“The Mystery of Christ”
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  

Web Design: allcreativemedia.com

Deadline for changes or submissions for the Autumn 2021 bulletin is July 15th

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, it remains uncertain as to whether church events may take place at the church address on the scheduled dates. My intention is to continue to stream Sunday morning services via Zoom to those unable to attend in person. The physical presence of people attending, witnessing and participating in the mysteries and sacraments of the Gnosis is of paramount importance to disseminating the Gnosis of the Light. We will open our doors as soon as other closed businesses in the area open for in-house gatherings again.

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

© 2021 Queen of Heaven Gnostic Church
A Homily for the Twelfth Sunday after Trinity

The Mystery of Christ

Rt Rev Steven Marshall

Many of us are familiar with the mystery novel where the object of the reader is to solve the mystery; yet the Mystery of Christ is something quite different, for the mysteries of Gnosis are not mysteries to be solved; they are mysteries to be experienced, experienced as mysteries. It is not by political ramblings, theological speculations or ideological discussions that we come to the sanctuary of the Gnosis, but through the experience of a mystery. To explain a mystery explains it away, and it is lost. A mystery does not avail itself to the precision that we can always say exactly what it is; often the most we can say about it is what it is not. When the disciples are asked to describe who Jesus is like, Thomas responds with the greatest insight and perception, “My mouth can in no wise declare whom thou art like.” It is not possible, nor desirable, and even dangerous to say what this mystery of Christ is. If you say what it is, it is no longer a mystery. It becomes a thing of the mind which people can either believe or not; it is taken out of the realm of pneumatic experience.

The inner mysteries of the Gnosis are not going to pat us on the head and comfort us with having the right answer. Initially, they are even troubling to the psyche. The mysteries are not something to be pinned down. The crucifixion of the Word, the Logos, very much reminds me of this continual desire to nail these mysteries down when their real purpose is to lift us out of our ordinary way of thinking. They are mysteries and must remain mysteries, so as to inspire us with a sense of awe and wonder, leaving us with a sense that there is always something greater, deeper and more unfathomable behind the outer symbols. “My mouth can no wise declare whom thou art like.”

Mysteries draw forth the response of seeking. The first Logion of the Gospel of Thomas states, “Cease not seeking until you find.” This seeking is not some kind of outward shopping around, not a process of (“Well, I didn’t find it here, so I’ll try over there, and on and on.”). It is an inward permeability and receptivity to experience without preconceived agendas or psychological filters about the experience. After deep, sometimes agonizing seeking for the truth, the answers to our seeking come through inner experiences and, sometimes, outer synchronicities revealing and amplifying these inner experiences. When these Gnostic insights come to us, they break down our preconceived notions of reality, the ego structure is shaken up; we are troubled. As stated in the Gospel of Thomas, “When you find you will be troubled, and when you have been troubled you will marvel, and you will reign over the all.” Finding does not solve the mystery. First it is troubling, as it breaks down, like a “tower of Babel,” our ego agendas and destroys our security in our personal conceptions and ideas. Then we marvel as we are faced with the ineffability of the Mystery, and finally, in the unitive experience of Gnosis, we reign over the all. A mystery does not have to be intellectually comprehended for it to be experienced in a transformative way. This requires a certain degree of trust in the process. Yet this trust is different from blind faith, or as I like to call it, “stupid faith;” as it is a faith in Gnosis, faith in an experience of an intimate acquaintance with a spiritual reality that dwells within us. Yet this unitive experience, this mystery is not a generic inspiration of a purely subjective nature, it is an experience within a context, a recognizable vessel in which the experience may occur. One such context is the Gnostic Holy Eucharist.

