

An Advent Reflection

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CHAOS

INCARNATION

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Weekly Guide



THE GATHERING

S F
L I G H T
H O U S E

SUNDAY worship cafe

Discussion Question

What does Christmas mean to you this year?

Scripture Reflection

And the word was made flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld the glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth 15 John[am] testified[an] about him and shouted out,[ao] "This one was the one about whom I said, 'He who comes after me is greater than I am,[ap] because he existed before me.'" 16 For we have all received from his fullness one gracious gift after another. (John 1)

Four Movements of Order From Chaos

1. **The Spirit** is God present with us, *brooding* over our chaos. (Genesis 1:2; Luke 1:35; Luke 3:22)
2. **The Voice of God** creates a *speech act* that sends forth vibrations of transformation (Genesis 1:3ff; Luke 1:26-35; John 1:1; Luke 3:22-23).
3. **Time as Sacred**, one day at a time, one week at a time moving from *one now to another now* (Genesis 1:1; 2:1-3; Galatians 4:4-7)
4. **The Incarnation** is the enfleshment and *execution* of the cosmic wisdom and full divinity into a very ordinary and temporal earthling (Genesis 1:26-27; John 1:14)



In the shadow of the Spirit

Luke 1:34-35

Lectio (Imagine): Read the above Scripture (3x's) notice **the role and the action of the Holy Spirit in the incarnation.** **After the third reading note the word(s) that stick(s) out to you.**

Oratio (Feel): *Pray and express your feelings to God about the words that stuck out to you. This could include your desires, confessions, questions, gratitudes, or resistance.*

Meditatio (Think): *Why do you think the Spirit highlighted those words to you? Where else in Scripture or your life have those words/themes come up? What message might God be conveying to you? How could you use these words to direct your path?*

Contemplatio (Be Still): *Sit silently for 5 minutes. Just be in God's presence. Focus your attention on the Presence of God that is around you, with you and in you. Enjoy the peace, rest in the love, be content with the Holy Spirit.*

Actio (Do): *What will you do today in response to the Voice of God?*

In Genesis the Spirit is present with the chaos, positioned over it, brooding like a fluttering bird, as it anticipates order and life. The Spirit is the precursor to order, the sign of coming life. When the Spirit is present there is a calming effect, a peace and confidence. The Spirit makes the chaos irrelevant.

We are told that Mary, who represents that pure and untamed chaos of humanity and is a stand-in for the fallen house of Jacob was overshadowed by the Holy Spirit. This motif of the Spirit as a prelude to goodness, order and life is seen all throughout the Biblical narrative. We see it in Psalm 91 and again in Jesus' baptism as the Spirit broods over the waters of Israel's national sins.

As we begin this week let's do so reflecting on where the Spirit is present in our lives. After your lectio divina moment you very likely sensed the nearness of the Spirit. What were you thinking about when you sensed it? What did feelings were you left with? Peace? Wonder? Joy? Hope? Confidence? Invite the Presence of God to come into the space where you experience the most anxiety. Now breath slowly anticipating order, light, clarity, and life.

**THE SOUL THAT DWELLS IN
THE SECRET PLACE OF THE
MOST HIGH WILL ABIDE
UNDER THE SHADOW OF THE
ALMIGHTY.
-PSALM 91**





Listening to the Voice

Luke 1:26-35

Lectio (Imagine): Read the above Scripture (3x's). **After the third reading note the word(s) that stick(s) out to you.**

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Actio (Do): What will you do today in response to the Voice of God?

"Notice how God's movements and activity is always associated with speech act. In creation we have one speech act after another choreographing orderliness and life. Throughout the Scripture, God's speech-act precedes all other acts. Why? Perhaps, it clues us into the longing God has to be in communion, communication, community with humanity. The most common pattern in the Biblical narrative of God's activity with humans is that of speaking. God is always speaking and people of faith are always listening. And this speaking and listening is the movement that follows the brooding Spirit. The untangling of chaos and disorder includes the Voice, speaking, calling, saying, and declaring.

