

WISDOM CALLS
Spring 2024 • Vol. 31 No.1



“Round Dance of Jesus”

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

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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.

**Monthly Sophia Service
Devotion to Our Lady Sophia**

This devotional service, unique to our rite, is a singularly meaningful and mystical experience dedicated to the Divine Feminine. The service includes the blessing of the rose, and culminates in the Litany of Love, in which love is sent forth to all, both the seen and unseen. (See schedule for details.)



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

WATCH EMAIL ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR SCHEDULE CHANGES

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A Homily for Good Friday

The Mystic Dance of the Saviour

By Rt Rev Steven Marshall



The whole period of Holy Week from Palm Sunday through Easter Morning recounts events that Gnostics have accepted not as historical facts but as myth and metaphor of interior processes of transformation and transcendence. In the mainstream denominations Good Friday focuses on the suffering and death of Jesus. In the Roman Catholic Church the tradition is to observe the Stations of the Cross, which illustrate the crucifixion and the suffering that led up to it. The focus is on one individual in history and a salvation through a belief in the mainstream interpretation of his death. So, why is this Friday called “Good?” I believe the answer lies in the mystic dance described in the Gnostic Acts of John, which is the principle focus of our Gnostic Rite of Good Friday.

Our Gnostic Rite of Good Friday is taken primarily from the Apocryphal *Acts of John*. This scripture that survived in Passion plays even through the spiritual darkness of the Middle Ages, describes both a mythic story and a mystery ritual. This particular stream of Gnosticism shows an understanding of the importance of myth and ritual as a means for experiencing the mystical state of consciousness through which to receive the saving and liberating insights of the Gnosis. For this to work both the transformative

myth as the context and the ritual as an outward expression of the myth must be present. A myth with deep transformational meaning and an enactment of the myth in a mystery ritual cuts through the ordinary means of mental perception and cognition. Spiritual insights and inward thoughts and impulses are not of much use until they are focused in outward expression. The transformational journey follows a certain mythic pattern, which must be ritualized and expressed in outer form in order to generate the mystical experience. As expressed in the twenty-second logion of the Gospel of Thomas, the inner and the outer must become a “single one.”

Like contemporary Gnosticism, early Christianity retained many elements of a mystery religion. This included preparations in the form of instruction, mystery initiations, different degrees of membership, and secrets imparted to initiates at different stages of spiritual insight and development. Gnostic Christianity retained these elements far longer than the mainstream. As evidenced in the Gospel of Philip, “The Lord did everything in a mystery: a Baptism, a Chrism, a Eucharist, a Redemption and a Bride chamber.”

In like manner the sacred dance of the Savior is a mystery, yet the mythic story that it enacts gives an entirely different twist to the conventional view of the crucifixion and the nature of salvation. The conventional meaning of the crucifixion is that the disobedience of the original couple, Adam and Eve, so angered God that he separated himself from them and their descendants so fully that the only way to redeem the

situation was through the suffering and death of his only son. This doctrine of original sin and salvation through belief made as little sense to the classical Gnostics as it does to us today. Such a meaning is not satisfactory to the Gnostic. To Gnostics the Fall was the result of a flawed creation, a false system (cosmos), not an original sin. To the Gnostics the crucifixion was not about an atrocity in history but a mystery with layers upon layers of meaning, a mystery in which we can and do participate. It is not just one thing. In the Acts of John the mystery of the Cross is described in myriad ways and with a multiplicity of meanings. "For you I call this cross of light now Logos, now Mind, now Jesus, now Christ, now Door, now Way, now Bread, now Resurrection, now Son, now Father, now Spirit, now Life, now Truth, now Faith, now Grace." (The Acts of John)

Like Buddhist philosophy the message of the Round Dance of Jesus teaches about suffering. Jesus tells John to learn how to suffer, in order to transcend suffering and move toward understanding and wisdom. The message is to approach the issue of suffering at an interior and mystical level of experience. Most attempts to put an end to suffering at the level of the world, in its system of materialistic and political values, usually create more suffering. The Good God, our Heavenly Parents and Fellow Spirits in the Light have never left us or forsaken us. They have continually sent Messengers of Light to awaken us and assist us to remember our true estate in relationship to them. The great existential experience of abandonment is the result of our not being conscious of the connection

and our own resemblance to the Divine. We require a change of orientation, an increase of consciousness. We have within us a connection to our divine origin, a highway back to our God. Remembering this connection may not seem to be as tall an order as world peace or saving the earth, but it is infinitely more effective in addressing the issues of suffering in the world, not just human suffering but the suffering of all sentient beings and, until we restore this connection we cannot rightly approach these larger, global issues.

