

Ubique

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Christmas through Epiphany

Moonless darkness stands between.
 Past, the Past, no more be seen!
 But the Bethlehem-star may lead me
 To the sight of Him Who freed me
 From the self that I have been.
 Make me pure, Lord: Thou art holy;
 Make me meek, Lord: Thou wert lowly;
 Now beginning, and always:
 Now begin, on Christmas day.

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS



The Adoration of the Magi

FRA ANGELICO & FRA FILIPPO LIPPI

c 1440/1460

National Gallery of Art

The Lesson of the Star

The Most Reverend William S.H. Downey

All during advent we prepared for His Coming, then at Christmas we celebrated His arrival. Now at Epiphany we join the Wise Men of All ages who come to worship Him and offer their best gifts.

You will remember that all the festivals of the Church are not only commemorations of historical significance that happened in the Life of our Lord Jesus Christ two thousand years ago. No, these festivals are symbolic of great events which occur in the Life of each one of us as we tread the Path of Christ. At Advent we await with anticipation His coming within our Soul — at Christmas we rejoice at His birth once again in our own heart.

Now Epiphany, twelve days after the festival of Christmas, is intended to translate all of that joy into action! Up until now all the preparation and all the celebration has been for the most part interior. Now the time has come for the Christ to become *manifest* to the World. For that is the meaning of the word epiphany to show forth... to shine forth... to manifest.

And now we look to the Magi within to discover what is this great symbol of the Christ manifestation. The three wise men represent the dedicated Body, Soul and Spirit. The Myrrh represents the bitterness and pain and sorrow of the lower nature within us before it has died out to self and selfishness. The root cause of all of our troubles is selfishness, the belief that we are separate from our fellows. That we are somehow unique or different. That we are either better than those around us, which is the sin of Pride; or that we are somehow not as good as others or less than, which is the sin of Pride in reverse. So Myrrh speaks of the death of the lower personality, the petty small self. St Paul says we must die to self that Christ may live within us.

The Frankincense is the symbol of the transmutation of our lower self into the Higher Self, the Christ Nature. The incense speaks of the sweetness of the Soul lifted in aspiration to the Christ within. And finally the Gold is that precious part of each person, the True Self which we are striving to manifest or show forth. It is the spark of Divinity which lies hidden deep within the heart of each person. The Gospel of St John says it is the true Light that lights every person coming into the World.

When that experience of the transmutation of the lower self into the Higher self takes place, a change happens in the life of the Christian Initiate. Notice our Gospel this morning says, “And being warned of God in a dream not to return to Herod they departed by another way.” Your life is changed and you cannot return to the old way. One has found a new and Living Way!

There is an ancient saying, “When you have found the beginning of the WAY, the Star of your soul will show its Light.” The means of finding the way I have just outlined may be implemented through prayer, meditation and the practice of good works. Jesus said, “Let your Light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify their Father which is in Heaven.”

One of the founding Bishops of the Liberal Catholic Church, CW Leadbeater, said, “We who love the Star should ourselves be as stars to help to illumine the world in which we live, each according to his or her capacity to shine and to show forth in purity, in gentleness, and in steadfastness, the Light that is within us.”



Love and the Soul's Journey to Divinity

The Right Rev. Gaspar Torres

first printed in *The Theosophist*, August 2022

There are two cycles of preparation for the two fundamental epochs that guide the soul's journey to Divinity. In both cycles, although the main emphasis is on developing those virtues that prepare the soul for such an elevation, there are two moments exclusively dedicated to Love as the most essential quality for the completion of this journey. This is due to the fact that Love is the real key to Divinity.

In the Christian tradition this is symbolized in the life of Jesus as his birth, through Advent as the nativity of Christmas, and in the passion and resurrection, through the period of Lent. In the early centuries of the Christian Church both of these periods were 40-days long; now Advent is only 4 weeks long. But the retention of the number 4 in both periods is its association with the quaternary, or lower human nature, called “constitution” in theosophical terms.

From the psychological point of view, we have seen that these two short resting periods in our constant examination of our weaknesses in order to purify our nature, leading us to a higher consciousness, could cause us to feel depressed or defeated if we do not have periodic pauses, such as the above two resting points (Advent and Lent), in order to regain our strength and recharge our energy to continue our self-observation. We need hundreds of reincarnations to be able to become really human.