In the incarnation narratives the angel (angelos means messenger) Gabriel is sent with a message, a word to Mary announcing the work that God is about to do. Word always precedes work. John (1:1) tells us that the word was in the beginning. And we see the pattern in Jesus' baptism as well before the work of God— there is the hovering Spirit and then the Word of God speaking.

God is speaking. The voice is at work in the stars (Psalm 19:1-4), in creation (Romans 1:20), in dreams and vision (Acts 2:17) and in Scripture (Hebrews 4:1-12). The question is: What is the Voice saying to you? Listen.

**LISTEN IN SILENCE BECAUSE IF
YOUR HEART IS FULL OF
OTHER THINGS YOU CANNOT
HEAR THE VOICE OF GOD--
MOTHER TERESA**



Living in the Fullness of Time



Galatians 4:1-7

Lectio (Imagine): Read the above Scripture (3x's) *note the phrase "time had fully come" and the language of timing in this incarnation passage. After the third reading note the word(s) that stick(s) out to you.*

Oratio (Feel): Pray and express your feelings to God about the words that stuck out to you. This could include your desires, confessions, questions, gratitudes, or resistance.

Meditatio (Think): Why do you think the Spirit highlighted those words to you? Where else in Scripture or your life have those words/themes come up? What message might God be conveying to you? How could you use these words to direct your path?

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Actio (Do): What will you do today in response to the Voice of God?

Chaos is no match for the nature of time. As we have seen in the creation account God makes time sacred both in working one-day-at-a-time as well as setting apart a day for rest. The Enūma Eliš, Babylon Creation Myth, that circulated about the time that Genesis 1 was edited, stated that Babylon was the crowning achievement of the gods. Genesis challenged this by saying that time, in fact day seven, was holy. And that God worked his creative miracle within the ordinary function of a day. Each day building on the previous' day. Time ticks forward one now moment to the next now moment to the next. In this manner Paul says, "In the fullness of time" the incarnation was executed.

Even the chaos of exiled humanity cannot be perpetually sustained. Time marches toward a resolution. When the time was right, when the moment was ready, the incarnation was activated. Jesus emerged on the scene preaching, "the time (kairos) is within grasp." Jesus' arrival activated the moment of undoing for chaos. So where does this undoing happen? In the constant nowness of time. So when does this happen? In the constant nowness of time. So who does this happen? In the "I am" presentness.

The incarnation teaches us that The Now of God has been inaugurated and when you are present you encounter it.

A large, gnarled tree covered in snow, standing against a sunset sky over a snowy landscape. The tree's branches are intricate and spread out, with the sun setting behind it, creating a golden glow. The foreground is a smooth, snow-covered slope, and the background shows a distant town or city under a hazy, orange sky.

**BEGIN TO BE NOW WHAT YOU
WILL BE HEREAFTER.**

--WILLIAM JAMES



Can These Bones Live?

Ezekiel 37:1-14

Lectio (Imagine): Read the above Scripture (3x's) notice *the movements from the chaos of dead bones to the order of a living army*. After the third reading note the word(s) that stick(s) out to you.

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Meditatio (Think): Why do you think the Spirit highlighted those words to you? Where else in Scripture or your life have those words/themes come up? What message might God be conveying to you? How could you use these words to direct your path?

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Actio (Do): What will you do today in response to the Voice of God?

We are uncomfortable with the chaos of death and the aftermath of what once was but now is not. We yearn to realize the form and shape of life. Yet before the bones lived, there was a time for the nation of Israel to sit in the chaos asking, *can these bones live?*

This question symbolizes a space of time before we see finally what God is up to, and when do we rejoice in the order, the incarnation, the plan of God. Yes! These bones can live. This heap, this pile, this mess of chaos can come together in order, incarnate with a Divine purpose.

We see this same story of order from chaos on birth of Christ, who began as a thought in the mind of God and arrived into time and space in the form of a human, God's plan of salvation incarnate, fully seen, fully realized and wholly ordered.

The Incarnation is the supreme example of order from chaos, tantamount even to creation. The Incarnation is the hope we have when we look upon our chaos asking, can these bones live?

