



## Teachings from Reverend Antoinette Schoenmaker

# The Ministry of Reconciliation

*For the love of Christ controls us, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. And he died for all, that those who live might live no longer for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.*

*From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once regarded Christ from a human point of view, we regard him thus no longer. Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. So we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us.*  
*2 Corinthians 5:14-20a*

THE MESSAGE OF RECONCILIATION and seeing no longer from a human point of view – these words of St Paul I have chosen for today, because I believe they describe the purpose of our Centre and the way in which we live out that purpose.

Today is our Centre's birthday. 36 years ago this entity emerged into physical manifestation and has been growing and maturing ever since. For me this day, which we call Founders Day, is one of the most special days of the year. It is not a traditional spiritual festival, but it is a sacred day for our Brotherhood because it is the day when a vessel was created through which the Melchizedek Brotherhood could become consciously expressive at a crucial time on this earth. So I feel our Brotherhood very active at this time, the brothers of the sun, in this month ruled by the sun. For me it is a time of the Brotherhood being able to manifest itself and make itself known and felt.

And just as Founders Day is a sacred day for the invisible brotherhood, it is also a special day for the visible brotherhood. It is a day on which we have celebrated the induction of members, held initiations and ordinations of deacons and priests and also elevations to the office of Meritus. Some people have also been made honorary roses, eagles and owls on this day. So I want to acknowledge that today there are in fact many people who are celebrating anniversaries of spiritual significance.

This is a time when spirit breaks through, when we remember becoming alive to something larger; the reality of the spiritual worlds, and our identity and purpose in Christ. The many memories we have of this

day tell us there is a beautiful partnership between the human being and the divine.

Founders Day is midway between St John's Tide, which celebrates the cosmic purposes of the human being, and Michaelmas, which recognizes the spiritual forces at work in the world. Being born midway between these two festivals, The Centre has values and ideals which reflect both celebrations. We have held over the years the preciousness and uniqueness of each human soul and that each human soul has the power to love, to be victorious, to be an individual, and to become mature in Christ. We have also recognized the spiritual forces at work in this world, those which are for Christ and those which are anti-Christ. We have recognized that choices need to be made and can be made. And we have recognized that we ourselves and what we create is where this spiritual battle is waged day by day and moment by moment. This is one of the ways each of us works together with Christ to complete his sufferings and fulfil the work of reconciling this world to God.

Over the years, Rev Mario has had a lot to say about the purpose of our Centre. To set men free. To make the able more able. To perceive the risen Christ. To create an occult school in the southern hemisphere. To raise again the priesthood according to the Order of Melchizedek. All these purposes are based on the fact that Christ is here and that because Christ is present in this earth the human being has been set free and has choice and many possibilities. So Christ is the foundation of every purpose and goal we set for ourselves.

**The New Covenant: "So shall no part of day or night from sacredness be free."**

When I think of these purposes which Mario outlined time and time again, I am glad that he repeated and repeated and repeated himself. When I remember back to the very early days of our Centre, I realize that he and Colin were trying to create a present day environment in which the covenant of Christ, the new covenant, could be known, understood, lived out and expressed. I see

that they wanted us to live in a world where Christ is present, where the Deed of Golgotha has been accomplished, where no part of life is free of sacredness, where real humanity is cherished and nurtured and freedom of possibility is acknowledged.

We see so many aspects of the New Covenant enshrined in our Centre, particularly the valuing of the whole human being – our ability to feel, think and act. In The Centre an environment has been created where what we value, think and feel is given the opportunity to be tried out, tested and expressed in deeds and responsibilities, in vows and commitments, in work and play, in learning and creating, in the midst of the people of God. An environment has been created in which we are able to live the whole of life in the light of spirit. We celebrate the large events of life and the small. We share food and exchange recipes. We farewell souls and welcome them. There is a place for abundant life, fullness of life, in the ministry of reconciliation and when we no longer look only from a human point of view.

The whole of the New Testament sets out the values of this new covenant, of what it means to be reconciled to God. These values have been summarized and expressed in our Centre as freedom, wholeness and individuality. To express these values is our task and challenge. And it is increasingly vital that we do this in a world which seems more and more bombarded by the forces which want to deaden, harden, formulate and remove an individual's responsibility and creativity.

