

**Icons as Visio Divina:
Doorways into the Seven Liberal Arts**

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Abstract

This dissertation is a fusion of my work in icon painting combined with a comprehensive overview of the seven liberal arts as experienced during my seven summers attending The New Chartres Mystery School, Chartres, France, 2006-2012. This is an invitation into the seven liberal arts through the readings, presentations, conversations, interactions and rituals offered through participation in The New Chartres Mystery School. Meditation upon the icons will enhance the depth and meaning of each liberal art through the spiritual practice of Visio Divina, the art of sacred seeing. Each icon is a personification of a liberal art, inviting the beholder into the essence and transformative energy of each one.

Dedication

To Russell,
with great gratitude and tremendous love.

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It has been a great blessing in this lifetime to be surrounded by a close family and many good friends. This gift has really been brought to the fore with the writing of this dissertation. So many thank yous are called for:

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Chapter 1

Introduction and Methodology

Introduction

From Pythagoras to Plato, through the medieval mystics to The New Chartres Mystery School, the seven liberal arts of grammar, dialogue, rhetoric, music, arithmetic, geometry and astronomy have been seen as gateways into what Andrew Harvey calls the rebirth and embodiment of the Divine within each of us. (Harvey, 2012) Immersion into the liberal arts, as presented at The New Chartres Mystery School, is a process of awakening and connecting the soul to the greater harmonics of the universe. It is not enough to connect just to ideas and definitions of a classical education through these arts. There is an underlying mystical regeneration process that takes place when we embrace the essence and patterns of these arts and allow them to become our guides. The hope is that this rebirth and embodiment of the Divine within each of us will then spread through us and out into a world sorely in need of healing and transformation.

For many millennia, in many ways, humans have pondered the question, “What is going on out there (the macrocosm) and how do I/we (the microcosm) connect and relate to it?” Science, theology, education, the arts, technology - each in its own way has wrestled with this question. From 25,000 year old cave paintings to the technology lifting humans into space, this has been one of the formative questions of our existence.

All dissertations begin with a question. For this work, I have modified the above question to ask, “What is going on out there (the macrocosm) and will an immersion into the seven liberal arts guide me/us (the microcosm) into connection and relationship with

the macrocosm?” The opportunity to dig deep into this question was offered to me through The New Chartres Mystery School.

After a 2005 pilgrimage to many of the Marian sites in France, Dr. Jim Garrison and Dr. Andrew Harvey arrived in Chartres where they developed the idea of recreating the original Chartres Mystery School in 2006, which was the 1,000 year anniversary of its original creation. The original school lasted from its origins with Fulbertus of Chartres and spanned 200 years until the death of Alanus ab Insulis. The “Chartres masters, teachers and pupils in the School of Chartres sought to reconcile Celtic and Greek mysteries, Arthurian and Grail streams, with a Christianity based not on belief but on the possibility of man’s direct experience of Christ and the spiritual hierarchies...(Querido, 1987, pp.14-15)

This merger of mysteries gave the original Chartres School a broad, inclusive wisdom. “Chartres was a focal point of the mysteries of healing. The same healing process can be fulfilled today if we discover our inherent harmony with the cosmos, with the earth, and with the deepest core of our being.” (Querido, 1987, p.16) Progressively moving through the patterns of the liberal arts attunes us to this healing harmony.

After a thousand years there is once again a school in Chartres devoted to these healing mysteries. Initiation into the mysteries of the seven liberal arts can and will bring about the transformation that empowers each of us to reclaim our identity and to divinize our heart, mind, body and soul so as to become divine emissaries of creativity on earth. (Harvey, 2012) Michael Schneider writes that, “The seven ‘liberal arts’ of medieval education were so named because they represented seven paths of learning intended to *liberate* us from a mundane life.” (Schneider, 1994, p.222)

My experience of initiation into the mysteries of Chartres wisdom through the archetypes of the seven liberal arts was transforming. I was privileged to attend all seven intensives of the first cycle of The New Chartres Mystery School. I arrived as a curious pilgrim and seven years later I left as a confirmed mystic, awake and aware of the tremendous scope of the universe.

Dr. Jim Garrison once commented to me that no one who completed a full seven year cycle had written about the experience. As I was seeking a project for my Doctor of Ministry degree, I decided to write a narrative of one pilgrim's journey through The New Chartres Mystery School, the seven liberal arts and the transforming power of Chartres Cathedral. This work is a compilation of teachings, readings, oral presentations, discussions, observations and encounters over those seven years. This narrative is both personal and universal.

During the global pandemic my friend, iconographer Cathy Reynolds, introduced me on-line to Kara Gillette, founder and teacher of The Sophia Icon Studio. Through Gillette's guidance and Reynold's support, I have come to embrace icon painting as a mystical and spiritual practice. After my first few intensives with Gillette, it became clear to me that some of my icons held the essence and presence of the seven liberal arts. Beholding the icons is akin to viewing the liberal arts "with a skin on." The mysteries of Chartres go beyond words, relying on visuals and visions to take us where we must go. These icons are both visual and visionary.

Having these icons accompany the narrative of each liberal art opens doorways for elegant encounters with the liberal arts. In my chapter on Icons as Visio Divina, I detail

the depth of soul journey offered through beholding the creative expressions of icon painting. These icons are incarnational spokespersons of each liberal art.

There is a long held tradition by many iconographers of referring to the process of creating icons not as painting them, but as writing them. Because so much prayer is infused into each painting, it is considered to be the writing of a prayer rather than the painting of an image. Each icon offered here is traditionally referred to as “written through the hand of Barbara Prince.” Throughout this dissertation, with a few exceptions for clarification, I will use the word “written” when describing the creative process. These icons, combined with my narrative adventure, will give the reader an expanded comprehension of all that Chartres and The New Chartres Mystery School offers.

This dissertation is crafted to be a *vade mecum*. *Vade Mecum*, Latin for “go with me,” refers to the special pouches or pockets of medieval pilgrims making the journey to sacred holy sites. “During the Middle Ages, a *vade mecum* served as a spiritual handbook for pilgrims while they journeyed. Illuminated parchment pages were wrapped in hide and hung from the belt or carried in a knapsack during pilgrimage to various holy sites across Europe. The *Vade Mecum* was a hand-scribed compendium of prayers, maps and spiritual inspiration.” (Reynolds, 2015, p.xiii) Each contained within it a collection of hints, helps, maps and markers to support them on their way.

I imagine the wealthier travelers carried richly illuminated Books of Hours for inspiration. The poorer pilgrim might have carried a cross of two lashed twigs to hold the focus of the soul on the way to a holy site. The travelers might have carried scallop shells to remind them to look for the large coquille shells lining the roadways left as

markers by earlier pilgrims. Anything that might help, inspire, support and keep the focus during what were often arduous journeys were included in the vade mecum.

This dissertation of narrative combined with artwork functions as a vade mecum for future pilgrims. Students to The New Chartres Mystery School may find it interesting to compare their experiences with mine. Much in this narrative offers conversation starters and journal prompts. When I began my pilgrimage it was very hard explaining to other people what I was doing. One friend asked, “What exactly is going on over there?” This will give others some descriptive words for their adventures. For those unable to physically travel to Chartres, this narrative can bring the magic and mystery of Chartres to them. The references and bibliography will excite some to read further. Whatever brings a reader to this work, I pray that the narrative combined with the artwork will speak to the power of the seven liberal arts and how they are manifested in Chartres Cathedral.

Methodology

The primary choice of methodology employed in this dissertation is Organic Inquiry. When I initially began this work in 2015, I was influenced by a book edited by Four Arrows (Don Trent Jacobs) titled, *The Authentic Dissertation: Alternative Ways of Knowing, Research and Representation*. Jacobs offered a variety of dissertation authors who, “recognize how tapping into more diverse perspectives, more authentic experiences and reflection, and more creative abilities can address the problems” facing our world today. (Jacobs, 2008, p.1) The stories shared by each representative author, “are authentic. They are in essence, spiritual undertakings and reflections that honor

the centrality of the researcher's voice, experience, creativity and authority." (Jacobs, 2008, p.2)

Organic Inquiry began with "the original five principle model of the sacred, the personal, the chthonic, the relational and the transformative," as originated by Jennifer Clements, et al. (Curry & Wells. 2006. p.9) It has since evolved to, "a three step process model of engaging the subconscious or liminal realm, gathering information there and returning to integrate it. (Curry, 2006, p.10) In her book, *An Organic Inquiry Primer for the Novice Researcher*, Deah Curry, Ph.D. writes, "We would encourage novice researchers to make use of both principles and process models if what is desired is to achieve a rich descriptive study that never forgets that the researcher is operating in a sacred manner, in partnership with Spirit. (Curry, 2006, p.11) Organic Inquiry gives validity to the sacred, to the numinous experiences and to intuitive information gathering.

Literature Review

This paper details an initiatory experience into the seven liberal arts. Throughout this dissertation authors and books are referred to in context, as they elevate each liberal art as presented and experienced through The New Chartres Mystery School and Chartres Cathedral. The Reference List and the Additional Bibliography following the body of this paper give a tiny sampling of the volumes that have been written in attempt to bring clarity to the question stated in the introduction. With regards to the quest presented here, two books are strongly representative of the two-fold aspect of my work with this dissertation, the *Visio Divina* of icons and the mysticism of Chartres Cathedral.

The first book is *Mother of God, Similar to Fire* by William Hart McNichols and Mirabai Starr. In this masterpiece of Visio Divina, William Hart has written (painted) 51 icons of Mary in a variety of styles. Each icon calls the beholder to meditate on the beauty of Mary, expressed through her love for her son and her unconditional love for all of creation. Such an up close and personal showing of the essence of Mary is an energetic, transformative experience. Lifting up and enhancing McNichol's art are the accompanying prose poems of Mirabai Starr. Her writing is both timely for our hurting world and eternal as she moves us into prayer and contemplation. This deep work, taking the beholder into a personal connection with Mary calls forth an intentional response. McNichols and Starr show the power and inspiration that can be ours when Visio Divina, sacred seeing, meets Lectio Divina, sacred reading. My hope is that my icons, companioned with my narrative, will bring a similar result.

