

An abridged form of this segment was presented to the congregation of the Creative Life Church in Hot Springs, AR, on Sunday, December 13, 2009. Your comments are welcome via email: [creationspirit@gmail.com](mailto:creationspirit@gmail.com). Succeeding presentations regarding other aspects of The Inward Way will be made on the second Sunday of each month at the 10:30 AM service of the Creative Life Church, 229 Bayard Street, Hot Springs, AR. The public is invited. In addition, meetings of The Aristotle Group, formed for purposes of metaphysical exchange, are held on the second Saturday of each month from 10AM-noon at the same location. These meetings also are open to the public and participation is encouraged.

### THE SECOND COMING—FOR REAL THIS TIME!

Depending on how we were raised, the sweet story of the birth of Jesus began the history of the living saint, Jesus the Nazarene—the only son of God—whom, we learned from certain religious sources, would return again one day to save us all.

In some of the descriptions of this period in history, we learn that Jesus was born of a virgin; that his earthly father, Joseph, was hesitant about marrying Mary, the mother of Jesus; that Jesus was born in a manger, not at the inn; that three wise men were guided by the star in the East to the manger and brought the baby Jesus gifts. This story represented not only the birth of the so-called Christ child, but also marked the “first coming” of Jesus, the One who had been sent to save us from sin—indeed, the one who was proclaimed the savior of us all—and thus Christianity was born.

From the point of view of a photographer, I will reframe this imagery this morning. From the point of view of a metaphysician, I will apply a metaphorical perspective to this rich, Scriptural offering. In either case, I will briefly re-translate the historical version into the spiritual Truth found in the allegorical form. By shifting the perspective formed by this allegory, we find, yet again, that Scripture understood as allegory presents us with the description of how to live spiritually.

Mary is a young woman, not yet married, and a virgin. Symbolically, Mary represents the willingness to listen, out of innocence, for each newborn inspiration as a new way of living. Taken to even deeper commitment, Mary represents the openness to Truth as her sole—and soul—guidance for living sacred meaning and purpose, moment by moment. In this allegory, Mary receives this news as a dream, a visit from an angel. Surely, this character trait depicts a newly born means of demonstrating our spirituality— virgin to our way of living, if you will—not from the law, but from the spirit of divine providence. If there ever was a virgin birth, this new or virginal, spiritual perspective was it.

Joseph, Mary’s so-called “spouse, represents our human tendency to follow the law of the land, the literal and rational—the intellectual way, if you will—that most of us live. Yet, if we have even a bit of what Joseph has in his character, we remain open to another way should a better way be revealed to us from some higher authority. Here we find that Joseph, stuck in the law of the day for his guidance, pushed Mary

away. Is this not what we also do when we are not yet comfortable with another, perhaps unfamiliar, way of living? Of course, we keep it at arm's distance. In this case—as is the case when we come to see from a spiritual perspective—Joseph was visited by an angel, a figure in a dream, which gave legitimacy to its message. Because this new, virginal view had been visited on him by an angelic source, Joseph took its guidance to be the Truth. And the message changed Joseph's view dramatically, just as our view and life is changed dramatically when we find that living spiritually is the only way to go. What, exactly, was that Truth? The same as that represented by Mary: to live out of innocence, to follow or obey only inspiration as one's day-to-day guide. And so he "married" Mary. As a story about spiritual living, it was not Mary the woman Joseph married. Rather, as spiritual guidance, this joining is *our* joining in reverence with the *idea* of living by the guidance of the Holy Spirit, later labeled the Christ. Metaphysically, we call the spiritual Source Christ consciousness.

Jesus represents the ideal man. In metaphysics, man refers to all divine ideas, every offering of inspirational Source, the tongue of The Inward Way. Jesus, as the ideal inspirational offering, represents the spiritual idea that, ideally, each of us is to become aware of and follow only spiritual consciousness, the divine Word that guides us for all time. Jesus represents the commitment to follow *only* the example of spiritual insight depicted in this magnificent allegory, and thus sets the example for us to follow—just as we are to be the example for others on how to live spiritually.

