



Teachings from Reverend Antoinette Schoenmaker

# Holy Brethren, Who Share in a Heavenly Call

*We know that the whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.*

*We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the first-born among many brethren. And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.  
Roman 8:22-25; 28-30*

TODAY IS OUR THANKSGIVING DAY. On this day we celebrate our being called together by Christ. We celebrate our Founders and the vision and values which inspired them to create this spiritual fellowship which we are privileged to have found.

### **The Power Generated by our Fellowship**

The Centre – which is the model and archetype of our spiritual community here and in other places – is today celebrating 37 years of loving service. During these 37 years, countless people, countless times, have heard, have said and have thought the words, *Christ is in you, the hope of glory*. In many ways these words sum up the heart and the work of our Centre.

Imagine if such thoughts, such words, remained unknown, unspoken, unthought and unheard.

I am aware of the power that is created – not just within us but within the world – when we gather together, on a Sunday or a Thursday or a Tuesday or any other day, for the purpose of honouring this spirit of Christ, of learning more about his grace and life and power, and of being nurtured and sustained in our unfolding spiritual life.

I think our gathering together must be like a spiritual remedy for the astral sheath of this earth, a tonic that adds power, vibrancy and life to a world that is increasingly in the grips of Ahriman and Lucifer. Our world, so loved by the Father, sure needs what we generate

here just to keep going, for it is in the keeping on going that we shall attain that which has been destined for us.

In one of his lectures, Rev Mario told us that one of the tasks of an occultist is to maintain a balance in this world so that it can keep going in its evolution. We are an occult school and therefore this is part of our task. We are assisting the evolution of this earth because in our gathering together we are able to sustain our consciousness of Christ so much better than when we are alone, and when we are together we are able to enter rapidly into this consciousness and work in this consciousness. As Christ himself said: Wherever two or three are gathered in my name, there am I. And whatever you together agree on shall be done. It shall be bound on earth and bound in heaven.

### **The Occult School – Individuality and Brotherhood**

It is not an easy thing that we have set ourselves to do in becoming associated with this Centre. It is not an easy thing to form a gathering, a group, a brotherhood by realizing the power of Christ working within us as individuals. There is great inner effort involved which causes us to rise up to a greater life.

This Centre is not an easy place to be. It is not meant to be easy. It is an occult school. By its nature, The Centre assists us to free ourselves of the forces which hold us captive and which bind us to a limited existence. And it will keep putting before us the areas where we are not free, where we are not expressing the fullness of the life that is ours in Christ. It will keep putting before us the upward call of God in Christ.

### **To Assist the Christ**

Over the many years of his ministry, our founder Rev Mario, spoke many times of the purpose of our Centre, of our fellowship and community. But one time he said something that made me feel a whole lot better, for I know when people ask me to describe The Centre I am often lost for words. He said in one Founders Day Address:

*I realise that I have still not fully expressed the vision that motivated Colin and me to commence The Centre. To a large extent, this vision is embodied in the volumes of teachings that have been given by Colin and I over the last twenty-two years. These you ought to study if you want to comprehend something of the reality that motivated our spirits to move away from an existence that was cozy, nice and safe, to one that is fraught with danger, insecurity, lack of money, and loss of long-standing colleagues and friends.*

*Yet at the same time, the path we chose was one of excitement, and led to the discovery of a realm that was new to so many of us. To become part of the new that re-discovers the old, to explore new possibilities and experience our own soul power was an exhilarating event. We discovered a living reality which surpasses anything of the past. The Centre exists to discover the new, to explore greater heights and deeper depths, to open a new highway which may be trodden by all who have courage and daring in their blood.*

*We encourage those qualities of thinking, awakened individualism, spiritual thoughtfulness, and inner authority, which are part of your inner beingness, and we want to exorcise the devils of hopelessness, depression, inferiority complexes, emotional instability and psychological confusions.*

*If you ask me what I see of the future, then I see, distant though it may be, a kingdom of people who share with each other the greatness of Christ's presence in all its glory. I see not little churches, mosques, temples or other edifices dotted all over the world, but a unity of souls who know the name of Christ, and who are bonded in that name. In order to make this happen, and to assist the Christ in the renewing evolution of this earth The Centre has come into existence. Let us realise the Christ within our being, and know that the anointing of the Holy Spirit binds us together as individuals.*

## Called Out

Mario never wanted a church in the traditional sense that we understand it. He wanted an ecclesia – a group of people who were called out of their own small lives, individuals who sensed their life had greater purpose and in that way knew the voice of Christ and the presence of Christ.

