

## 12-11-2011; CELEBRATE YOUR RE-BIRTHDAY!

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**PRAYER:** Mother-Father-God; Divine-Mind of the Universe; The Christmas Season is a glorious time to celebrate the rebirth of the Christ-Mind within each of us. As we gather in this building every week, and as we gather with friends and loved ones in parties and joyous festivities, whether near or far away, we affirm our intentions to celebrate the birth of the Christ-Child, who brought us a new level of awareness, a new way of living, and a new way of demonstrating the Truth of Who We Really Are. Thank You for the gift of Jesus, who came to show us the way to a brighter, better life on Earth. At this season of gift-giving, we are so very grateful for all the wondrous gifts, which are too numerous to name, that You've given to us. As we grow into spiritual maturity, we affirm our desire to give back to You our Love, Honor and Gratitude. As we demonstrate the Highest Version of the Highest Vision of Self, we affirm our desire to give to others our true expressions of Divine-Love, through our renewed Christ-Mind within. ...and so it is... Amen.

**SCRIPTURE:** [*The New English Bible*] **Luke 1:26-31** = "...The angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town in Galilee, called Nazareth, with a message for a girl betrothed to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David; the girl's name was Mary. The angel went in and said to her, 'Greetings, most favored one! The Lord is with you.' But she was deeply troubled by what he said and wondered what this greeting might mean. Then the angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for God has been gracious to you; you shall conceive and bear a son, and you shall give him the name Jesus.'"

### **MESSAGE: CELEBRATE YOUR RE-BIRTHDAY!**

The busy Christmas season can be very stressful in many ways, can't it? Sometimes, we just want it all to be over, so we can get back to *normal*. Celebrations can be rather taxing & stressful for our Spirit. "Do not be afraid...for God has been gracious to you." Remember, there is no such thing as stress; you can't buy it anywhere. It's a learned response we use, so we can change it! And we all learn those responses and have to unlearn them. This Christmas Season is perfect for a new birth of Spirit. Let all the old garbage, stress & problems go. Renew the contact, the connection with Divine-Mind.

In modern times, scientists have learned more about our stress responses and the effects they have on our bodies. A few years ago, I told you about this, but it's worth repeating. In 1957, Thomas Holmes developed a Social Readjustment Scale to measure the impact on our body of our chosen stress responses. It gives points from 1 to 100, assigned to various situations to indicate the amount of stress put on the human body and mind. Examples: Christmas and holiday time = 12 pts.; change in number of family get-togethers = 15 pts.; change in living conditions = 25; change in financial state = 38 pts.; death of spouse = 100 pts. If your total score in 1 year is over 200 points, that's a "moderate life crisis" with 50% chance of illness. If over 300, it's a "major life crisis" with 80% chance of illness.

If we apply this scale to Mary's life...a pregnancy = 40 pts., but an unplanned pregnancy adds 20 pts. Mary moved in with Elizabeth for about 3 months, changed her living situation = 25 pts. I am sure living with another woman in the kitchen =

20 pts.! When she married Joseph, she added 50 pts. Maybe there was a heated family “discussion” when Joseph didn’t make reservations for the stay in Bethlehem = 35 pts. Giving birth in a stable of animals = worth at least 39 pts. Let’s add a few extra points for the changes in sleeping and eating habits while traveling for several days. Then there were all those visitors! Angels, shepherds, kings for goodness sake, all calling on the new family. So, that brings the estimated total of points for Mary to 400 points that year! Anything over 300 is a “major life crisis.” She was so young to be experiencing a big crisis in life. She and Joseph likely had great upheaval in their lives that first year.

As you look back at your year, maybe you should total up your points. That total might account for whatever negative stuff you’re feeling these days. In Psychology, things that we “blame” for causing stress are called “stressors.” Today, we know and understand that we CAN control our responses to stressors. There is no such thing as stress; it’s an idea. In Unity, we know and understand that we control our lives by our thinking patterns. We can choose to make a positive list of Bonus Points for every challenge we let go of, for every belief we hold about the Power of Divine-Mind.

