

0

Depth Spirituality

Depth Spirituality: Opening Prayer

Let us take a moment in silence to allow each of us to be truly present.

Prayer

Divine Mystery, as we prepare to share our time together, we recall your promise to be present when two or three are gathered in your name. We know that without you here among us, and within each one of us, all our ideas and efforts to transform will come to nothing.



All: Unite us in your Spirit.

We rejoice that we are blessed and called together in your name and to be an example of a contemplative community. We pray that we will respond generously and without self-interest to serve you in serving each other and in serving all those in need. May our listening and sharing help us to grow in Spiritual Depths.

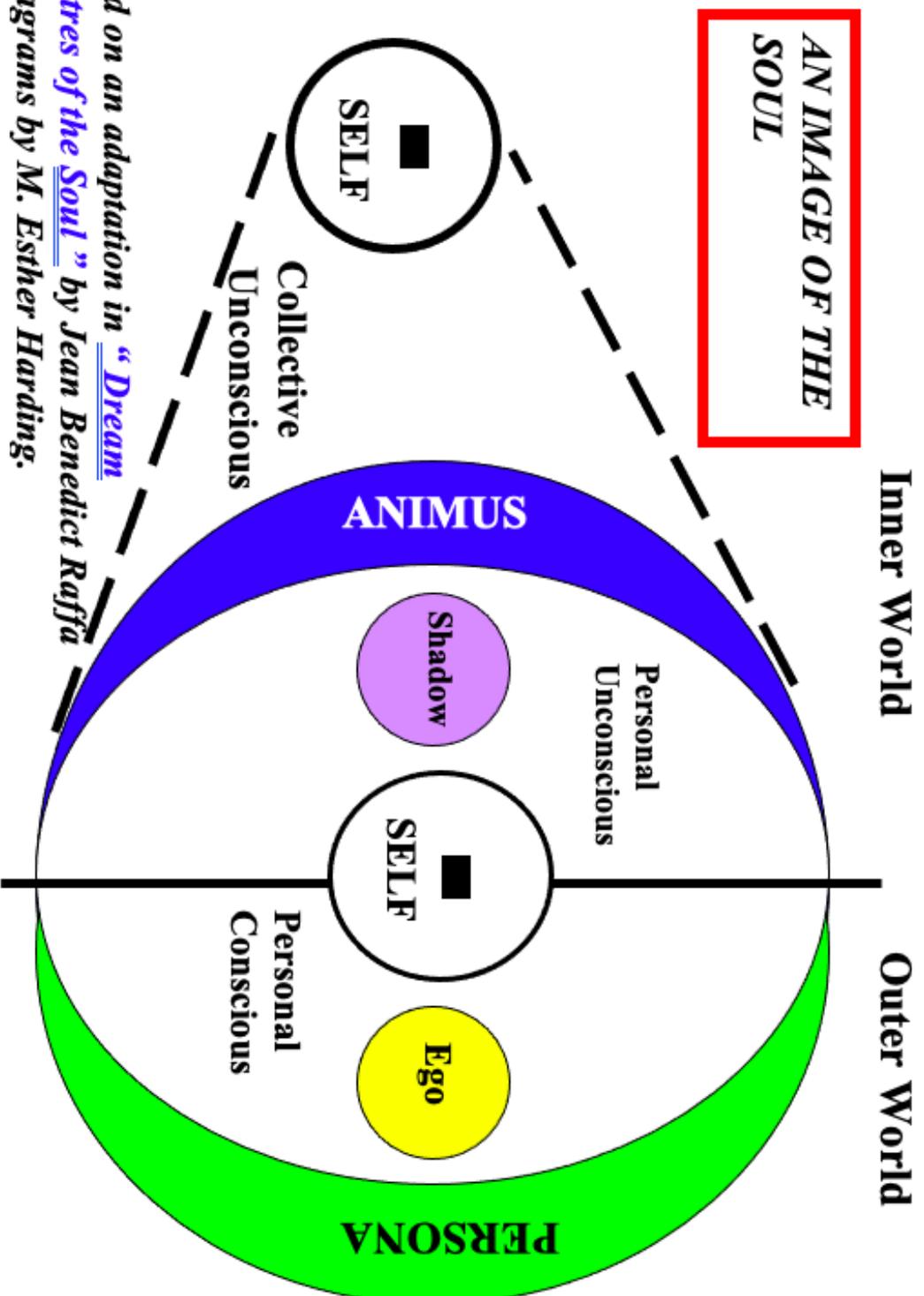
All: Unite us in your Spirit.