The complete glorification and illumination of the human spirit is found at the center of not only humanity, but this Divinity is also found in all the other kingdoms of Nature: the mineral, vegetable, animal, and angelical. The Unity of the Divine life penetrates all of manifestation,

from subatomic particles to the most highly evolved beings. This Unity is the one Reality. All the rest is what appears as separate forms, but they continue constituting the same Unity.

To be able to pause for these periods of self-observation allows us to shift our attention from our animalistic desires and tendencies, and our sensual passions, to our center of Love, where our spiritual faculties lie dormant. Only with this superior passion are we able to reach “the peace that passeth understanding,” which “abides in the hearts of those who live in the Eternal.”

It is easy to find fault for our suffering in the behavior of our parents, teachers, neighbors, politicians, and so on, but the real cause of suffering is in our minds, thoughts, words, and actions, which originate within us. Only Love will bring peace within every one of us, humanity as a whole, and our planet. This is due to the fact that the human kingdom is the most important of all other kingdoms because it is the only one with the necessary self-consciousness to develop the sense of responsibility to guide all the rest.

One of the things that we unconsciously keep repeating is that there is cruelty in all of Nature and that everything around us struggles for self-preservation. But we forget that it is in us that conflict originates and that as long as we cannot understand this and live it, we cannot help other kingdoms to avoid their apparent cruel behavior. As stated in Isaiah 65:25: “The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent’s food. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD.”

Another example is found in the well-known “miracle” of the bread and the fish (Mark, 8:15-19) when Jesus and his disciples reach a high mount and realize that a hungry multitude of 5,000 people have followed them. The numbers involved in this parable (5,000 people, 5 loaves of bread, 2 fish, 12 baskets, and so forth) are not to be taken literally. They are symbols of the result of Jesus’ teaching that only through his love and compassion could he first awaken, and then transform, a great part of human consciousness, so that through that Love humanity could elevate itself to a new phase of its evolution. The 12 baskets symbolize the 12 constellations surrounding our solar system, during the Sidereal year, and every constellation takes around 2,100 years giving its influence over our solar system. It is also the cycle of influence of a Great Spiritual Instructor for Humanity as Krishna, the Christ, the Buddha, and so on. (**The Secret Doctrine, vol. II, p. 330 footnote.**)

Just as there is no real Christmas unless the heart vibrates each year with a new realization of Love, there cannot be a real Resurrection Sunday unless the heart is reborn with a new deepening of Love within our being.



Solemnity of Mary

Rev. Steven Arndt

Today we say happy new year's day, and as an old saying goes, well begun is half done, so let us reflect as we advance into the new year. We move into this year on the heels of Advent and Christmas, celebrating the return of light, the birth of the Christ child, ever glowing in the hearts of all mankind. Breathing throughout the Sun, the Moon, the Stars, the earth, connected by the nurturing bodies of water in the oceans of the world — and today, we discover that virgin matter, represented by Mary as the soul.

It is this stirring of the pure, sweet, simple, virgin matter of the soul, moving more and more, revealing that light of Christ, freeing it from the bondage of the charged emotions to the fullness of the love, that great light that has always existed. From the Metaphysical dictionary we read, “Mary, the mother of Jesus, represents the soul that magnifies the Lord ‘daily in the temple’ and through the devotions prepares itself for the higher life.” It goes on to say, “the perfected-man manifestation is conceived in the intuitive or soul nature, and is molded in its substance.”

The beauty of these descriptions is that they move us in a mystical direction, towards the greater unseen, unnoticed until the divine light peeks through and exposes the reality that was always present. From today's Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians, Paul is revealing how the soul, in exposing its light, becomes recognized, and provides us with the concrete Faith. And after that, Faith is established in knowing the experience of that light, that virgin matter of the soul, we no longer are separated, and as such not needing a schoolmaster. In that light, we begin to see more and more clearly, the experience from St. Paul to the Galatians: 3:28, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.” St. Paul goes on to say in Galatians 3:29: “And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.” Meaning that we are all heirs to being freed from all limitations of awareness and completely able to know the fullness of the living Christ in everyone and in everything, the experience of that love, the pure virgin matter, that Mary represents in her purity.