The second book is *The Golden Age of Chartres: Teachings of a Mystery School and the Eternal Feminine*, by Rene Querido. This is a treasure chest of Chartrian history and mysticism. Beginning with the Celtic Druid mound upon which the current cathedral stands, and moving through history up to the mystical dimensions offered through today's structure, this book illumines a cache of wisdom, mystery and the power of the cathedral and her two Black Madonnas. Initiation into the seven liberal arts is central to embracing these mysteries. Querido's book covers the great teachers of the original Chartres Mystery School and was one of the basic texts used in the formation of The New Chartres Mystery School, 1,000 years after the original school.

Note to Readers

Please keep in mind that gold leaf does not photograph well which causes much of the illumination to appear dimmed. In person, the gold shines, glowing with radiance.

Icons as Visio Divina

The whole earth is a living icon of the face of God.

St. John of Damascus

Chapter 2

Icons as Visio Divina

Visio Divina, the art of sacred seeing, is about more than just observation. It is about beholding. To behold something is to enter into the experience of what is being viewed. Through beholding we see deeply, beyond the surface, behind the veil.

Linette Martin, author of *Praying with Icons*, writes that, “An icon is a two-way door of communication that not only shows us a person or an event but makes it present. When we stand in front of an icon, we are in touch with that person and we take part in that event.” (Martin, 2011, loc.57) It is an interactive experience.

Many iconographers use the word “doorway” to describe how beholding an icon can transport us to a “thin” place, a place where our mundane world and the mystical world of the cosmos meet. Rowan Williams, former Archbishop of Canterbury, has written several books about beholding specific icons of Christ and Mary and describes the experience, “as if the world were always on the edge of some total revolution, pregnant with a different kind of life, and we were always trying to catch the blinding momentary light of it’s changing. This is what any icon sets out to embody and transmit.” (Williams, 2002, p.xv)

Icons offer us borderline experiences. Williams likens icons to C.S. Lewis’s wardrobe and lamp post, iconic markers into Narnia. (Lewis, C.S., 1950) There is an invitation to step through the wardrobe and to find ourselves in new and challenging places.

In his reflection on beholding the ancient icon of Christ Pantocrator, Williams talks about the eyes of Jesus in the icon. As we behold Christ in this icon we see not only what we see, but also what Christ sees. “We look at him looking at us and try to understand that as he looks at us, he looks at God.” (Williams, p.79) As we observe Jesus, he observes us and, “sees the love that is his own source and life, despite all we have done to obscure it...when we look at him looking at us, we see both what we were meant to be, bearers of the divine image and likeness, and what we have made of ourselves.” (Williams, p.79)

Icons take us behind Nature’s veil and give us a brighter connection to what we now “see through a glass darkly.” (Corinthians 13:11) In his YouTube video inviting students to The New Chartres Mystery School, Andrew Harvey said the purpose of The Chartres Mystery School is to facilitate the birth of the Divine in the human. This birth is a divinization of our hearts, souls, bodies and minds for the purpose of our becoming emissaries of divine creativity on earth. (Harvey, 2012) Icons as visio divina offer us a pathway to facilitate this divinization.

While prayerfully beholding the icons which I have included in this work, I was struck with how each one embodied and presented a different liberal art. It was a very intuitive process. The icons were laid out on my dining room table for a friend to view, and it suddenly felt as though there was a chorus of voices, “I’m Musica,” “I’m Astronomica.” And so forth. For example, the icon of Hildegard of Bingen identified with Musica. In the icon she sits, scribing music handed down from the heavens, translating it for our human ears. A similar awareness made it clear that my icon of the cosmic Christ was indeed the embodiment of Astronomica. Each offers an experience of a liberal art.

I am not a trained artist and I have never painted much in my life. Through this mystical practice of icon writing I have come to understand that the level of artistic expertise of the icons rendered is not nearly as important as the resonance, the love and the prayer infused into each one during the creation process. Martin believes that icons which have been infused with prayer during their writing have, “an indistinguishable plus” quality that can come across even if the beholder is not particularly spiritual. (Martin, loc. 103)

Iconographers, from the early Byzantine and Greek eras on into our modern day practice of the art, hold to strict standards. These rules for icon writing include painting in silence and “washing” the paint boards with prayers for the community, for peace, for hope. During each icon writing intensive at The Sophia Icon Studio, the group is instructed in these traditions. Before beginning to paint we are asked to cleanse ourselves of any anger or malice. Instructor Kara Gillette begins each day of the writing intensive with an hour of prayer and meditation. Icon writing is a prayerful, open-hearted outpouring of blessings for hope, unity, and harmony. This is a process of midwifing the divine human.

Through my icon writing intensives with Gillette and The Sophia Icon Studio, I have come to describe the mystical practice of icon writing as a process of evoking and invoking. First, I work in paint to evoke an image of Christ, of Mary or of a saint. Continuing with the outward work of applying paint, my continuous inward contemplation and prayer opens a doorway inviting in the essence of each spirit. As I engage in this work, I hear an internal call that says, “Come in and learn more, come in and grow more, come in and love more.” I am trusting that this call can also be heard

by the beholder of the icon, who will step through the doorway. The icons presented here illuminate and make accessible the heart of the seven liberal arts. Meditation before each icon will take the beholder into the spirit and intricacy of each specific liberal art.

Readers of this work are invited to behold the icons which proceed the narrative of each chapter. I have written icons in a variety of styles. Some are ethnic folk art, some are in the classic Byzantine and Greek style, some are modern interpretations, but all function as vehicles of *Visio Divina*, the way of sacred seeing into the interior of the liberal arts.

**Behold,
Grammatica**

In the beginning was the Word.

John 1:1



The Icon

In Christian theology the revelation of the truth of God's intention for the world began when Archangel Gabriel came to Mary, a virgin, and announced to her that she would conceive and bear the child of God. At the Annunciation, as this was proclaimed to her, the spirit of God in the form of a dove came upon her, initiating the incarnation of God into being.

And so it began, the initiatory act of God's truth coming in human form. It is the ultimate form of Grammatica. The Word, the Source, the Heart of the Divine, comes into language and context through the incarnation.

The icon chosen for the liberal art of Grammatica is a 16th century Ethiopian folk art painting of The Annunciation. It brings to life the image of Mary, Gabriel and the Dove interacting in this moment of Divine intervention in the course of human history.

This icon is expressive in a way that classical Byzantine and Greek icons are not. In Ethiopian folk art icons, the eyes are unusually large. And in this instance of the Annunciation, I can't imagine Mary as anything but astonished and wide-eyed with excitement and panic. The Dove hovers just above her, bringing to her womb the spirit of God. And it is almost fun to see Gabriel over-joyed to bring this message of God's Word.

One beautiful aspect of folk art icons is the open, child-like quality of the work. The Word comes to us simply, plainly, without nuance. This icon calls to mind the words of Rabbi Sandy Eisenberg Sasso's children's book, *When God Gave Us Words*. It is a

delightful story and, like most children's stories, it carries with it much wisdom for adults as well.

One day God decided to give words to a man and a woman. But the angels objected, 'People will not know what to do with words. Words should belong only to angels.' But God said, 'Perhaps people will make something beautiful with the words.' Then God sent the angels to put words in the mouths of all the people...When the angels returned from spreading the words, they sat down with God and listened. (Sasso, 2018, pp.1-8)

However, it soon became clear that no matter how much heavenly help humans received, they argued, gossiped, lied and twisted words.

The angels shouted 'Stop! What a mess people are making with our words' and God regretted giving words to man and woman. God was about to send the angels to earth to take back all the words when God heard a new sound. (Sasso, pp.13-15)

The people had started to get the hang of words and began to put them to music, to create poetry, to joke and to laugh, and to create prayers. God and the angels listened and the angels were "enchanted." God asked if the angels still wanted the words taken back but the angels replied, "'We must hear the end of the stories the people are telling'...And it was so. People were allowed to keep the gift of words, for the sake of the stories." (Sasso, pp.15-22)

Grammatica is the gift of words, the language of stories. Our stories.

Chapter 3

Grammatica

Grammar is context. Grammar takes random words and ideas and symbols and coalesces them into coherent patterns that form language. It is the first building block in the creation of communication. It is the beginning of bringing order out of chaos, bringing sense out of nonsense. Grammatica is an initiatory art; it's how we begin to interpret, decode and communicate what is happening within us and around us. In the book, *Trivium*, edited by John Martineau, writer Rachel Holley describes language as, "humanity's primary vehicle for thought and communication, both internal and external." (Martineau, 2016, p.57)

In the journey through the first week-long gathering of The New Chartres Mystery School, Grammatica was indeed the beginning of both internal and external communication. It became immediately clear that this initiation would bring context for spoken and written language, of finding context for the language and places and of symbols. We were also asked to place ourselves within the context of the original Chartres School, to open ourselves up to the beginnings of the transformative power of the seven liberal arts.

The first adventure in placing myself within the context of Grammatica came when I stepped off the airplane in Paris. It was the first time I had traveled alone to a country where I did not speak the language. And, sometimes humorously, it became clear how much of the spoken work can be conveyed by gesture. With a lot of body language, hand pointing and facial expressions, I succeeded in getting myself to the airport bus and then to Gare Montparnasse for the train. My made-up language of gestures helped

me purchase my ticket and find the platform for the train to Chartres. Before boarding the train, I memorized the names of the three station stops before Chartres, so I would know when my stop would be coming up. I could not yet trust my ears to interpret this new language correctly. The experience called me to listen and watch very carefully, to pay close attention to everything happening around me.

While on the train I met another American who appeared distressed. Not versed in the language of the French, she was also not versed in the language of exchange. During her stopover in England she thought she would take advantage of her lay-over time and change her American money so that she would not have to worry about it when she got to France. She did not realize that British money was based on pounds and that France was part of the European Union, basing their money on euros. She discovered her misconception when she tried to purchase her train tickets in Paris. There is much involved in the spoken and written grammar of currency.

