



Neo-Coptic Icon of the Epiphany, Stephane Rene

## *Embody Grace*

8:45 a.m. + January 7, 2024 + Baptism of Christ

*A master says that he thinks now and then on the words the angel spoke to Mary: "Hail, full of grace" (Luke 1:28).*

*What help is it to me that Mary is full of grace, if I am not also full of grace?*

Meister Eckhart (d. 1328)

Starting Authentically

*We come here to worship, we come here to pray.  
Aware of our weakenss, in need of your grace.  
Some of us hiding, some of us found.  
Standing together upon holy ground.  
Boundless love and beautiful grace,  
Filling this place, filling our hearts.  
In our delight and in our despair,  
Still you are there, flooding our lives with boundless love.*

*"Boundless Love"*

## Crossing the Threshold

### Song of Response

***“Boundless Love”***

***Boundless love and beautiful grace,  
Filling this place, filling our hearts.  
In our delight and in our despair,  
Still you are there, flooding our lives with boundless love.***

### Seeing and Being Grace (with sung response)

***John 1:14-18, 32-33, Luke 6:32-36***

*And the Word became flesh and tabernacled with us, and we beheld his glory, glory as of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth. John testified of him and cried out, “This was the one of whom I said, ‘The one who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.’” From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.*

***Rejoice! Rejoice! For you are full of grace, the Lord is with you, blessed are you.***

*The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. The only begotten Son, who is close to the Father’s heart, he has unfolded.... And John testified, “I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abided upon him.*

***Rejoice! Rejoice! For you are full of grace, the Lord is with you, blessed are you.***

*I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘The one on whom you see the Spirit descend and abide upon is the one who baptizes with the Spirit of Holiness.’”*

***Rejoice! Rejoice! For you are full of grace, the Lord is with you, blessed are you.***

*Jesus says, “If you love those who love you, what grace do you have? For even sinners love those who love them. If you do good to those who do good to you, what grace do you have? For even sinners do the same. If you lend to those from whom you expect to receive payment, what grace do you have? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. Instead, love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Highest, for he himself is gracious to the ungracious and the hurtful ones. Be compassionate, just as your Father is compassionate.*

***Rejoice! Rejoice! For you are full of grace, the Lord is with you, blessed are you.***

### Meditation

#### Offering Ourselves for Transformation

***“Soften My Heart”***

***Soften my heart, Lord, soften my heart.  
From all indifference, set me apart.  
To feel your compassion,  
To weep with your tears.  
Come soften my heart, O Lord, soften my heart.***

### Guided Prayer

Becoming a Channel of Grace  
*Pour out through me,  
Lord of glory, Lord of grace.  
That all may see,  
Thy eternal, radiant face.*

*“Pour Out Through Me”*

### 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.

### Opening Ourselves

*Pour out through me,  
Lord of glory, Lord of grace.  
That all may see,  
Thy eternal, radiant face.*

*“Pour Out Through Me”*

### Holy Communion

*Ubi Caritas, deus ibi est.  
Congregavit nos in unum Christi amor.  
Exsultemus et in ipso jucundemur.  
Timeamus et amemus Deum vivum.  
Es ex corde diligamus nos sincero.  
Amen.*

*Where charity and love are, God is there.  
The love of Christ has gathered us together.  
Let us rejoice and be glad in it.  
Let us revere and love the living God.  
And from a sincere heart let us love one another.  
Amen.*

*“Ubi Caritas”*

### A Stance for the New Year

*Always we begin again, every moment new,  
Giving back the good we have received from you.  
Waking up with grateful hearts,  
As we greet the day.  
All creation sings with us a song of praise.  
We will arise and seek the common good and welcome all in love.  
Offering grace to all humanity as reflections of above.  
Living with sacrifice, simplicity, and wisdom till the end.  
Because always we begin again.*

*“Always We Begin Again”*

### 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

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

*Rafa* - An Evening of Contemplative Prayer, Lament, and Healing  
Tonight | 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 tonight 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>*

Creative Space  
Saturday, January 20 | The Anchor House | 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

*Creative Space is a nurturing, encouraging gathering of people who come together to create art and spend time in personal reflection. You will get an opportunity to explore spirituality through creative expression, as well as to be creative in a setting that is intentionally designed to enhance the spiritual. Create Space is on the third Saturday of each month and is open to all. Art supplies will be provided. Learn more and sign up at the registration link below.*

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.*

