



# CentreCOMM

SEEING THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST AT WORK IN THE WORLD  
NOVEMBER 2011

January FREEMAKING Political upheaval Nature erupts February LENT Self Control March BLESSING OF THE ROSES The Nourishing Thankfulness April RESURRECTION Closer to Christ May MOTHERS A continued yielding of the will June ST JOHN Relationships July FELLOWSHIP Strong and Steadfast August SPIRITUAL FATHERS Continuing to dare Purpose September ARCHANGEL MICHAEL There is a plan October CONCLAVE & AGM the Familiar and the Unknown November FEAST OF THE DEAD Open December THE BIRTH OF THE LIGHT We are the Light-Bearers the Masculine the Feminine JANUARY Financial uncertainty Fear FEBRUARY the Battle MARCH Knowing the Strength of the I AM APRIL As Within, So Without MAY Letting Go JUNE New Doors JULY You judge by the Flesh AUGUST Co-creators SEPTEMBER Lifting the Veil OCTOBER Movement NOVEMBER The Lord has taken away DECEMBER Gratitude January Walking across the Bridge FREEMAKING February All things are New Lent March Roses eyes for spirit April light shines in the darkness Resurrection May the unknown June love St John July working together August unity of spirit September balance Michael October conversation continues November the reality of prayer December the message of the angels January FREEMAKING Political upheaval Nature erupts February LENT Self Control March BLESSING OF THE ROSES The Nourishing Thankfulness April RESURRECTION Closer to Christ May MOTHERS A continued yielding of the will June ST JOHN Relationships July FELLOWSHIP Strong and Steadfast August SPIRITUAL FATHERS Continuing to dare Purpose September ARCHANGEL MICHAEL There is a plan October CONCLAVE & AGM the Familiar and the Unknown November FEAST OF THE DEAD Open December THE BIRTH OF THE LIGHT We are the Light-Bearers the Masculine the Feminine JANUARY Financial uncertainty Fear FEBRUARY the Battle MARCH Knowing the Strength of the I AM APRIL As Within, So Without MAY Letting Go JUNE New Doors JULY You judge by the Flesh AUGUST Co-creators SEPTEMBER Lifting the Veil OCTOBER Movement NOVEMBER The Lord has taken away DECEMBER Gratitude January Walking across the Bridge FREEMAKING February All things are New Lent March Roses eyes for spirit April light shines in the darkness Resurrection May the unknown June love St John July working together August unity of spirit September balance Michael October conversation continues November the reality of prayer December the message of the angels January FREEMAKING Political upheaval Nature erupts February LENT Self Control March BLESSING OF THE ROSES The Nourishing Thankfulness April RESURRECTION Closer to Christ May MOTHERS A continued yielding of the will June ST JOHN Relationships July FELLOWSHIP Strong and Steadfast August SPIRITUAL FATHERS Continuing to dare Purpose September ARCHANGEL MICHAEL There is a plan October CONCLAVE & AGM the Familiar and the Unknown November FEAST OF THE DEAD Open December THE BIRTH OF THE LIGHT We are the Light-Bearers the Masculine the Feminine JANUARY Financial uncertainty Fear FEBRUARY the Battle MARCH Knowing the Strength of the I AM APRIL As Within, So Without MAY Letting Go JUNE New Doors JULY You judge by the Flesh AUGUST Co-creators SEPTEMBER Lifting the Veil OCTOBER Movement NOVEMBER The Lord has taken away DECEMBER Gratitude January Walking across the Bridge FREEMAKING February All things are New Lent March Roses eyes for spirit April light shines in the darkness Resurrection May the unknown June love St John July working together August unity of spirit September balance Michael October conversation continues November the reality of prayer December the message of the angels January FREEMAKING Political upheaval Nature erupts February LENT Self Control

*For what you have given*

*For what you have taken away*

*For the extent of this year -*

*We give thanks.*



# WELCOME TO THIS CENTRECOMM

We are reaching the end of an extraordinary year in which much has been given and much has been taken away. The year has been dedicated to freemaking, and we now know a bit more about what that really means and involves. We have witnessed momentous events across the world, the movement for change in the Middle East, the devastating earthquakes in NZ and Japan, the floods and cyclones in Australia, famine in Africa, the death-throes of old systems of economics and government in many nations. In the lives of individuals there have also been many experiences – births, deaths, marriages, illness, changing roles. And throughout it all, we have been called to realize again and again what we are, who we are – regardless of what changes around us. I AM – *every day*.

If we judge, or view, things according to the flesh then we would look at this year as a tragedy, so much bloodshed, so much financial hardship, so much loss. But if we look with the eyes of spirit and glimpse what is happening to souls everywhere, we may have a different view. I think we would see what Mario described: *The presence of the Christ is everywhere at this particular moment and is to be seen in the lives of the men and women of today who are totally and utterly different from the men and women of yesterday.*

We are being given cause to experience ourselves differently, and anything that causes us to experience ourselves differently ... “Blessed are those through whom it will come.” The result is more light, more truth.

Many years ago, the very first publication that Colin and Mario produced together was called “New Freedom” and on the cover was a picture of a bird in a cage. The door of the cage was open, but the bird hadn’t moved. It hadn’t realized it was free. It needed a shove. This year I think the bird-cage has well and truly been shaken. And we have the choice of clinging on to our familiar perch or flying. We can realize our independency, our essential nature. And hopefully we will see that it is for freedom, that Christ has set us free.

The powers that are working to set us free are not so gentle and it really takes some special inner soul qualities to actively co-operate with them – faith, spiritual perception, forgiveness, letting go, knowing

this is a purposeful opportunity, acceptance, trust, stillness ... Above all, gratitude. These help us to take hold of what is, essentially, being offered for our freemaking.

So at the end of this year we do give thanks for the extent of our experiences—for what has been given and what has been taken away. We bring these experiences before the Throne of Grace that they made be made bright. We give thanks that we know more about ourselves. We give thanks for the shove.