In the preliminary information sent out by Wisdom University, we were encouraged to come to Chartres with the mindset of a pilgrim. In her book, *The Soul of the Pilgrim: Eight Practices for the Journey Within*, author and Abbess of the on-line Abbey of the Arts, Christine Valters Paintner begins her book with these words, “Journeys are movements from one place to another, often to a place that is unfamiliar, foreign and strange. In fact, the Latin root of the word pilgrimage, peregrine, means ‘strange or stranger.’” (Paintner, 2015, p.1) So, the unfamiliar, out of context mode of pilgrimage was encouraged for our first intensive.

In keeping with the idea of coming as a pilgrim, I brought no luggage, only a backpack, and I wore only sandals, to remind me of peregrine as I traveled. Valters

Paintner writes, “One of the greatest gifts of travel is how it makes me focus on the things I carry with me. Heavy baggage is a burden...The pilgrim doesn’t want to be weighed down with the things that are unnecessary for the journey...Broaden your vision of what you carry. Imagine what kinds of attitudes, beliefs, expectations, and stories that you tell yourself that don’t need to go with you.” (Paintner, p.34) Clearing the heart, mind and spirit is essential to opening up space within us to allow the gifts of strange new places to bless us with awakening and transformation.

Being jammed up both internally and externally makes it so much harder for new experiences to communicate their language. Most seasoned travelers would agree that dragging along the expectation that the new place, the new context, should be just like what was left behind at home, negates much of the experience. For weeks before this trip, I meditated on clearing my mind and setting an intention for stretching myself in new ways.

Stepping off the train in Chartres, I stood for a moment on the platform in bewilderment, with a slight touch of panic. Where to next? In the distance I saw the spires of the cathedral and set off in that direction. While climbing the hill from the train station to the Cathedrale Notre-Dame de Chartres, awe and mystery began replacing the uncertainty and strangeness of the trip.

Arriving at the cathedral, I sat on a bench outside the West Portal, transfixed by the beauty of the carvings. It is an exquisite entryway carved in the 12th century. With over 200 figures, it is impossible to take it all in with one seeing. The language communicated by these stones is deeply theological, covering the full scope of God’s incarnational presence on earth, from birth to the Second Coming.

Since I was heading to an initiatory experience into the seven liberal arts, what captured my imagination most that afternoon were the right portal carvings. Malcolm Miller, many years a guide at Chartres Cathedral, has written a comprehensive book on the sculpture, glass and architecture of the cathedral. In his book, *Chartres Cathedral*, Miller details these portal carvings:

Beneath the ascending Christ, angels swoop downwards, announcing His return. Surrounding Him in the archivolt are the zodiac signs with their corresponding monthly activities; around Mary and the Child, wisdom incarnate, are sculpted the seven liberal arts with those scholars who best illustrated each art: from the apex downward, to the left, are Geometry and Euclid, Rhetoric and Cicero, Dialectic and Aristotle; to the right are Arithmetic and Boethius, Astronomy and Ptolemy, Grammar and either Donatus or Priscian, beside whom are Pythagoras and Music, playing a tintinnabulum. Christ rules over all human endeavor, whether intellectual or manual. (Miller, 1996, p.28)

Given the battle which rages even today between religion and science, it is profound to see the seven liberal arts immortalized in the cathedral's stone. But within the either-or mindset that takes sides in this battle of seemingly opposites, there exists a both-and attitude as well. St Augustine was a believer in the both-and. Philip Ball, in his book, *Universe of Stone: Chartres Cathedral and the Invention of the Gothic*, describes this under-lying attitude of Augustine. "Allied to his trust in divine illumination was a faith in human rationality. God has placed in the human mind a capacity for reason that can and indeed should be used to deepen our understanding of him. Reason is a tool that may be honed and wielded by means of the intellectual disciplines cultivated by the ancient scholars, which became enshrined in the tidy conceit of the liberal arts." (Ball, 2008, p.80)

The merging of religion and reason continued to complete a whole picture of divine intention:

These disciplines were regarded by the classical writers as the essential components of a sound education. According to the sixth century Roman monk Cassiodorus, 'liberal' has its roots not as we might expect in the Latin *liber*, 'free' – that is being the topics suitable for the training of a free man in the ancient world – but in *liber*, 'book': they were subjects to be learned by reading...

Augustine believed that, as God's reason has rendered the world intelligible, this order can be discovered by the use of mathematics, geometry and astronomy, as well as through literature, poetry and music. These subjects may be pursued then, not for the sake of mere learning or art, but as a route to divine truth – as a way of enabling men to appreciate the rational basis of their faith. Augustine's advocacy of the liberal arts can be seen as a call for a research programme that is no open-ended inquiry but whose aims and conclusions are pre-ordained. Mathematics, for example, can be deployed to help us understand the significance of the numbers that appear in biblical allegories. The purpose of studying nature was not to discover what it was like or how it was constituted but to discover new dimensions of the moral order of divine wisdom inherent in all creation. (Ball, pp.80-81)

So there I sat, beholding the stone-carved representations of the seven liberal arts and feeling that a whole new language, a whole new context in which to immerse myself was opening up to me. I looked down at my dusty sandals and dirty feet and thought, this really is a pilgrimage to a whole new place. I didn't have the words for it then, but I have found the words of Christine Valters Paintner to be descriptive of what I was feeling at the moment. "Peregrination is the call to wander for the love of God. It is a word without precise definition in English and means somethings different than pilgrimage. This wandering was an invitation into letting go of our own agendas and discovering where God is leading." (Paintner, p.65) In *Sacred Earth, Sacred Soul*, John

Philip Newell expands on this idea of wandering for the love of God from a Celtic perspective:

But alongside these more prominent outward journeys [Santiago de Compostela, Iona] there is another mode of Celtic pilgrimage in which the destination is not known. This is when the pilgrimage becomes peregrination, as it is called, seeking one's place of resurrection, setting sail into the unknown in search of new beginnings. This is the sacred journey that opens us from the heart of life in every moment. This is the critical journey ahead of us as a world today, if we are to find our way forward into well-being together. (Newell, 2021, p.221)

Feeling a newfound sense of awe for what was being offered in this initiatory art, I left the bench and made my way down the side of the cathedral to Hotellerie St. Yves, a 17th century former monastery, now a hotel and the center for the upcoming week of Wisdom University's New Chartres Mystery School. As I entered the doorway I remember thinking, "Okay, let's jump down this rabbit hole."

The first person I met was Karen, who would eventually become my apartment mate for the last five years of the program. She was having her own out-of-context moment trying to find someone who spoke French and help her in what was obviously a struggle to get Air Canada to understand that her luggage was lost. I was no help, offering only sympathy and support.

Next it was into the St. Charles room, the center for our large group gatherings. I grabbed a seat next to an open, pane less window and, just as I tease the parishioners in my church for always seeking out the same pew, I sat in that area for the next seven years. Here I was, in a whole new context, in a whole new place with a whole lot of new people. It was so exciting!

The room was filled with an electricity, loaded with an expectant energy flowing from person to person. Dr. Jim Garrison, president of (then) Wisdom University, welcomed us all and introduced the amazing group of presenters for the week: Cambridge University scientist Rupert Sheldrake, Rumi master Kabir Helminski, astrologer Lynn Bell, sacred activist Andrew Harvey, indigenous wisdom keeper Apela Colorado, Episcopal priest and labyrinth guide Lauren Artress, energetics master Calen Rayne and author Caroline Myss, among others. Here were people whose books I'd read, whose wisdom I have followed, all here in one room. It was certainly an embarrassment of riches.

The week provided a wide variety of language, symbols, rituals and ideas. Our days took on a pattern. Each began with an Indigenous fire/smudging ritual by Apela Colorado, followed by a report from astrologer Lynn Bell on what was happening in the cosmos, especially as it related to the work we were doing. Next came a lecture/talk by Jim Garrison, always clarifying what we were doing and how it fit into the context of the world at that moment. After a break, one of the special presenters would offer their wisdom from their particular context. Afternoons offered optional groups and gatherings and also gave us time in the Cathedral. Evenings were either free, or the time for informal talks and gatherings. Two evenings offered special times for our group, which became the highlights of the session, and would continue to be so in the six summers to come. The first event was the labyrinth walk in the closed Cathedral and the second was time for our group spent in the crypt with the Black Madonna and the Druid well under the main Cathedral.

It is in the Cathedral where the magic happens! Inside those doors, all the words and teachings, the activities and the interactions of the Wisdom School became alive. They were drawn together to form their own language, amplified by the embedded and embodied wisdom of the Cathedral.

The Cathedral holds a palpable, visceral energy. Andrew Harvey describes the Cathedral as a resurrection machine, alive with energy. (Harvey, A. 2012) There is an undercurrent of vibration in the Cathedral that is hard to describe. It is a strange, inexplicable sense of the cells within the body re-organizing. The Cathedral is dedicated to the “birth of the Divine in the human, dedicated to the mystical core of Jesus’ transmission to the world, empowering everyone in this divination to become emissaries of divine creativity on earth.” (Harvey, 2012) He talks about the transformation to reclaim our “identity and divinized heart, mind, soul and body, a new kind of human being, a divinized human being. A co-creative partner in God’s plan for the birth of a new humanity.” (Harvey, 2012)

Maybe this divinization of the human is the Second Coming that is carved in the stone of the Royal Portal. In the YouTube video inviting participants to The New Chartres Mystery School, Andrew Harvey shares his belief that, “We are entering into the greatest storm of our evolution and we need the joy of this birth, the rapture of this birth, the peace of this birth and the passion of this birth” (Harvey 2012) to help us enter into this storm. This is Big Work.