Yet, look at what goes on all around us every Christmas season. For many people today, this month-long season of Christmas might provide plenty of opportunities to create stress-responses equal to 300-400 points on the Social Readjustment Scale. Look what our culture has done to the beautiful, celebratory event of Christmas. We shop, buy, fix food, bake cookies, wrap gifts, hide gifts; watch the budget, address and mail many cards, clean the house; deal with family members. All of that gives us many chances to respond with stressed feelings.

But, why would we do that? Why would we choose that? I hope you know you don’t want more of the negative stuff or feelings or upset. I believe that when we feel disconnected from Source, our responses to “stressors” get out of hand and we begin to get caught up in the dramas of life and focused on Earthly things, and then the points on this scale add up. When we FEEL apart from the Divine-Energy, the One Presence, we lose it! We get bogged down. We respond with stressed-out feelings. This happens not only at the holidays, but especially at holiday time. Truly, it can happen anytime we lose track of Who We Really Are.” I suggest one great way to rejoice and celebrate this season, and that is to stay fully focused\_on Who You Really Are, which is Spirit, a portion of the Divine-Mind. That way you don’t allow or experience much of a stress-response to anything. When you are living in Spirit, you stay calm, loved, loving, gentle, peace-filled, etc. Be the bringer of the Light, Joy, Happiness, Love, etc. Do not be afraid, for God has been gracious to YOU.

Jesus was born into a world that trembled with fear of a distant God. He was born into a society of people who would not even speak God’s name out of fear of death. Jesus, the Christ, was born to bring a new message that there is a light and warmth, waiting for us in the One Source, the One Presence. We don’t have to feel afraid or lost, because “the way” is already open wide for us to enter to a full and abundant life. And we must take the first step in that direction. Celebrating the Re-birthday of your Spirit-self is a good start.

Over 2,000 years ago, a Divine Soul became incarnate in the body of a human baby. This is the season when we especially focus on making, creating and renewing our contact with the Christ-Mind within. Jesus, the Christ Child, according to Charles Fillmore’s Metaphysical Bible Dictionary, represents God’s idea of mankind,

in expression. The Christ is the man that God created, the “perfect-idea” of mankind and is the real self of all people. So, the Christ-Mind is your real self. Jesus is the Christ, the anointed one, the perfect one, brought forth into perfect expression and manifestation. Jesus demonstrated that this attainment is possible in mankind, therefore it’s possible in all mankind, even in you and me. This Christmas, I hope you’ll give yourself the gift of entering the warmth of God’s abundant life, of seriously celebrating your re-birth day, and *living the Truth of Spirit*, which resonates deep within you.

Christmas is a time for many scenes, both visual and memorable. Many Christmas scenes hold a vision of the nativity. I’ve heard that the use of nativity scenes originated in early 1200’s, on a hilltop in central Italy when St. Francis, in Assisi, set up a crib, complete with ox, donkey, and an infant in a manger. Now, nativity scenes are displayed in many churches and communities across America and around the world. It’s a tender, wonderful emphasis on the humanity of Jesus, the Christ. It helps to know that Jesus was human, like we are, and that we can achieve what He did. Jesus told us, “One, who believes in me, will also do the works that I do, and will do *greater works* than these.” [John 14:12]

Maybe you have a nativity scene in your home. We have one that was hand-carved in the Black-Forest area of Germany. In that lovely scene, we celebrate the birth of Jesus, but we also celebrate the young child, the pure and perfect baby, who came to tell us of our own ultimate potential. Every nativity scene is a celebration of Christ’s being born, AND the birth in us of a recognition of our own higher spirituality. Think about that: every Christmas is another opportunity to follow Jesus, the Christ, by experiencing the new birth of new depths in our own spirituality. This is why the babe was born. This is the greatest story ever told, which we hear every Christmas. It’s also a story that can take place in us. Spiritually, we have all the aspects of this story within us. Charles Fillmore gave us these meanings:

**The Birth of the Christ** = The bringing forth of God’s idea of man, the Christ of God; done through the quickening power of the word of Truth; the beginning of the inner realms of consciousness of a higher set of faculties, which when grown to full stature, will save the whole man from ignorance, sickness, and death. [*The Revealing Word*; P. 34-35] In other words... we are each the expression of God’s idea for us & we are enlightened when we study the Truth of Divine-Mind.

