

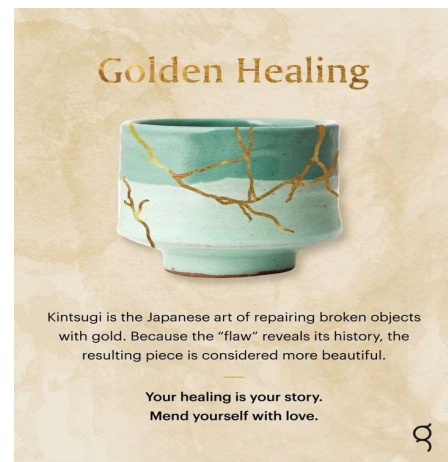
Editorial: Ann McNelley

Season's Greetings everyone!

As I was walking through the bush, I was pondering what I would put in this issue of the newsletter. Then I stopped, faced the rising sun, closed my eyes, felt a gentle breeze on my back and gave thanks for all the blessings I've been given. One of those special blessings has been my involvement with Sychar and my gratitude to Sr. Elaine and Moyalialia for their unstinting dedication to the work they do. So many people have been enriched by their participation in the many openings offered here. Next year promises to be even better.

Labyrinth Workshop

On 18 November, Randal and Susan Dennings led a workshop *Walking the Labyrinth: To Heal the Fractures of Our Broken World*. Participants were offered preparatory reflections and invited to be prayed for individually as they entered into the labyrinth experience. Individual experiences were greatly enriched by the group sharing of what was for some a new form of embodied spiritual practice. Some were surprised in the way that their hopes for the walk were realised. We hope that the Sychar labyrinth will become an ongoing source of enrichment for many.



Reflection:

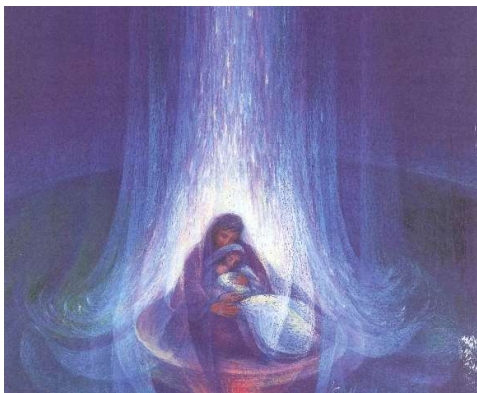


If you are feeling trouble by the state of our fractured world perhaps this quote from the Babylonian Talmud will comfort you.

“Do not be daunted by the enormity of the world’s grief,
Do justly now,
Have mercy now,
Walk humbly now,
You are not obligated to complete the work,
But neither are you free to abandon the way.”



Whenever Christ is born anew, Joy resounds in all Creation.



Christmas is not simply the birth of God in a manger; it our birth as well. We are to become new persons with new minds and hearts for a new world.

“The seeds of all we desire are already within us. God, the creator of heaven and earth, is already there waiting to born again.

This new birth of God is not a past event but a future happening. God wants to become something new in us but we must trust God sufficiently to engage this new birth.

Life lives on the cusp of the new, and the only real newness of life comes from within.

If we live from the inner life of the soul, from the place of the heart, we shall be prepared for this new world. It is already happening.



A Christmas Prayer (An Extract) – –Ilia Delio, OSF

As we celebrate Your birth, O God;
–help us to know that it is our birth as well.
Help us to know that without us,
You have no place to dwell, to call ‘home.’
Without us You cannot come to birth,
And if You cannot be born in us, then what do we live for?

Help us to see that, like You, we are undergoing the pangs of new birth,
–like You, we are not finished,
Our work together, You and I, O God, is to become whole and complete,
You in me and I in You.

Christmas is the feast of the whole person,
–the whole creation,
–the whole cosmos
-celebrating the wonder of new birth.
The universe is Theotokos,
–God-bearing.
Everything alive is seeking You,
–longing for You.

Christmas is the celebration of love:
In love with love and through love, You and me and all fragile creatures
–are being born
–into a new future together, a new reality.
This new reality is the Christ; the humanity of Jesus is our humanity.

Awaken in me the truth of Christmas: You and I are bound together in love.
Together, You and I and all creation, we are the Christ;
And only through us can your dream for the earth be realized.
Joy to the future fullness of love!

Pictures from Christmas Celebration









Tripping Over Joy – by Hafiz

What is the difference
Between your experience of Existence
And that of a saint?

The saint knows
That the spiritual path
Is a sublime chess game with God

And that the Beloved
Has just made such a Fantastic Move

That the saint is now continually
Tripping over Joy
And bursting out in Laughter
And saying, "I Surrender!"

Whereas, my dear,
I am afraid you still think
You have a thousand serious moves.