Walking the labyrinth was a mesmerizing experience. The year before I had the gift of being alone on the Chartres labyrinth. My cousins and I made a two week trip to France and as part of the planning we were each given the choice to pick the one place

we would most like to see. Remembering how enchanted mythologist Joseph Campbell was with Chartres Cathedral, that was my pick.

Our trip from Paris to Chartres was on a bitterly cold February afternoon. Because of the cold and the afternoon hour, there was hardly another soul there. By pure chance, it was a Friday, the only day that the Diocese of Chartres allowed the chairs to be removed from the labyrinth. On arriving, my cousins went straight to the Black Madonna and to the Sancta Camisa, the sacred relic. The labyrinth was empty, so I began walking. Arriving in the center I couldn't help myself. Facing the West Rose window, I threw up my hands and out loud proclaimed, "Joseph Campbell, look at me! I'm alone in the center of the Chartres labyrinth!" It was thrilling! That was the moment the Cathedral began to work her magic in me. There was an immediate sense of being embraced. Suddenly, I could speak the language of the place. I fit into the context of the Cathedral and all that she is, a resurrection machine, the embodiment of the Divine Feminine, an alchemical agent for transformation. I carried this awakening into my walk the following year with The New Chartres Wisdom School.

As Lauren Artress prepared the group for our evening walk, I remembered the words from her book, *Walking a Sacred Path: Rediscovering the Labyrinth as a Spiritual Practice*. (Artress, 2006) She described her impactful first walk around a labyrinth, "I began to realize the profound need we all have to connect to the Spirit that enlivens us. We need that core feeling of connection to the Divine to give us meaning, to find the vision for the future. We need to awaken to a vision of a thriving, healthy planet that supports life among diverse communities...the labyrinth is an archetype of wholeness, a sacred place that helps us rediscover the depths of our souls." (Artress, 2006, pp. 3-4).

The Cathedral was dark, lit only by candles. The air vibrated with the acapella voices of The Ensemble du Fulbert. Unlike my previous solitary walk, this one included about 150 others. I was early into the labyrinth and when I came off I sat with my back against a stone pillar, watching my friend Amy dancing ecstatically around the path, my friend Theresa crawling the whole pathway on her knees, and the many others gliding through at their own pace. It felt like time travel, being drawn from my 21st century world back into the 13th century. The flickering candlelight, the pilgrims rounding the labyrinth, the resonance of the music in the majestic space, all had me leaning back against the pillar and asking the stones of Chartres to tell me their stories. And they did, bit by bit over the next seven years.

The week was a powerful initiation, leading us into the heart of Grammatica and how this was the first step in our journey of illumination of the seven liberal arts:

For the masters and their pupils [of the original Chartres School], the seven liberal arts were more than disciplines; they were beings. The study of an art was an approach to a being. The mastery of an art was a connection to a being who, belonging to the spiritual hierarchies, would then inspire one as a priestess or guardian of that particular art. Each of the seven guardians had her 'place' in the spiritual world, which was one of the planetary spheres. Thus, following the path of the seven liberal arts was bringing one's soul into right relationship with the planetary system...the arts were studied in a definite order, because there was an order to the universal scheme of the cosmos. Beginning with a study of Grammatica, a pupil ascended the ladder of the arts in a gradual progression that in the School of Chartres may have taken seven years to complete. (Querido, 1987, pp 74-75).

Grammatica represents the sphere of the moon, with Donatus as the foremost representative:

The Chartres masters felt that through the being of Grammatica, they were led to the sphere of the moon, which is the great reflector raying back the light of the sun. Like the moon, grammar was a mirror, and by her the Logos, the Word, was reflected through its working in language on earth.

The students at Chartres, filled with the enthusiasm to discover the source of the Word that was 'in the beginning,' would be lifted to the moon's sphere by means of inner, spiritual cognition. (Querido, 1987. p.72ff.)

The Oxford Dictionary defines cognition as, "the mental action or process of acquiring knowledge and understanding through thought, experience and the senses." With Grammatica nearly concluded and six more liberal arts to come, I shared in Querido's description of the enthusiasm of the original Chartres School students, that they would be lifted, "to the moon's sphere by means of inner, spiritual cognition." (Querido, 1987, p.72). This initiation into Grammatica has truly been a process of thought, experiences and senses.

Querido was the Director of The Rudolph Steiner College in Sacramento, California. As my week in Chartres drew to a close, I came across these words by Rene Querido, sharing the thoughts of Rudolph Steiner who believed that:

Those who had been in the school began to descend to earth...The heavenly alliance formed at the beginning of the thirteenth century is bearing fruit in the twentieth...The masters and students of Chartres will be incarnating throughout the last third of this century [20th] to begin their practical work...to bring healing impulses to the world. (Querido, 1987, p.149)

According to Querido, esotericist Rudolph Steiner believed that the original Chartres Mystery School masters and students would be reincarnating to carry on the work of the original Chartres School. That final night I lay in my tiny monk sized cell of a room wondering why we were all gathered here. Are there some healing mysteries that I/we are being called on now to offer up to the world? I thought of the many conversations I had during the week. Almost every conversation began with the question, "What brought you here? What made you decide to come to Chartres?" And without exception the reply was always, "I don't know. I just felt I had to be here, I was called to be in this place."

I don't know if Steiner's predictions bear any reality but I do know our global news is frightening, with its implications of destruction. We need those healing impulses now! Through reading newsletters of local churches, reports from charitable organizations and email from socially active friends, it is clear that many people, in many places, in many

ways are working tirelessly to bring such healing impulses to the world. Grammatica is the first doorway into the communication and context needed to do this work. As Andrew Harvey said, it is time for the rebirth of the divine human. And it begins here, in Grammatica.

Behold,

Dialectica

The three gifts of the Black Madonna
that I wish upon you:
tremendous courage, ecstasy and peace.

Andrew Harvey



The Icon

Our Lady of the Burning Bush.

The Monastery of St. Catherine came to be on the Sinai Peninsula in the 6th century. Each generation has since left its mark, with additions, subtractions, and embellishments shifting its construction and theology through the centuries.

The original monastery was built on what was believed to be the site of the Burning Bush, revealed by God to Moses in Exodus 3:1-6. Tradition holds that the Burning Bush of Moses, aflame but not consumed, was a pre-figuration of the Virgin Mary. While Mary was afire with Divine love, she was not consumed by it. In the Eastern Orthodox tradition, September 4 is the celebration of the Feast of the Most Holy Theotokos, the Unburnt Bush Icon. This prefiguration of the Burning Bush was described in the 4th century by Gregory of Nyssa:

What was prefigured at that time that the flame of the bush was openly manifested in the mystery of the Virgin...Just as on the mountain the bush was not consumed, so also the Virgin gave birth to the Light and was not corrupted. (Mitch, 2019.)

Painted as a fresco on the wall of St. Catherine's Monastery is the icon of Mary of the Burning Bush upon which this icon was designed.

Following the initiation by Andrew Harvey into the Five Sacred Mysteries of the Wisdom of The Great Mother, this icon is a manifestation of those mysteries. No matter what pain, no matter how deep the howling of the soul in the alchemical fires, she is not consumed, we are not consumed. In an article on the Seeking Theosis website, Jobin

George wrote in his article, *Mary Mother and the Burning Bush: A Profound Mystical Connection*:

The Burning Bush is a powerful symbol that can speak to us in many ways...in modern life, we can often feel overwhelmed by the challenges of the world. The Burning Bush can give us hope and strength, reminding us that God is with us, even in the most difficult circumstances. (George, 2024)

Will it be fire or fire? The fire of illumination or the fire of consumption? This question was posed in several ways during Dialectica, with a variety of responses.

Chapter 4

Dialectica

The Being of Dialectica (dialogue, logic) is elusive. Our second liberal art intensive began somberly with Jim Garrison telling us that Dialectica is the most difficult of the seven liberal arts because we are very unskilled at dialogue in the social and systemic collective.

Garrison suggested that perhaps our lack of skill at dialogue is because we think we have pursued wisdom, and now we understand it and can base our assumptions upon it. In his excellent book, On Dialogue, David Bohm offers his input on our very uncommunicative communication processes:

Now, why do we need dialogue? People have difficulty communicating, even in small groups. But in a group of thirty or forty or more, many find it very hard to communicate unless there is a set purpose or unless someone is leading it. Why is that? For one thing, everyone has different assumptions and opinions...And these assumptions are defended when they are challenged. People frequently can't resist defending them and they tend to defend them with an emotional charge...The point is, dialogue has to go into all the pressures that are behind our assumptions. It goes into the process of thought behind the assumptions, not just the assumptions themselves...Dialogue is really aimed at going into the whole thought process and changing the way the thought process occurs collectively, (Bohm, 1996, pp.8-9)

Jim Garrison continued his presentation by sharing how Socrates believed that a deeper way of knowing arose out of the meeting of conflicting questions. Out of colliding truths come bigger truths. Such is the nature of antinomial reality: the opposite of a great truth is another great truth. Reality is a multiplicity of truths that interact and collide, and we are vessels through which these truths course. Wisdom is never obtained, it is only pursued.

To put this concept of bringing together a multiplicity of truths into a greater truth, we were all randomly assigned to dialogue groups, with whom we would interact all week. In doing this, Garrison reminded us of Socrates' urge that in dialogue we must become vessels, not egos. He gave our groups the following instructions:

- 1 – Come in the Socratic spirit of vessel.
- 2 – Each individual needs to suspend judgement.
- 3 – Approach interaction with as much honesty and transparency as you can. Don't suppress fear and opposition, but speak in an honest "witness" way, to create empathy. Essential dialogue is empathy.
- 4 – A posture of building a conversation that is open-hearted takes the dialogue to the next level.

It was extremely helpful to remember the words of David Bohm on the difference between dialogue and discussion:

Contrast this [dialogue] with the word "discussion," which has the same root as "percussion" and "concussion." It really means to break things up. It emphasizes the idea of analysis, where there may be many points of view, and where everybody is presenting a different one – analyzing and breaking up. That obviously has its value, but it is limited and will not get us very far beyond our various points of view. Discussion is almost like a ping-pong game, where people are batting the ideas back and forth and the object of the game is to win or get points for yourself. Possibly you will take up somebody else's ideas to back up your own – you may agree with some and disagree with others – but the basic point is to win the game. That's very frequently the case in a discussion.