Inspire us and all seeking to live the Good news with your Spirit of wisdom. Plant the vision of a life of prayer, community, and depths of love in many hearts and minds. Give us humor and humility in our working with others to overcome the tensions and divisions of our society. May we may know the privilege of contributing together, so that your kingdom of peace, justice, reconciliation, and compassion can come upon the earth.

All: Unite us in your Spirit.

Concluding Prayer

We ask that sharing together will increase the communion among us and our readiness to share our spiritual search with others, as members of your Body on earth. May the communion we experience give us the courage to give witness to you and to center our lives on you. Amen.



Based on an adaptation in *"Dream Theatres of the Soul"* by Jean Benedict Raffa of diagrams by M. Esther Harding.

Depth Spirituality:

1. Divine Indwelling

Faith calls for the total surrender of our faculties and of all our being to the truth inside and outside ourselves. The Christian tradition calls this reality God.

Christian faith is a leap into the unknown. Experience confirms the wisdom of every act of trust. The alternation of the darkness of faith leading to understanding, and understanding illuminating the darkness of faith is the normal way that leads to the growth of faith. Like everyone else, God wants to be accepted as he is – and he happens to be infinite, incomprehensible, and inexpressible. We have to accept him, then, in the darkness of faith. It is only when we can except God as he is that we can give up the desire for spiritual experiences that we can feel. Faith is mature when we are at ease without particular experiences of God, when his presence is obvious without our having to reflect on it. One who has this faith simply opens his eyes and, wherever he looks, finds God.

Faith is strengthened by reading and meditation on the Word of God, prayer, fidelity to the duties of our state of life, and the acceptance of the circumstances of life. We must try to perceive Christ in the interruption of our plans and in the disappointment of expectations; in difficulties, contradictions, and trials. No matter what happens, “We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him” (Rom. 8:28). The Holy Spirit works on our evolution not only by purifying and enlightening us from within, but also by allowing difficulties trials, and temptations to assail us from without. This much is certain, that once we make up our minds to seek God, he is already seeking us much more eagerly, and he is not going to let anything happen to prevent his purpose. He will bring people and events into our lives, and whatever we may think about them, they are designed for the evolution of his life in us.

(Thomas Keating, “The Heart of the World”, Crossroad, New York, 2008, pp 45-46)

Depth Spirituality:

2. Human evolution

Human beings, even if we postulate a process of evolution, also possess the uniqueness which cannot be fully explained by the evolution of other open systems. Each of us has his or her own personal identity and is capable of entering into dialogue with others and with God himself. Our capacity to reason, to develop arguments, to be inventive, to interpret reality and create art, along with other not yet discovered capacities, are signs of a uniqueness which transcends the sphere of physics and biology. The sheer novelty involved in the emergence of a personal being within the material universe presupposes a direct action of God and a particular call to life and to relationship on the part of a 'Thou' who addresses himself to another 'thou'. The biblical accounts of creation invite us to see each human being as a subject who can never be reduced to the status of an object.

Yet it would also be mistaken to view other living beings as mere objects subjected to arbitrary human domination. When nature is viewed solely as a source of profit and gain, this has serious consequences for society. This vision of Might is right has engendered in men's inequality, injustice and acts of violence against the majority of humanity, since resources end up in the hands of the first comer or the most powerful: the winner takes all. Completely at odds with this model are the ideals of harmony, justice, fraternity and peace as proposed by Jesus. As he said of the powers of his own age: 'You know that the rulers of the Gentile lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It shall not be so with you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant.' (Mt 20:25-26)

The ultimate destiny of the universe is in the fullness of God, which has already been attained by the risen Christ, the measure of ultimate maturity of all things. Here we can add yet another argument for rejecting every tyrannical and irresponsible domination of human beings over other creatures. The ultimate purpose of other creatures is not to be found in us. Rather, all creatures are moving forward with us and through us towards a common point of arrival, which is God, in that transcendent fullness where the risen Christ embraces and illumines all things. Human beings, endowed with intelligence and love, and drawn by the fullness of Christ, are called to lead all creatures back to their Creator.