**Mary** = The feminine, the soul, the affectionate and emotional phase of man’s being, both when seemingly bound and limited by sensate thought, and in its freed, exalted state; Mary represents divine motherhood.” [*Metaphysical Bible Dictionary*; P. 427] In other words... we are each a loving portion of God-Essence, both limited by our thoughts and freed by our thoughts. We each “give birth” to new ideas through the Christ-Mind.

**Joseph** = “Represents wisdom and understanding, which have been ideas in mind, but are now to bring forth a manifestation in substance; represents the Son of man.” [*Metaphysical Bible Dictionary*; P. 367] In other words... we are each in the process of remembering, manifesting, and creating more, according to our level of wisdom and understanding.

**The shepherds** = “The shepherds watching by night are the protecting entities of God that watch over us; they are the conservers and protectors; to affirm, ‘Jehovah is my shepherd’ is to acknowledge that God [Spirit] is the source of understanding

and of all help.” [*The Revealing Word*; P. 178] In other words... we each are guided and guarded by the God-Essence, even if we’re not aware of it.

**The angel** = “A messenger of God; the projection into consciousness of a spiritual idea direct from God; the word of Truth in which is centered the power of God to overcome all limited beliefs and conditions.” [*The Revealing Word*; P. 13] In other words... we each are receiving ideas, suggestions and guidance from Source into our conscious minds, all the time, but it comes as the *still small voice*; we really must listen. So, see? We each have all the aspects of the nativity story within Self.

Another way you might celebrate your re-birth day is to give to yourself a whole new nativity of your birth. Design, create or RE-create your spiritual nativity, your spiritual birth into the Christ-Mind. Be willing to take the time to have a two-way dialog with the Divine-Mind. Find the Christ-Mind within you, and turn it ON, once and for all time.

I mentioned last week how our society has “sped up” over the past few generations. Our need for speed, efficiency, productivity and progress is evident in many facets of life today. When do we take time to love God? When do we take time to real-ize [to make real] the birth of the Christ-Mind within? Do we think we’re wasting time when we sit, listening for the God-Essence? Are we too impatient to sit in Silence with the Divine-Mind? Do we pooh-pooh the idea of a Divine-Love that is *real enough to feel*?

Again, this Christmas, when you find yourself on a treadmill, I encourage you to *slow down!* Take time to celebrate the very essence of YOU, and re-create the birth of the Christ-Child, the Christ-Mind within YOU. Studies now show that when we are really good at “multi-tasking,” we tend to decrease our ability to focus our mind on one thing, to concentrate. An exercise you might try is to pick one task and try doing it 100%, with no distractions, no phone, no TV. We really do know that the most important things in life can’t be rushed. Think about trying to rush loving, thinking, cooking, eating, laughing or praying. When we hurry these activities, we lose the very essence of them. These activities are really gifts from our One Source. Instead of rushing, plan a meal with friends; cook slowly; enjoy the aromas; take one or two hours for eating and talking. Savor the experience!

In Biloxi, MS, when I lived there in a *prior life*, we’d celebrate birthdays or anniversaries at the big, fancy hotel, with a dining room and dance floor, with a three or four piece combo. We’d eat, then dance, then eat, then dance, etc. I asked a waiter, “How long does it usually take to have meal?” He said, “We’re given three hours to serve the meal.” It was quite leisurely and most enjoyable!