The message of reconciliation, that there is no condemnation, that we have been set free from the forces of bondage and sin, must continue to be shouted out loud. The forces that would keep us bound and in slavery are still very strong. They inwardly seduce us to become self-indulgent, negative and hopeless, to remain in our woundedness and to give up trying to reach what we can be. Part of the ministry of reconciliation is to meet and know these forces, just as Christ did. And just like Christ we must see them clearly and not be overcome by them.

St Paul, whose spirit is so much part of our Centre, urges to stay conscious of our freedom. In his astounding letter to the Ephesians he says we were dead because of the trespasses and sins which resulted from following the prince of the power of the air, but through God's mercy, love and grace we have been made alive and have been called to be co-creators with Christ (Eph 2:1-10). In I Cor 7 he says: You were bought with a price, do not become slaves of men.

He says to the Colossians that because Christ died, we also have died to the elemental spirits of the universe and that we no longer have to live as if we still belonged to the world; we no longer have to follow the rules of the world which seem wise but are in fact totally ineffective. (Col 2:20-23)

In these and so many other passages St Paul encourages us to live out the new covenant. Anything that would enslave us he warns us about. He reiterates that there is no technique, no method, no set way by which a person may realize their divinity. Rather he directs us towards the powers of mercy, love and grace – the gifts of the divine - and of faith, the creative response of the human being. He doesn't dismiss the great appeal that the God of this World and the thinking of this world has for us, but he reminds us that we are free and that we have a task, that purposes have already been set for us to walk towards and fulfil.

I think Founders Day, the birth of The Centre, the many initiation services held on this day, are pictures of our determination not to be in bondage to the powers of the air, not to be enslaved by the human culture and social norms of our time, not to become slaves of men, but servants of Christ, co-workers and friends, and to place our loyalty and energies toward a purpose that is larger and reaches beyond the current constraints in which we live. They display our valuing of that which is not of the world but must be expressed in the world. They are pictures of the work involved in the ministry of reconciliation.

## **To See No Longer from a Human Point of View**

Many years ago, Mario said: "The purpose for which The Centre exists is to train you, discipline you, and make you to love the higher worlds sufficiently so that your inner eyes may be opened to see the spiritual, etherised Christ in your midst. We want you to step from faith into experience, into knowing.

"That's why we cannot be compared with other churches, or other organisations. That's why our church is essentially a mystical church, and whatever we do in terms of liturgy and ceremony, teaching, and otherwise, is but a symbol, creating a channel within your soul so that you may behold him and know that he is in your midst.

"By touching that presence, just the hem of his garment, the outer sphere of his etheric presence, will make you alive with the fullness of his spirit and power. That is the purpose for which we meet as a church, and once the Christ has become real to all of us, then symbols can be done away with, for then we live the total Christed life." (From The Meditation on the Fourteen Stations of the Cross 1989)

The Centre and all its activities, are symbols, channels, through which our inner eyes can be opened to the greatness of Christ. Increasingly I recognize this. I see what the Centre has made possible for each one of us. The beautiful thing of being together over many years is that we can see how this has worked in one another's lives.

I am also conscious that The Centre, when looked at from a human point of view, is often criticized; it is not perfect by human or earthly standards, but when I look with spiritual eyes, I see what the many different activities and experiences enable and engender within us.

Why is it so important to see? Why don't all the churches have seeing the Christ as their purpose? Mario often said that whether you believe in Christ or not, has very little relevance to the fact that he is at work within you, within world history and within the

economy of daily life. Whether you see that or not makes no difference. There are thousands of things we do not see, yet they happen regardless. But, when we do see, when we can perceive the Christ at work within us and around us then, Mario said, we can consciously associate with him and work together with him in order to bring about the perfecting of the soul.

So *seeing* is what makes a co-worker with Christ. Seeing no longer from a human point of view. It reminds me of the great story in the Gospel of Matthew where Jesus says, 'And who do men say that I am?' And there are a number of answers which involve him being the reincarnation of some of the great prophets. And then he says, 'But who do *you* say that I am?' And Peter answers, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.' Here we have a clear example of what it means to look no longer from the human point of view. This was the beginning of Peter becoming a co-worker with Christ.

The Centre has always wanted an active creative membership. No pew-sitters please! No just coming to fill up your tank and off you go again. In saying this we are acknowledging that we want every member involved in the ministry of reconciliation. Christ died so that those who live might live no longer for themselves but for him. Every member a co-worker with Christ! To be a co-worker we must see no longer from a human point of view. To see, no matter how dimly, is what makes us able to fulfil the work of reconciliation and live in the Age of the New Covenant.