The text of the Gnostic Holy Eucharist can provide us with reference points or signposts on the way of our apprehending the Mystery of Christ. One of the mystery phrases uttered by the priest is “the mystic and cosmic Christ.” This presents us with a mysterious paradox. The Mystery of Christ is both mystically interior and cosmic in scope, both individual and universal. First, there is the mystic Christ, the interior Christ, the Christ within, “the hope of glory”, as stated in the letters of St. Paul the Apostle. Isaiah describes it as, “…the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of reverence…” Jung referred to it as the Self; yet, initially, it is experienced as exterior to our egoic consciousness, as a mysterious other within our interior sphere of consciousness. All who report an authentic
connection with this presence say that its voice neither flatters nor condemns. Another somewhat paradoxical characteristic is a feeling of forgiveness, which nonetheless does not justify our faults and personal weaknesses. “He shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears...” This mysterious other guides us toward the unitive experience of Gnosis, the Spirit within us striving to become conscious in us and through us, as our true royal Selfhood.

The unitive experience of the mystic Christ allows us to apprehend the cosmic Christ. We find that there is not only an interior and individual Christ but there is also a cosmic and universal Christ. The cosmic Christ works at the unifying process of gathering together the fragmented sparks of divinity scattered throughout the cosmos, which is gathered into the wholeness of the more universal consciousness of Christ but, yet is also, paradoxically, the one who has been fragmented and scattered in us. In the Sethian material of the Nag Hammadi Library, the fragments of divinity are called seeds of light, from the seed of Seth to whom Sophia gave the light of her Spirit in preparation for the coming of the Christ and the redemption of all creation.

“Likewise the Mother sent down upon the man her spirit which is in her likeness to prepare a dwelling in him and his seed for the aeons that will come down, in order that when the Holy Aeon come forth, they may raise him up and heal him of the deficiency, that the whole pleroma may again become perfect and holy.” (The Origin of the World)

The seed of Seth describes a spiritual lineage, a root from which the Christ within us is descended. As in the words of the Prophet Isaiah: “There shall come forth a rod out of Jesse and a branch shall grow out of his root.” The seed of light is prepared as a dwelling for the aeons that will come down, suggesting a unifying experience which has been poetically figured as a marriage in Gnostic literature, and the dwelling place as the heavenly city, Jerusalem, adorned as a bride for her bridegroom. Yet this dwelling is prepared in the seed of Seth not in the heavens, so that we find another paradoxical mystery of that which is both interior and transcendent.

We can never really say what this mystery is, but we can more easily say what it does in us. The mystery of Christ is not something to be nailed down but something to lift us up. Jesus’ immediate response to Thomas’ answer is “I am not thy master.” This is not a case of Christ humbly lowering himself to Thomas’ level but of Thomas being raised to the level of the Christ. That the other disciples miss it indicates that a certain receptivity and emptiness of preconceptions is necessary to apprehend the Mystery as Thomas does. Jesus explains further to Thomas why it is he who receives the Mystery, “...because thou hast drunk, thou hast become drunk from the bubbling spring which I have measured out.” Because Thomas has emptied himself of all the petty agendas that we make up to explain to ourselves what the mystery is, he has been able to become intoxicated with the true wine of the Gnosis. The rising up to the level of Christ is more implicit in a later logion from the Gospel of Thomas where Jesus says, “Whoever drinks from my mouth shall become as I am and I myself shall become he, and the hidden things shall be revealed to him.”

Reception of the hidden and inner dimension of the outwardly expressed mysteries requires a preparation. It requires a certain level of spiritual understanding based on experience, as well as an emptying of the ego of its preconceived notions about Gnosis. To communicate inner mysteries to the unprepared might even be destructive. When the other disciples ask Thomas what Jesus said to him in secret, Thomas answers, “If I were tell you one of the things that He said to me, you will take up stones and throw them at me, and fire will come out of the stones and burn you up.” Gnosis of the Mystery provokes a negative and fearful reaction from the world, even as in the Gnostic myth, the ignorant Demiurge strives to destroy the seed of Seth in the Flood and in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and in history with the crusade against the Cathars and the annihilation of Tibet. If we reveal that we know, those in ignorance will pick up stones and throw them at us. The difficulty in transmitting the inner mysteries is that they are not something that verbal expressions are adequate to convey. An additional difficulty is that one cannot transmit them to one not prepared to receive them. They are things that one
must experience for oneself, and otherwise can only be destructive to both the giver and the receiver.