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# Reflections on Michaelmas



## The Awakening I AM

Rev Lukas

THESE DAYS, AS FINANCIAL AND POLITICAL FEARS reverberate around the world, it is quite special to be with like-minded friends to celebrate an Agape or Cosmic Mass, or simply to meet and talk about spiritual teachings. At these gatherings we can be present with each other and for a moment enter into something greater than all those other concerns. That greater experience is the mystery of Christ.

We recently celebrated the festival of Michaelmas. In Melbourne, after the Mass, we had a Creativity Fair. Some members and friends used their creativity to make art, craft and other produce for this fair. The use of the will and creative thinking are important aspects of Michaelmas. Being together at services and in study groups is important but Michaelmas reminds us of the work and the effort required of us in our daily life.



It seems that it is becoming more and more necessary for us to develop a strong will so that the developing I AM consciousness will continue to evolve and not stultify. It was on this subject that I gave the address for the Michaelmas service. The following is a modified version of that address.

## Archangel Michael

Spiritual researchers tell us that there are seven archangels. Each archangel, in turn, comes to the forefront of cosmic influence for a period of 350 years. We are currently living in a Michael era. This era commenced in 1879 and will conclude around 2230. The previous Michael era was somewhere between the years 550 BC and 200 BC. Each archangel is associated with one of the cosmic spheres - Saturn, Jupiter, Mars ... Michael is the archangel associated with the Sun and so works with and on behalf of the Christ.

In his earlier reign, Michael worked to prepare the world for the incarnation of Christ. It is therefore very interesting to look at some of the historical personalities of this earlier age in order to gain a sense of how Michael may have influenced their work and lives.

The great Greek philosophers, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, created their philosophies during this earlier Michael era. Their work concerned the development of the 'intellectual soul'. They raised thinking out of the potential mire of a murky mixture of thinking, feeling and will. They elevated thinking out of the old clairvoyance or psychism so that it could become like a light shining on the world and on the life of soul.

In another part of the world during this era, a bodhisattva became the Buddha. He taught many things but is perhaps best known as the great teacher of compassion. Compassion relates to the refined life of feeling. In this regard he taught how attachment and clinging to worldly things causes suffering and how the realisation of this brings a certain freedom and equanimity which then enables the individual to experience compassion for the human condition.

Amongst the Hebrews, the prophet Isaiah incarnated during this earlier reign of Michael. Isaiah chapter 11,

verses 1 to 9, portrays something of the vision of this prophet.

***There shall come forth a shoot  
from the stump of Jesse,  
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.  
And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him,  
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,  
the spirit of counsel and might,  
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.  
And his delight shall be in the fear of the Lord.  
He shall not judge by what his eyes see,  
or decide by what his ears hear;  
but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,  
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;  
and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth,  
and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked.  
Righteousness shall be the girdle of his waist,  
and faithfulness the girdle of his loins.  
The wolf shall dwell with the lamb,  
and the leopard shall lie down with the kid,  
and the calf and the lion and the fatling together,  
and a little child shall lead them.  
The cow and the bear shall feed;  
their young shall lie down together;  
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.  
The sucking child shall play over the hole of the asp,  
and the weaned child shall put his hand  
on the adder's den.  
They shall not hurt or destroy  
in all my holy mountain;  
for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord  
as the waters cover the sea.***

In these verses we read a prophecy about the coming Christ. The prophet also pictures a future time when our animal nature will be tamed, when the inner refinement of instincts and unconscious will-forces has been achieved, and when the I AM nature of the human being will be like a child living in harmony with the forces of will. Like a child, the I AM will not need to control the will in some high-handed manner but rather will lead with a spirit of peace and harmony.

***The wolf shall dwell with the lamb,  
and the leopard shall lie down with the kid,  
and the calf and the lion and the fatling together,  
and a little child shall lead them.***

## *The festivals of Michaelmas and Christmas can renew within us two different soul moods, both of which foster the emerging I AM.*

The Greek philosophers, together with Buddha and Isaiah, were ancient masters of the soul faculties of thinking, feeling and the will. They were enabled to bring the fruits of their creative work into the world during that reign of Archangel Michael. Their work therefore can be considered to be an aspect of Michael's preparation for the incarnation of the Christ.

### **The Incarnation of Christ**

Soon after the conclusion of this earlier Michael age, Christ, the Sun God, incarnated into the body of Jesus. He did not teach philosophy and he did not teach how to develop compassion. The Christ *was* these things. He did not teach about love. He *was* love. Through his act of sacrifice at Golgotha he fulfilled the ancient prophecies and the teachings of compassion.

As a consequence of Christ's deed at Golgotha there is a new consciousness available to us now. It involves Christ love, a love that has the nature of sacrifice. Since Golgotha this Christ love can now flow into our souls.

We are now living in a new Michael era, which commenced towards the end of the nineteenth century. Esoteric Christian teachers of the twentieth century have indicated that the intellect, which has become increasingly earthbound and dead, can now be enlivened, enabling the divine back into our thinking. Our sense of earthly self can now be imbued with spiritual life and love, changing this earthly sense of self into an I AM consciousness.

A certain mood of trust and patient work is needed to develop this new consciousness. Such an attitude is probably best expressed in our song of initiation:

*O love that knoweth of no fear  
O love that sheds a joyous tear  
O love that makes me whole and free  
Such love shall keep and hallow me.*

It is this developing I AM however, that is in danger from the oppositional forces that work against the Christ impulse.

### **Observations on Materialism**

I have been looking into some of the extreme trends of our modern culture of materialism. By materialism I mean a denial of spirit and a belief that matter is the only reality. I recently went to the opening night of a conference and listened to futurists speak about the potential benefits and dangers of our developing technology.

One American futurist who was talked about but wasn't present at the conference was quoted as saying that, because of the exponential rate of development in technology, by the year 2045 we will be able to create a biological human through genetic engineering and through a new technology called synthetic biology. The blood stream of this biological form will incorporate blood cell-sized, programmable nanotechnology bits that will stimulate cell responses enabling senses, feelings, movement. And, to cap it all off, artificial intelligence will be so advanced by the middle of the 21st century that it will surpass human intelligence. These super-intelligent computers will be so smart they will be able to 'upload' an existing human mind into one of these bodies, enabling an existing person's mind to live forever in one of these artificial forms. It all sounds like science fiction but the presenters at the conference could see the possibility of these predictions becoming a reality within the next century or so.

