“Divine Grace”
**Wisdom Calls** is the quarterly bulletin of the Queen of Heaven Gnostic Church

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**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.

**Gnostic Healing Service** - Every 2nd Sunday

On the 2nd Sunday of each month of this quarter the Gnostic Healing Service will be inserted after the regular Mass. The Healing Service includes a sacramental anointing with Holy oil and imposition of the hands, which constitutes one of the seven sacraments of the Gnosis. Please join us in receiving this auxiliary sacrament.

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

WATCH EMAIL ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR SCHEDULE CHANGES
A Homily for the Second Sunday after Easter

Divine Grace
By Rt Rev Steven Marshall

The intents for the Sundays following Easter and preceding the Ascension can be viewed as steps of a process leading from the Inner Resurrection of Easter to the Return to the Light on the Day of the Ascension. The period between the Resurrection and Ascension of the Christ was a particularly important period, mythically and spiritually to Gnostic Christians, and historically to mainstream Christianity. In Roman Catholic practice and our own, this period is signified by the 40 days following Easter Eve during which the Paschal candle is kept burning. The 40 days is particularly important as a symbol of culmination. In our seasonal observances this is most aptly represented in the day of All Saints, November 1st being the 40th day after the autumnal equinox.

The period between the Resurrection and its culmination in the Ascension holds a great importance to Gnostics, as many of the Gnostic writings describe Jesus’ transmission of the most secret teachings of the Gnosis to the disciples and to Mary Magdalene as his most favored disciple during this period. According to Gnostic scriptures, the Christian dispensation in Jesus brought forth the most secret teachings after the resurrection and which were received spiritually, yet not just words or a book, but filled with a Divine Grace and a redeeming power which can be internalized by the individual through receiving sacraments so empowered. According to the Gospel of John, the most Gnostic of the canonical gospels:

“Then said Jesus to them again: Peace be unto you; as My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you. And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them: Receive ye the Holy Ghost (Spirit). Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.”

Yet all of this begs the question, what do we, as Gnostics and sparks of the Divine Light, need with Divine Grace or a Savior figure? Can we not just forget about all of this Christ and sacraments and mediators of Divine Grace? Certainly, true Gnostics should require no priesthood or sacraments. As one may glean from the Gnostic writings, this attitude is simply not the case. Yes, we are sparks of the Divine Light but we have fallen a long way from that Light; we are pearls but we are stuck in the mud of this world. Not only do we come into this world spiritually blind and deaf, but we come into it spiritually stupid as well. It is as if we were caught in quicksand. We cannot simply lift ourselves out, nor others caught in it with us. We require the hand of some being who is outside or has been brought out of the quicksand to lift us out. We require a redeeming power that is transcendent to the ego; we require Divine Grace.

The Gnostics of old recognized that there is something fundamentally wrong with the existential condition of the human soul in this world, a flaw in our psychological cosmos which no amount of affirmation to the contrary is going to fix. Yes, we have a spark of the Divine within us but it is sleeping; it needs to be awakened, needs to heed its Call and needs to do the will of the Divine who sent it. Christ came into the world to awaken the sparks of light from sleep and unconsciousness through teachings (Logos), mysteries (sacraments) and a spiritual power transmitted through the Apostles. According to the Gospel of Philip, “The Lord did everything in a Mystery: a Baptism, a Chrism, a Eucharist, a Redemption and a Bridechamber.” Another verse from the Gospel of Philip relates to the Apostolic succession that empowers them, “The Father
anointed Christ, Christ anointed the Apostles and the Apostles anointed us.”

The definition of a sacrament may help direct us to an understanding of the Divine Grace conveyed through sacrament. A sacrament is defined as, “the outward sign of an inner and spiritual grace.” From a Gnostic point of view, the key to this definition is “inner and spiritual.” It is hardly possible to grasp the Gnostic meaning of purification, forgiveness and the remission of sins without it. As in one of the logions from the Gospel of Thomas, “Why do you wash the outside of the cup? Do you not understand that he who made the inside is also he that made the outside.”

One way that Gnostics have interpreted the remission of sins in the dispensation of the Christ is as an abrogation of the Old Law. A keynote of the Old Law, as recounted in the Old Testament, is that of purification, as the purity necessary to find favor with God. Deuteronomy and Leviticus describe numerous physical ablutions, dietary laws and hygienic practices, all in the name of ritual purity, yet they are all practices of outer purification; they do not in themselves bring one closer to the Divine; they do not absolve one’s guilt nor remit one’s sins. As an abrogation of the Old Law, both superseding it and fulfilling its purpose, the Christ brought an inner purification, the Law of Love, and a forgiveness not of this world, a Divine Grace from above.