The word “ecclesia” from which we have the word “church” means those who are called out from their homes, their singular lives in the world, to assemble together for a holy task. Yes, holy brethren, who share in a heavenly call, all of us still have our singular lives in the world, but increasingly we are being set free of the world, increasingly we can discern the forces of Ahriman and Lucifer, stultification and selfishness, which take us away from the real self and the real purpose of being human. To become free and to set others free is one of the great purposes which has called us out and to this place.

## Becoming Free

The process of becoming free is an interesting one, because it involves great paradoxes. It actually involves binding yourself and sacrificing yourself. As we say in the Eucharist for the Unordained, *We sacrifice our lower nature so our higher Christ self may be revealed.* As Christ directed, we are here to lose our life, so we may gain it truly. And to that end we pray:

*O Loving Christ,  
present in these holy mysteries,  
I give myself to you,  
for joy and for sorrow,  
for sickness and for health,  
for success and failure,  
in time and in eternity.  
I offer to you my body,  
my mind and my spirit,  
to be a holy sacrifice.  
Take me and make me  
an instrument of your will.*

It is these two activities – voluntarily binding ourselves to Christ by loving and serving the Christ in other souls, and sacrificing ourselves in ways that our higher self may be revealed – that this Centre has made possible. We come here to give of ourselves

and to realize that what we have to give has worth. It is for this that we give thanks today. We give thanks that we have been called to freedom, or with freedom in view.

## You Were Called to Freedom, Brethren

This word “calling” is a precious and holy word. It is true that Jesus said: *Many are called, but few are chosen*, but the fact that we are called is already a formidable thing to consider.

We know that there are many callings and many purposes to be fulfilled in this world for evolution to go ahead. Not all are called to be saints and initiates and co-workers with Christ. We know there are many brotherhoods at work, of which our brotherhood, the Brotherhood of Melchizedek, is but one, and that they all fulfil many purposes needful for human life in this world.

But the fact that we have found ourselves here – often by long and windy roads – is an indication of a calling, of hearing the voice of Christ resounding within our souls and of a growing response to that call, to become as he was in this world, to complete his sufferings and his ministry of reconciliation.

It seems to me very precious and rare to be called to be free, called to become individuals, called to express, expand, and realise the holiness of our inner individuality, which is Christ. Called to walk in the spirit and overcome the limitations of this material existence and discern the gifts of the spirit to us. Called to the one body. Called to have his mind among ourselves. Called to become servants of one another through love.

## Developing Care for our Soul

This is another of the great paradoxes of the spiritual path, that where we serve each other in love, we are gain freedom. St Paul has a lot to say about this. Through loving service, we retain our self respect, our values, our inner strength. But where we slander, bite, bitch, argue and think and speak in a negative way about self and others, we ourselves are devoured, St Paul says. We lose our values. We become bitter,

disillusioned, empty and bored, having no strength and no courage, and constantly blame life's journey and others for our misfortunes.

Yes, indeed, to be in the occult school is not easy. It can only be understood by those who are developing a spiritual point of view, a clear seeing and a real care for the spiritual nature of their soul rather than a giving in to the fleeting material existence we have now.

Have you ever thought you have made a complete mess of your life? Does it seem tangled, knotty, with loose threads or sudden cuts? Mario would tell this wonderful story of his grandmother's embroidery. He would sit at her feet and look up and see a tangled mess. But when he stood up and looked from above he saw the most wondrous image emerging.

This higher view of our lives takes *will* to achieve. Clear seeing, clairvoyance, takes enormous will and strength of soul to rise up and see the beauty rather than the mess. In the occult school we are given the esoteric knowledge, the truth, which nurtures and fortifies our souls, so we can do precisely this.

Through the working of the grace of God each one of us here has become conscious to some degree of our inner "I", our own individuality and have begun to understand our own inner spiritual life and the choices we have as to how we will live.

The incarnation of Christ within our souls is in its infancy stage. None of us can say that Christ is fully present within us, and yet, in being here we are saying with our actions that we have recognised the working of this spirit within our being, and that we want and need an environment in which we can experience, nurture and integrate this power in our lives.

### **Not What the World Wants; but What it Needs**

It was the late sixties when Mario and Colin saw that Christ and his power and his teaching were no longer really understood or

being applied in this world. They wanted to make a modern mystery school which would be relevant and useful to people today. They knew that Christ came that we may have life and have it with fullness and abundance and they noticed that this was not the effect the Christian churches were having and that as a result there was no longer a vision of the presence of Christ at work in human existence today.

Of course, many have tried to make Christ relevant and modern, but the danger of becoming relevant to the world is that you give the world what the world wants not what it needs; many, in becoming like the world have actually denied the world the riches of the spirit.