In a dialogue, however, nobody is trying to win. Everybody wins if anybody wins. There is a different sort of spirit to it. In a dialogue, there is no attempt to gain points, or to make your particular view prevail...It's a situation called win-win, whereas the other game is win-lose...(Bohm, 1996, p.7)

It is so difficult for humans to make the internal switch from a win-lose to a win-win goal in communicating with others, both individually and as a group. To internalize this distinction between dialogue and discussion, described as Bohm has done here, calls for an intense re-aligning of our interactive skills. That was our challenge for this week, particularly within our dialogue groups. What became clear in our group was the need to pay mind to the line from instruction number three about essential dialogue being empathy.

Throughout the week, many of the dialogue groups depended on John Hanagan and others to facilitate getting them to the point of open-hearted listening. One group suffered much discord and another group just disbanded altogether. Dialogue is extremely difficult. I am eternally grateful to Natalie, Matey, Peter, Lynn, Carolyn and Elizabeth for their openness, honesty and empathy that helped make the dialogue exercises effective and helpful. The level of earnest participation brought to mind the words of a professor from my seminary, Dr. Nelle Morton, who believed that we are here to hear one another into speech. A huge part of dialogue is attentive listening. It was a week of deep listening for me.

While this intensive was generally focused on outward dialogue, much of what I recall also came from the ever-present, ongoing inner dialogues with myself. Rami Shapiro's words from his presentation rang true when he declared how we need awakened people with internal dialogue that will make room for the external dialogue.

One day in particular stands out to me as deeply embracing the essence of Dialectica. Thursday was packed with dialogue – personal, with other people, with The Great Mother, with my fears and with the profound impact of dialogue in one very

special encounter. Each moment of the day, beginning to end, was an encounter with the Being of Dialectica.

The day began early. Lying in my bed, I tried to hold on to the fast fading images of my dream. My whole life has been plagued by nightmares. The day before, dream scholar Dr. Jeremy Taylor offered a presentation on dreams. He said that nightmares are a form of urgency and that the good news is that nightmares which are remembered call us to do extraordinary things in the quest to be rid of them. He called it dream extension, where skills come to people as creative gifts capable of big work.

His words spurred an internal dialogue about antinomial opposites – about my dreams of looming horrors over and against the skills which these dreams were calling forth from me. I recalled more of Dr. Jeremy Taylor's dream wisdom that dreams are in the service of health and wholeness, not of comfort and convenience. We have, he said, free will. We don't have to follow our divine and authentic selves, but we do have to accept the consequences, for to ignore our inner selves is to do so at our own and the planet's peril. Taylor said that any world view that ignores the unconscious is doomed to failure. Dialogue with my dreams this week was both internal and in community, as we shared our dreams each morning in Apela Colorado's Dream Circle. Internally, dreams have much to inform our subjective minds. These dream interpretations are then enlarged by the objective reflections of the group. Taylor taught us that our dreams are in the service of health and wholeness. Deep dialogue with our dreams can bring us into significant communication with our unconscious and subconscious selves.

Taylor quoted T.S. Eliot's words, "The only hope, or else despair lies in the choice of pyre or pyre – to be redeemed from fire by fire...We only live, only suspire consumed by either fire or fire." (Eliot, 1971, p.57). And here is the antinomial reality of crushing oppositions that are the same great truth, our choice to make: fire or fire? Humanity has a choice: the fires of apocalyptic destruction or the refining fires of the emerging wisdom culture? As Jim Garrison put it, now is the time to step into the alchemical fires in order to bring forth the reconciling third truth of the two opposing energies of crisis and opportunity. This third great truth is the transformative energy of Love.

So, fire or fire? How do I reconcile the truth of the fires of apocalypse with the fires of the healing and transformation needed to bring forth the new fire of Great Love? This is both the internal and external dialogue of life. It is also the great question for our time. How do we enter into the antinomial experience of fire or fire?

Andrew Harvey presented next, offering a passageway for entering into the experience of the fires. In his presentation Harvey made it clear that from a social perspective we could only go through the horrific dark descent of an apocalyptic fire, and live with real wisdom, if the descent is married to the ascent. Here was to be found the Great Love.

Harvey invited us to walk into *The Five Sacred Mysteries of the Wisdom of the Great Mother* and how ascent through these mysteries affords the soul wisdom rather than madness as the soul descends into the horrific fires. Pyre or pyre? These *Five Sacred Mysteries* are:

1 – To see The Great Mother as the transcendent Mother of eternal darkness out of which is born a radical humility of awe.

2 – To see The Great Mother as the Queen of Nature and central to the mystery of the death-birth process, for being destroyed is to be remade.

3 – To see The Great Mother as Queen of Tantra, reversing body and soul to soul and body. There is a powerful quote, sometimes attributed to, (but unsubstantiated), French priest and scientist Teilhard de Chardin that asks, “What if we are not human beings on a spiritual journey, but instead we are spiritual beings on a human journey?” This question sprang to mind as Harvey spoke of this body-soul, soul-body reversal. The wild energy of the tantric fire is the soul enjoying the fire of the human journey to the maximum, a burning that is enveloping but not consuming.

4 - To see The Great Mother as The Queen of Outrage. Pure outrage, raging at the injustices of the world! To walk through the flames of alchemical fires is to connect to the wild roar of the Dark Mother. It is quite an indictment of the toxic social construct of patriarchy which has, down through the centuries, demonized the raw outrage of women responding to injustice with much more vehemence than their responses to the injustices themselves. To love the world and all that is in it calls for nothing less than howling outrage at what is being done to bring down the apocalyptic fires. Here, I think, is where the choice is made – fire or fire.

5 – To see The Great Mother as The Burnt Woman, the Stabat Mater, where absolute compassion is wrought from horrific heartbreak. She is Mary, experiencing Christ crucified, Gaia, experiencing the earth afire. The Burnt Woman is opened, shattered,

and annihilated. She is finally, fatally allowing the pain of the world to burn itself to death so it can rise up in resurrection! This is how to walk through the fires: open, shattered, pierced to the point of allowing the old to die and the new to rise up from the ashes. It is outrage. It is outrageous. It is alchemical love. It is the love of the *Mysterium Tremendum*.

Hearing his words, I felt pierced, shattered, and wide open. All of my life I have been held captive by the fear of fire. I could not even light matches for campfires as a camper. As a child I cringed whenever the fire whistle blew. I did anything to avoid fire because I had no mythic way of living through what the fire represented. Now, The Burnt Mother was telling me how to live with fire and fire. The Burnt Mother is telling me to scream! I am to howl in rage at injustice and to cry out with deep passion on behalf of all that I love. I am to kindle a great fire within me, stoking it to such heat that all is reduced to ashes, because only then can the phoenix rise...in me, in others, in the world. And from walking through the flames of the apocalypse, fueled by the flames of wisdom (fire and fire, pyre and pyre) comes the Third Reality of the Great Love.

Awed by this vision of what it means to be alive in this wild time, I staggered over to the Cathedral. As I bowed before The Black Madonna, I was instantly taken over by a scene from the Walt Disney movie *Fantasia*. (Grant, J & Huemer, D. 1940) To the music of Mussorgsky's A Night on Bald Mountain, there are visions of screaming, howling, screeching gargoyles and all sorts of evil frights. It is truly an apocalyptic scenario. But as I held this in dialogue with the Burnt Mother, there came a strange "knowing" connection. Fear left. As I thanked the Black Madonna for this release from fear, she guided me down past the choir screen to the Sancta Camisa, the feminine relic of this

sacred Cathedral, the stole that wrapped Mary's head at the annunciation/birth of Christ. It is a flimsy slip of fabric that survived the great conflagration of 1194, the fire that flattened the previous cathedral. The survival of this fragile relic called forth hope in the people of Chartres, inspiring them to rebuild the Cathedral. From the ashes of that fire rose the transformed church which is the present day Cathedral.

Bowing before the Sancta Camisa, the scene in my head morphed to the final scene of the movie *Fantasia*. Dawn is breaking, the horrors of the night have passed. And through the woods processes a long row of hooded monks, bearing candles, bringing light into the new world that is dawning. The magnificent music of Schubert's Ave Maria lifted my soul to new heights. I have come through the Five Sacred Mysteries of The Great Mother, as will this world, in whatever fashion it takes. I just need not to be afraid because no matter what happens, hope is alive, resurrection is promised. This was a powerful initiation.

But this day, with all its experiences of the wild power of real dialogue, was not over yet. Four friends, Deb, Shonali, Karen and Donna, joined me for a celebratory birthday dinner at the ancient Salmon House. And as if the wonderful food and excellent champagne were not enough, we bore witness to an exquisite dialogue between Shonali and Donna. It was such a powerful interchange that all of us present felt the true essence of the Being of Dialectica.

Shonali and Donna talked of motherhood. Shonali was moving into her ninth month of pregnancy, excited, scared, awed about what was to come. The summer before, Donna's much anticipated baby daughter was stillborn. It was a perfect dialogue. Her daughter's stillbirth was the deepest sear on Donna's soul. The impending birth of

Shonali's now famous "Chartres baby" had been hailed with joy all week by our gathered group. Yet these two women could share conversation at its deepest level. Shonali was not apologetic for the lively, kicking child in her womb. Donna was not bitter, nor did she resent Shonali's joy. They displayed genuine empathy for each other. The women listened to each other's stories, cried for each other and themselves, hugged and rejoiced in each other, and the Third Great Truth of Love was born. Deb, Karen and I were speechless, so deeply moved by the dialogue we witnessed that we could hardly breathe. It was the Being of Dialectica presenting herself in all her beauty.

