

THE GIFT OF THE CHRIST SPIRIT

THE PULSE OF SPIRIT

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JANE ANETRINI is a coach and teacher of Primal Spirituality. She assists people to find their own inner wisdom, strength and vitality. Jane is a Doctor of Chiropractic who has been practicing for over 30 years.

(Transcript of a portion of the December 25, 2016, service in the Dome Chapel at Sunrise Ranch)

Here we are on another beautiful Christmas morning. There are songs singing of the birth of the Christ child and the glory sung by the angels to celebrate. Christ's birth certainly was the beginning of something wonderful, something possible, and the story has been told over these last 2,000 years. I was thinking this morning of another Christmas hymn that I didn't learn until recently: "Mary, Did You Know?" It's a powerful song. It acknowledges how little Mary knew at the beginning of this cycle. It speaks to the impact Mary's son would have on this world that she was unaware of as his life began. And obviously he had an impact.

We measure the year in the Western world based on when he was born. We're still talking about his birth, his life, and we're still honoring it. The story is told every year by Linus in *A Charlie Brown Christmas*. I'd like to read a portion of the story from the Bible, in my own voice.

And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed. . . .

And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; . . .

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*To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife,
being great with child.*

*And so it was, that, while they were there,
the days were accomplished that she should
be delivered.*

*And she brought forth her firstborn son, and
wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid
him in a manger; because there was no
room for them in the inn.*

*And there were in the same country
shepherds abiding in the field, keeping
watch over their flock by night.*

*And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon
them, and the glory of the Lord shone
round about them: and they were sore
afraid.*

*And the angel said unto them, Fear not:
for, behold, I bring you good tidings of
great joy, which shall be to all people.*

*For unto you is born this day in the city of
David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.
(Luke 2:1,3-11)*

It touches me to remember that such a gift was given. There is a stirring of the memory of why humankind exists. All kinds of stories have been created that are about the end of Jesus' life, and so little is acknowledged about why he was here: so that there might be a message given of

what our lives are about. I remember one of the earliest stories told after his birth; he was around thirteen years old and was in the temple with his family. The caravan leaves without him, and he's back speaking to the prophets and the priests in the temple. His mother becomes frantic, looking for him, and comes back, asking, "We've been looking all over for you! Didn't you care that we would be worried?" And his message to her was, *Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?*

And that message at such a young age could seem arrogant or preteen or tween, depending on what child you want to think about. But it was also the continuation of why he came, which was to bring this incredible invitation, not only to his family but to the world. Part of his world was his Jewish faith and the temple and the people who were teaching at that time. He was bringing his message there.

And I think about the stories, written and repeated over and over again—who knows how many iterations, how many adaptations? But the story is still being told, and there is still some passion and some knowing of the essence of the story as it is read. I have an emotional response to the story because it is in my cells. It's hard to know how much is childhood memory and how much is vibrational memory. But I know it's not just because of Christmas. It

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was about something miraculous happening. When a story like that is told over and over again, it gets embellished and altered by the people who tell it, gets embellished by the priests who I listened to year after year in the Catholic Church. It gets embellished in the children's plays in school, depending on whether or not they're even allowed to tell it anymore because it is a Christian story and not a "holiday" story.

But I want to say it's a current story for me. There have been people in my lifetime who have come and said the same thing and told the same story. And there are times when I'm teaching and remembering those people who taught me, where I'm repeating the story they told me, or I'm repeating the truth that I know because I met them. Less iteration, less adaptation. But the current story is the Christ spirit that is being born by people who consciously know that they're responsible, capable and awake to bring the story. And not just to bring the story—to live the reality. A story is something that can touch your heart, but what really touches my heart is when I meet somebody who knows what that means, somebody who is living the reality of what is represented in the story, somebody who knows what Jesus' life and their life is about.

His life was about the revelation that love is all that's real and that you are an

instrument and a magnification of love. Don't forget it. Please bring it. Do it with me. Create with me.

I had a conversation with someone this morning who already in their mind had created that this Christmas day was going to go badly. And I thought, Well, you are a Creator-being, so enjoy what you create. It wasn't a teaching moment! I couldn't say, "Oh, do something different; create something else," because the intense addiction, the intense desire to suffer, is present in this person. If I were to describe to you what this person has lined up for the day, you'd think, What a great day! They've already got a twist on it that it's not going to go well, and it's going to end early and they're going to be alone.

We have the opportunity to live the Christmas message, to provide the answer in the way we live our lives. The angels were involved in making sure the shepherds found their way. The magi were involved in making sure Jesus' birth was acknowledged and honored. I want to say, one of the greatest gifts that I've been given is someone teaching me how to honor another person who is bringing this incredible spirit. I used to, in my youth, honor it with false adulation. I grew up, as most of you know by now, in the Catholic Church, and the respect and honoring I gave to the priests and the nuns because of what they represented to me was based on

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something that I found later in my life didn't make sense. At the time it did and served me well. But then when I found somebody who actually was bringing the spirit of the living Christ in the world, and sharing it with me unabashedly, the respect and love I could give to that person was a gift back to me—a gift to them but a gift back to me, that I got to participate in my life in a greater way because of what they brought.

David Karchere wrote this poem that presents a different angle on the spirit of Christmas. Today is the day that people acknowledge and celebrate the birth of a man 2,016 years ago. I don't have any problem with that but, as I said, the story is 2,016 years old. We have a more current story to honor. Any person who's been in our life who has brought this same message through their living needs to be celebrated on this day—needs to be celebrated *every* day. If Christmas is about the birth of a man who brought the true message of Love, the message that life is amazing and we can be the creator in our world, we need to give thanks for every man and woman who has come and magnified that message and made it available in our lifetime.

As I read this poem I'd like you to think about somebody who changed your life because of the way they were living *their* life, who inspired you to be a creator and

to be a holy, magnificent Being. The poem speaks of a man but it may have been a woman.

*I walked all the quiet night
through the snow to his home
with only the winter moon
lighting the path ahead.*

*Limbs of fir trees
hung low on each side
as carols sang in my head.
Silent night,
O Christmas tree,
Singing sweetly o'er the plains.
The crunching of snow
kept time as I trod,
one happy foot
in front of another.
Frost formed on my beard
as the broad brim of my hat
filled slowly with crystal flakes.*

*The smoke of burning pine
told me I was there.
And before I could knock
he let me in
through the heavy oak door,
polished from years of use.*

*I stood before him,
his back to the fire,
wearing a heavy wool cloak
down to his knees.
He seemed to know why I had come
and waited for me to speak,*

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*gazing at me
with his blue-gray eyes.*

*“I never told you
how much I love you.
I didn’t tell you
how grateful I am
for all you did
that has made my life worthwhile.
I never said what you mean to me,
and how my whole life
has been saying thank you.”*

*He laid his hand on my shoulder
and smiled a smile that lit up my heart
as it lit the room.*

*I smiled back,
and stood there
for a forever moment.
Then turned to enter a new morning,
and walked the long trail home.*

I stand here on this Christmas Day to say I never told you how much I love you and how much I thank you for living an honorable life. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. May my life be a living example of what you gave me and a celebration of that joy.

Jane Anetrini

janetrini@emnet.org



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