

INSCAPE February 2015

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Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

May you always be consciously aware of the grace and peace of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the love and mercy of God the Father, and the communion of the Life-Giving Holy Spirit dwelling within your heart!

A CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY OF THE HEART

“Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me” (Psalm 50:10).

God Trinity whispered in the silence of a muted, material world of beauty and multiplicity that God infinite wanted to be recognized and accepted by other creatures with whom he could share his very own life. “...Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them...And God blessed them...”(Genesis 1:26-28).

God dug deep into the very inner core of his being, the triune community of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and put into the hearts of the first man and woman and in all their progeny, you and me, their very own perfect and eternal burning love for each other. But because we are created by God as finite, material human beings, God puts into us also a burning yearning, a deep down, aching pain, to know the triune family of God and to share intimately in their Spirit of love in a unity-of difference.

We roam throughout this material world of ours, searching to discover more intimately the I-Thou-We of God’s community in every flower we touch, in every sunset we cry out to with awe and reverence: “O God!” Nothing, not even the oneness we experience in our human loves through the uniqueness of our two-ness and otherness, can ever take away this longing, aching pain within the depths of our being for greater oneness in the triuneness of God and for our uniqueness as a beautiful manifestation of God’s presence on this earth in the incarnation of our “fleshness” with God’s presence.

“For thy heavens have seen the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than angels, and hast clothed him with glory and honor. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet” (Psalms 8:3-6).

LIVING IN THE HEART

God has made us to live according to our true nature and to be at home, at oneness, with him. God’s numinous or sacred presence was meant to be discovered within the inner depths of our being, called in Scripture our *heart*, as well as inside the material layers of the created world around us. We see the need to turn “within” in order to make contact with a sacred presence that is more powerful than we are. We long to know a sacred meaningfulness that will give ultimate direction to our lives beyond our immediate self-centered needs.

Yet in our exploding universe of today, the traditional views---as presented by Western Christianity, and based largely on an exhausted scholastic philosophy and theology that concern human beings, God, and the material cosmos---no longer seem adequate. A spiritual vision is needed to offset the Augustinian Platonism that has accounted for an un-Christian separation of nature and super-nature and a heavy dichotomizing between body and soul, matter and spirit, the secular and the sacred.

Our heavy rationalistic framework that has served to present Christianity to the West is in need of a complimentary vision. Such a “new” vision is really not so new. It is found in the Old and New Testaments and in the ancient religions that discovered God immanently present in his created world.

Such *heart knowledge* is grounded more in perceptual intuitive knowledge. It is an openness to God as mystery in which we meet the transcendent God in a reverential awe and wonderment. God’s awesome transcendence cannot separate him from us. We are rooted in God as in our Ground of being. Yet that Ground is also rooted immanently within us. As Jesus Christ is the meeting of divinity and humanity with neither of them inseparable, and yet each of them distinct, so are we not to be separated, in all of our materiality and finite humanness, from God dwelling within us, even though God is not man and man is not God.

It is inwardly that we must go, into our hearts, that scriptural symbol of the interior “place” where we meet our Maker and Beloved in ever-expanding consciousness. This consciousness cannot be taught. It can only be evoked, awakened in the mind and heart by the transcendent power of God’s Spirit. This consciousness of the divine presence, as loving, uncreated energies, abiding within us and without us, in each material atom and subatomic particle of the universe, grows as we tune in more consistently to listen to God’s revealing Word as he speaks to us in the cosmic signs of the material universe. His Word also speaks to us in our heart and reveals God’s numinous presence in the signs of written Scripture as well as recorded history of the past and of the present moments in history now being lived and created with our cooperation. We can read these signs inside of us in the depths of our own consciousness and unconscious.

HEART SPEAKS TO HEART

As we learn to live more interiorly, our progress is a movement away from our masculine dominated, rationally controlled self to a more intuitive grasp of reality. A new knowledge is given to us: “heart knowledge.” At first it is experienced as coming out of our deep reservoir where it seemingly always existed, yet was unknown to our superficial self.

Its depths seem to stretch downward into infinity. Gradually we have courage and sincerity to surrender to this new knowledge. We become aware that it flows from a communicating Person or Persons, indwelling within us. This Absolute Ground of our Being becomes gradually more and more present to us. We learn to let go and surrender to this loving presence. We experience an integrating process taking place between the feminine and masculine aspects within us. We are becoming an *I*, our true selves, now in free, loving dialogue with God as a *Thou*, an indwelling presence.

Integration takes place at this deep level, and it takes place most perfectly in the heart, that placeless place, where we can live fully on body, soul and spirit levels through the Holy Spirit’s gift of virtues, faith, hope and love, in what we call *contemplation*. This is our human self, standing, as it were, outside of our habitual ideas that we entertain of ourselves by getting down below that false everyday *ego* and touching in our deepest source the Indwelling Trinity. Consciously and most freely we turn toward our Source and in the totality of our being, we humbly surrender in awe and wonder to the mystery of God’s outpoured, personalized love in the Holy Spirit.