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I couldn't help thinking about the threefold human being - body, soul and spirit. This particular technological movement aims to create a genetically engineered body, the nanotechnology can be seen as the new soul, and artificial intelligence the new thinking or spirit. What some of these researchers are aiming for is a biological 'human' creature totally removed from spiritual evolution.

Of course, advances in these individual technologies are already providing benefits for us in fields of endeavour such as medicine and communications. So these advances are potentially good and valuable. However, the thing we need to be aware of is that some of the people driving these advances are also saying that such technology will be the 'saviour' of humanity. Some are saying that the Bible prophecies regarding eternal life were actually referring to and predicting these technological advances. They are saying that these advances are the goal and ultimate purpose of human evolution: that is, for an individual to live forever in this world of matter. This is a dark and spiritually bereft view of the human being.

This example is just one way this voice of deception is being expressed today. This same voice is coming to us in many different guises and from many different fields of endeavour in our modern culture.

### **Self-Orientated Spirituality**

We could ignore these forces, avoid them, perhaps retreat to a cave in an isolated part of the world and work on becoming very spiritual. This may be what is needed for some but for others it could be an example of another force working against the I AM consciousness. This force could be attempting to lift us, prematurely, out of the world thus causing us to miss an opportunity to love and develop freedom. This tendency is one that focuses on oneself, whereas Christ consciousness or I AM consciousness involves devotedness to the world around it. Jesus of course is the great example for us in this regard.

Developing I AM consciousness is not comfortable because we begin to wake up. 'Falling awake' can be distressing and painful because it comes with the realisation that it is now up to me to adjust my life accordingly. No one is going to do it for me. A feeling of responsibility for the emerging I AM consciousness arises.

### **Revelations 12**

This is when the picture of Michael conquering the dragon can be inspiring or at least helpful for us because we are now required to stand in strength and courage, to be consciously present with and deal with these oppositional forces that exist within us and around us.

In the Book of Revelations chapter 12 we find the well-known reference to Archangel Michael. The chapter begins with a picture of a woman with stars around her head, clothed in the sun, and the moon at her feet. She gives birth to the child, the I AM. Then we read:

*Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they were defeated and there was no longer any place for them in heaven.*

*And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world -- he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.*

*And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, 'Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God.*

*And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death.*



# FREEMAKING 2011

*Rejoice then, O heaven and you that dwell therein! But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!’ (Rev 12:7-12)*

Michael has thrown these forces down to earth. We may well wonder why he has done this to us. One way to understand this is to consider that without these forces we would not be challenged, we would not engage our will and earn Christ’s gift of the I AM. It is now up to us, in this new Michael era, to use our own free will, to decide to raise ourselves to the challenge, to develop goodness and virtue in the face of opposing forces.

## **Towards Christmas**

The picture of the woman giving birth to a child in this section of Revelations brings to mind our next spiritual festival, Christmas, when we will celebrate the birth of the Christ child.

Christmas creates a mood that is quite different than Michaelmas. At Christmas an emphasis is placed on the enfolding presence of the feminine, giving birth to and nurturing the child, whereas Michaelmas brings to the fore a masculine mood of spiritual activity.

It is of interest to note that St John’s Apocalypse places the contrasting moods of the divine feminine and the michaelic masculine together in this section of scripture. Both the masculine and feminine moods therefore seem necessary for the unfolding I AM consciousness. The festivals of Michaelmas and Christmas can renew within us these two different soul moods, both of which foster the emerging I AM.

I will conclude with the words from Isaiah which concern a future time when paradise will be regained for we will have gained the I AM consciousness in love and freedom.

*The wolf shall dwell with the lamb,  
and the leopard shall lie down with the kid,  
and the calf and the lion and the fatling together,  
and a little child shall lead them...  
for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord  
as the waters cover the sea.*



*At Christmas an emphasis is placed on the enfolding presence of the feminine, giving birth to and nurturing the child, whereas Michaelmas brings to the fore a masculine mood of spiritual activity.*

*Michael,  
you guard the birth of the child,  
the child that is holy and true.  
In your warrior role  
you show so much love  
for that which is born from above.*

# The Lord gave ... and the Lord has taken away

IN REFLECTING ON THE YEAR that has been a prayer of Rev Mario's offered a helpful perspective. He prayed:

*We give thanks for the extent of this year,  
for the experiences,  
for what you have given  
and what you have taken.  
Now let our hearts be open towards you,  
our minds be inspired by your spirit,  
our eyes focused upon the goals set before us,  
full of the ideal, which is Christ Jesus, our Lord.*

Hearing this prayer I was reminded of the well-known biblical quotation: *'The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.'* (Job 1:21)

It prompted me to think of the blessedness of having some things taken away. But in this world of needs, wants, growth and capital, the taking away of something is usually not considered a blessing.

In this series of short articles, Centre members reflect on this subject of loss and their different experiences of having things taken away or being stripped down, and why they would give thanks.

## THAT'S HOW THE LIGHT GETS IN Rev Richard Moss

In early October Antoinette wrote *'Would you write some reflections?'* and her provocation was two pieces of text, one from Mario and the other from Job. The text from Mario was a year-end prayer and his words were, *'Thus we pray at the end of this year. And we give thanks for the extent of this year, the experiences, for what you have given and what you have taken. Now let our hearts be open towards you ...'* The words from Job were from 1:21: *'The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.'*

My first instinct was to personalise Mario's words and so I wrote: *I pray and give thanks for this year, for my experiences, for what has been given and for what has been taken away. Let my heart now be open.*

Having done that and read these words several times I began to ponder the events of my year. As I did, it occurred to me that our lives are made up of our conscious endeavours and things that surprise us and call for our attention. So I find myself writing about a conscious endeavor, a surprise and an event that falls somewhere in between.