It was this realization of the wide-spread spiritual poverty in the world that led Mario and Colin to revive the ancient values and spiritual truths lost in the stream of time. Truths like: reincarnation, our living history; the importance and need for initiation, for real spiritual training, commitment and blessing; the power of symbols and ritual and mystery; spiritual healing and being touched; the need for beauty and reverence to feed the soul; our relationship with the spiritual hierarchy and spiritual evolution.

The ancient knowledge that your body is but dust but your spirit will live forever is a message that has healing in its wings. It heals, strengthens, renews, gives hope, joy and the impetus to grow in Christ. Assuredly it is an old message which the church in ancient days proclaimed and experienced. It is relevant because it pertains to the spirit of the human being. It becomes practical when we see the outcome in the shining beings who have become part of this mighty and wonderful place, which we call The Centre.

### **The Hallmark of Freedom**

As The Centre came into being its hallmark was freedom. Mario and Colin built into our Centre the necessity of expressing the freedom of the spirit. Freedom to explore, examine, learn and come to experience. Nothing was excluded. The ancient religions and techniques were absorbed and came to

new expression within our Centre. They saw that in Christ there is fullness, the completion of all that went before, and we did not want to exclude anything from that fullness.

Becoming a member of The Centre, therefore, has never been like joining a church which usually does not require anything from you except to believe what they teach and preach, which is often nothing else but a social gospel. Being a member of The Centre means exploring, experiencing, and learning for yourself the life of Christ within you, taking responsibility for encouraging that life wherever you are and embracing freedom. And there is no system to do this.

### **After the Calling, the Choosing**

The fact remains: He has called us. As Mario often said, you are here by divine appointment. We are called to represent the glory of God here upon this earth, to express his word, so he can make his appeal through us. This calling involves living many lives and going through many experiences, not only to fulfil karma and to create good karma, but so that we may be conformed to the image and likeness of the Son. For that purpose he has called you out, set you aside, and is now sanctifying you, purifying you, re-creating, moulding you and disciplining you so that you may become his image and likeness. And in that great evolutionary process, this occult school here is doing a great work.

The burdens we each have to carry are preparing us for an eternal weight of glory. The dangers and obstacles we meet are the tests to see whether we are ready to go on to higher and greater things. They are the questions: Are you willing to surrender what holds you back from perceiving God's purpose? Are you willing to change? And become larger than you were?

The aim of these testings is always to direct your gaze to the bigger picture, seen from above, to change direction, to perceive the earth and all that belongs to it as spiritually based.

It is therefore no simple thing, no easy thing to be called and pre-destined by God for his

glory. And we must take into account that many are called but few are chosen. Few choose, really choose, to accept this path, walk this road and subdue the self in order to gain the crown of life.

It takes guts, courage and discipline to really embrace this fiery road and finish the race. Those who do are destined to bear the likeness of Christ within their being, they are destined to shine like the sun in heaven and be the initiates, teachers and leaders of the age to come.

If you are called, and the fact that you are here in this chapel this morning would indicate this, then this choice is entirely yours. As we affirm in our Infant Baptism Service: *In the final account, it is for you to choose what path to follow and what life to live. And should you in later time decide to turn away from what seems to us to be the only life worth living, then that too is your right.*

The Centre is not an easy place. It is a school. And we value the occult work that we do. We value our work and activity in the realm of the physical, in the mental realm and in the spiritual realm. We value study, learning, worship and prayer, creative expression and fellowship, so that we develop sanely and harmoniously and in a whole way. We don't only exercise our minds, or our bodies. We don't only work spiritually, in prayer and devotion and worship. We do all these things in order that we may subdue and transform all our bodies, so we may inherit the body of eternal life.

When you choose to accept your calling and set foot on the fiery road of justification, of being made right, then the glorification also begins. Then you learn many things – too many to speak of now. You learn that he gives us more grace as our burdens grow greater. Your inner eyes start to open, a real spiritual communication with your real inner self and with the heavens begins, and there is no end to that process.

But the rewards are not obvious. There is no immediate change of consciousness, no heavenly light will suddenly flow through you

and give you “cosmic consciousness”. God’s work and re-creation is slow and exceedingly fine. But when you look back and see what you were and what you have become over a period of years, then you can say to yourself, “I have indeed come closer to the God of my heart and closer to the heavens where my real home exists”.

Together we have been given a way, a means, and the power to do this; and it is for this that we are truly thankful to God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit and for their servants and our founders, Reverend Mario and Reverend Colin.

So shall it be.

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