“Steadfast Dedication”
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: Abiding by the Oregon Health Authority’s guidelines
regarding Covid 19, we are open for in-person gatherings of fully
vaccinated individuals. Masks are now optional. We request that
unvaccinated individuals wear a mask and observe standard
precautions. If you are experiencing any Covid or flu-like
symptoms we request that you stay home. We will continue to
stream Sunday morning services via Zoom to those unable to
attend in person. The physical presence of people attending,
watching and participating in the mysteries and sacraments of
the Gnosis is of paramount importance to disseminating the
Gnosis of the Light. Please join with us in service to the Divine.
Steadfast Dedication

Rt Rev Steven Marshall

Here “dedication” is the dedication to achieving Gnosis; steadfast is persevering in that quest. The quest is the quest for Gnosis. The road is not easy or short. There is no shortcut to Gnosis, no magic pill, no magic wand, no weekend workshop. It takes long years of practice in following the inner voice of one’s higher and divine Self. Giving up along the way or turning from the chosen path keeps us from finding the stepping-stones and experiences of Gnosis required along the way. We must seek before we can find. The Gospel of Thomas puts it very well, “Cease not seeking until you find…”

Gnosis requires three things. They are very similar to the three jewels in Buddhism in which the aspirant takes refuge: the teaching (guru), the practice and the community. First, one must dedicate oneself to the spiritual helper and initiator within one’s Self. Secondly, one must be steadfast in pursuing one’s chosen path of spiritual practice. Lastly, one must serve in a community of those striving for Gnosis.

The words of the Prophet Mani describe the Spiritual Helper thus, “The Father sent a creative Logos to us.” In the Mass we affirm, “Thou art our Word (Logos). Thou wast sent by the Father to dwell in us.” There is a creative Logos, a spiritual helper, a higher power, a divine Selfhood, which transcends but does not exclude the lesser self or the ego personality. This has been called the Christ within, to which we must be dedicated and in which we must in some measure be acquainted, before we hear the “Call” to the quest.

The Gnostics differed widely in the various details of Jesus incarnation and death. Though the historical details may differ from the mainstream, nothing in the Gnostic scriptures denies the validity and authenticity of a living conscious presence that the Gnostics experienced in such an inward fashion. Such a being has been metaphorically titled the Living Water, the Word, the Way, the Christ. “It is Thou of whom all stand in need, within and without, for Thou alone art the unattainable, the invisible and the unsubstantial.”

What then is this Gnosis that is revealed by the Logos? I cannot give you any details or specifics that would be helpful; I can only give you certain assurances. There is something, some conscious being behind this experience, a creative Logos, a Christ, within and without, which is the foundation of our sacramental work. In this way, it transcends our personal sense of I, and yet it is revealed inwardly as our essential Self. This is the nature of a mystery, that it reconciles two seeming mutually exclusive ideas. As in the preface to the oblations in the Mass, “Thou knower of the chosen’s’ mysteries descend.”

The mysteries of the Christos are inwardly revealed, not dogmatically dictated from outside authorities. So, Gnosis is not an intellectual belief, a dogmatic statement or teaching of facts. It has been called the Gnosis of the Heart. A definition of it from Bentley Layton’s The Gnostic Scriptures is “acquaintance” It is an intimate acquaintance, a knowing, not in the sense of knowing a fact, but in the Biblical sense of intimately knowing a person, as in “Adam knew Eve.” Gnosis is more of the character of the experience of another, the intimate sharing with another consciousness. But one taste of that greater consciousness is all it takes; then we know – we know that higher and divine Self to whom we are dedicated and to whom we will be united, in which realization we
shall know that all our struggles have been utterly worthwhile.

The Prophet Mani further intimates the importance of a spiritual practice, a practice in which one perseveres and strives.

“Then lights, which are the means of Gnosis were given him, and he was given authority over all the secrets, so that he might distribute them to those who had striven.”

The secrets are given to those who have striven. The struggle toward Gnosis is about developing an awareness of a greater consciousness within us. This is often experienced as an “observer”, who is perfectly compassionate, yet completely detached from our outer senses, our thoughts, feelings, and desires. This is why Buddhist meditation practices put so much stress on self-observation. First, one observes the breath, then thoughts, emotions, and finally the will and desires. Some develop an acquaintance with this “observer” in childhood, some later, and some never in a particular lifetime.

As we strive toward Gnosis, we understand the struggle, how difficult it is to get even the slightest amount of this greater consciousness. When we set out on this journey to Gnosis, we realize how far we are from the Light. There is a struggle, a keen striving. As spoken in the Mass, “Thou who dost share in all noble strivers’ struggles.” This is not a phrase that anyone arbitrarily conceived and wrote into the Mass; it comes from a hymn in the Acts of Thomas. Someone long before us experienced the striving and struggle to obtain Gnosis. The mystic, William Blake, in his epic poem “Jerusalem”, also speaks of this striving.