The mystical tradition and the journey of the mystical year calls us each year to engage with the festivals and with the seasons that fall between those festivals – each with its own particular invitation for us. For a number of years now I have been endeavouring to stay engaged with this journey and to carry forward a vision of myself, more whole, into each new festival and spiritual season. I have envisaged this journey as the work of transformation in which something is

# Blessed be the name of the Lord.

given up so that something more divine can be revealed. This task is most specifically the work of Lent and Easter but is also a component of the other festivals until we celebrate at Michaelmas the new thing, the quality that we have added through our endeavours.

For myself the work of this year has been to tackle something of my emotional world and to deal with my tendency to let my emotions rule my being – a tendency that has not served me so well in the past. My approach was to give up trying to deal with every situation that came before me with words and logic; instead I have preferred prayer and imagination. A conscious working in this way, with the ideal in mind to be more whole, has been at times exciting and exhilarating and at other times hard work - a bit like riding my bike up one of these big hills we have in Wellington – would I ever make it?

In relation to this piece of work I come to the end of the year thankful for what has been given and what has been taken away. It is not so much that this piece of work is finished, but that the way forward is now more obvious and the self-correction needed can continue.

Another thing that I have been conscious of relates to my father who died in September. I have been reading a wonderful book, 'And when did you last see your father?' by Blake Morrison. It is a moving memoir and reflection on his father, written after he died. His experience, and my own, is that my father's real purpose and his gifts to me have been so much easier to perceive and receive after the moment of death. For myself it has been a revelation. Since September I have felt myself so much more conscious of what he gave and what has been taken away by his death. It is something that I wish I could have experienced more wholeheartedly in his life for much could have been made of it that would have enriched both our lives. I feel somewhat chastened by the experience of not seeing what now seems so obvious. I am determined not to let this happen again in my life, for the capacity to perceive the gifts in us all is a human capacity and I am sure that I can master it.

I also end the year having recently given up the thing that has created the most stability in my life for going on 14 years – my job. And while I am relieved, as doing some parts of the work was becoming tedious, I am also enormously grateful for the opportunities presented to me over all those years, for the ways new abilities have been developed and honed, for the wise

counsel I have been surrounded with and for the resources to create a prosperous life. I now embark on a period that is more unknown but with a light heart.

So I end this year full of gratitude for what has been given and what has been taken away. I also have a sense of thankfulness, of being protected and provided for and being upheld. Because of the things given and the things taken away it has been a most fruitful year. And as I am beginning to orient to a new year I am aware of how much our thankfulness provides a capacity to enter into the year to come with confidence and good will.



*Richard Moss lives in Wellington, New Zealand where he leads the Centre community. He likes to ride his mountain bike off road, do voluntary work and participate in the life of the city with community and friends.*

***That's how the light gets in***, the title for this writing, is from *Anthem* by Leonard Cohen:

*'There is a crack, a crack in everything,  
that's how the light gets in,  
that's how the light gets in.'*

# The Lord gave ... and the Lord has taken away

## THE BLESSING OF LOSSES

Deacon Meredith McLeod

*Blessed is the man who endures trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life which God has promised to those who love him. (James 1:12)*

Our spiritual journey and our earthly learning are both separate and intertwined. Lessons learned on a physical and earthly plane have one interpretation and the spiritual lessons another and each is important. Embracing the idea that 'losses are a blessing' is a spiritual truth that flies in the face of our worldly view. It can be difficult at times to shift from one perspective to the other.

This has been made real to me over the years when many losses have presented themselves; each time there has been a process of dealing with them in the world and also integrating the impact of them on my spiritual development.

My early contact with The Centre occurred at the time my brother was murdered in Melbourne, in 1984. In my initial stage of grieving I found it difficult to see anything positive about such a traumatic event. As time went by I came to see the 'gift' that this event was in my life, giving me a realisation that my spiritual life was essential to my personal and professional development and my life's purpose. This event gave me a stronger sense of my own strength and abilities, deepened my compassion for others as well as my ability to bring meaning to traumatic events happening to myself and other people who suffered multiple losses.

Not every loss is as dramatic. There are other transitions, such as loss of job or of roles in life, that bring grief with them and can take a lot of searching both to learn from and to accept. I have found multiple losses, especially when they occur in many areas of life simultaneously, particularly daunting, but also making me richly blessed. Central to these transitions has been my increasing willingness to open to Christ, returning to Christ within as a 'home', where everything can be healed and transformed, and a growing faith in Christ's love which allows the pain to resolve and the light of new wisdom to manifest.



Accepting that this 'stripping' is a blessing, spiritually requires an ongoing contact with Christ, the richness of which is all encompassing. Building that relationship tests faith and is richly rewarding. The blessing of such a relationship fills my heart with peace and love and gratitude.

I have been re-reading Job while on holidays. He has been a fresh inspiration to me. Nothing held him back! His faith was strong and unbreakable. Would that I could hold to such joy and commitment in the face of severe adversities as did Job!

As James states in his letter: *Count it all joy, my brethren, when you meet various trials, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. (Jas 1:2-4)*

# Blessed be the name of the Lord.

## DOWN-SIZING

Rev Grace Johnston

This Year of FREEMAKING has but a few weeks to go, so Rev Antoinette's invitation to me to 'write something about things being taken away' has been timely. This year, for me, has been all about down-sizing.

With worldly eyes, you could say I have achieved very little in my life. I am now living in a very small space in a so-called retirement village and, although I consider myself far from 'retired', I don't currently have what the world would term a job. Look at that with those 'wordly eyes' and you could classify all this as failure.

'What, Grace, living there among all those old people? Surely you're too young! And what are you going to live on, with no income coming in?' Indeed, my decisions have distressed two of my children considerably. But while I appreciate their love and concern I suggested they might like to look at the causes of their distress as their problem, not mine!

I've spent much of the past few months clearing out, giving away, handing on to children and/or binning much that remained from what I collected over many years as daughter, wife, mother and goods-depository for various children living overseas. Out went books, work files, clothes and shoes, linen, garden stuff, crockery and cutlery, furniture, pictures, pot-plants, boxes of other people's things ... I've sold things on e-bay and given away furniture to the Salvos. I've had things snapped up from a well-timed hard-rubbish collection. I've cleaned two residences, and moved out of one and into the other. Now I fit into two rooms (well, almost), and manage just fine.