The birth of Jesus, that light flowing unrestricted from the virgin matter of the soul, entering our world, is the story that is told, not for the adoration of Jesus, Mary, Joseph or the shepherds. This story is told to those who would have ears to hear, and hearts to receive, that all may know that story is everyone's story, that we too, like the baby Jesus, can within our own consciousness grow in our experience of the soul, the virgin love from the beginning, becoming our experience in everything we do. This solemn experience is noted by many when praying Our Lady's rosary, helping anyone who wishes to birth more and more of that relationship with the divine.

The Franciscan, Father Richard Rohr says, “You cannot think your way into this kind of radiant, expansive seeing. You must be caught in a relationship of love and awe now and then, and it often comes slowly, through osmosis, imitation, resonance, contemplation and mirroring. The Christ is always given freely, tossed like a baton from the other side. Our only part in the process is to reach out and catch it every now and then.”

The beautiful story in today's Gospel from St. Luke is welcoming that process, and our collect prayer from today is another inviting expression, in the words, "May we open our hearts to thy divine wisdom, that was before heaven and earth existed, thy wisdom which is the eternal mother of the light".

May these thoughts this morning prepare us to open our hearts more and more, in this new year of 2023.



The Madonna of Humility

Fra Angelico

c. 1430

National Gallery of Art

Corpus Christi: The Body of Christ

Rev. Richard Hall

The First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians, Ch. 11, V. 23:

Take, eat; this is my Body... this do in remembrance of me... As oft as you drink (this cup) do ye in remembrance of me...

It seems that Jesus wanted them to remember something. But I think it was more than, “Oh yea, that dinner back in Galilee, the bread and wine thing...”

I think he wanted them (and us) to remember more.

- Remember what he said.
- Remember what he did.
- Remember what he taught me.
- Remember where he brought me.
- Remember how I looked at the world before I met him.
- Remember how I look at the world now.

Some say Christ is a living presence in the world.

But his physical body is no longer here,

- To walk with me along the shore of the Sea of Galilee and talk to the fishermen.
- To celebrate the gathering of friends at the marriage of friends.
- To share wisdom and food with a multitude on a hillside.
- To share bread and wine with close companions.

But Christ no longer walks the earth.

Unless, of course, he does.

Unless he lives and breathes in each of us.

Unless the light of the Father, which he reflected, reflects again in our faces.

So Christ walks with us, in us, and we become the arms and legs and mouth — we become the Body of Christ.

And we remember.

Editor’s Note: Fr Richard passed to the Higher Life in December 2022. See page 12 below for a tribute to him.



PROVINCIAL NEWS

In Memoriam

Rev. Norberto Machado **Nuestra Señora de los Angeles**

Passed to the Higher Life 8 June 2022

Father Norberto Machado was born in Havana, Cuba, and was baptized in the Roman Catholic Church. His mother Raquel was very involved in the Theosophical Society. Norberto became a theosophist as well and remained a committed member throughout his life.

Norberto was confirmed in Havana by Bp Mayola, April 29, 1962, and was admitted to the minor order of cleric the same year in July. He immigrated to the United States in 1963 and was advanced to Doorkeeper in October, 1963, in New York City by Bp Will Pitkin. In the 1990s Norberto received the rest of his minor orders at the hands of Bp Joseph Tisch in Florida.

In his secular life Norberto pursued a successful career in real estate. As an executive managing a sales staff he was always held in high esteem for his charismatic personality and good character. Norberto naturally attracted people to himself.

In January 2002 he was ordained to the subdiaconate by the Rt Reverend Lawrence J Smith and in November of the same year I ordained him to the Diaconate. On July 13, 2003, it was my privilege to ordain him to the priesthood.

The Parish of Nuestra Señora de los Angeles in Hialeah, Florida, had gone through a tumultuous period of their history, but Fr. Norberto Machado came on board as rector at just the right time. He ably steered the course of the parish in the right direction and kept her on course.

Norberto was a gifted musician and vocalist and sang at many ordinations and retreats throughout the Province. His generosity and selfless service were hallmarks of his ministry. His presence among us will be missed. I am proud to have called him friend. Rest in the arms of Your Lord and Master, dear brother.

+*William Downey*



PROVINCIAL NEWS**Canoness Imelda Brown****St Raphael the Archangel****Passed to the Higher Life 15 November 2022**

Imelda H.S. Brown was born in Ashley, North Dakota, on April 18, 1931. She was the child of first- and second-generation German immigrants who settled in the area. Her parents were killed when she was five and she and her brother, after being shuttled from one relative to another, were raised by their relatively strict grandparents. From a young age, Mellie was said to be “willful”. This willfulness was an early sign of her determination to lead an independent life,



and as she grew up, she took steps to manage her life on her own as best she could. Mellie was twice married and had four children, which, after divorcing her second husband, she raised by herself; even travelling with them to California while they were very young, to start her life anew — an action that demanded courage, brave self-reliance, and the ability to think on her feet.

