty."

People have not truly come into the world empty but, being unconscious and ignorant of the treasure within them, they are effectively empty. The recognition of that treasure cannot come about through an abstract or theoretical speculation on the origin of material or immaterial things but through experience, both a consciousness of the poverty of ignorance as the existential condition of the human being in the world, and the recognition of the true treasure of the Spirit, that fragment of the Divine Light that enlightens the soul and aids her in transcending the material and psychological obscurations of the world.

The Gospel reading for today further explains the process by which these conscious recognitions occur:

"Jesus said: I took my stand in the midst of the world and in flesh I appeared to them; I found them all drunk, I found none among them athirst... But now they are drunk. When they have shaken off their wine, then will they repent."

This passage indicates two steps in the process. First, we must shake off our drunkenness by the

things of the world. Then only can we repent and turn the awareness of our soul from external and material things to inner and spiritual things.

The captive and unrepentant soul is drunk on the drink of the world, a world that is made of substitutes for the spirit, that hold the soul captive, a worldly drink that befuddles our awareness, that puts us into a stupor of unconsciousness, and prevents us from becoming conscious of the spiritual treasure within us and of anything beyond the world's counterfeits of the real. This drink comes in a myriad of masquerading and superficially attractive forms, but they are all unfulfilling and counterfeit creations, they are only replicas of the real, they are the promises and threats of false gods and archons. We become attached to and captured by the ideas of the mind, the emotional affections of the passions, the dressed-up desires of our instinctual drives. But they are false gods; they give false promises of fulfillment, comfort and peace, but they do not deliver it in any enduring fashion. Ultimately, they are empty and they leave us empty.

What we are really seeking behind all these counterfeits are the enduring things of the Spirit, the wealth of the Spirit, the treasure of the Light within. Being drunk on the drink of the world is an attempt to find wealth, happiness and fulfillment on the horizontal and external dimension of being.

Wealth is related to the word "weal," meaning wellbeing, but material and psychological things cannot really offer this in any lasting way. How often have people found that the achievement of their worldly desires did not bring them the happiness that they sought. How often we say to ourselves, "If only so and so believed in my ideas then I would be well and happy. If only I had such and such a possession or physical characteristic then I would be well and happy. If only I had this like satisfied or that dislike

removed, then I would be well and happy. But when we have obtained these objects of our desires, we find that we are still not well nor happy and another thing takes its place.

Eventually, we must throw off the wine of our worldly attachments; we must come to a point of dissatisfaction and sometimes, even despair with these counterfeits of the real before we can ask for and receive the spiritual drink of another and higher reality, before we can drink of the Living Water of the Spirit, which alone provides a weal that is fulfilling and enduring. We must lose the life oriented to the poverty of ignorance to obtain the life of liberating Gnosis. In some instances, before we can be disappointed with the false wine of the world, we must experience that which truly offers a wellbeing and fulfillment that endures; we must experience something better and greater, then we can repent.

Repent means to turn back, to reverse our direction. Instead of giving our worship to the shibboleths and false gods of the ego and of the human nature directed toward the external world on the horizontal dimension of being, we must turn back to our authentic Selves and to our beginning, our source in the Fullness. We must turn the womb of the soul inward so that she bears us spiritual children as insights of Gnosis. When the soul becomes directed to the Light within, she bears forth the wealth of the Spirit. The Kabbalists teach that the highest is the innermost. In the Pistis Sophia, the Most High is called the Inmost of the Inmosts. That interior star of our being is the door, the way, the opening to transcendence and freedom. Yet that pearl, that treasure of the Light, is hidden beneath layers and layers of dust and darkness. It is imprisoned and entombed by the rulers of matter and psyche, so thickly obscured that we can barely know where to seek for it. What the Gnostics knew is that we cannot find it outside of ourselves.

The title for this Sunday from early times is *Dominica in Albis*, meaning “Sunday in White,” as it signifies the day when at the end of the service, the neophytes, those baptized on Easter Eve, stripped off their baptismal garments of white and put on their civilian dress. The white vesture of the Light becomes interiorized and hidden beneath the outward and worldly appearance. As St. Paul the Apostle wrote, “We have this treasure in earthly vessels.”

We must find a way to penetrate these layers of obscurity. We must cleave the wood of outward semblance. We must lift the stone. We must roll the stone away from the tomb of matter, lift it away from the tombs in which our spirits are buried while we live in this flesh.