I've always been good at throwing things out. I've moved regularly and am not a hoarder, so throwing out is easy for me. What I found hard was realising that I



had accumulated so much 'stuff' that I did not really need.

Do I regret anything now that I am living in a much smaller space? Only that I did not throw out more. I find myself yearning to have another cull of my remaining belongings, and then another one after that, and another after that again, if needs be, until what is left is just the absolute bare minimum I need in order to live.

*As within, so without,  
as without, so within.*

It goes without saying that the outer process of simplifying my life mirrors what has been going on within my consciousness. I know without doubt this is my soul yearning to rest more and more in the

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# The Lord gave ... and the Lord has taken away

simplicity and peace of the Christ. Just to write those words fills me with longing, delight and joy.

That doesn't mean having nothing. It doesn't mean retreating to contemplate my navel ... been there, done that, lived those lifetimes before and hope I won't need to learn those lessons again. Rather it's an allowing, an inner permission, a sinking into, a flowing and an increasing trust. It's a continued yielding of will ... *We cannot rest til we rest in You.*

Many years ago Rev Mario, in one of my readings, talked about a lifetime where I was 'a bit of a mystic' – I sat on top of a hill in Ireland and played my flute. In worldly terms, he said, you could call that a bit of a waste of a life, but it was my soul that needed the quiet and the rest.

The memory of that life is strong within me now and has been all year. Unlike that life, however, this life no external hilltops beckon to provide me with a place of peace. The peace instead has grown and is growing within. It is the inexhaustible well from which I know I can always draw the energy for whatever I am required to do for the rest of my life.

The Year of FREEMAKING, the Year of the Almighty Cull, the Year of the Great Down-Sizing - the year that, for me, has turned out to be all about peace and, above all, simplicity.

Please God, just one thing I pray, may the rest of my life simply be simple.

**The Year of FREEMAKING,  
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the Year of the Great Down-Sizing -  
the year that, for me, has turned out  
to be all about peace and, above all, simplicity.**

**About Grace:** *For those who don't know me well, I have been a priest based in the Melbourne community for 16 years, having walked into The Centre just on a decade before my ordination and knowing that I would have to turn my life upside down to remain there.*

*Since the end of June this year I've not been working formally – though I don't think of myself as 'retired'; it's just I'm not sure what comes next. During this time, however, I've moved into a retirement village (part of the simplifying) and have been enjoying the peace.*

*The last ten years of my somewhat eclectic career has been spent working with mature-age unemployed people, job-matching, teaching, counselling and, at times, kicking butt. While I don't want to do that again, the things I have in mind to do next will build on that knowledge and experience.*

*In the meantime, you might find me in my vegetable allotment talking to my tomatoes and black cucumbers, or spending time with three small grandchildren – or even getting on with the writing of my current book, now, according to my own timetable, much overdue.*

## Blessed be the name of the Lord.

## FULL CIRCLE

Deacon Anja van Holten

Chris and I met at the train station in Rotterdam. It was love at first sight. It just took a while to fully acknowledge it. She was over from New Zealand, staying in Paris and visiting Holland to be at the Word of the Year celebration with Rev Antoinette in The Netherlands.

On her second visit to Rotterdam, two weeks later, it was clear in my heart that I would be moving to New Zealand to live with Chris. A year later my house was sold, my belongings packed and shipped and I said my farewells at Amsterdam airport.

It sounds all very easy and in a way it was. Love makes things easy, love makes things to flow, but love is also inclusive. Love does not love one moment and not the next. I knew I would be missing my family and my spiritual family in Holland. And so I do.

I didn't realize how much until I went to a psychodrama dream-workshop. In this workshop I worked with a dream I had had about Mario the week before. As I was setting out the dream it became clear to me that I felt divided into two worlds: the world in which I was living and the world that lived in me. These two worlds co-existed but seemed unaware of each other.

A lot of how I understand my self is defined by my relationships - my relationship with God, with people and with everything around me. The first few months in New Zealand I was in a bit of a shock, part of me seemed lost, had disappeared out of sight. The mirroring was gone. I had to redefine

my self. Everything and everyone I met was new to me and I to them. The people I met spoke Maori and English but not in an accent I had learned at school, they were all driving on the wrong side of the road, their jokes were funny once I got them, their issues different, the house I now lived in had nothing familiar in it, the color of the sea was different, the sound of the birds, the fragrance of the trees, the feel of the air, hills and mountains everywhere, no high buildings, no traffic jams, no one pushing me on, no one wanting anything of me ... only love.



Moving to the other side of the world taught me to see the beauty of routine and of being able to do things on automatic pilot. I was now so busy trying to build a relationship with the world I was now living in that I seemed out of touch with the world that was living in me, a world very sacred to me.

In the dream-workshop I discovered that I had not allowed myself to go there for fear

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# The Lord gave ... and the Lord has taken away

of not being able to cope with the feeling of loss. Once I did, the tears came easily and abundantly. I missed my loved ones, my fraters and sorores. But it was not just my grief I met there: it was in this inner world that Mario spoke to me. He said: 'You don't have to be here for us to be here.' His words immediately comforted me even though it took me awhile to grasp their full meaning.

It is in this physical world that we have the opportunity to build relationships. When love starts flowing through a relationship, it builds a connection between heaven and earth. These relationships then become a reality in the spiritual worlds. The stronger these connections become the less dependent they become on the physical world to sustain them. What has been wrought in the heavens cannot be undone here on earth.

What Mario taught me in that dream was that even though my attention or awareness was at times drawn away from Christ, from the Brotherhood, the Centre and my loved ones, they were still very much nourishing me. My understanding of what it means to be in relationship deepened. As a result something shifted in me.

Where I have been more conscious of and relating to Christ as a power outside of me, coming towards me in the things I meet, I have now found him within, in the very core of my being. My strengthened relationship with Christ and my awareness of Christ working through my relationships, provides me with the love and inspiration to meet the outside world in a new way. I have become more of an initiator rather than an observer. My inner world has become a powerful tool

in creating the world outside. It is as if I am granted a glimpse of what it means to be a co-creator with the gods.