A keynote of the new dispensation is that of freedom, freedom from the restrictions of the Old Law, a liberation and loosening of the chains of guilt and sin. Guilt is the great curse of the Demiurge: the great binder of the spirit, the great stunting of spiritual growth, the great perverter of all things beautiful and good in human experience. Anything that can aid us in relieving this burden of guilt is a remedy worth having. Yet, guilt is with us; one cannot deny it or cover it up or project it onto others. Whatever we do in this way never gets rid of it; our sins are retained. To rid ourselves of guilt our sins must be understood and absorbed.

One of the powers of the priesthood is to remit (absolve) sins. To absolve comes from the Latin root absolvere meaning “to loose.” Absolution works to relieve the burden of guilt and loose the psychological complexes that enslave us. This cannot be accomplished at the level of the ego consciousness alone; it requires a redeeming power transcendent to it. The inner purification comes by Divine Grace, a transcendental mystery that yet dwells within us. It is called “Grace” because it is given without cost, stint or bargain. It is called Divine because its redeeming power, which cleanses the soul of every stain, seems to come from a place transcendent to and outside of the ego; it comes from another aeon.

The work of redemption, also known as the Restoration in Kabbalah, is not something we can complete at a human level; it requires a transpersonal process, something from another aeon. Absolution is not a rational process; one cannot simply think or affirm guilt away.

There are two ways that our egos attempt to get away from the process: arrogance or laziness. It is the supreme height of arrogance to believe that our human personality can accomplish the work of redemption on its own, no matter the modality it may choose or concoct for the purpose. It is the supreme height of laziness and stupidity that belief in anything: Jesus, the Bible or anything else is going to get us out of the mud of ignorance. Yet the lifting hand from above requires a response from below; absolution requires contrition.

One can view contrition as diverging into two principal approaches to the process: one based on fear and ignorance, and the other based on love and Gnosis. When contrite out of fear one finds a god-image who is jealous, vengeful, punishing and judgmental, evoking guilt and fear of requital; one bears the cry of an endangered, suffering ego, approaching contrition through fear or reaction in arrogant denial. When contrite out of love one finds a god-image who is compassionate, generous, patient and kind, a contrition inspiring faith (Pistis) in Gnosis and hope in newness of life. Even in orthodox Roman Catholic theology, the latter, as perfect contrition is considered equivalent to receiving priestly absolution.

We cannot ignore the wrathful god-image of the Old Testament, which is common to all of the Abrahamic religions, primarily mainstream Judaism, Christianity and Islam and predicated on a god-image that is external and separate, exacting judgment with punishment to the sinful and rewards to the righteous, either in this life or in the hereafter. The mystical
developments of these in Kabbalah, Christian Gnosticism, and Sufism sought to counter the former god-image with a God that they experienced as interior and the all-pervading source of the universe and the human being. Rather than seeing this development as a polarized dichotomy of god-images, it might be advantageous to view the God of these mystical developments from a Jungian perspective as the direct experience of a transcendent, ineffable and unknowable God-image which both transcends and subsumes the God of fear and judgment into the God of love and forgiveness. One finds then a transcendental forgiveness and Divine Grace, as one visionary once declared, “such forgiveness, such forgiveness, such forgiveness in the very being of consciousness itself.”

Greater consciousness is thus the means and purpose of perfect contrition. Complete forgiveness, whether of ourselves for our offences or others for theirs against us, requires a fundamental change in consciousness, a metanoia. The harmonizing pair (syzyge) of absolution is Confession; we must confess our sins to ourselves and to the God of our heart in an effort towards greater Self-knowledge and receiving the Gnosis of the heart, not wallowing in guilt and exclaiming “mea culpa (my fault),” but seeking, rather, the greater consciousness of union with one’s divine Self-hood, the God indwelling, which subsumes the lower self into the Divine, just as the God of the Gnostics absolves and subsumes the punishing god of the Old Testament. This is no more beautifully expressed than in the general Confession and Absolution in our Gnostic Holy Eucharist: ignorance is subsumed into Gnosis, error is subsumed into Truth, and the lower self is subsumed into the Higher, to “receive the Grace and comfort of the Holy Spirit,” the celestial Mother and Consoler of the Gnostic.