Walking home from the restaurant, Deb and I stared up at the sun and moon spires of the Cathedral. Fire or fire, which will it be? We talked about the question Andrew Harvey had put before us earlier that day: "What do you do with what you have for a burning world?"

Behold,

Rhetorica

Beauty will save the world.

Fyodor Dostoyevsky



The Icon

Holy Sophia is a representation of the perfection of Plato's pre-existent forms. This icon embraces the beauty, wisdom and truth that is the intention of Rhetoric.

In Christianity, Sophia is the feminine face of God. Some Christian theologies hold Sophia to be the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity. This restores the feminine to our image of God. To represent the wholeness of the pre-existent urge toward fullness and unity, the idea of the feminine must be returned to the theological equation of Creator, Christ and Holy Spirit.

We find Sophia in many places, cultures and religions. In Hebrew, (C)Hokhmah is Wisdom. For the Chinese, Kuan Yin (Guanyin) perceives the sound of the world. The Black Madonnas, found world-wide from France to Africa to South America are bearers of wisdom, beauty and truth. Inanna is the Sumerian projection of the ideal form of wisdom and strength. This icon of Holy Sophia is one of many female personifications of holy wisdom.

The pattern for this icon is from 15th century traditional Russian iconography. Her crown shows her elevated status while the scroll represents her teaching of divine wisdom. Her red wings, hair and face are a nod to the fire of her divinity. She is the incarnation of the wisdom of Christ and the beauty of the created order. She is the Anima Mundi, the glue that keeps the cosmos whole.

The painting of this icon was a profound experience. In our group sharing and prayer sessions it became clear that the rendering of this icon held the whole class in a state of mystical adoration.

Chapter 5

Rhetorica

Several years ago there was a program on Australian television called *Miss Fisher Mysteries*. It followed an indomitable female detective at work in Melbourne in the 1920's. One memorable episode featured a flashback to Paris just after World War One. A young artist was being mocked for his modernistic, avant-garde style. He responded to his critics with this deep truth: "There can be no brave new world if there is no brave new art." (Cox, D & Eagger, F. producers, 2012-2015)

Rhetoric is the brave new art of the Trivium. Rhetoric takes the words of grammar and dialogue and elevates them, taking the words to new levels of beauty and impact. . Whether it is the perfection of a Mary Oliver poem or the power of Lincoln's Gettysburg address, the passion of a Shakespearean drama or the pathos of the Biblical words, "Jesus wept," rhetoric brings the beauty, the wisdom and the conviction of words needed to make an impact. The art and science of rhetoric is about making things happen, about stirring us to new dimensions of thought and action.

Journeying through the seven liberal arts is an ever-expanding initiation into the energetics, structures, patterns and harmonics of the cosmos. Our opening up to these new dimensions happens on all levels, from the mundane to the extraordinary.

During my first two years in Chartres, I functioned within a tiny arena: St. Yves, the Cathedral and the adjacent stores and restaurants. By year three, I was more attuned to my surroundings. My friend Karen and I rented an apartment close to the cathedral and ventured farther afield to the grocery store, the weekly farmer's market, and into a lively downtown area of shops and restaurants. It was exciting to see new and different

quarters of the city of Chartres. Likewise, that same pattern of greater attunement was happening on the mystic and cosmic level.

Dr. Jim Garrison told us that rhetoric is the lynch-pin of this attunement. This liberal art of Word contains a subtle shifting from Word toward Number, from the Trivium to the Quadrivium. Our spiritual quest really begins here, with meditations on beauty, harmony, wisdom and eloquence of expression.

After the intensity of the first two years, with many speakers and a host of new experiences, year three was a much more low-keyed session. Having only Dr. Jean Houston (author and co-founder of The Foundation for Mind Research), Dr. Peggy Rubin (author and Founding Director of The Center for Sacred Theater), and Dr. Jim Garrison as the main presenters was an oxymoron of calm exhilaration.

The week was focused on the beauty expressed through rhetoric. Our invocation for the first day came in the form of a handout from Jean Houston and Peggy Rubin. They shared that it was from the Diotima, from Plato's Symposium:

And this is the way, the only way, we must approach or be led toward the sanctuary of Love. Starting from individual beauties, the quest for the universal beauty must find us ever mounting the Heavenly ladder, stepping from rung to rung...until at last we come to know what beauty is.

Plato's notion of eternal forms shapes this quest for beauty. Nothing is manifested without the pre-existent idea of its perfection. The rhetorical path continually moves us forward, towards this pre-existent idea. This pre-existent idea of perfection is often thought of as God, or harmony in the universe, the fullness of Good or cosmic

intelligence. However it is imaged, this idea calls us to focus regularly and continually on advancing ever closer to this ideal. In Christian theology, the iterative processes leading to higher initiation into this pre-existent perfection are expressed in the biblical passage, Philippians 4:5 (NIV):

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things.

Dr. Houston shared that the central theme of rhetoric is a divine/human reunion. We feel this reunion as a deep longing for connection with the Beloved. It is a yearning to go beyond the horizon, and into new territory. It is the movement from cosmopolitan to planetary civilization. Both she and Jim Garrison spoke about Love as restoration. This movement is the healing work of returning our world to wholeness.

The sadness of our modern age is the accelerated press of noise that keeps us from hearing and attuning ourselves to the cosmic hum of wholeness. The din blocks us from the yearned for song of our Beloved. The truth of Rhetorica breaks through the cacophony, allowing us to hear the Beloved's song of hope, peace, restoration, inclusion, art, imagination, compassion and creativity. The Beloved's song evokes love and goodness in ourselves and others. As we recognize the beauty of others, so we recognize the beauty of the universe and, conversely, as we recognize the beauty of the universe, so we recognize the beauty of others.

With this emphasis on beauty, Houston and Rubin filled our week with meditations on the beauty and power of rhetoric. Monday's focus was The Ascent and Descent of Love, with discourses on Plato's Symposium, the goddess Venus, the Song of Songs

and of the goddess Inanna's descent into the Underworld. Tuesday concentrated on Eros, Seduction and Tragedy with readings and theater presentations dramatizing the great loves of Tristan and Isolde, and Abelard and Heloise. Wednesday's discourse was Love as Restoration, featuring Jesus and Mary, and Isis and Osiris. Thursday's topic was Eros and Gaia where we discussed St. Francis of Assisi and St. Clare, and the deepening of our own earth spirituality. Friday covered Ecstatic Love and the Generative Power of the Beloved featuring discourse on Rumi and Shams, Rabia, Mirabai and Hafiz. Our time together ended on Saturday morning with Rhetorica as Adoration of Beauty and with our initiation into the Guild of Rhetorica, a closing ceremony designed by Jean Houston and Peggy Rubin to help us internalize all that we had experienced during our week.

Dr. Houston and Dr. Rubin offered a variety of exercises and meditations to help us reflect personally on the ideas of love and beauty. Rubin challenged us with a writing prompt: "This I have loved. What decides love for each of us? How would we begin a discourse on love?" It was not a simple assignment. It involved peeling back layers, like an onion, until the heart's core was uncovered. I found this to be a more difficult assignment than expected. It asked me to examine how and where I have sought/found love. Like many of my classmates, I thought the assignment would have been easier if we were as drunk as the philosophers in Plato's Symposium as they orated upon the very same questions.

One of Dr. Houston's guided meditation exercises focused on meeting ourselves in a parallel universe as a way of placing ourselves in a broader dimension. Upon greeting

our parallel selves we were invited to share with them our yearning for a particular talent or skill. Houston explained that we all had layers and layers of latent skills, many of which we had “lost” in childhood. Now was the time to reclaim them. We were asked to reach out our hands to our parallel selves and receive from them a longed-for skill, and then to imagine ourselves engaging in this skill. Next, we were to return this gift by offering our parallel selves a particular skill of ours for which they have yearned. Houston encouraged us to meet often with our parallel selves to share our yearnings for the remembering of latent skills and to be thankful to “each other” for this sharing. Once this process of skill transfer begins, Houston said, it is rapid and full.

The skill I asked for that day was for the art of painting. I always wanted to paint but considered myself lacking in any artistic ability. Looking back on that exercise, I am moved to see that part of this dissertation includes my paintings, creations that I would never have attempted, but for the restoration of this latent skill.

Engaging Rhetorica through such a personalized pursuit showed the real depth of the transformative power of this liberal art. When something previously unimagined reveals itself as a life-altering gift, I clearly hear the song of The Beloved. This exercise of greeting and exchanging latent gifts with myself in a parallel dimension, combined with our earlier exercise on diving into the core of how I sought/found love, has had subtle yet profound impacts on my response to my world. Recalling that there can be no brave new world without brave new art, I found this applied to my microcosm, as well as the macrocosm of the world. Not only is the word “art” the operative phrase here, so is the word “brave.” I have become braver in my expressions of beauty and conviction. Past fears shrivel when I take my paint to the birch board and invoke a spirit of healing

through my icons. Nine years after shelving this dissertation I am again energized, called to put my Chartrian experiences out into the world. In my spiritual direction practice I am more venturesome in the ways I call my clients (and myself) to listen for the song of the Beloved and to dance to the song.

These meditations, and similar others, set the scene for a very deep experience in the crypt of Chartres Cathedral. Our descent into the crypt was dedicated to the Sumerian goddess Inanna and to her descent into the Underworld. As we descended the stairs into the crypt we moved through the Seven Gates of Inanna, each gate an embodiment of Inanna's energies, each offered to us as a blessing. This initiation began on the top step with the Gate of the Crown, Inanna's intuitive insight and imagination. Next came the Gate of the Lapis Necklace, which was fixed around her neck to bestow voice to sing, speak and to inspire. The Gate of the Beads wrapped around her chest and brought courage and compassion. The Gate of Her Breastplate, fastened around her solar plexus, brought fire, passion, vitality and the ability to attract what was needed. The Gate of Her Golden Bracelet, offered us her authority, leadership, confidence and discernment. The Gate of Her Measuring Rod of Lapis was special for manifesting sacred geometry, providing a continual measuring of what is happening in time and space. The last was The Gate of Her White Robe, the fusion of the physical self with the Divine, the yearning for the reunion fulfilled.