This new awareness has inspired me to try and build my own community here in Golden Bay. About a year ago we started an OMC study group. And a few months ago I started meeting once a week with four others for spiritual conversation and the sharing of bread and wine.

Having come full circle I feel great gratitude for all that God gave and has taken away. It has been a free-making process. The image from the Bible that keeps coming to my mind is from Revelation 4:6-8:

*And round the throne, on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind: the first living creature like a lion, the second living creature like an ox, the third living creature with the face of a man, and the fourth living creature like a flying eagle. And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all round and within, and day and night they never cease to sing, 'Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!'*

In my mind I see these creatures orbiting around the throne, taking in more and more fully all that God was, is and will be. And each time they come full circle they go WAUW!!!

*Anja, originally from Rotterdam in The Netherlands, is a deacon of The Centre and now lives in Takaka in New Zealand with her partner Chris.*

## Blessed be the name of the Lord.

## REVELATION IN LOSS

Rev Marja van Breda

### *The measure of loss*

Is being a refugee worse than being an immigrant? Is amicable divorce easier to bear than an acrimonious one? Is losing the use of a hand more awful than losing the use of limbs? Is the impact of the sudden loss of a loved one greater than the loss of someone whom we have nursed for years through a terminal disease?

Much research has been dedicated to studying loss and the subsequent grieving process. With that has come a depth of understanding for those who suffer which has provided the helping professions with tools to better assist the ones who seek help. No doubt, this is a good thing.

It is good to have frameworks for processes people go through, and necessary, however, when we place 'having something taken away' within the context of reincarnation and karma, a significant spiritual dimension opens up which goes beyond textbook knowledge.

Like most people, I am familiar with having something taken away which had given me, up to that moment, a sense of belonging, an identity and a known rhythm.

### *A short story*

As a child, I grew up in a loving, protective family environment which was bound up in all the usual Dutch cultural nuisances. As a young teenager, I lived a full life in a secure home environment, with strong friendships and enjoyed going to school. I was having a great time - although I disliked Sundays, mainly because we had to go and visit either one of my grandmothers, an obligation which was extremely boring ... Then, two weeks after my 15<sup>th</sup> birthday, my parents announced that we were emigrating to New Zealand ... and the world which I had known so well simply fell apart.

For the rest of the year I gradually said goodbye to the known, and at times became very anxious about this 'other

world' we were going to. In particular, there were questions such as 'did people there wear jeans?' or 'did the boys have long hair like here?' Important questions for a 15 year old! The Dutch culture does not embrace feeling sorry for self or others in quite the same way as some other cultures, so I was always encouraged to just get on with things by friends and family. I pretty much rode an emotional rollercoaster; one moment being very sad, and the other trying to remain strong. There was also a good dose of curiosity and a sense of adventure.

There was also something else at play of which I was vaguely aware. Around the age of 13 I was given a glimpse of the concept of 'faith', of knowing there was something else that was at work in my life. This 'otherness' was with me when I got up very early on the morning of our departure to watch the port of Rotterdam disappear. Standing on the promenade deck, I recall a sense of knowing that where I was going was in accordance to a plan, as yet unknown and probably very difficult. I didn't shed any tears as the boat left the harbour. For six weeks we traversed several oceans, sailed around Africa, stopped at all the major Australian southern ports and, at last, disembarked in Auckland.

### *What gets revealed*

My first immigration story is one visible and measurable story of what I was 'stripped of' and of what I was then 'given'. I became part of a different culture, started speaking in a new language and gradually freed myself from Dutch nationalism. And such a story is not unique.

There are many other stories of loss in my life, some apparent, and quite a number not so obvious - such as letting go of a belief-system about self and others or relinquishing past hopes. At times what needed to be discarded happened as a lengthy drawn-out process; at other times, within an instant.

The occurrences of loss in my life are—without a doubt—the response to a deep longing within my soul, not only to fulfil the spiritual blueprint that was created prior to

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# The Lord gave ... and the Lord has taken away

**It is the lifting of one more veil that lies between the darkness of ignorance and the true light of knowing.**

this incarnation, but also, and perhaps more importantly, to more fully experience the Christ. To remain open to this process requires faith, determination, courage and a willingness to hear beyond the obvious.

It is in 'letting go' that I am enabled to move closer to discovering the nature of my real self, my I AM. It is the lifting of one more veil that lies between the darkness of ignorance and the true light of knowing.

### **A crossing**

I was recently reminded of my 15 year old friend, Christien, who, just before I left Holland, thrust three letters she had written to me into my hand. These were her stories to help me on my journey. She wanted me to read them in order, and each had to be opened on the Monday of every second week, which I did. I don't recall any details of the content, but some pictures have remained: walking a dusty road, being taught by someone who was wise, meeting lots of people, and encountering a number of dangers. The final letter described me walking across a bridge. This bridge lay between one

landscape and another which looked very different. With each step I took, the parts of the bridge I had crossed fell away so that I could never go back; I could only go forward into the new.

Crossing the bridge, without being able to go back, is for those who dare; and though the temptation to remain in places I know is never far from my consciousness, I do continue to dare. For I know that in Christ, nothing is impossible. I know that with loss there is much to gain.