DEEP CALLS TO DEEP

The following teachings and instructions are a humble attempt to share with you what is the meaning of *heart*, its kind of knowledge as opposed to the exclusive rational knowledge known only by the senses, and how we can in Jesus Christ encounter the heart of God and live in him through the pierced heart of Jesus Christ.

We, therefore, begin to look at the historical elements that account for the neglect of heart knowledge, chiefly in the Western world. Jesus in the Gospels calls us to the gift of heart knowledge by our becoming converted and becoming like a little child, filled with the gift of wonder. After a look at what mystical awareness or consciousness is, we investigate what heart means as a symbol down through the ages of all human cultures, but more precisely in the revealed Old and New testaments.

As a condition of getting in touch with our heart we learn from the life of Jesus in the Gospels and the lives of all the great Christian mystics of East and West the absolute need of a *silent heart*. When we quiet our noisy minds and allow the Word of God to open up our heart, we discover much brokenness. As we learn to accept our brokenness deep within our heart consciousness, the Spirit of God and our spirit search for healing in God's triune love dwelling within us.

We learn from the early Christians how to pray in the heart by allowing the Spirit to pray with our spirit in wordless surrender to God's flaming heart. It is through the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ, dwelling within us as the risen Saviour, that we discover how to enter into his heart, human and divine, and thus touch the deepest interior of God's perfect, self-emptying Spirit of love for each of us individually, unto the last drop of water and blood. "This is he who came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ, not by water only, but by water and blood. And the Spirit testifies that that very Spirit is the Truth. And there are three to bear witness, the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three are one" (1 John 5:6-8).

We will conclude our by examining how in the heart of Christ we are driven forth by his Spirit to fashion ourselves into a synergism as co-creators with Christ through our cosmic heart. We see that only in a transformed heart living in unity with the heart of Christ can we also love all other human beings and all of God's material world, as we love ourselves. Such a *cosmic heart* is one with the pierced heart of Jesus Christ, as we go forth in his Spirit to empty ourselves for all human beings whom we meet and are privileged to serve. We strive to harmonize the entire world around us by the inner direction of the Holy Spirit and the Logos made flesh, Jesus Christ, to bring about the total Christ as we assist in the birthing of the universe into the cosmic Christ and help to reconcile the universe to the Father through his Son in his Spirit.

THE FOLLOWING IS A LIST OF WORDS DEFINING EXPRESSIONS THAT WILL BE USED IN *INSCAPE* OVER THE NEXT FEW MONTHS ON OUR TOPIC OF THE *HEART*:

AGAPE: Greek for Christian love or charity, as Saint Paul describes it in 1 Corinthians 13:1-8. It is also used in the New Testament as a synonym for the Eucharist as the love feast.

ALOGOS: Greek meaning, without the Logos and first used by Origen in the third century to refer to Satan, who by sin rejected the freedom to live in the Logos in which the Father creates all things.

ANAKEPHALAIOS: Greek word used by Saint Paul and Eastern writers, especially Irenaeus, meaning recapitulation. As used by the Greek Fathers it can refer to a resume, a taking up of all since the beginning, a return to the source, a restoration, a reorganization and incorporation under one head, Jesus Christ. Christ completes God's eternal plan by over-throwing Satan and the works of sin and gathering all creatures under one head, Christ, to the glory of the Father (cf.: Ephesians 1:10).

APATHEIA: From Greek a-pathos, meaning dispassion. The goal of most of the Eastern ascetics is to bring into subjection to the indwelling Lord Jesus all human passions, created by God as good, but now directed by sin in us toward submission to the inner sources that make up our carnal mindedness. It is the state attained through virtue and the control of these inordinate passions so that the individual person will act in harmonious obedience to do only God's will in all things.

APOPHATISM: From the Greek verb apophanai, to speak out or to deny. Apophatic is usually translated as negative in contrast to cataphatic theology, which is one of positive assertions about God in relationship to us human being, drawn chiefly through Scripture and the use of rational knowledge. Apophatism denies that such positive knowledge is our only human knowledge about God. More importantly it asserts that there is a positive, experiential knowledge in the mystical order, an infused knowledge given by God to those who are clean of heart for they shall see or experience God in luminous darkness.

ARIANISM: An early Christian heresy begun by the Alexandrian priest, Arius, who maintained that Jesus Christ was not the eternal Son of God the Father from all eternity. This heresy was condemned in the first two Ecumenical Councils of Nicaea (325) and Constantinople (381).