The more we see, the more we can do. Mario said that the more we see the love of God, the more we are able to love. I have been reflecting on the fact that the more I see of The Centre, the more I am grateful for it. Seeing increases gratitude, increases love, increases power and increases our ability to be free from the powers of bondage.

On this special day, which is also called Thanksgiving Day, we are called upon to see The Centre – not from a human point of view, but from a spiritual point of view. We are called upon to see our Founders no longer

from a human point of view. We are called upon to see one another not only from a human point of view, but as wise spiritual beings, being renewed in Christ, changing from one degree of glory to another. For me it would be a true celebration of Founders Day if we were able to behold one another like this and behold our fellowship like this. Once we saw Christ from a human point of view, but we regard him thus no longer. And our awe and our love has only increased the more we know and see. I hope this can be true for one another as well. To me how we see things is a vital part of the work of reconciling this world to God.

### **A Spiritual Point of View**

So I wonder what you see? So much given over all these years. And in some ways there is so little to show. Our organization is smaller in numbers, influence and monetary worth. It has in some ways become more earthly. And change comes more slowly now. All the things that happen when one reaches middle-age and settles down! And yet I do not for one minute believe that our Centre at 36 has shrunk in power from when it was 7 or 14 or 20. I see that the channels created have deepened - in terms of knowing the reality of spirit, in terms of real integration of the spiritual teachings, and in terms of real commitment to Christ.

I know all too well how difficult it has been for all Centre members especially in the last ten years and I want to say to you today I am in awe of the strength of the sword of your souls. Something very fine and strong has been forged in our midst. Yes, there are many things we can criticize about The Centre, it is far from perfect by human or earthly standards, but spiritually what I see is a blazing furnace and a brightly burning beacon.

When I think of all the opportunities provided by all the different Centre communities and sub-groups, the many retreats and seminars we have participated in together, the conclaves and all the other meetings in which we have worked to come to grips with what we have and what we must do, then I think what an extraordinary thing our Centre is; so

much comes to us through this precious vessel. I see what it makes possible. I see what it has given to you and what it continues to make available. It is chosen, special and precious in the eyes of our Brotherhood. And it is a great blessing in my life and in the lives of many.

### **A Prayer for Us**

Almost twenty years ago, there was an oracle given at the Fourteen Stations of the Cross. When I read it recently it was like reading a prayer, the prayer of Mario and the Brotherhood for us. And it speaks beautifully of the work that we must do, the message of reconciliation which we must embody. I would like to conclude with it today:

*Remember my beloved that you did not choose him; he chose you. From the foundation of the world, he called you by your name. Hold fast when the storm blows; he is your anchor, and then you shall be his right hand, his mighty arm. Your purpose, for which you sought, will suddenly become clear, for that which you have tried to understand will become the intent of your being.*

*Why do you think you have been trained by life itself? Why do you think you've been hurt, emotionally and otherwise? Why do you think you have to hide behind your shields? So that you can stand fast on that day and have compassion with those who are scarred, heal the wounds of those who are broken, open up the portals to a newer hope.*

*The task of our Centre is to make within you a renewal whereby you can stand as a soldier of the Cross, as a follower of Michael the Archangel, as one who can hold the sword of Christ, as one who can slay the Evil One. Of course you will be wounded; don't you forget that. Even by those who seem also to be Christ and are; there is much blindness even among God's people. Keep your eyes open; your heart wide open; let your soul be transformed by the strength of him who has called you, who formed you out of his hand, who gave you the fullness and it is yours now.*

*Don't hold back; never hold back. In disappointment and in pain, in the dissatisfaction of your astral selves, do not hold back the love that lies within you and in that love, go forward. Never lose the picture of divine love, for with that you will be blessed and your life will have meaning to the souls whom you must touch and heal.*

*Dear Lord, I have asked for an army and you gave it to me. You've stilled the arguments of the souls of these my beloved. Strengthen them with your weapons; gird them with your protection. Let truth, rightness, love, strength, be their portion. For they are part of the Brotherhood, the army of the living Christ, the silent manifestors of the Crucified One, called and chosen from the Foundation of the World, trained from life to life, from incarnation to incarnation, at times in despair, at times in anxiety, at times in fervour, at times in peace.*