(Pope Francis, *Laudato Si: on care for our common home*, Veritas Publications, Dublin 2015, par 81-83)

Depth Spirituality:

3. Cosmology

This story of the universe is the new sacred story, ... a biospiritual story as well as a galactic story and an Earth story. Above all, the universe as we know it is integral with itself throughout its vast extent in space and throughout the long series of its transformations in time. Everywhere, at all times, and in each of its particular manifestations, the universe is present to itself. Each atomic element is immediately influencing and being influenced by every other atom of the universe. Nothing can ever be separated from anything else. The earth is a single if highly differentiated community.

... So, too, every part of the universe activates a particular dimension or aspect of the universe in a unique and unrepeatable manner. Thus everything is needed. Without the perfection of each part, something is lacking from the whole. Each particular being in the universe is needed about the entire universe. With this understanding of our profound kinship with all life, we can establish the basis for a flourishing Earth community. ... A vast mystery is being enacted in which we participate in a unique way.

Thomas Berry, Evening Thoughts
(God is Love: The Heart of all Creation Guidebook p 42.)

Depth Spirituality:

4. Into Unity Consciousness

The immensity of God is the essential attribute which allows us to seize him everywhere, within us and around us, ...whose marrow is everywhere present and constitutes the true food of our lives. What is, when all is said and done, the concrete link which binds all these universal entities together and confers on them the final power of gaining hold of us? The essence of Christianity consists in asking oneself that question, and in answering: 'The Word Incarnate, Our Lord Jesus Christ.' How can we validate to ourselves this prodigious identification of the Son of Man and the divine *milieu*? A first step, unquestionably, is to see the divine omnipresence in which we find ourselves plunged as an omnipresence of action. God enfolds us and penetrates us by creating and preserving us.

Now let us go a little further. Under what form, and with what end in view, has the Creator given us, and still preserves in us, the gift of participated being? Under the form of an essential aspiration towards him – and with a view to the unhoped-for cleaving which is to make us one and the same complex thing with him. The action by which God maintains us in the field of his presence is a unitive transformation... in which the substantial one and the created many fuse without confusion in a whole.

...As a consequence of the Incarnation, the divine immensity has transformed itself for us into the omnipresence of christification. ... Everything I endure, with faith and love, by way of diminishment or death, makes me a little more closely an integral part of this mystical body.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Divine Milieu*
(*God is Love: The Heart of all Creation Guidebook* p 84-85.)

Depth questions:

Do I feel that my life has prepared me for this moment of history? Am I willing to be formed by what is happening around me?

Is this divine birthing process pushing me into a new way of living and being?

In what ways, in my emotions and body, am I being made new?

How am I holding the reality of our world today in contemplative openness and willingness to suffer consciously and be moved by reality?

Can I trust the invitation for being undefended and open to the call of compassion and an open heart?

How have I wrestled with conscience recently and do I choose to hold conflicts consciously so a deep wisdom may come forward?

Is ethical conscience replacing moral conscience in my life?

Is there a call to deepen my relationship to the Center through prayer, meditation and social action?

Who are those individuals in your life model the reality of costly grace? Are you one of those persons for others?

Are we willing to sacrifice the comforts of a sleepy conscience for the struggle of a God driven conscience?

Franz Jaegerstaetter listened to a dream and believed that God gave him a choice. What choices are God presenting us?

Am I more influenced by the voices of judgement or of compassion towards myself and others?

A paradox cannot be understood and yet can be lived. Does this apply to my own life?

When I ponder on the meaning and review my life, do I do so with the eye of my consciousness? To a life of discernment?

Do I allow my life to be disturbed enough to grow in consciousness? What or who disturbs me about my life and security to the familiar?

How affected am I by the collective identity of my culture or religion? Am I brave enough to witness the shadow side of their realities? Can I be a loving prophetic voice of change?

Do I fear the concept of revolution? Can there be a revolution of the heart?

Have you been called in circumstances to speak truth to power? What was that experience like?

We are called to a new ethic. It is not good enough to be “good” but to be awake. What does that look like in your own life?

Do you have a soul friend to share your concerns? Are you a member of a community committed to hope and transformation? Can I create such a community through invitation and sharing? May we all share the journey! Amen