This work of finding and rescuing the Light within ourselves and in the universe may be simple but not easy. The alchemists have said of old, “Nature unaided always fails.” And so it is with our own human natures. We might also say, “Human nature unaided always fails.” The work of freeing the wealth of the Spirit cannot be accomplished by the mental-emotional-instinctual complex of the ego, or by a social organization simply devised and orchestrated by such egos. We require a light from outside of the archonic system of the world and yet lies within us, such a light as that represented by the flame of the Paschal candle, to find our way back to the Light, to give us the spiritual strength and sustenance to lift the stone away from the tomb of our spirits.

So, from whence does this aid for us come. As sung by the Psalmist, “From whence shall my salvation come?” It comes in diverse ways through the Messengers of the Light, and for us through the Gnostic sacraments or mysteries, particularly the central one of the Eucharist. The Eucharist does not do the work for us, but it provides the necessary aid; it provides the spiritual nourishment and sustenance that gives

us the strength to make the great journey in this life, to search out the hidden tomb of our authentic being and to lift the stone away. The inner light that makes the way clear in the darkness of this world is increased by our participation in the Eucharist. Eucharist comes from the Greek word meaning “thanksgiving.” It is a thanksgiving for the wealth of the spirit given to us in the Eucharist, in the sacrament of what has been rightly called “the most precious gift.” It is a thanksgiving to the one who came down through all the Aeons of the Light and all the Archons of the Spheres to bring that gift to us. And so we are also thankful for the true and pure bishops, such as our Right Reverend Father Tau Stephanus, who represent the apostles of that Light. For as written by the holy prophet Mani, “For all the earlier religions were true so long as pure leaders were in them,” so has our bishop maintained the purity of our tradition by his pure leadership and remained true to his calling and his promise to the Light.

He has remained true to the Light from whence he and indeed all of us have come; and there shall he stand in Gnosis and in Truth, so that he and his successors might ever offer the Living Water, the true wine of Gnosis, and the Bread of Life, the Sustenance of the Angels, to the generations now and in the future, to provide the drink and the waybread of heaven to the weary pilgrims in this world who long for return to the Light and who long for the wealth of the spirit in Gnosis.

Schedule
Spring 2021

FEBRUARY

FRIDAY, February 5, 2021 11:00 am
Vespers and Healing
Intent: "Kindling of Light in the Darkness"
Officiant: Rev. Ali Azizi

SUNDAY, February 7, 2021 11:00 am
Sunday after Candlemas
Intent: "Kindling of Light in the Darkness"
Celebrant: Rt. Rev. Steven Marshall

SUNDAY, February 14, 2021 11:00am
Day of the Holy Valentinus
Intent: "Mythic Poet of the Gnosis"
Celebrant: Rt. Rev. Steven Marshall

SUNDAY, February 21, 2021 11:00 am
First Sunday in Lent
Intent: "Self-examination"
Celebrant: Rt. Rev. Steven Marshall

FRIDAY, February 26, 2021 7pm
Vespers and Healing
Officiant: Rev. Ali Azizi

SUNDAY, February 28, 2021 11:00 am
Second Sunday in Lent
Intent: "Yearning for God"
Celebrant: Rt. Rev. Steven Marshall

MARCH

SUNDAY, March 7, 2021 11:00 am
Third Sunday in Lent
Intent: "Understanding"
Celebrant: Rt. Rev. Steven Marshall

FRIDAY, March 12, 2021 11:00 am
Vespers of the Martyrs and Healing
Intent: "Holy Cathar Martyrs of Montsegur"
Officiant: Rev. Ali Azizi

This evening's vespers service commemorates the date in March 16, 1244 CE when the last of the Holy Cathars were burnt at the stake. Remembering them makes us mindful of the noble struggles and sacrifices that have been made to keep the Light of Gnosis alive.

SUNDAY, March 14, 2021 11:00 am
Fourth Sunday in Lent
Intent: "Spiritual Refreshment"
Celebrant: Rt. Rev. Steven Marshall

SUNDAY, March 21, 2021 11:00 am
Passion Sunday
Fifth Sunday in Lent
Intent: "Mystery of the Cross"
Celebrant: Rt. Rev. Steven Marshall

SUNDAY, March 28, 2021 11:00 am
Palm Sunday
Sunday Next before Easter
Intent: "Temporary Triumph of the Light"
Celebrant: Rt. Rev. Steven Marshall



SUNDAY, March 14, 2021 11:00 am
Fourth Sunday in Lent
Intent: "Spiritual Refreshment"
Celebrant: Rt. Rev. Steven Marshall



APRIL

HOLY WEEK

April 1 - 4

SEE HOLY WEEK OBSERVANCE PAGE

SUNDAY, April 4, 2021 11:00 am

Easter Sunday

Subject: "The Inner Resurrection"

Celebrant: Rt. Rev. Steven Marshall

SUNDAY, April 11, 2021 11am

1st Sunday after Easter

Intent: "The Wealth of Spirit"

Celebrant: Rt. Rev. Steven Marshall

SUNDAY, April 18, 2021 11am

2nd Sunday after Easter

Intent: "Divine Grace"

Celebrant: Rt. Rev. Steven Marshall

SUNDAY, April 25, 2021 11am

Day of the Holy Prophet Mani

Intent: "Apostle of the Gnosis"

No Portland services will be held this Sunday.