My role in this ritual was that of the second gate, the Gate of the Lapis Necklace. As each person descended the stairs and stopped by me, I offered this blessing, "I am the lapis necklace. Re-member what you have left behind. I am the lapis necklace. Re-member the powers of voice that are now restored to you."

Empowered with the gifts of the Seven Gates, we were now equipped to be world helpers. With the added power of the whole of Chartres Cathedral above our heads, and the deeply felt strength from the Notre Dame de Sous-Terre, Our Lady from Under the Earth, there came a sense of a shifting of time and dimension, of being taken back to a primordial place to receive these gifts of The Seven Gates of Inanna. So many powerful stories from this underground crypt experience were shared by participants throughout the rest of the week. It was a very potent initiation, facilitated by the power of Chartres Cathedral herself.

We are all, as Dr. Houston said, in the process of becoming, where every kind of new conception begins with going inward. She put two questions before us: What am I doing to be an adequate steward at this great fulcrum in history? And, what am I doing in my inner life to become deep enough and complex enough to go out into the world and make a difference?

In my years since this Chartres experience I have found myself returning to these questions time and again. As the world shifts, so do my answers. As a steward of this great fulcrum in history I find it increasingly necessary to be alert to the truths revealed through beauty, but also to be very conscious of the dangers we face from the shadow side of Rhetorica. Initiated into the Guild of Rhetoric on our final night of the intensive, we were charged with the responsibility of elevating our written and spoken language and to be mindful of our usage. With regards to our creative offerings we were called to remember the beauty, truth and wisdom of Rhetorica. Our present world demands real and sustained vigilance on our part to be faithful to the essence of true rhetoric.

In the book, *Trivium*, authors Adina Arvatu and Andrew Aberdein write about Ethos, Logos and Pathos, which they call the three appeals. Aristotle, they explain, defines rhetoric as “the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion.” (Martineau, ed. 2016, p.242.) Rhetoric’s shadow side is how the means of persuasion do not always lead to beauty and truth.

The three technical means of persuasion (or Appeals) are based on the three key elements of the rhetorical situation: speaker, subject matter and audience.

1 – Ethos is your *character* as communicated through your speech. It is an effect of what you say, not of what/who you are. To be persuasive, your *ethos* must inspire confidence, and rhetorical credibility comes from three projected qualities: good sense, good morals, and good will. Absent any of them, says Aristotle, and you get less cred, which is why attacking an opponent’s character, generally a fallacy in logic (*ad hominem*), is permissible and often successful in rhetoric.

2 – Logos is your *argument*, covering both the ‘what’ (the substance) and the ‘how’ (the style) of your discourse, both the ideas and the words used to convey them. The mark of a persuasive speech is finding in any given case the best possible fit between the two.

3 – Pathos refers to the *emotions* of your audience (anger, fear, pity, patriotism, sympathy, etc.). Emotions colour judgements and affect outcomes, so to insure a favorable reception of your *logos*, try to arouse in your audience those emotions that best fit your subject matter and further your cause. (Martineau, J. ed. 2016, p.242.)

At this moment in time we suffer from an abundance of situations where the shadow side of rhetoric is used to gain and retain power. The goal of rhetoric, of ever moving us forward toward Plato’s idea of the perfection of eternal forms, has been usurped by a rapacious societal greed for power and money. Ethos, Logos and Pathos are often embraced as means to these ends. Ethos is the speaker’s character which is presented to the audience, not necessarily what/who the speaker may actually be, but of how

persuasive said speaker can be. Logos, argument, is often the spin doctored effect of using persuasion to play on the emotions of Pathos, the audience, to allow the argument to win the day, even if there is little reality, truth or substance to it. When beauty, truth and wisdom are removed from the equation, what results is devolution, not evolution.

And what does this shadow side of rhetoric do to our souls? Writer Ursula K. Le Guin shares these astute comments in her piece *A Few Words to Young Writers*:

Socrates said, 'The misuse of language induces evil in the soul.' He wasn't talking about grammar. To misuse language is to use it the way politicians, and advertisers do, for profit, without taking responsibility for what the words mean. Language used as a means to get power or make money goes wrong: it lies. Language used as an end in itself, to sing a poem or tell a story, goes right, toward the truth.

A writer is a person who cares what words mean, what they say, how they say it. Writers know words are their way towards truth and freedom, so they use them with care, with thought, with fear and delight. By using words well they strengthen their souls. Story-tellers and poets spend their lives learning that skill and art of using words well. And their words make the souls of their readers stronger, brighter, deeper. (Le Guin, undated, <https://www.ursulakleuin.com/a-few-words-to-a-young-writer.>)

Responsible, well-conceived and well-executed language truly can make the reader's souls stronger, brighter and deeper. Our world is often lacking in the art of critical thinking, deluged by conspiracy theories displaying little desire to seek out truth and beauty for the good of the collective and of earth herself. This reinforces Socrates' belief that the misuse of language does indeed induce evil in the soul.

In her award winning book, *Words Are My Matter: Writings on Life and Books*, Ursula K. Le Guin shares these prophetic words:

Hard times are coming, when we'll be wanting the voices of writers who can see alternatives to how we live now, can see through our fear-stricken society and its obsessive technologies to other ways of being, and even imagine real grounds for hope. We'll need writers who can remember freedom – poets, visionaries – realists of a larger reality. LeGuin, 2019, loc.1788-1790)

We desperately need writers, and readers, and listeners to come forward and share in the larger reality to which LeGuin points us. We need the beauty of true rhetoric.

In his acceptance letter to the Nobel committee thanking them for his prize in literature, Alexander Solzhenitsyn had these thoughts on beauty:

Dostoyevsky once threw off the cryptic comment: 'The world will be saved by beauty.' What did he mean? For a long time I thought it was just a phrase. How is it possible? When, in our bloodthirsty history, did beauty ever save whom from what? Ennobled, exalted – yes, but whom did it ever save?

There is, however, one special characteristic of the essence of beauty and the position of art: the conviction carried by a true work of art is utterly irrefutable and conquers even the resisting heart...

It is a waste of time shouting what doesn't ring true... So perhaps the old trinity of Truth, Goodness and Beauty is not simply an empty shopworn formula after all, as seemed to us in our self-confident materialist youth? For if the tops of these three trees converge, as the sages said they did, and the obvious and too straight growths of Truth and Goodness have been stifled, cut back and not allowed to flourish, then perhaps the fantastical, unpredictable and astonishing growth of beauty will break through and soar up *to the same place* and there will do the work of all three?

And then it would not be a slip of the pen, but prophecy, would it not, when Dostoyevsky wrote: 'The world will be saved by beauty'? For to him it was given to see much and he was gifted with uncommon sight.

And then art, literature, can indeed be of help to the modern world? (Solzhenitsyn, 1970, p.13-14)

For the beauty of rhetoric to save us it must be wielded responsibly for the whole of the community. We are at a crucial time when beauty, wisdom and truth are desperately

needed for restoring unity and for our re-union with the Divine. Our future depends on such a visionary and evolutionary employment of Rhetorica. Yes, we do indeed need brave new art for a brave new world.

Behold,

Musica

Music is a higher revelation than all of wisdom
and philosophy. Music is the electrical soil in which
the spirit lives, thinks and invents.

Ludwig van Beethoven



The Icon

Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179) was a Renaissance woman centuries before there was a Renaissance. She was extraordinary. Her fields of expertise were many and her imprint remains to this day. Hildegard wrote stirring music. Her music was of such importance that today, 1,000 years later, you can buy it on amazon.com. Her artistic paintings, mostly mandalas, are still extant. She was also a natural herbal healer. Books on Hildegard's remedies can be found on amazon.com as well. A google search will bring up societies all over Europe and the US dedicated to Hildegard and her many healing gifts and teachings.

It was the spirit of Hildegard that brought me to iconography. After leading a service at a local Episcopal Church based on the words and inclusive spirit of Hildegard, my iconographer friend Cathy Reynolds told me that Kara Gillette of The Sophia Icon Studio was offering a class on painting a Hildegard icon. I knew I had to take it. And thus began my love of icons.

She is my first icon. I am not a trained artist and there was a very steep learning curve. Her face is the size of nickel and I scrubbed her face off and repainted it at least five times, still not achieving the expression I was looking for. However, it was through this icon of Hildegard that I learned that the results of the painting were not the gift. The spiritual practice that infused the prayers and paint with vibrational energy is the blessing offered through an icon. Her music vibrates through this evocation and invocation of her spirit.

This icon finds the hand of God reaching down from heaven, handing Hildegard a scroll of gold notes – the music of the spheres. Hildegard sits at her music stand and transcribes these notes for human ears. On the floor next to her on one side sits a basket of herbs, a nod to her wisdom of the healing vibrations of plants. At the foot of the music stand is a harp for playing her newly written notes to the community.

There is a technique used in this icon that is often employed in icon painting. The technique involves a shift in perspective. For example, if painting a road, the artist would gradually widen the road as it got closer to the front, to the viewer. The road would become narrower the farther back it went. This is our perspective as we observe the world around us. However, observe the chair in this icon. Starting with the footrest, it is narrower in the front and widens as it goes back. It is a technique to draw the eye into the icon, giving a sense of entering into it, of progressing toward a wider view. The more we travel into an icon the more is revealed.

Hildegard has much to reveal about the harmonics of the cosmos.

Chapter 6

Musica

So...if a tree falls in the forest and no one is around to hear it, does it make a sound? This puzzler provided great entertainment for my friends and me when we were young. The philosophical arguments of 4th graders can be intense. I always sided with the group that insisted of course it makes a sound. And, after the intensive on the liberal art of Musica, I am even more convinced of my position.

Musica is sound, silence, harmony, discord, proportion. Musica is the vibrational pattern of the spheres. Wisdom and philosophy are means to an end. The vibration of the universe is the end.