As you look out upon your chaos, ask the question in hope, "can these bones live." Then answer in faith, picturing Jesus in the manger, and say YES! These bones can live!



**HE ASKED ME, "SON OF MAN,
CAN THESE BONES LIVE?"**

EZEKIEL 37:3



What Am I Incarnating?

John 1:14-18

Lectio (Imagine): Read the above Scripture (3x's) notice **After the third reading note the word(s) that stick(s) out to you.**

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Actio (Do): What will you do today in response to the Voice of God?

Mozart is the incarnation of music. Ghandi is the incarnation of non-violent resistance. MLK, Jr is the incarnation of civil rights. Mother Teresa is the incarnation of compassion. For many Americans they are the incarnation of the American Dream. Everybody's life in incarnating some word, some idea or some ideal.

Jesus Christ was the incarnation of the Word. He was the fleshing out of God's wisdom and character. We behold the very face of God in Jesus Christ. All the love. All the compassion. All the mercy. All the justice. All the forgiveness. All the grace. All the truth. It's all there. Living and breathing for us to behold.

What word are you incarnating with your life? What are you an incarnation of? What do you want to incarnate in the coming year?



**WE ARE ALL INCARNATING
SOMETHING.
--THE BELOVED**



pilgrimage to an infant

Luke 2:1-20

Lectio (Imagine): Read the above Scripture (3x's) notice **After the third reading note the word(s) that stick(s) out to you.**

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Actio (Do): What will you do today in response to the Voice of God?

Annually we pilgrimage to an infant to re-encounter innocence. Every Christmas eve we hear the story of how God's salvation didn't come on the backs of horses and tanks, nukes and F16s, but in the most unassuming manner, a crying baby. As we read the story we are caught off guard by this approach. Could it really be this simple? This mysterious? This baffling?

And there we stand all of us in hushed and silent awe. A baby, a little baby, this is God's answer to our hate and chaos, our evil and disorder? Yes, yes it is. God brings us to this moment every year and we are faced with the reality of our longing for an infant's innocence, the stirring of our soul at the powerful communication of a baby's cry and giggle.

And we know.

God is really with us, like all the way.