**About Marja:** *I was born in Amsterdam, and immigrated to New Zealand when I was 16. I stayed in New Zealand for 13 years, and migrated to Melbourne, Australia, in April 1987. Six weeks later, I met a number of Centre members and Rev Mario soon after. Whilst witnessing the Priests' Communion at my first Cosmic Mass, I experienced a strong sense of belonging. Sometime after, I was ready to accept Rev Mario as my spiritual teacher. When Mario died, part of me was set free to become more fully what I needed to be.*



*In 2000, I entered the employ of The Centre as an Administrator and a time filled with creativity, challenges and then some more challenges, a growing sense of spiritual community, and an ever increasing love for Christ and Mario's teachings.*

*In February 2008 I was ordained, and later that year invested and commissioned to be a priest with The Centre community in Adelaide. I moved to Adelaide in July 2009, where I now live and work.*

# Blessed be the name of the Lord.



# A Light in the Darkness

**From the Teachings  
of  
Rev Mario Schoenmaker**

THE FESTIVAL OF THE BIRTH OF LIGHT, life and love is now before us, and the Gospel of St John is - par excellence - the gospel of light and life. Therefore I want to meditate for a moment on Christ being the light of the world, which is spoken about in John 8:

*Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, 'I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.' The Pharisees then said to him, 'You are bearing witness to yourself; your testimony is not true.' Jesus answered, 'Even if I do bear witness to myself, my testimony is true, for I know whence I have come and whither I am going, but you do not know whence I come or whither I am going. You judge according to the flesh, I judge no one.'*

This gospel, as most of you would know, is not parochial; it is not even worldly or global, but spans the universe. It speaks from a point of view which pertains to spirit and not the flesh or worldly circumstances. Even today, when we read this gospel we are confronted with a very different consciousness. We

can apply the words of St John in a literal and to a degree even moral way, this does no real justice to the cosmic view of St John and the wisdom contained within the words of his gospel.

### **Why we don't see the light**

In this chapter of John's gospel we come face to face with the light, and we are taught how this light was received by the hearts and minds of those who said that they were longing for the light yet could not see the light because of their own blindness. Consider what Jesus says to the Pharisees: *You judge according to the flesh, I judge no one* (Jn 8:15). If we translate the word *flesh* differently, as some translators have done, we could read this as: *You judge by material standards. You judge by the outside. You judge according to appearances. You judge after your worldly fashions.*

If there is one thing you must never do, it is argue about truth. Truth needs no defending. It does not need the impurity of human minds to do that. For truth cannot be grasped by the human mind; it can only, as we say in our Affirmation, be understood and

experienced within the heart. Yet here we see the leaders of spiritual traditions and the keepers of truth, not only arguing about truth, but denying that it can reside within the human heart and soul.

To the ordinary mind it may seem preposterous that Jesus could make such a claim: I am the light of the world. How are we to know that such a claim is real? Should we compare this saying of Jesus with what other spiritual leaders have said of themselves?

Buddha believed that he had a marvelous and beneficent gospel to bring to mankind, but for himself he claimed only to be the re-discoverer of an old and forgotten path, and urged his followers not to think of him, but to concentrate upon the teachings. Confucius said of himself: How dare I lay claim to holiness or love? A man of endless craving, who never tires of teaching, I might be called, but nothing more. Mohammed, with all his lofty claims, once, covering his head, cried out that unless God cast the cloak of his mercy over him, there was no hope for him at all.

No spiritual leader has ever made that claim 'I am the light of the world' and neither could they, for the light of Christ was not as yet shining fully and powerfully in this world.

But Jesus was not speaking of his own flesh and blood appearance. He was speaking of an impulse that was coming into the world, in which all mankind could participate - the I AM, that portion of our being which we call spirit and which cannot be manipulated by the will of the flesh. As St John warns at the very beginning of his gospel: *Those born of God cannot be born by blood-bond, nor by the will of the flesh, nor by the will of man, but of God.* (Jn 1:13)

Our I AM is the light which Christ brought into the world. This light shines now within our souls, and gives us beingness, self-consciousness and individuality, which we can either enhance or diminish.

#### **Where is the darkness?**

*I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.* This light must be followed in order to light up the darkness, St John says. But we must ask ourselves:

Where is this darkness? And how are we going to follow the light in our inner soul?

There seems to be a general consensus among spiritual circles that darkness is here upon this earth; that it is here where the darker forces have free play, and that you have to set yourself free from the darker forces. The world is



often portrayed as the dark domain of evil spirits, and that we have the task of giving light and life and power to this dark world of ours.

I would be the last one to disagree with such sentiments, but are we not forgetting the injunction of Jesus when he said to his contemporaries: *You judge by the flesh?* Are we forgetting that we ourselves are spirit beings, and as such must judge or distinguish that which is of this world and that which is of spirit?

# The Season of Christ's Advent

The Book of Hebrews tells us that *we are in the world, but not of the world*, and as such we must never perceive ourselves as an integral part of this world. We must remember that there is a portion of us which belongs to the heavens and to the spirit, from whence we came originally.

Where is the darkness? If people would but read their Bibles! Even without the necessary scholarship, the Bible can still give answers to many a question. If we would go to the beginning of Genesis we would read the answer quite clearly:

*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep ... And God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light.'* (Gen 1:1-3)

The darkness does not pertain to this earth. Without form and void, true, disorder and emptiness, for sure - who would disagree with these sentiments, literally or philosophically - but not darkness. Darkness belongs to the deep, to the spiritual worlds themselves. It is there that the darkness needs to be lit up by the light which Christ gives.

This brings another consideration to our consciousness, for if the spiritual worlds are dark, and we ourselves have received the light - from the Elohim in the beginning, in small measure, but since the coming of the Christ with abundance - then it stands to reason that we ourselves, who have become participants of that light, whose consciousness has been lit with the beauty, power and responsibility of those spiritual gifts which we distinguish as thinking, feeling and willing, should become the light-bearers to the spiritual worlds.

It must be clearly understood that darkness pertains to the spiritual worlds and not, as we at times tend to think, to ourselves or the world in which we dwell for a little time. I would go further and suggest that we have incarnated into the world in order to *become* a light, for there is no other way for us to become a light-bearer

unless we have dwelt in the disorder and emptiness of this world. This it is which assists us to focus more clearly and willfully on the light we have to become.

When we enter the spirit world after we leave this body, we bring with us our own light, and through the light that we have we can perceive the spirit world in all its glory and majesty. According to the light that we have developed we shall either see dimly, as in the twilight, or we shall see clearly because we have developed and enlarged the light of our own being.



That is why Jesus said if we follow the light we shall not walk in darkness, and light and life will follow us. This pertains at present to our spiritual state, when we have shed the body. Later in evolution, when this physical body shall be spiritualized, it will apply to our consciousness as well, but let us not occupy ourselves with the future, the present is enough to handle, and at times even too much.