EIKON: Greek meaning for icon or image. Jesus is the icon or image of the invisible God (Colossians 1:15).

ELEUTHERIA: Greek for freedom. It is the quality that accompanies the integrated human nature, allowing a person to regain the harmony that God intended for us before sin occurred. It is the divinizing work of the Holy Spirit to restore this harmony as a person is guided by the Spirit to seek only the will of God.

EPECTASIS: Greek for stretching out, as Saint Paul used the word, stretch out for what is still to come (Philippians 3:13). Saint Gregory of Nyssa builds a Christian mysticism of a process of ever-continuing growth, both in this life and in the life to come as we grow from glory to glory.

EPIKLESIS: From Greek, epi, upon. And kalein, a calling down of the Holy Spirit in the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, to make the risen Lord Jesus present and effecting what the symbols of the individual sacraments signify.

ESCHATON: Greek for the end or the end times, in which God's eternal plan will be fulfilled and the Kingdom of Heaven will be completed in its manifestation of all creatures in Christ to the glory of God.

GNOSIS: Greek for knowledge. It is the foundation for the pre-Christian mystery cults whose esoteric elements were loosely brought into the early Church.

GNOSTICISM: From the Greek word, gnosis, or knowledge. It is older than Christianity and represents the fusion of Oriental and Greek ideas into various elaborate systems whose aim was to acquire gnosis, or knowledge of the divine. Ancient mythological material was blended with philosophic and religious ideas. In the second century of Christianity it took on a heretical form with the Christian element only a superficial addition to a system already complete. It spread from Edessa and Alexandria and was refuted by many early Christian writers, Irenaeus in his work, Adverse Haereses.

GODHEAD: The term used by the early Fathers, especially the Cappadocian Fathers, to refer to the unoriginated Source of all being, the ultimate essence of God, which cannot be known through human knowledge.

HARMATIA: Greek word that, together with the word hamartema, designates the New Testament concept of sin. It is used to describe sin as a single act, as a state or condition, or as a power infecting, not only the entire human race, but also the subhuman cosmos.

HESED: The Hebrew term referring to God's condescending love, to make a covenant with his Chosen People (cf.: Genesis 17:2-8).

HESYCHASM: This refers to the type of desert spirituality that started in the 4th century with the development in the Egyptian and Mesopotamian deserts of various forms of monasticism. Men and women lived a way of life made up of intense ascetical practices of solitude, the guarding of ones thoughts, and purification of the heart by fasting, vigils, and incessant prayer, which included synchronizing ones breathing with the name of Jesus. The goal was to attain transformation by the uncreated energies of God-Trinity into their divinized true selves as in their humanity they fulfilled God's eternal plan to make all of us in God's image and likeness.

HESYCHAST: A monk who strove to live according to the desert spirituality of hesychasm.

HOMOIOSIS: Greek for likeness. Irenaeus builds a theological anthropology upon the phrases of (Genesis 1:26-27): kat eikona, & kath homioisim (according to the image of God and according to his likeness). The imageness can never be lost in us, not even through sin, as it is a potential to be evolved into the likeness, which means to discover ones true self in Christ Jesus as an ongoing process into his likeness.

HYPOSTASIS: Greek for person. In Christology it refers to the one, individuated person, the eternal Son of the Father. Through the Incarnation he possesses two distinct, but inseparable natures: divine and human.

KATA PHYSIN: Greek for according to human nature. In the thinking of the early Eastern Fathers this phrase referred to everything that God puts into human nature, whether at the beginning stage or the final one. It also refers to, at least in potentiality, all that would come to a human being after Baptism and through living a virtuous life. In this manner the Fathers did not write about a supernature imposed upon nature, but rather a drawing out of all that God has put into human nature in the beginning.

KENOSIS: Greek for an emptying. In Eastern theology it refers to Saint Paul's description of the central work of Christ as a self-emptying of himself in and through his death on the cross (Philippians 2:7) to image in human form the perfect love of the Father for his children, made in Christ's image and likeness.

LOGOS: Greek for word, or a form which expresses a thought as well as the thought itself. The early Greek Fathers built their Christology upon the writings of Saint John the Evangelist and Theologian, and Saint Paul, who stressed Jesus Christ as the Logos, one with the Godhead from all eternity, who took on our human nature. It is in the Logos in whom all things are created (John 1:2). Therefore every creature possesses a unique logos in relationship to the Divine Logos, Jesus Christ, who in the end will gather all creatures into himself and bring the universe into its fulfillment as the Father conceived all creatures in and through and for the Divine Logos made flesh, Jesus Christ.

MACROCOSM: From Greek, macros, long, great, and kosmos, the cosmos. The Fathers, especially Irenaeus and Maximus the Confessor, saw the presence of Christ risen and living in his Body, the Church, as recapitulating the entire cosmos into a unity through the power of the Holy Spirit.