Yet, the effort to greater consciousness in the act of confession is essential to absolution. Confession and contrition constitute the work that we must do for ourselves. In addressing ourselves to the interior dimension, nobody or no-thing can do the work of Self-knowing for us, not a bishop or a priest, vicarious atonement, or even Jesus himself can do it for us. From an interior point of view, as an expression of our Divine Self-hood, we are all apostles and disciples of the Christ within. In this case, where the Logos declares, “Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained,” we can take it to refer not to the “whosoever” out there, but rather the “whosoever” within ourselves. We must dig down and bring out into consciousness those shadow elements within us which require redemption and absolution. As stated in the Gospel of Philip:

“For so long as the root of wickedness is hidden, it is strong. But when it is recognized, it is dissolved. When it is revealed it perishes. As for ourselves, let each one of us dig down after the root of evil which is within one, and let one pluck it out of one's heart from the root. It will be plucked out if we recognize it. But if we are ignorant of it, it takes root in us and produces its fruit in our heart. It masters us, it takes us captive, and we are its slaves.”

When we pluck out those constellations of repressed guilt within us and bring them into consciousness, they are absolved, they perish and the Truth that makes free grows in its place, in our own hearts.

Sin comes from the Greek word transliterated as himarzia, an archery term meaning “missing the mark” and comes very near the English meaning of the word “mistake” or “error” as used in the Gnostic writings, primarily the Gospel of Truth, where the “Error” refers to the Demiurge, the “root of wickedness”, the incomplete fruit of the fallen Sophia which in her ignorance she generated. To “miss the mark” is to stray or fall from the aim of union with the Divine, and so in our general confession in the Mass, we confess that we have “wandered from the path which leads to righteousness.” Thus, sin constitutes those errors born of separation from and ignorance of the Divine. That “missing of the mark” occurs when we do not redeem with our own consciousness the shadow elements, the “whosoever” within us. When we bring these shadows of the personal and collective unconscious into the day light of our consciousness, our sins can then be remitted. Our consciousness is flooded with a transpersonal sense of forgiveness, which is experienced as Divine Grace; we transcend our human personalities in receiving an absolution from
on high. As in our general confession addressed to God, we aspire to become “the unspotted mirror of Thy power and the image of Thy goodness.”

When we apprehend the fullness (Pleroma) of being we can see that sin and guilt belong to a very ephemeral and passing part of our nature; we are freed from the shackles of the Demiurge. When we see our own star shining immortal in the heavens and feel the presence of the redeemer within, who cares what misdeeds one may have done “from our youth until today,” as we have apprehended the Self who “makes all things new.” Even so, as our consciousness is expanded to include an ever greater reality, shall the old god-images of the collective unconscious emerge and require assimilation into a new religious paradigm of the individual, as in the Revelation of St. John, “Behold, I make all things new.”

Divine Grace came into the world to awaken the Christ within us, that we might become Christs. The exoteric rite of Penance is primarily for the so-called “psychic” Christians, referring to those under the Old Law. For the pneumatic Christian, the Gnostic, absolution is made complete in the sacrament of Redemption.

Redemption comes from the Greek word “Apolutrosis”, which means literally to become unstained, as to be unstained by the world and connotes being rescued from captivity and to be made new, akin to the Cathar rite of the Consolamentum. This redemption involves a renunciation of the world as a renouncing of the system that keeps the human spirit and indeed all of nature in thrall, a renunciation of all of our psychological soul attachments and ego projections with which the archons have enslaved us and hidden from us the truth of our divine Self. We become one of those who, according to the lesson from the Gnosis of the Invisible God, “have left the whole world and all its affairs.” We transcend the hyletic body and transcend the psychic chains in preparation for the supreme initiation of the Bridechamber, the mystical union with the Divine.

In our sacramental system, the sacraments of Redemption and Bridechamber are most particularly under the auspices of the holy feminine power, known by the Gnostics as Sophia, who is an image of the redeemed Redeemer. The Gnostic Mystery of the Renunciation from our Gnostic Rosary expounds a metaphorical truth concerning this sacrament of Redemption:

“And the Lord laid the kingdom at Her feet and renounced all sovereignty and rule unto Her Throne. The sword that he brought he received at Her hands to redeem and to conquer for the reception of the Light.”

The holy feminine Powers, Sophia and the Holy Spirit are sublime agencies of Divine Grace and redemption. Among the followers of Valentinus, Grace is the title of one of the feminine Aeons. Elaine Pagels translates a portion of the Marcosian prayer included in our pre-Eucharistic prayers, thus:

“May she who is before all things, the incomprehensible and indescribable Grace, fill you within and increase in you her own knowledge (Gnosis).”