Mellie always had an innate intuition that there was more to life as she knew it and that one day she would find it. She remembered the first light touch of it was experienced through the Lutheran religion of her grandparents, but this was not enough. After coming to California, she attended a Methodist church for a while and found confirmation that religion, for her, was a way toward that inner “something” that would give her life meaning and purpose, but this, too, was not enough and she knew subconsciously there was more.

Mellie developed an interest in astrology. She could see the energy and influence of the stars and planets on daily life and found in them a guide toward an increased understanding that there was more to life and living... and that God was, indeed, an immanent God. It was directly through her interest in astrology that she found Theosophy at a time in her personal life when she could not cope any longer; could not survive another day. She said she asked God for help; she felt lost and alone with her children and felt that she simply “could not go on” as she “sat on the edge of the bed hugging her youngest child and crying out to God.” The following week she was looking for an astrologer in the Yellow Pages and found one. She inquired and discovered there was a theosophical speaker giving a lecture on esoteric astrology. She attended with her children in tow and was immediately drawn to every word. She had found part of a philosophy that touched her inner heart and from that point on, she would attend every lecture and meeting she could find on Theosophy. In May 1967, she became a member of the Theosophical Society and maintained her membership all her life. It was as a direct result of her theosophical studies that she came to see the true nature of religion and saw God in and of all things and in all beings.

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It was during this time that she discovered the Liberal Catholic Church and its doctrine — many of the theosophists she was meeting were also members of the LCC. She read many of its pamphlets, which led to her first LCC church service at Our Lady and All Angels in Ojai, California.

From then on, after her move to San Raphael, California, she never missed a church service at St. Francis LCC in San Francisco, and found a religious way of life that addressed every innate religious-oriented aspiration toward an understanding of the meaning and purpose of existence including an explanation of the universal nature of God in and of everything. Her forlorn prayers had been answered. She had found her way into the light.

On October 3rd, 1982, Mellie was baptized at St. Francis by Reverend Steven E. Kellogg, and on October 6th, was confirmed as a Liberal Catholic by Reverend Gerrit Munnik. She began her religious life in earnest as a dedicated and never-failing Server. Her work for the Church was unceasing. She would perform work as needed from altar preparations to cleaning the floors and setting out snacks for after-service fellowship. Her unflinching constancy, faithfulness, and loyalty toward her chosen religion was not ignored and on February 16, 1991, Bp Joseph L. Tisch admitted her as Deaconess during the 75th anniversary of the founding of the Liberal Catholic Church held in Ojai, California.

In her later years, at St. Raphael the Archangel, Deaconess Imelda H.S. Brown continued her work for her religion unabated through the various ups and downs that

occurred. She was unfazed when no one came to services, when only Father Mathias van Thiel and she were conducting services. She knew, even when conducting services alone, that Christ was present, that the angelic host were there and working with the two of them, and she felt deep in her heart that the Holy Spirit was ever-present and supporting their efforts to spread holy forces there in the Church and outward into the surrounding community. Her heart belonged to the Blessed Holy Mother and her faith sustained her every effort in keeping her Church spiritually alive. This was her motivation. The Church was alive with spiritual energy and she would do all that she possibly could to keep it so, even if she was officiating alone.

It has been said of Deaconess Mellie Brown, “Her deeply dedicated soul exemplified all of the marvelous qualities of a true disciple — the highest demonstration of what it means to be a Servant of Christ.” For at least



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the last two years of her life, she was alone. She honestly and with heartfelt devotion to Jesus Christ our Master, and the Holy Mother, conducted Prime and the Ritual to Our Lady. One Sunday morning, she was seen by a handyman at the altar of Our Lady performing the Ritual. He was there to meet her after services. He was so touched by what he saw that he secretly placed five dollars in the donation tray — five dollars he could not have afforded because he was homeless.