On this Sunday, in the Diocesan Center of Ecclesia Gnostica in Los Angeles, Ali will be ordained to the order of the priesthood. Check email announcements for details.

Note:

The Queen of Heaven Gnostic Church is the Portland parish of the Ecclesia Gnostica, a Christian Gnostic sacramental church, with its headquarters based in Los Angeles, CA. As a sacramental, liturgical church, we employ chant, candles, incense, bells, vestments, and other accoutrements for the purpose of elevating consciousness out of the ordinary. The structure and content of our liturgies are age old and inspired by the practices and metaphorical writings of the early Gnostics of the 1st through 4th centuries.

We continue an established and recognized, apostolic tradition without moralizing judgments or dogmatic statements of belief in a setting that fosters mystical inquiry and spiritual understanding. We retain the early gnostic practice of ordaining women on an equal basis with men and revere the feminine aspect of Deity in the fashion of our Gnostic forebears.

For more information please visit the Gnostic Archives: www.gnosis.org

www.gnosticchurchportland.org

Facebook: Queen of Heaven Portland



Easter Services 2021

Queen of Heaven Gnostic Church
5815 NE Everett St.
Portland, Oregon 97213
503-233-0854

Holy Week Begins

Palm Sunday Service

Sunday, March 28, 2021 11:00 am

Please join us for this holiday Mass with the blessing and procession of the palms to commemorate the triumphal entry of the Light into the Heavenly City. Palm Sunday marks an important initiation of our mystical participation in Holy Week.

Maundy Thursday Eucharist

Thursday, April 1, 2021 7:30 pm

The Eucharist is preceded by the Ceremony of the Washing of the Feet in commemoration of the Last Supper. A procession of the most holy sacrament exposed in the monstrance is enacted, as well as the blessing of holy oils for the year.

Good Friday Service

Friday, April 2, 2021 7:30 pm

This Gnostic service is restored from the Gnostic Acts of John and contains the sacred dance often translated as the Hymn of Jesus. Scholars believe that this simple dance is a mystery ritual and may be one of the earliest Christian rituals.

Holy Saturday Vigil

Saturday, April 3, 2020 7:30 pm

This service includes the Blessing of the New Fire with the lighting of the Paschal Candle, the Blessing of the Baptismal Water, Baptisms and concluding with the Easter Praeconium. Holy Saturday celebrates the timeless story of the Harrowing of Hell from the Acts of Pilate. In this story, enacted in Passion Plays throughout Christendom, the spirit of Jesus descends into the underworld to rescue Adam and Eve and a host of ancient spirits from the bondage of the Archon.

Festival of the Risen Light

Sunday, April 4, 2020 11:00 am

In this Festival of the Risen Light, we celebrate the Resurrection of our own spiritual natures, as exemplified in the story of the resurrection of Jesus. The triumphant culmination of the archetypal events of Holy Week brings a precious opportunity to enter the dimension of the sacred in a mystical apotheosis and transformation of consciousness.

CHURCH NEWS:

Father Joseph, celebrated a beautiful Mass for the 29th anniversary of his priestly ordination on the Third Sunday in Advent, December 13th. Thanks so much to him for his help in keeping the Gnosis growing and his Gnostic ministry.

Beginning in February of this year we have scheduled several Friday Vespers and Healing services with the reserve sacrament for Ali to further his training and experience in preparation for his advancement to the Priesthood in the Spring of 2021. Thank you, Ali, for your dedication and service to the Gnosis.

We collected a record amount for our Christmas Charity last Christmas Eve. We, as a church, donated \$250 to Portland Homeless Family Solutions. Thank you everyone who contributed.

As Multnomah County entered phase 1 of reopening we have opened the chapel for services on a limited basis. To preserve social distancing requirements, we must limit the number seated in the congregation to no greater than 3. If you wish to attend a service please text Quinton at 1 (425) 345-2826 so that he can advise you on the space available. We also ask that all attending wear a mask throughout the service to abide by the current regulations.



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