I heard a story, somewhere, about an older minister who was giving advice to a brand new minister. The new minister was all ready with pen and paper to write down all the advice. The first thing the older man said was, “As best you can, stop rushing things and S-L-O-W down your life.” He was then silent, & the young man asked what was next, & the older man said, “That’s it!”

You see, when we stop rushing, we become aware of our “NOW” moments. That’s living in the Spirit. *Hurry* is a fear-based, inner condition. When we become aware that we’ve been caught up in *hurry*, we can make a new choice. Pick one day this week to be your “slow day,” your “live in Spirit” day. Do everything, including work, at a leisurely pace. What would your whole life look like at a slower pace? Growing oneself to spiritual maturity takes time; it’s *a process*. We’ve heard before that it takes about 60 repetitions of some activity to create a habit. Based on

research, experts have learned that it takes 10,000 hours of practice to master anything. Ah, so if we're going to master the art of allowing or master the re-birthing of our own Christ-Mind, we'd better get started on those 10,000 hours of practice.

Question: What are we practicing, what am I practicing, what are you practicing the most? What are we most likely to master first? Is that what we truly want to master? The true focus of Christmas is not how or when Jesus was born into the world, but rather what Jesus taught. A true Christmas comes to us when we follow his lead and love the unloved, think of the thoughtless, care for the careless, sing with the tone-deaf, laugh with the jokesters, cry with the sorrowful, forgive the unforgivable, bless those who are cursed, heal the sick, and do the impossible by living our Truth as Spirits, as expressions of Divine-Mind.

In review...some of the ways we might celebrate our re-birth of the Christ-Mind are: ~ 1. Staying fully focused on Who We Really Are, which is Spirit, a portion of the Divine-Essence; that way we don't create or experience much of a stress-response to anything. When we are living in Spirit, we can choose to stay calm, loved, loving, gentle, peace-filled, etc. ~ 2. Entering the warmth of God's abundant life, & consistently living the Truth of Spirit, which resonates deep within. ~ 3. Creating a whole new nativity of our birth, our spiritual nativity, our spiritual birth into the Christ-Mind. ~ 4. Living slower, taking time to grow into spiritual maturity, time to be with the God-Essence, at a leisurely pace; finding time, every day, to sit in the silence with the God-Mind.

Realize, too, that nobody else can give you these gifts. You must create them for yourself; wrap them up in wonderful ribbons of Love, and claim them! Let's focus on doing just that in our meditation.

**MEDITATION:** Meditation is a time to quiet your mind and reconnect with the One Holy Presence, thus gaining access to divine inspiration and guidance for your life. Close your eyes; relax; let your shoulders down; let the chair hold you. ~ For a moment, focus your attention on your breathing; let it be slow and steady; let your mind release the chatter and focus on the silence within. ~ Let your intention, for this time of meditation, be to listen for guidance and to gain insight on re-birthing yourself and consistently creating a new life by living your Truth in the Christ-Mind. ~ In the silence, listen for guidance on how you can create and accept the gift of staying fully focused on Who You Really Are, which is Spirit. ~ ~ ~ In the silence, listen for guidance on how you can create and accept the gift of ... entering the warmth of God's abundant life, of consistently living the Truth of your Spirit. ~ ~ ~ In the silence, listen for guidance on how you can create and accept the gift of a whole new nativity of your re-birth, your spiritual birth into the Christ-Mind. ~ ~ ~ In the silence, listen for ideas on how you can create and accept the gift of living slower, taking time to grow into spiritual maturity. ~ ~ ~ Give thanks to the One Holy Presence for new insight and guidance on celebrating yourself. ~ Affirm your intention to use these gifts and this guidance in a way that builds you up. ~ Bring back to the rest of your day, the peace that passes all understanding, & the joy of your personal Christmas Celebration with the God-Mind. ~ Gently, bring your focus back to your fingers & toes, to the chair, the room, and when you're ready, open your eyes.

**Do not be afraid, for God has been gracious to you!" ... and so it is...Amen.**