### **Embracing the light**

In order to follow the light within your soul, one must first become aware of the light. That is, to embrace the light, to say yes to the light, and that means the Christ. It means to accept the fullness of Christ within

your being and know that this power, this principle, is giving you the impetus to become the light yourself and that, with the help of the Christ, you will grow and become spiritually mature within yourself.

The task at hand for each and every soul with spiritual inclinations is to take hold of the Christ and be lit by the flame which he brought to us. This is commemorated at Christmas time and fulfilled through the mysteries of Golgotha.

This Christ will open new doors through which you will receive knowledge about yourself and about the spiritual worlds. You will find that once you have opened your soul to the Christ forces that these forces start to work first on your mind; that is, you become clearer in your thinking, not led by psychic forces nor

living in a dreamy or semi-conscious state. Your mind will light up so as to be able to become a real individual, full of enthusiasm for life and the values you give life. This means that you should attend to your mind, learn to discipline it, and fill it with those ideas, knowledge and perceptive powers that will enable you to judge rightly and to know, without emotional interference, the truth of the matter as it arises before you.

The second thing this power will do is make you morally responsible. You become a moral being, with a consciousness of rights and wrongs. No longer do you need the ten commandments to tell you what to do or not do, and neither are you bound by the moral climate in which you are born. Rather, you will be able to make your own moral decisions, decide your own path, and walk your own road.

Of course this means that you have to understand the motivations of your being and the input of your astral. The realisation that your astral self is not the real you enables you to correct, adjust and cleanse the astral through new moral input. Perhaps the advice of the ancient of days still rings true: *As you wish others to do to you, so do this to others.*

Thirdly, you will become strong within yourself, and not be blown by the winds that come and go - the winds of philosophies, cures, alternative healing methods,

religious concepts, psychic phenomena, masters or other self-professed spiritual teachers. One becomes strong and steadfast by following the Christ light in your chosen path and getting on with things - in your own personal life, in your profession, in your hobbies or whatever. Spirit life takes care of itself once there is the commitment and the willingness to follow the light.

**To become light-bearers we have to dwell in the disorder and emptiness of this world. There is no other way for us. We have incarnated into the world in order to *become* a light.**

The light of Christ is of course enhanced by participation in the means which Christ gave to us. In the regular use of the sacraments, in communion with kindred minds and hearts, in prayers and regular meditations, you will find renewed strength and steadfastness, and

thereby become the greater light-bearer in the worlds beyond this world.

Your task is to light up the darkness of the spiritual worlds once you arrive at the gate of the heavens. The strength of your light will determine your ability to participate and unite with the spiritual worlds as a whole. If there is one purpose, one goal, for the spiritually minded soul, it is to be a light in the darkness for then you will be able to commune face to face with that which you have loved more than your own life ... the Christ.

*From an address given on 17th January 1988*

## **An Advent Prayer**

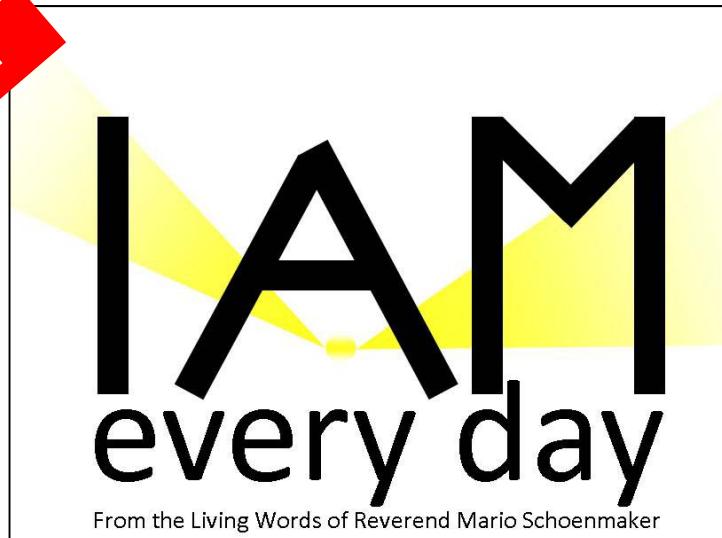
Let us, O Lord of Lords,  
warm towards the advent of Christmas.  
Fill us with expectation and deep inner longing.  
Hold before us the graciousness of Your presence  
and the greatness of what we may be.  
Overshadow us with your angels;  
help us to listen to their presence and their voices.  
Guide us towards the ultimate goal which You have set before us,  
and make us conscious of Your everlasting presence and power.



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# Resources for each Spiritual Season

Great Christmas Gift!



**I AM every day**  
perpetual calendar

**A spiritual thought for each day of the year from Rev Mario Schoenmaker**

The daily thoughts in this calendar have been selected from the many inspiring and challenging words in Rev Mario's study series on St Mark, entitled *Deliberations on St Mark*. Rev Mario called the Gospel of St Mark 'the gospel of the I AM' because it reveals how we can experience the I AM in our daily lives – every day.

The I AM is the Christ in you. It is the real self, the truth of your being, and it is working in every human being. The historical Christ portrayed our potential to be fully human and fully divine, to be purposeful, free and without fear, and today we see many individuals in this world working to express this divine I AM nature fully and freely.

Year after year, these sayings will assist you to stay conscious of the I AM throughout each day. Hold the day's saying in your consciousness. Allow it to enter into you, even though at times it may be surprising or uncomfortable. Contemplate it. See where it leads and what unfolds. Express its truth in your life, and the path of the I AM will open to you.

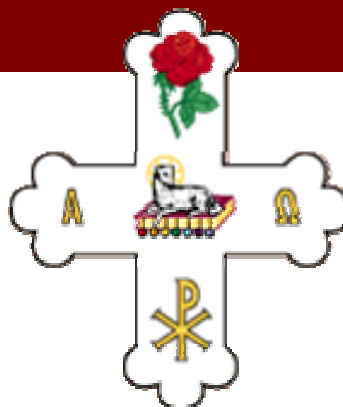
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