The precise details of the crucifixion are not important to the Gnostic. The Logos used the suffering and death of the appearance of humanity to accomplish a great, powerful and transcendent mystery that gave fulfillment and life to the mysteries instituted in the Last Supper, a mystery transcendent to the suffering and death of material existence, and which allowed, in some measure, a means of transcending the suffering of embodied existence throughout the universe.

"Jesus said to John: Thou hearest of me suffering, yet I have not suffered; pierced, yet was I not smitten; hanged, but was not hanged; blood flowing from me, yet it did not flow. And in a word, what they say of me, these things I did not have; while what they do not say, those I have suffered. Understand me then as the slaying of a Word, wound of a Word, hanging of a Word, suffering of a Word, fastening of a Word, death of a Word, resurrection of a Word, and defining this Word, I mean every one!" (The Acts of John)

In the visionary experience recorded in the Acts of John, the cross of wood that slays the body of matter becomes instead a Cross of Light, which, like a ship, carries us across the ocean of suffering and ferries us back to our true home. Like a great door, a crack, a rent in the veil of the false cosmos, the intersection of the Cross, as the center of the Mandala, becomes a passage beyond this veil of tears.

In the Acts of John, the Christian mythos of transforming suffering into transcendence is described through ritual in the form of a sacred dance. This is the dance that, in the Acts of John, Jesus asks the disciples to dance with him. In the Gospel of Mark, the disciples sang a hymn after the last supper. In the Acts of John they not only sing a hymn but also participate in a mystery dance. Jesus asks the disciples to join hands and to move in a circle around him as they sing. The dance represents the transcendent union of all beings—the interior unification, wholeness and at-one-ment of human consciousness. The Logos in the center of the circle of disciples is a Mandala of the Self, with the Self in the center.

The Logos asks the disciples to reply to him with “Amen.” Amen means “So be it.” It is an affirmation on the part of the ego to the revelations and impulses of the greater Self—saying yes to a greater consciousness. Jesus begins by singing I would be saved and I would save, indicating that both the savior and that which is to be saved is within him and within us. The Initiator and the Disciple are one and the same. The Savior and the one who is to be saved are one. The one who rushes forth to save is the one who

is to be saved, in the gathering together of the limbs of fragmented divinity. The paradoxical statements of the mystery Logos are both simultaneously within us. The one in need of liberation and the one who liberates are one within us, as in a dance where all move as one.

In the mystery described in the Acts of John, we are really dealing with two dances: the one of the outer world in which Jesus appears to be crucified by a mob, and that of the inner and spiritual realm where Jesus is laughing and transcendent. The first might be called the Dance of Death, a cyclic, ever-repeating return to the same place, which never goes anywhere. It is in Buddhist teachings the Wheel of Samsara, the Kala Chakra, the Wheel of time, the wheel of death and rebirth. It is the wheel that many of us are on in the world: we are born, grow up, get a job, have a family, grow old and die, around and around, over and over again without any increase in consciousness or awareness of life’s meaning. This is the Wheel of suffering, of embodied life, whereon all of us are crucified everyday.

Yet in the Buddhist tankas there are figures in blissful and beatific radiance floating peacefully outside the wheel, who are transcendent beings, liberated ones. They got on a different wheel, the Dharma Chakra, the Wheel of Enlightenment, the Wheel of the Eight-fold path, that delineates the steps for getting off the wheel of suffering. In the Acts of John, this dance of liberated beings is described thus, “The eight dance with us. Amen. The twelve above lead the dance. Amen. The whole on high is a dance. Amen.” A light comes into

the world from outside the wheel of death with a message of liberation. It awakens us to the nature of suffering and how to transcend it. The Logos descends and says, "It is not me who is being crucified, but you who are being crucified by the world...The one who clings to this aeon will suffer unto the end of the aeon."