There are facilitators of experience, but there is nothing of this world that can make an unprepared person have these authentic experiences. There is no one or no thing that by itself can make people have the specific and recognizable experience that is called “Gnosis.” There are facilitators of Gnosis and there are outer mysteries or sacraments, which like a cup can hold and make available the living waters of the Christ. They can hold the living waters, but only you can drink. As the old adage goes, “You can lead a horse to water, but you can’t make it drink.” We must be prepared to drink of the “bubbling spring” which Christ has measured out.

The key to approaching the inner mysteries through the outer forms of ritual and sacrament is a heartfelt, sacrificial and selfless devotion to the Mystery, a true and sincere longing for that which is deeper and more ineffable than all our imaginings to reveal itself to us. This is not blind faith in a doctrine, but an interior certainty of something original within us, which we have forgotten. For the bubbling spring, the living waters are the water from the Well of Memory. This water is the antidote to the waters of forgetfulness which even the highest of the Messengers of the Light who have come down, save one, is made to drink when coming into the world. It might be said that there is an original ignorance rather than an original sin with which we all struggle. When we drink from the Well of Memory, the bitter gall of forgetfulness gives way to the sweet taste of the living waters of the Christ within.

The principal task, the mystic and cosmic task of the Gnostic is to remember. Remember the House from which we have come. Remember our root. “There shall come forth a rod out of Jesse and a branch shall grow out of his root...” So must we remember our true and immortal root, the light, life and grace from which we have come, the heavenly city which the Gnostics called Jerusalem, the City of Peace, the place of repose. This is not a political kingdom on earth or on another planet. For the Gnostic it has always been and always will be a heavenly kingdom beyond this world. And when we drink from the bubbling spring, which Christ has measured out, its memory comes to dwell in our hearts. The cry of the Gnostic rings out in every age, “If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand wither, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I remember not Jerusalem above my highest joy.” The beauty of the memory is so intense, so heartfelt and so deep, the longing to return so great, that it brings tears to our eyes, tears of beauty, tears of joy and longing, joy at obtaining the memory that was lost and longing to keep that memory bright which will guide us back to our origin. And this is enough. This is enough. It is not necessary to have prophetic visions or grandiose pronouncements of past-life memories. Only this Gnosis of the Heart is sufficient. The memory may come simply as a waft of a fragrance, or a sweet taste that moves through and fills our heart like a penetrating and enfolding spirit. This may be all there is to it; yet this simple Gnosis of the Heart is what is necessary and, in many ways, a more authentic and genuine memory than anything else we might receive.

When we remember the House from which we have come, when we remember our true and immortal root, when we remember the heavenly City of Peace, the mystery of Christ shall be raised up in us, and the peace and the rest shall come. When we drink of the water from the Well of Memory, then as Isaiah proclaims, “the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon us.” When the Heavenly City comes to dwell in our hearts, then, “they shall no more hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain.” When we remember the Heavenly City in our hearts, then we are the mystery of Christ. Then, truly, “the earth shall be full of the Gnosis of God as the waters cover the sea.”
Calendar of events
Summer 2021

Note:
Check email for Zoom announcements of the Gnostic Rosary of Sophia at 8:00pm on most Fridays.

MAY

SUNDAY, May 2, 2021 11am
4th Sunday after Easter
Intent: Divine Aid toward Liberation
Celebrant: Rt. Rev. Steven Marshall

SUNDAY, May 9, 2021 11am
5th Sunday after Easter
Intent: The Human Potential for Liberation
Celebrant: Rt. Rev. Steven Marshall

SUNDAY, May 16, 2021 11am
Ascension Sunday
Subject: “Return to the Light”
Celebrant: Rev. Ali Azizi

SUNDAY, May 23, 2021 11:00 am
Pentecost Sunday
Intent: “Coming of the Holy Spirit”
Celebrant: Rt. Rev. Steven Marshall