*May they rise in newness of life, in full adoption as Sons of God, in clear vision and perception, full use of sensitivities and feelings, and thereby be guarded and guided in this world. So may you, O Christ, dwell forever in the souls of these my Beloved, and may they know that they are not alone and so stand strong with the purpose for which you have called them.*

*Grant, beyond the powers of our imagination, on these your servants and my brothers and sisters, my fraters and sorrores, the renewal of the picture, a deeper consciousness of what you have implanted within them down the ages, and the realisation that, yes, indeed, they are the Brothers of the Sun.*

*So let your presence always guide us and strengthen us. May our spines be strong and straight for we have to carry the flame. These my brothers and sisters must carry on the task which in the first place you entrusted to me.*

*To us it has been entrusted not just to be the sheep, however wonderful that may be, but to be the shepherds on his behalf. There are sheep out there you must bring to the fold, not this fold, not another fold, Christ's fold.*

*You must teach them how to forgive themselves, how to live in serenity. You must teach them how to laugh, how to be joyful. You must teach those who fail how to be successful. You must teach those whose lives are broken how to make it whole. You must teach them how in relationships there can be extremities of joy. You must teach them the secrets of love and the evils of jealousy. You must teach them the purposes of God and the mighty power of Christ. You must teach them it is not the healing of the body alone that is important, but the healing of the soul, which is sick. You must teach them that through evolution we come to a greater knowledge of Christ. You must teach them patience instead of haste, gentleness instead of hardness, great thoughts instead of small thoughts. Teach them how to be cosmic instead of parochial ... What a great task all of you have!*

*And if today, this beautiful, powerful, vibrational day, has opened within your soul the possibilities of what you are and must be, because he, the Christ, has laid the foundation within your soul from the inception of this world, then today is the day wherein your rose may start to bloom and the powers of the Brotherhood will band towards you in benediction.*

(Oracle given at The Fourteen Stations of the Cross 1986)

So shall it be.

*An address for the Founders Day Cosmic Mass, 7<sup>th</sup>  
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*Grant, O God of our hearts,  
that we may know the peace that passes  
understanding,  
and the joy that wells up from the inner  
knowing that Christ dwells within us  
and among his people.  
Grant in whatever way we may meet together  
that we may do it with that peace and love in  
our hearts,  
and that wherever we may be in our daily  
work  
may we silently, quietly, and unassumingly  
bring the Christ force,  
the Christ power from within ourselves  
into the surroundings where we are.  
May we radiate your light as complete human  
beings - free from slavery.  
May we make the Christ more visible.  
We ask these things because the power of  
Christ is in us.  
So shall it be.*

*We offer the sweetness of our inner  
realizations this day.  
May our thankful hearts and our perception  
of what has been given and created in us and  
around us  
be a sweet incense rising up to the heavens.  
May our time of worship be a strengthening  
not only of each one of us here, but of all who  
are connected  
with the work of the Melchizedek  
Brotherhood,  
especially our Founders, Rev Mario and Rev  
Colin,  
and all our fraters and sorores in spirit.  
We pray that what was begun with them may  
continue through us  
and that our love and gratitude may be for  
them a strength and a power  
to continue their work in spirit.  
We offer and present our Centre and all her  
members, wherever they are,  
all those who have made vows and promises  
to serve Christ,  
and we pray that our ability to see and fulfil  
our promises and purposes  
may grow stronger each day,  
and that our individual and united strength  
may create an environment  
where the able may become more able,  
where the human soul can become free from  
all that would limit it,  
and where the Christ spirit can be seen and*

*realized.  
Likewise, we offer and present to you all who  
are in need, sorrow or pain.  
Grant the knowledge of your presence and  
loving purpose to grow within them.  
We offer and present to you all who have  
broken through the cycle of time,  
we pray that their souls will be filled with  
peace and that this peace  
will also envelop and indwell their earthly  
families.  
We offer and present all human souls who  
are preparing  
to enter the flesh once more.  
May their purpose and relationship with you  
remain clear and strong.  
Finally, we offer and present to you  
ourselves,  
as we are gathered here, our souls and  
bodies,  
praying that we may indeed be your co-  
workers,  
that our strength may be spent in your  
service  
and our love poured forth upon your world.  
This we pray through Jesus Christ,  
your son, our Lord.  
So shall it be.*

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