As long as we are attached to the world system, it does not allow us to transcend suffering. Yet the savior comes not to destroy the world but to redeem it. "I have not come to destroy this cosmos but that by me this cosmos may be transformed." Ego attachment to the things of the world is the source of suffering, yet the Light comes not to destroy the ego but to cut through its bonds and to add something to the psychological whole, the consciousness of the Self. "If thou hadst known how to suffer, thou wouldst have power not to suffer. Know then how to suffer, and thou hast the power to put an end to suffering." Such insight into the nature of suffering through an ecstatic state of consciousness brings about a metanoia, a change of consciousness, a turning from our fascination with the wheel of death and rebirth. The coming of the light of greater consciousness brings about a condition where one can transcend suffering by showing us how to transcend the limitations of this repetitious cycle through a radical awareness of its nature as impermanence and suffering.

The Dance of Death then becomes the Dance of Ecstasy, the Dance of Liberation, the Dance of the Savior. Ecstasy means to stand outside of one's self, outside of one's

ordinary condition. It requires an ecstatic state of consciousness to contact that greater spiritual reality that is extra-ordinary. Such a state I believe is not more beautifully expressed than in a passage from Mechtilde of Magdeburg's "Way of Love", as quoted by our Right Reverend Bishop, Tau Stephanus I, in his lecture on the Round Dance,.

"I would not dance, Lord,
unless thou ledest me.
Wouldst thou that I leap mightily,
then must thou sing for me.
Thus, will I leap into love,
From love into knowledge,
From knowledge into joy,
And from joy beyond all human senses."

Schedule Spring 2024

FEBRUARY

SUNDAY, February 4, 2024 11:00 am
Sunday after Candlemas
Intent: "Kindling of Light in the Darkness"
Celebrant: Rt. Rev. Steven Marshall

On this Candlemas Sunday, please join us in the blessing of candles for the new year and the St Blasius blessing of throats. We invite you to bring candles that you wish to have blessed for home devotional use.

SUNDAY, February 4, 2024 – 2:30 pm
Sophia Service
A Devotion to Our Lady Sophia
Officiant, Quinton

SUNDAY, February 11, 2024 11:00 am
Quinquagesima Sunday
The Holy Spirit as the Fire of Love
Celebrant: Rt. Rev. Steven Marshall

Sunday, February 18, 2024 – 10:30 am
The Gnostic Holy Rosary
A pre-eucharistic recitation and singing of the Gnostic Holy Rosary/Sophia Rosary

SUNDAY, February 18, 2024 11:00 am
First Sunday in Lent
Intent: "Self-examination"
Celebrant: Rt. Rev. Steven Marshall
Please join us for the Gnostic rite of signing with ashes.

SUNDAY, February 25, 2023 11:00 am
Second Sunday in Lent
Intent: "Yearning for God"
Celebrant: Rt. Rev. Steven Marshall

MARCH

SUNDAY, March 3, 2024 11:00 am
Third Sunday in Lent
Intent: "Understanding"
Celebrant: Rt. Rev. Steven Marshall

SUNDAY, March 3, 2024 – 2:30 pm
Sophia Service
A Devotion to Our Lady Sophia
Officiant, Quinton

SUNDAY, March 10, 2024 11:00 am
Fourth Sunday in Lent
Intent: "Spiritual Refreshment"
Celebrant: Rev. Quinton Ask

SUNDAY, March 17, 2024 11:00 am
Passion Sunday
Fifth Sunday in Lent
Intent: "Mystery of the Cross"
Celebrant: Rt. Rev. Steven Marshall

SUNDAY, March 17, 2024 2:30 pm
Vespers of the Martyrs
The Holy Cathar Martyrs of Montsegur
Celebrant: Rev. Quinton