I ask you this: just who are these people, this Mary, this Joseph, this virgin-birthed one named Jesus? Are they someone we look to outside ourselves, like characters in a movie we take for real? Are they someone in our extended family, like our favorite aunt or uncle? Nope, as characters in an allegory, images of Truth in a spiritual story, they are there as mirrors of our very selves. As a friend of mine often says as she signs off on her emails to me: "Remember, I'm another yourself." Yes, she, like Mary, Jesus, and Joseph, is another aspect of me, so I can look at that aspect within myself in a respectful way and give it all the dignity it deserves. Every character in this allegory, just like every character in our dreams, like everyone we'll even meet—*ever*—they represent simply another aspect of ourselves. So, as we continue briefly, let's keep in mind that every aspect of this allegory is speaking about a single aspect of us, an aspect waiting only to reach our awareness, so we can accept and celebrate our completeness.

To continue the allegory, the religious practice of that time was one of living by Scriptural law, the literal meaning of chapter and verse. This literalized way of living is represented by the Pharisees. When it is said, for example, that there was no room at the inn for Jesus, Mary and Joseph, such a description takes on the meaning that—of course—there would be no room amongst the common view of religious practice, represented by the Pharisees, for the representations of the ideal, spiritual way. For certain, Jesus, Mary and Joseph represented the way of humility, getting out of the way of intellectuality and self-importance in order to become

aware of the Truth that was to guide them. Thus we have the humble setting for this virginal birth of spiritual living depicted by the manger.

The star rose in the East, it is said, and guided the three wise men to the place of Jesus' virgin birth. Indeed, the guiding light found in darkness—enlightenment—spoke to the ignorance attached to the old way and, if wise, one is led to and through this virgin birth to the very seat of its founder: inspiration delivered out of the womb of Wisdom—enlightenment born out of ignorance. And when the wise arrive in the lap of divine inspiration, the gifts of wisdom flow like gold, frankincense and myrrh. Gold represents royalty; frankincense, divinity; and myrrh, passion. Each of these testifies to the exalted value of spiritual Truth discerned, and the very nature of its source, practice and impact on our lives.

And so in the allegory of Jesus' virginal birth we have different meaning attributed to the description of the first coming. We move from a literal description to deeper metaphorical comprehension. We move from a doctrinal description which sets Jesus, the man, up to be a false idol, on to a description that establishes the rich texture of metaphorical translation as the straight and narrow path to follow. Indeed, it was Jesus that is supposed to have said that he did not come to change the law but to translate the law. It is this means of using symbolic meaning that defines the very process of living spiritually, wherein we abide and demonstrate Christ consciousness. Now, neither by Jesus the man, nor through religious dogma—or only when Jesus supposedly “comes again” to be among us some day in the future—but through the Truth, Christ consciousness, are we made free to live spiritually though each moment of every day. When we live spiritually, comprehending that Jesus represents the ideal, never-ending commitment to awareness of divine inspiration as the *only* spiritual path or way, we also come to discern that the Christ is the very voice that informs us in our awareness. Thus, there will not be a single, second coming of a man named Jesus, but rather the voice of Christ consciousness informs our unending commitment for living spiritually regularly—and once and for all. Thus the *real* message of this allegory is that the Christ—the voice heard as we get out of our ways of self-importance—comes to us not *once* again, but again and again, and yet again—endlessly, as we stay in awareness.

As we approach this Christmas season, then, let us approach this holiday with a resolve to focus our undivided attention on one thing, and one thing only, as our guidance: the Christ consciousness we find inward, moment by divinely inspired moment. This will indeed be the joining of the full meaning of the Christ—spiritual Truth—with the spiritual meaning of the term mass, the celebration of living joined to that Truth as our spiritual demonstration out into the Universe. Then we can truly say: Merry Christmas!