Mellie did it all: she cleaned the church when no one else could or would, or she would see that a housekeeper was hired to thoroughly clean. She always provided fresh flowers at her expense for the main altar and for the Mary altar. She insisted fresh was better than artificial and that the fresh flowers helped to elevate the holy atmosphere. When there was a priest, she was always helping at his side or on the periphery doing whatever she could if only by expressions of support and admiration for a service well done. And, too, Mellie was the unfailing preeminent snack-provider after church services.

And so it was on July 18, 2022, Deaconess Imelda H.S. Brown was elevated to Canoness by the Most Reverend William S.H. Downey.

Early in 2022, Mellie was diagnosed with lung cancer that quickly spread to her spine and bones. She was told she had four months to a year to live. Despite her diagnosis, she continued conducting services every Sunday until she became bedridden. And even then, it was her hope she would be able to do more if God granted her the privilege.

Four months after her elevation, on November 21, 2022, Canoness Brown passed away quietly and serenely in her sleep and in her home with family members nearby. Her beloved church, St. Raphael the Archangel in Richmond, California, will establish a memorial library in her honor.

Peggy Heubel, St Raphael the Archangel



PROVINCIAL NEWS

Rev. Richard Hall St Gabriel and All Angels

Passed to the Higher Life 17 December 2022

Richard was an Air Force Veteran, an Award-winning managing editor of the computer magazines at Thaddeus Computing, a beloved priest at Saint Gabriel and All Angels, and a loving father and husband.



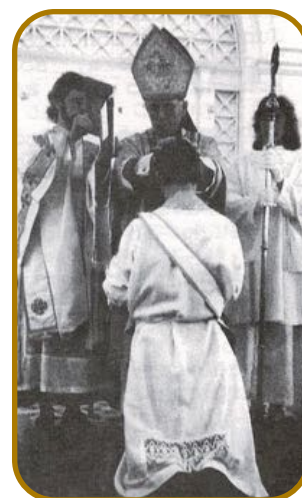
He leaves behind his wife Lucinda, a Deaconess at St Gabriel's, and his children Robert and Ella. Richard and Lucinda were married 48 years.

Richard will be remembered for his intelligent, beautiful, touching sermons at St. Gabriel's. Ordained to the priesthood by Bp Lawrence Smith on May 14, 1995, Fr Richard once said, "As soon as you start the Holy Eucharist, the Holy Spirit takes over." His steadfast service

and bright presence revealed that truth again and again.

He will also be remembered for his lively performances in community theater, and for his fun humor, intelligent speech, compassionate service, ready wit, and his lyric tenor voice.

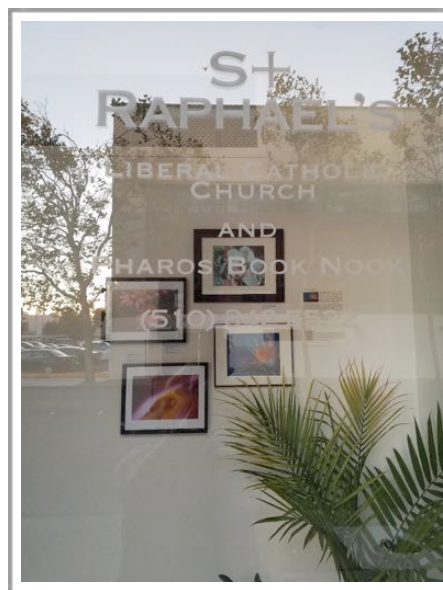
We were blessed to share his beautiful, enlightened life. Richard created love and happiness in his world.



PROVINCIAL NEWS

Ordination

Larry Brown of St Raphael the Archangel in Richmond, California, was ordained to the diaconate on Sunday, January 20, 2023, by the Most Rev. William S.H. Downey, Presiding Bishop of the Liberal Catholic Church.



Editor's Web Picks

The Late Paul Johnson (journalist & historian) — **Reason to Believe**

<https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/reason-to-believe/>

Evidence of Something Beyond Nature

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F6rd4HEdfw&t=8s>

250 Years of Amazing Grace

<https://www.conservativewoman.co.uk/250-years-of-amazing-grace/>

*Readers are invited to send their own web picks to the editor (ubique@thelccusa.org)
for inclusion in future issues.*



And the glory which thou gavest me
I have given them;
that they may be one, even as we are one.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN, 17:22

Art
Madonna and Child

Giotto
c 1310/1315
National Gallery of Art

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Altar Photo, page 1:
Church of St. Albert,
Greeley, Colorado
Easter 2019

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