This Sunday'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 24, 2024 – 10:30 am
The Gnostic Holy Rosary
A pre-eucharistic recitation and singing of the Gnostic Holy Rosary/Sophia Rosary

SUNDAY, March 24, 2024 11:00 am
Palm Sunday
Sunday Next before Easter
Intent: "Temporary Triumph of the Light"
Celebrant: Rt. Rev. Steven Marshall



HOLY WEEK
March 28 – 31

SEE HOLY WEEK OBSERVANCE PAGE

SUNDAY, March 31, 2023 – 11:00 am
Easter Sunday
Intent: “The Inner Resurrection”
Celebrant: Rt. Rev. Steven Marshall



APRIL

SUNDAY, April 7, 2024 – 10:30 am
Divine Mercy Sunday

A pre-eucharistic recitation and singing of the Chaplet of Divine Mercy. Please bring your own rosary if you have one.

SUNDAY, April 7, 2024 11:00 am
1st Sunday after Easter

Intent: “The Wealth of Spirit”
Celebrant: Rt. Rev. Steven Marshall

SUNDAY, April 7, 2024 – 2:30 pm
Sophia Service

A Devotion to Our Lady Sophia
Officiant, Quinton

SUNDAY, April 14, 2024 11:00 am
2nd Sunday after Easter

Intent: “Divine Grace”
Celebrant: Rt. Rev. Steven Marshall

Sunday, April 21, 2024 – 10:30 am
The Gnostic Holy Rosary

A pre-eucharistic recitation and singing of the Gnostic Holy Rosary/Sophia Rosary

SUNDAY, April 21, 2024 11:00 am
2nd Sunday after Easter

Intent: “Divine Grace”
Celebrant: Rt. Rev. Steven Marshall

SUNDAY, April 28, 2024 11:00 am
3rd Sunday after Easter

Intent: “Divine Protection”
Celebrant: Rev. Quinton

NOTE:

We are observing Montsegur Day on March 17 with a Cathar potluck feast after the Mass and followed by a Vespers of the Martyrs in honor of the Cathar Martyrs of Montsegur.

Divine Mercy Sunday falls on April 7. We will celebrate with a pre-Eucharistic call and response singing and recitation of the Chaplet of Divine Mercy.

We have two in-person, monthly, Sunday services added to our weekly scheduled services: the Devotion to Our Lady Sophia with the Blessing of the Rose and a call and response recitation and singing of the Gnostic Holy Rosary/Sophia Rosary, All are invited to attend these services in honor of the Divine Feminine. See Calendar for specific dates and time.

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

Queen of Heaven Website
www.gnosticchurchportland.org

Easter Services 2024

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

Holy Week Begins

Palm Sunday Service

The Temporary Triumph of the Light before its Obscuration

Sunday, March 24, 2024 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

The Mystery of the Eucharist

Thursday, March 28, 2024 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

The Mystery of Suffering: Human and Divine

Friday, March 29, 2024 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

The Descent of the Light before its Rising

Saturday, March 30, 2024 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 Christ 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

The Inner Resurrection

Sunday, March 31, 2024 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:

We have a new parish!

Bishop Marshall just got back from a trip to Nashville with greetings from Father Ali and the ecclesia gathered there for the consecration of his home chapel in Lebanon, Tennessee. On January 28, 2024 Bishop Marshall, Father Ali and clergy from Austin, Texas and Los Angeles, California convened for the ceremony with an attendance of more than thirty people. Congratulations and thanks to Father Ali for planning the event and providing all that is necessary to start a Gnostic church in Tennessee. Congratulations and thanks to Elizabeth, our new cleric, for all of her support during the event and of Father Ali in his Gnostic ministry. Thanks to everyone who contributed time and resources to making this a glorious and memorable event. Blessings on the Church of St. Thomas, the Apostle.

We collected a record amount for our Christmas Charity last Christmas Eve. We donated \$206 to Rose Haven for the Sisters of the Good Shepherd. Thank you everyone who contributed.



Note: The Queen of Heaven Gnostic Church is a 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 www.gnosticchurchportland.org

And the Gnostic Archives: www.gnosis.org