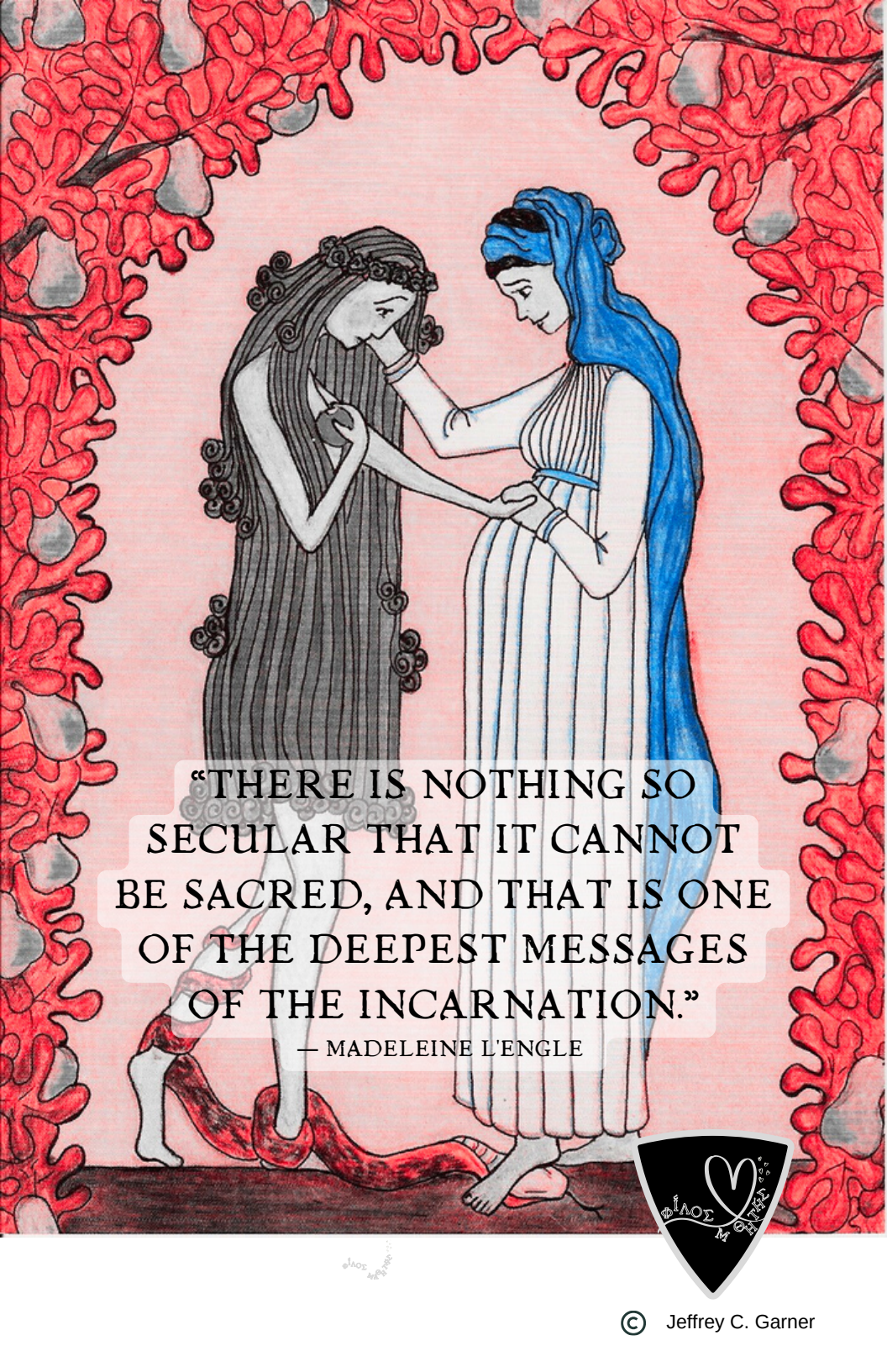
God is really one of us, in the flesh.

God is eternally bound in time, marked by flesh, loved by a mother, scarred by men, and transformed into an earthling. And why? Well, Irenaeus said it thus, "He became human, that humans might become God."

**“He who was the
Son of God
became the Son
of man, that man
... might become
the son of God.”**

Irenaeus





“THERE IS NOTHING SO
SECULAR THAT IT CANNOT
BE SACRED, AND THAT IS ONE
OF THE DEEPEST MESSAGES
OF THE INCARNATION.”

— MADELEINE L'ENGLE





OPPORTUNITIES *To Love and Beloved*



December CALENDAR

Coming Up

- **24th @ 6:00p YWAM 357 Ellis Street** This will be our Christmas Service. We will sing Christmas carols, then go out into the TL and pass out hot cocoa, snacks, hygiene kits, and socks.
- **25th. NO WORSHIP CAFE.** Dr Jeffrey Garner will be present at 1337 Sutter @ 10:30a showing his short Christmas Video Message called "Happy Birthday Jesus," the message will be emailed out to all our members on Saturday so they can watch at home with their friends and family.
- **Jan 1st.** Noon Brunch. Potluck style. **NO WORSHIP CAFE.**



HELP NEEDED

socks, hats, hygiene, Christmas cookies
for our unhoused brothers and sisters Christmas Eve event



COMMUNAL PRAYER REQUEST

COMMUNAL PRAISE BOARD

See prayer cards on the table to submit a personal prayer or praise.



December Transparency Report

Budget	Incoming*	Outstanding
\$17,930.23*	\$14,812.00	\$-3.118.23

Vision. Our vision for the next 18 months (12/23) is to have each operation financially self-sustaining.

Building: for the building to be self-sustained (mortgage, utilities) thru residential and event rentals.

Church: for the offerings/tithes to fund our social impact missions of anti-human trafficking in Nepal, homelessness in SF, recovery to those in need, and monthly events as well as operational costs.

Pastoral: for Jeff's content creation (e-course sales, coaching) to pay his salary and other future salaries

*incoming includes tithes, offerings, peerspace rentals, and building leases.