“I will not cease from mental fight,
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,
Till we have built Jerusalem

In England’s green and pleasant land.”

“We do not need models, if we are but just and true to our own imaginations, those worlds of eternity in which we shall live forever in Jesus our Lord.”

The “mental fight” describes another aspect of the quest. As in the Grail legends, part of the quest is in asking the right questions. One of the hallmarks of Gnostic experience is that we begin to question. We begin to question certain religious concepts and ideas by which we have been enculturated, either directly or indirectly. We say to ourselves, “I do not want to believe; I want to know!” This precipitates a great crisis, a troubling in the psyche, which only this inward, mental fight, “the noble striver’s struggle,” can resolve.

In Marion Zimmer Bradley’s the Mists of Avalon, Morgana talks to Lancelot concerning the struggle for enlightenment.

“They have not forgotten the Mysteries,” she said, they have found them too difficult. They want a God who will care for them, who will not demand that they struggle for enlightenment, who will accept them just as they are, with all their sins, and take away their sins with repentance. It is not so, it will never be so, but perhaps it is the only way the unenlightened can bear to think of their Gods.”

Part of the struggle, part of what makes the mysteries of Gnosis difficult, concerns the antagonism of the worldly system to the aspirations of the Gnostic. In this fashion, the Gospel of Thomas describes the world as a thief ready to snatch the insights of Gnosis from us.

“Therefore I say: If the lord of the house knows that the thief is coming,
he will stay awake before he comes and will not let him dig through into the house of his kingdom to carry away his goods. You then must watch for the world, gird up your loins with great strength lest the brigands find a way to come to you, because they will find the advantage which you expect.”

Like Don Quixote, like Parsifal, in their interactions with worldly society, the world will attempt also to dissuade us from our quest. We might think, “O that is unpopular, not politically correct.” However, if we stay awake, if we are ready when the thief that is the world comes to carry away the fruits of our Gnosis, then we will be guarded against the theft. We are ready to withstand the world, when we have the Self-knowledge to reveal the weak places in our own psyches. All of this is part of the struggle in pursuing the spiritual practices of Gnosticism.

The quest for Gnosis in spiritual practice is the path of individuation. This process is three-fold: in finding the means of increasing the light within us through some form of sacramental practice, in garnering various ways of receiving inner experiences of a transcendent nature and in the creative expression of those experiences in some form of art that can reflect and amplify such experiences. Together they result in the eventual constellation of the Self, as the Holy Grail, the Philosopher’s Stone, the final goal of the quest. It is no accident that alchemy is everywhere referred to as an art, not a science. Many avenues exist for these processes; the principal acid test is that they be authentic, in terms of The Red Book, an expression of the “Spirit of the Depths” rather than the “Spirit of the Times;” it must come out of our own experience. We must not be bound by fears or desires, neither concern ourselves with obtaining approval in the form of fame and fortune. Most of all, we must avoid the mere tinkering with other’s works of art. Many times, developing a form of art at which one is innately lacking in expertise can be most productive. A good example can be found in Jung’s illustrations in The Red Book, which, though lacking in technical skill, abound in numinosity and inner vitality, truly, as much windows to transcendence as any painted icon.

Another requirement is that we persevere in steadfast dedication to that goal and quest for Gnosis. In this regard, very often, we may “cease not seeking,” but we never pursue a particular path long enough to find anything, forever skirting about the base of the mountain and never reaching the summit. Although we have a marvelous smorgasbord of spiritual traditions from which to choose in the present culture of America, therein lies the difficulty as well. We may never reach that “mount of vision”, wherein we can perceive the golden thread that weaves through these various myths and practices. In essence, we must garner certain fundamental experiences, we must achieve a certain degree of individuation along a particular path leading upward, before we have something into which other symbol systems and traditions can find their place fruitfully within our own wholeness and Self.

The Collect for this Sunday also intimates the importance of a spiritual community of practitioners, a community that is not only manifest in the physical world and visible, but also a community that is unmanifest and invisible.

“Thou art the creator of those who have not yet manifested, for it is these whom Thou alone knowest — we know them not. It is Thou alone who showest them to us, so that we may pray to Thee for them.”
The communion with a community of noble strivers, both manifest and unmanifest, is a reflection of that ultimate consummation of our relationship with our indwelling divinity. This is the ultimate goal of Gnosis. And so, we dedicate ourselves to the quest, like Don Quixote, like Parsifal, like all the Fool-Heroes of myth and literature and history, to something greater than ourselves, to find a relationship of wholeness with a greater consciousness.

In like manner, the *Gospel of Thomas* tells us a little about the requirements for such a Gnostic community, “Let there be among you a man of understanding; when the fruit ripened, he came quickly with his sickle in his hand, he reaped it.” A Gnostic community must have a person of understanding, one who intuitively discerns the opportunities for Gnosis and can reap the fruit of those experiences.