METANOIA: From Greek, meta, a complete returning to, and nous, i.e., mind or heart. It is the Greek word used in the New Testament and the patristic writers of the early Church to indicate an ongoing process of sincere repentance, a complete upheaval of our carnal values to put on the mind of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 4:17).

MICROCOSM: From Greek, micros, small, and kosmos, world. The human being is conceived by the Fathers as a microcosm, a miniature of what the macrocosm or the entire world is to become as we are called to be co-creators with Christ to bring all creation under Christ, who will bring it to completion back to the Father.

MONOPHYSITISM: From Greek, monos (one) and physis, nature. It refers to the 5th century heresy that taught that there was but a single nature in Christ, i.e., the humanity of Jesus was subsumed into his divinity, or the human and divine natures in Christ made up only one composite nature. It was condemned in the Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon (451).

NEPSIS: From Greek, nepo, to be sober, not to be intoxicated. It refers in Eastern asceticism to the praxis of striving to attain a mental sobriety or balance, an inner alertness and attentiveness to seek always to fulfill the divine commandments.

NESTORIANISM: A 5th century heresy begun by the Patriarch Nestorius of Constantinople, who maintained the Jesus Christ had two natures, divine and human, but therefore had to be also two persons. Mary was not the birth-giver to God but rather gave birth to the human person, Jesus, who dies on the cross, since God could not suffer and die. This doctrine was condemned in the Council of Ephesus in 431.

ORTHODOXY: From Greek, arthus, right, correct, and praxis, living. For Eastern Christians right teaching must also be lived out. There can be no intellectual ascent given in faith to a revealed truth together with a style of living that does not admit of a faithful response to living according to God's truth.

PAROUSIA: Greek meaning, presence or manifestation through a fulfillment or the arrival of some person. It denoted the triumphal entry of rulers, kings, emperors, high-ranking magistrates, and religious leaders into a city. Saint Paul sees the triumphal entry of Christ in his victorious return to earth at the end of time (1 Thessalonians 5:2; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-12; 1 Corinthians 15:20-28; 2 Corinthians 1:14).

PENTHOS: Greek word to express an abiding sorrow for sins. Such compunction was considered an essential element of Eastern Christian spirituality, which usually stressed the gift of tears as an indication of a true and lasting state of conversion.

PHILAUTIA: From Greek, phile, i.e., love, and autos, i.e., self. Saint Maximus the Confessor taught that self-love was the root of all sin.

PHTHORA: Greek, ruin, or waste. The Fathers used this term to describe the corruptibility that sin brought into God's creation. It came to mean the deprivation of God's life of grace inherited by the sin of Adam and passed on to all human beings. Ancestral Sin.

PHYSIS: Greek, nature or essence of a being.

PLATONISM: The philosophy developed from the writings of Plato, which influenced many of the early Christian writers, especially those of Alexandria, e.g., Origen.

PLEROMA: Greek fullness or maturity. In Eastern theology it refers to Christ's influence on the entire created world as redeemed by him and thus arriving gradually at its goal of fullness, which is God in all things and all things in God.

PNEUMATOMACHOI: From Greek, pneuma, i.e., Spirit and machomai. i.e., to combat or to fight. The name was given to those who embraced the heresy of the Patriarch Macedonius, who denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit. This heresy was condemned in the 2nd Ecumenical Council of Constantinople (381).

PRAXIS: Greek deed, act, action. In Eastern Christian ascetical teaching, it refers to what human beings do in cooperating with God's grace in order to uproot any self-centeredness, called in general the eight vices, and to put on the mind of Christ by an inner revolution that develops the virtues he lived by and taught us to imitate.

RUAH: Hebrew breath or wind. A symbol of God's power operating throughout all creation in and through the Holy Spirit.

SOTER: Greek Saviour. In Greek Christian theology it refers to Jesus Christ, the Saviour.

SOTERIA: Greek salvation, or redemption, the bringing of one into safety. In Christianity soteriology refers to the branch of theology that seeks to explain how Jesus Christ has brought about the salvation of the human race.

SYNERGY: From Greek, syn, i.e., together, with, and energia i.e., energy, a working, activity. As Jesus worked with his Father (John 5:17), so we are able to work with him in every thought, word and deed by his indwelling presence in us.

TABORIC LIGHT: This term refers to the teaching of Saint Gregory Palamas and his successors (14th century) that purified Christians, due to the uncreated energies of God, are able to be transformed into a sharing of the light of Jesus radiated on Mount Tabor through the process of divinization as they yield to the divine indwelling presence of the Holy Trinity.

In our March 2015 *Inscape* Newsletter, we will begin with “Heart Failure” and its Christian meaning and experience.

In Christ's love,

Father John Michael Zboyovski