SUNDAY, May 30, 2021 11:00 am
Trinity Sunday
Intent: “Devotion to the Triune Deity”
Celebrant: Rt. Rev. Steven Marshall

JUNE

SUNDAY, June 6, 2021 11am
Commemoration of Death of Carl Gustav Jung
Intent: Divine Protection
Celebrant: Rev. Joseph Wolf

SUNDAY, June 6, 2021 11:00 am
1st Sunday after Trinity
Intent: Transforming Power of the Holy Spirit
Celebrant: Rt. Rev. Steven Marshall

SUNDAY, June 13, 2021 11am
2nd Sunday after Trinity
Intent: God as Light
Celebrant: Rt. Rev. Steven Marshall

SUNDAY, June 20, 2021 11am
3rd Sunday after Trinity
God as Ruler of Angels
Celebrant: Rt. Rev. Steven Marshall

SUNDAY, June 27, 2021 11:00 am
4th Sunday after Trinity
Intent: God as Love
Celebrant: Rt. Rev. Steven Marshall

JULY

SUNDAY, July 4, 2021 11:00 am
Day of American Independence
Intent: Freedom of Gnosis
Celebrant: Rt. Rev. Steven Marshall

SUNDAY, July 11, 2021 11:00 am
6th Sunday after Trinity
Intent: Steadfast Dedication
Celebrant: Rt. Rev. Steven Marshall

SUNDAY, July 18, 2021 11:00 am
7th Sunday after Trinity
Intent: Purity as a Condition for Union with God
Celebrant: Rt. Rev. Steven Marshall

SUNDAY, July 25, 2021 11:00 am
Mary Magdalene Sunday
The Apostle to the Apostles
Celebrant: Rt. Rev. Steven Marshall

We celebrate the Feast of the Holy Mary of Magdala. Gnostics have esteemed Mary Magdelene above all other disciples, as the embodiment of Sophia and the beloved Consort of Christ.
Pentecost Sunday

May 23, 2021

Holy Gnostic Eucharist at 11 am

At Pentecost we celebrate the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and into communication with all Gnostics, as the Source of Wisdom, the Sanctifier and Comforter. The Gnostics have always recognized the Holy Spirit as a feminine power of the Trinity.

Confirmation also called the sacrament of Holy Chrism will be administered to those who have requested it and prepared themselves to receive it.

(Call Father Steven at 503-233-0854 for requirements.)
Church News

This year we observed Holy Week with attendance limited to accommodate social distancing. Father Steven conducted the rituals of each night, assisted by Quinton and Father Joseph. Thank you so much Father Steven for your impeccable attention to every detail and to all those who contributed to its success. In-person and Zoom attendance supported the inspiration brought forth with each service.

On Easter Sunday, we safely and successfully celebrated and streamed the Easter Mass via Zoom to seven people in their homes, and with two attending in-person. It was fabulous to see all of you over the airways, and particularly those who attended in-person. Thanks go to Quinton for setting up the camera/microphone for the Zoom meeting and attending to the online participants.

On Sunday, April 25, Ali was ordained to the order of the priesthood in the diocesan center of Hollywood, California. The Queen of Heaven Gnostic Church presented Ali with a beautiful gold-plated chalice and paten, which were consecrated on the Saturday before the ordination. The ordination by two bishops, the Right Reverend Fathers Stephan A. Hoeller and Steven W. Marshall, and the attendance of many clergy in choir made it a memorable event for all. Congratulations to Ali on his ordination to the priesthood and his continued growth in service to the Gnosis.

News Flash – Gnosticon IV – Save the Dates

Every twenty years the Ecclesia Gnostica has coordinated a Gnostic conference. The last was in October of 2001 aboard the Queen Mary in Long Island, California. This year 2021 Gnosticon IV will be held in Austin, Texas. The dates to save are September 16 – 19. More details will be forthcoming.

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, California. As a sacramental, liturgical church, we employ chant, candles, incense, bells, vestments, and other accouterments 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: “gnosis.org”
And the Queen of Heaven homepage at: “gnosticchurchportland.org”