So, we must take the opportunities for Gnosis when they are available to us. Like Parsifal in the Grail Castle, we must take the opportunity to ask about the mystery when it is presented to us; we must find the question in the quest. Then, like Don Quixote, we will find the “Impossible Dream”. If we remain steadfast in our dedication to the quest for Gnosis, we will reach that unreachable Star, as in one of the LCC benedictions, “we will stand in the place where the one initiator is invoked, we will see our star shine forth.”
Calendar of events
Summer 2022

MAY

SUNDAY, May 1, 2022 11am
2nd Sunday after Easter
Intent: Divine Grace
Celebrant: Rt. Rev. Steven Marshall

SATURDAY, May 7, 2022 7:30 pm
Sophia Service
A Devotion to our Lady Sophia
Officiant: Quinton

SUNDAY, May 8, 2022 11am
3rd Sunday after Easter
Intent: Divine Protection
Celebrant: Rt. Rev. Steven Marshall

SUNDAY, May 15, 2022 11am
4th Sunday after Easter
Intent: Divine Aid toward Liberation
Celebrant: Rt. Rev. Steven Marshall

SUNDAY, May 22, 2022 11am
5th Sunday after Easter
Intent: The Human Potential for Liberation
Celebrant: Rev. Joseph Wolf

SUNDAY, May 29, 2022 11am
Ascension Sunday
Subject: “Return to the Light”
Celebrant: Rt. Rev. Steven Marshall

JUNE

SUNDAY, June 5, 2022 11:00 am
Pentecost Sunday
Intent: Coming of the Holy Spirit
Celebrant: Rt. Rev. Steven Marshall

SUNDAY, June 12, 2022 11:00am
Trinity Sunday
Intent: “Devotion to the Triune Deity”
Celebrant: Rev. Joseph Wolf

SUNDAY, June 19, 2022 11:00 am
Sunday of Corpus Christi
Ordination to Deacon
Celebrant: Rt. Rev. Steven Marshall

SUNDAY, June 26, 2022 11am
Sophia Service
A Devotion to our Lady Sophia
Officiant: Quinton

JULY

SATURDAY, July 2, 2022 7:30 pm
Sophia Service
A Devotion to our Lady Sophia
Officiant: Quinton

SUNDAY, July 3, 2022 11am
3rd Sunday after Trinity
God as Ruler of Angels
Celebrant: Rt. Rev. Steven Marshall

SUNDAY, July 10, 2022 11:00 am
4th Sunday after Trinity
Intent: God as Love

SUNDAY, July 17, 2022 11:00 am
5th Sunday after Trinity
Intent: God as Peace

SUNDAY, July 24, 2022 11:00 am
Magdalene Sunday
Intent: The Apostle to the Apostles
Celebrant: Rt. Rev. Steven Marshall

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

SUNDAY, July 31, 2022 11:00 am
7th Sunday after Trinity
Intent: Purity as a Condition for Union with God
Celebrant: Rt. Rev. Steven Marshall
Pentecost Sunday

June 5, 2022

Holy Gnostic Eucharist at 11 am

At Pentecost we celebrate the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and into communion with all Gnostics, as the Source of Wisdom, the Sanctifier and Comforter, and our Celestial Mother and Consoler. Gnostics have always recognized the Holy Spirit as a feminine power of the Holy 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.)
Announcement – Ordination to Deacon – Let’s fill the Chapel

On June 26 Quinton will be ordained to the Diaconate. Please join with us in celebration.

Church News

This year we observed Holy Week with a full complement of clergy. Father Steven and Father Ali conducted the rituals of each night, assisted by Quinton and Father Joseph. On Holy Saturday Father Ali was conditionally baptized into our Gnostic rite. Congratulations, Ali! Thanks go to all those who contributed to the success of the Three Holy Days preceding Easter Sunday. The people in attendance greatly enhanced the inspiration brought forth with each service.

On Easter Sunday, we safely and successfully celebrated and streamed the Easter Mass via Zoom to eight people in their homes, and with four 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 24, Father Ali celebrated with powerful grace and beauty the first Anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood. Congratulations to him on this milestone. Blessings on his mission to set up an altar and start a parish in Nashville and on his continued growth in service to the Gnosis.

News Flash – Clerical Synod and Public Convocation – Save the Dates

June 10 – 12 in Hollywood California. See links to announcements and information below. All interested people are invited.

https://www.facebook.com/austingnosticsociety/videos/4806235392808289
https://youtu.be/rjhK7EHQpyU
https://www.facebook.com/events/289492353290506?ref=newsfeed

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 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: "gnosis.org"
And the Queen of Heaven homepage at: "gnosticchurchportland.org"