May that seed of Light that has been implanted in us from the beginning be watered with the divine dew of Grace. May it grow into the Tree of the Pleroma, the Tree of Light and the Tree of Gnosis within us. May we become the Knights and Standard-bearers of Sophia and bestowers of her Grace, that we might know the Divine Grace that was always in the world, from the beginning, world without end, unto the Aeons and aeons.
Schedule
Spring 2020

FEBRUARY

SUNDAY, February 2, 2020 11:00 am
Candlemas Day
Intent: “Kindling of Light in the Darkness”
Celebrant: Rt. Rev. Steven Marshall
(Please bring your candles to be blessed for the year.)

SUNDAY, February 9, 2020 11:00 am
Septuagesima Sunday
Intent: “The Gift of Wisdom”
Celebrant: Rt. Rev. Steven Marshall

MONDAY, February 10, 2020 7pm
Open Divination Night
We will be doing tarot, angel cards, pendulums, etc. Come and join in. If you don’t know how, come and learn!

SUNDAY, February 16, 2020 11:00 am
Sexagesima Sunday
Intent: “Holy Spirit as Sanctifier”
Celebrant: Rt. Rev. Steven Marshall

SUNDAY, February 23, 2020 11:00 am
Quinquagesima Sunday
Intent: “Holy Spirit as the Fire of Love”
Celebrant: Rt. Rev. Steven Marshall

FRIDAY, February 28, 2020 7pm
Sophia Devotional Service
Celebrant: Quinton

MARCH

SUNDAY, March 1, 2020 11:00 am
First Sunday in Lent
Intent: “Self-Examination”
Celebrant: Rt. Rev. Steven Marshall
(Blessing and Signing of the Ashes)

SUNDAY, March 8, 2020 11:00 am
Second Sunday in Lent
Intent: “Yearning for God”
Celebrant: Rev. Joseph Wolf

MONDAY, March 9, 2020 7pm
Open Divination Group
We will be doing tarot, angel cards, pendulums, etc. Come and join in, if you don’t know how, come and learn!

SUNDAY, March 15, 2020 11:00 am
Sunday before Montsegur Day
Intent: “Holy Cathar Martyrs of Montsegur”
Celebrant: Rt. Rev. Steven Marshall
Today’s Mass commemorates the date in 1244 AD 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 22, 2020 11:00 am
4th Sunday in Lent
Intent: “Spiritual Refreshment”
Celebrant: Rt. Rev. Steven Marshall

FRIDAY, March 27, 2020 7pm
Sophia Devotional Service
Celebrant: Quinton

SUNDAY, March 29, 2020 11:00 am
Fifth Sunday in Lent
Passion Sunday
Intent: “Mystery of the Cross”
Celebrant: Rt. Rev. Steven Marshall
APRIL

SUNDAY, April 5, 2020 11:00 am
Palm Sunday
Intent: “Temporary Triumph of the Light”
Celebrant: Rt. Rev. Steven Marshall

HOLY WEEK
April 5 - 12

SEE HOLY WEEK OBSERVANCE PAGE

SUNDAY, April 12, 2020 11:00 am
Easter Sunday
Subject: “The Inner Resurrection”
Celebrant: Rt. Rev. Steven Marshall

SUNDAY, April 19, 2020 11am
1st Sunday after Easter
Intent: “The Wealth of Spirit”
Celebrant: Rt. Rev. Steven Marshall

FRIDAY, April 24, 2020 7pm
Sophia Devotional Service
Celebrant: Quinton

SUNDAY, April 26, 2020 11am
2nd Sunday after Easter
Intent: “Divine Grace”
Celebrant: Rt. Rev. Steven Marshall

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 2020

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Holy Week Begins

Palm Sunday Service
Sunday, April 5, 2020 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 9, 2020 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 10, 2020 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 11, 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 12, 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.
Chapel Cleaning Day was held on November 17th. Many thanks to all that assisted in preparing the chapel for the holidays. A special thanks to Stevan for decorating the chapel so beautifully for Christmas.

One of our assisting priests, Father Joseph, celebrated a beautiful Mass at a well-attended service for the 28th anniversary of his priestly ordination on the Third Sunday in Advent, December 15th. Thanks so much to him for his help in keeping the Gnosis growing and his Gnostic ministry.

Our Special Epiphany Service was held on January 5th this year, traditionally known as Twelfth Night. A grand time was had by all, concluding with the holiday party and gift exchange. Special thanks to Stevan for all of the gift bags that he prepared for us.

Ali has been serving at the altar nearly every Sunday for the last three months and advancing rapidly through the minor orders. On November 24th he was ordained to the order of Acolyte. Congratulations and blessings to him for his continued growth in Gnosis and his commitment to the service of the Light.