



The Center  
for Christian Spirituality



*The Revelation to Joseph*

## *Overlooked*

8:45 a.m. + December 10, 2023 + Second Sunday of Advent

Singing With Mary

*"Magnify"*

*My soul will magnify the Lord, and my spirit rejoice in my savior.  
See how his favor rests on me, I am blessed in the sight of the world.  
For he has raised me up on high, the Mighty has done great things.  
Mercy flows out to everyone, who walks in the fear of the Lord.  
Magnify, magnify, magnify the Lord with me.*

*Come see his strength, his mighty power, has torn the proud from their illusions.  
Thrones of importance cast aside, as the humble are raised up on high.  
Come see the hungry satisfied, while the rich are all sent away.  
For he has come to help his servant, remembering his promise of mercy.  
Magnify, magnify, magnify the Lord with me.*

*My soul will magnify the Lord, and my spirit rejoice in my savior.*

Preparing for Advent

*from the Iona Community*

*Into our world as into Mary's womb...*

***Come, Lord Jesus.***

*Into the forgotten places, as into the stable...*

***Come, Lord Jesus.***

*Into the lives of the poor, bringing hope;  
Into the lives of the powerful, bringing caution;  
Into the lives of the weary, bringing rest;  
Into the lives of the wise, bringing restlessness;  
And into our lives and longings, whatever our estate...*

***Come, Lord Jesus***

*This is the good news: Christ is coming, and blessed are those who wait on the Lord.*

***Therefore come quickly, Lord.***

Opening to God with Us

*"Come Thou Long Expected Jesus"*

*Come, thou long expected Jesus, born to set thy people free;  
From our fears and sins release us, let us find our rest in thee.  
You our strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art;  
Dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.*

*Born thy people to deliver, born a child and yet a King,  
Born to reign in us forever, now thy gracious kingdom bring.  
By thine own eternal Spirit rule in all our hearts alone;  
By thine all sufficient merit, raise us to thy glorious throne.*

Contemplating Scripture

***Matthew 1:18-25***

*Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly.*

*But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:*

*“Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son,  
and they shall name him Emmanuel,” which means, “God is with us.”*

*When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife but had no marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son, and he named him Jesus.*

## Meditation

### Song of Response

*“You Lead Me Home”*

*I trust you have guided the road that I travel, although I have been unaware.  
So I’ll keep believing though life may unravel, yes I will choose faith amid fear.  
For there is a place that I long to return to, that calms my desire to roam.  
And so as I journey it’s you that I turn to, believing you’re leading me home.*

*You lead me home, by paths unknown,  
You lead me home, by ways unfamiliar.  
Wherever I turn, still you are there.  
A compassionate friend when I choose to stray.  
Leading me home by another way.*

## Guided Prayer

### Song of Response

*“You Lead Me Home”*

*You lead me home, by paths unknown,  
You lead me home, by ways unfamiliar.  
Wherever I turn, still you are there.  
A compassionate friend when I choose to stray.  
Leading me home by another way.*

## Centering in Silence

During these minutes of silence, simply rest in God’s abiding and loving presence in this moment. You are in God and God is in you. Just be and relax. Center your attention in your heart and imagine your breath flowing in and out from your heart area. If it helps you to center, use a sacred prayer word such as Christ, Love, Abba, Jesus, or Spirit. Or follow the rhythm of your breath.

## Singing With Mary

*“Magnify”*

*Magnify, magnify, magnify the Lord with me.*

## Holy Communion

## Receiving a Good Word



### Our Staff

*Haley Brown – Ministry Assistant & Director of gastrochurch  
Peter Johns – Associate Director*

*Rev. Rachel Sciretti – Associate Pastor  
Rev. Dr. Michael Sciretti, Jr. – Pastor of The Center*

*Thank you for worshipping with us today. Please register your attendance.  
If you are worshipping online, please text the word center to (844) 474-0707  
If you are worshipping in person, please text the word chapel to (844) 474-0707*

*For information about The Center for Christian Spirituality and upcoming events, visit: [www.TheCenterFCS.org](http://www.TheCenterFCS.org).*

*Please register your presence in the notebooks in the foyer.*

## Centering Prayer

Today | The Chapel | after Contemplative Worship

## Advent Community Gathering

Today | The Anchor House | 10:00 a.m.

*Join us for some good food and fellowship with friends from our contemplative community after worship in The Anchor House.*

## Service of the Longest Night

Sunday, December 17 | The Chapel | 6:00 p.m.

*The Service of the Longest Night is held on the Sunday evening closest to the Winter Solstice, the longest night of the year. The "longest night" has also become an expression for the spiritual journey of grief and loss. Our time together will be especially appropriate for those who have experienced a significant loss this past year. In this time of worship, you are invited to quiet refuge of prayer, music, remembrance, and Holy Communion. We will acknowledge our losses and ponder the everlasting hope that shines like a light in the darkness.*

## Contemplative Candlelight Christmas Eve Service

Sunday, December 24 | The Anchor House Grounds | 6:00 p.m.

*We will sing carols, hear the Christmas story, reflect on its meaning for us today, and light candles to celebrate the coming of Christ. It will be a lovely way to mark Christmas Eve.*

## Receiving the Grace of Epiphany: Our January Guided Silent Retreat

Saturday, January 6 | The Anchor House | 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

*In our January Guided Silent Retreat, after a time of Centering, Michael will give a short presentation on the ancient as well as the inner meaning of the treasures of gold, frankincense and myrrh. Much of the symbolism has been lost but, once seen, will deepen your understanding and experience of this day and how it helps us to both receive and embody grace. As a part of this day, participants will experience extended communal silence, anointing with holy oil, and contemplative communion. For more information and to register, go to: <https://thecenterfcs.org/retreats>*

## Rafa - An Evening of Contemplative Prayer, Lament, and Healing

Sunday, January 7 | The Chapel | 6:00 p.m.

*This is a new Contemplative Worship service that will be offered monthly on the first Sunday of the month that we are calling Rafa. Interestingly, rafa is the sound of two different Hebrew verbs. One means "to heal" or "to make whole," and the other Hebrew verb means "to relax, sink down, be quiet, let go, be still," such as in Psalm 46:10: "Be still, let go, and know that I am God." If you are seeking rafa – wholeness and quietness, healing and stillness – for yourself, for others, and for our world, join us on January 7 for a gathering of Contemplative Prayer, Lament and Healing. Through simple, meditative songs, short reflective readings, extended silence, communal intention, and contemplative communion, we'll quiet ourselves in body, mind and heart that we might be more open and receptive to the Beloved's life-giving, healing presence for us and the world. For those who seek it, we will also offer a time of healing prayer with anointing. For more information, go to: <https://thecenterfcs.org/rafa>*

## Giving to The Center

*All of us are part of a never-ending process of giving and receiving. Life is not possible without this organic flow. What we co-create together here at The Center for Christian Spirituality is not possible without our conscious participation in this holy activity of freely receiving and freely giving. In this light, we invite you to financially give to The Center in response to what you have received today or throughout our contemplative offerings. Using the QR code will take you to a page where you can make a one-time offering or recurring gift. Thank you for your contribution and investment.*