Philosophy of science, mysticism or esotericism will all agree on one point if they touch the summit of their knowledge, and that point is that behind the whole of manifestation – if there is any subtle trace of life that can be found, it is motion, it is movement, it is vibration. (Khan,1991, p.40).

Sufi master Hazrat Inayat Khan understood well that this vibration is the actuality of creation itself. Everything grows from the electrical soil of music. So, does that tree in that lonely forest make a sound? Yes, because musical vibration is much more than an acoustical impact on human ear drums. It is the deep connective tissue between all that is. It is the tone of the Anima Mundi, the soul of the world. Music is the vibrational symphony of existence.

Joscelyn Godwin, musicologist, choirmaster, author and professor at Colgate University has written two excellent books on Musica: *Harmonies of Heaven and Earth: Mysticism in Music from Antiquity to the Avant Garde* and *The Harmony of the Spheres: The*

Pythagorean Tradition in Music. His discussions on mysticism and music affirmed my childhood tree/sound conclusion:

But it is not necessary to be so philosophical in order to recognize the existence of an unheard music all around us, even permeating our own bodies. All matter is in a perpetual state of vibration. The fact that a certain range of vibrations affects our sense of hearing as sound deafens us, for better or worse, to the immensely wider range of vibrations that we cannot hear. A group investigating megalithic stone circles in Britain...once found that the stones actually give off ultrasonic vibrations of extraordinary strength, varying in regular patterns according to the time of day, phase of the moon, and season of the year. The professional chemist, Don Robins, who directed the project, came to the conclusion that the matter of stones and the geometry of their placement transduces the microwave energy coming from the sun, amplifying it to a very high level and giving it off in regular pulses. Applying his methods to a modern stone circle, built according to ancient principles, Robins found the ultrasonic energy so high that it damaged his instruments. (Godwin, 1987, p.6)

The unheard music all around us is the heartbeat of the universe. Godwin reminds us that the sound being discussed here is not, “a fluttering of the air felt by the eardrums. This primal, etheric sound is perceived directly by the receptive mind, or, in exceptional cases, the receptive stone.” (Godwin, 1987, p.6).

While I might choose to reverse Godwin’s sentence to read, “This primal, etheric sound is perceived directly by the receptive *stone*, or, in exceptional cases, the receptive *mind*,” I am in agreement with his description of the deep, eternally resonating cosmic music as primal and etheric.

Energetics master Dr. Calen Rayne once told me that every sound from the beginning of time still remains as a resonance/vibration that continues to develop and mature. Energetics carry imprints of this sound memory as resonance, as a means of our being able to access it. We access these imprints through attunement to the resonances. So,

returning to the childhood question, the answer is of course it makes a sound, because the vibrations still remain as imprints of sound memory.

Year 4 of The New Chartres Mystery School found us back in the St. Charles room at St. Yves, where Jim Garrison asked us to engage in what he called the kinetic aspect of moving from what we know to becoming it. There was a noticeable shift in energy as we moved from The Trivium, the first three liberal arts of Word, into the Quadrivium, the last four liberal arts of Number. This pilgrimage into the liberal arts is a process of remembering, of re-membering.

In his forward to the book, *Quadrivium: The Four Classical Liberal Arts of Number, Geometry, Music and Cosmology*, Keith Critchlow reaffirmed this re-membering:

Our soul, which is proven by Socrates in the *Phaedo*, comes from a position of complete knowledge prior to being born into the body. Re-membering – the point of education – literally means putting the separate members back into wholeness. The goal of studying these subjects was to climb back (up) to Unity through simplification based on an understanding gained by engaging in each area of the Quadrivium... This is the goal and source of all knowledge. Thus, time and wisdom tested, the Quadrivium offers the sincere seeker the opportunity to regain their own inner understanding of the integral nature of the universe, with themselves as an inseparable part. (Critchlow, 2010, pp.3-4).

The Quadrivium is where the rubber meets the road. Musica is all about learning to attune ourselves to the vibrations of intense, profound and eternal energy. In leaving the Trivium, we are indeed engaging in an arena beyond words. The week in Chartres was all about experiencing new and different frequencies. And these frequencies were greatly amplified by connecting with the vibrational levels in the Cathedral.

My re-membering of myself into the wholeness of Musica began before I even arrived in Chartres. As the intensive date drew closer, I actually considered skipping this one. How could I participate? Wasn't I the only kid in my 4th grade class with no singing part in our musical production of Thumbelina? Wasn't I the one perpetually teased for my "tone deafness"? Wasn't I the one who always turned off her microphone in church when hymns were being sung? (Thank goodness that the choir was always right behind me, so my lip-synching worked.) My assumed inability to relate to music had diminished a part of my soul and I was not looking forward to a repeat of the pain that it caused me.

But...I wanted to sing in Chartres Cathedral. I wanted to add the vibration of my voice to the embodied wisdom held in her stones. So I sought out our church's choir director Julie Morgan, a firm believer that, if trained, anyone can sing. I met with her once a week for singing lessons, and I practiced daily in my car on the way to and from work. I learned to listen to my own voice.

During our daily group singing at St. Yves, I was fortuitously seated next to a very accomplished alto, and to my amazement I found I could match my voice, my vibrational pattern, to hers. I apologized to her for not being very good, but she said, "You are fine. I hear no wrong notes." And suddenly years of embarrassment and repression fell away and I was singing...a French Renaissance Ave Maria...in a choir...on key...in Chartres Cathedral! I was making music with my voice. I was vibrating in harmony with the voices around me. Ah, I thought, this is creation, the harmonious vibration of things into being. I couldn't wait to get to choir practice each day.

My experiences of singing on the Chartres labyrinth and singing in the crypt with the Black Madonna were sublime, and a real blessing. Hazrat Inayat Khan believes that,

“The secret of the idea of a blessing to be found in a holy place lies in the principle that the holy place is no longer a place: it has become a living being.” (Khan, 1991, p.180). This is so true. The Cathedral is alive, she has a heartbeat, a strong discernable vibration that invites all who come into her space to vibrate along. Like the woman who graciously sat next to me in choir, the Cathedral emits a vibrational pattern with which I resonate deeply.

Professor Godwin explains the construction of the Gothic Cathedrals as being based on Arithmetic – dimension, and Geometry – space:

These irrational proportions also have their place in the design of the cathedrals, and all the more appropriately since they are so conspicuous in the design of the physical cosmos.

Thus far, the cathedral was calculated to be a reflection of God’s mathematical intelligence, and a vessel for his first creation of light. One more thing was needed to complete the effect: the cathedral must be made to sound. (Godwin, 2007, pp 80-81).

He goes on to explain that the liturgical music of the early cathedrals became the first repertory of harmonized music. “Why is harmony important? The Pythagorean musician will answer that it is because, through harmony, we can perceive the proportions by which the cosmos is created...harmony is number made audible.” (Godwin, 2007, p.81).

In her book, *Sacred Space, Sacred Sound*, Susan Elizabeth Hale relates a story about singing in the Chartres Cathedral crypt. Hale says of the Cathedral that, “Chartres is not only a place where music is played, Chartres *is* music.” (Hale, 2007, p.184). After singing a Rudolph Steiner composition in the crypt, one of her fellow singers exclaimed, “Yes THE Cathedral and the human cathedral must meet through the voice,” (Hale, p.190).

Such was my experience on the night when our group sang in the crypt. My human cathedral met Chartres Cathedral through voice. There was deep harmony and powerful vibration.

In a similar experience, Michael Deason-Barrow, as quoted by Hale in her book, talks about choral singing in Chartres Cathedral:

‘Once, after hearing my choir, one of the guards said he’d never heard the cathedral sound that way.’ Michael told me, ‘Most people tend to sing *at* the space, but he had heard us sing *with* it. This has to do with how you listen. There is an old Italian dictum that says, ‘To sing, you inhale the voice.’

Singing belongs to the receptive, feminine realm, not the masculine one of voice projections. But many people force the voice and are taught to project at, or to, a specific focus.

‘The stream of sound includes the space,’ Michael said. ‘The cathedral is full of flowing lines of energy. The cathedral is full of echoes, and, if you can listen well with your whole intention, you can hear the response of the building. It is an act of trust.’ (Hale, 2007, p.186).

The Cathedral is an animated being with whom I can, and indeed have, built levels of trust. This trust relationship began developing the night, during the first intensive, when I sat with my back against one of the great stone pillars and asked the stones to teach me. The Cathedral trusted me and began downloading mystic awareness. I received (and continue to receive) the Cathedral’s wisdom and guidance. All this happens through a pathway of intuitive vibration. I can hear her “sing.” It felt like the Cathedral was trusting me to incarnate the trust which had she bestowed upon me.

Khan continues his insights on the incarnated spirit of objects and places:

Jelal-ud-Rumi said centuries ago that before everyone fire, water, earth and air are objects; before God they are living beings that work at His command. The meaning of what Rumi said is that all objects, all places, are

gramophone records. What is put into them they speak; either one's soul hears it or one's mind, according to one's development.

It seems that people are now beginning to believe in what they call psychometry. What is it? It is learning the language that objects speak...

How little we know when we say: 'I believe in what I see.' If one can see how influence works, how thought and feeling speak, how objects partake of them and give them to one another, how thought and feeling, life and influence are conveyed by the medium of an object – it is most wonderful. (Khan, 1991, p.182).

Yes, it is indeed most wonderful, when our human cathedrals and Chartres Cathedral meet and exchange vibration. Our music becomes part of the Cathedral and the beauty and wisdom of the cathedral becomes part of us.

Khan also believes that the vibrational energies of objects and people can break down the harmonious vibrations of a place. Khan's writing offered me a new respect for the protective concern that the priests of the Diocese of Chartres have for their Cathedral. The Cathedral welcomes masses of tourists each year. Many come to experience the vibrational energy of the labyrinth, of The Black Madonna and of the structure of the Cathedral herself. Sadly, many others bring all manner of noise, bad behavior and disrespect, unaware that they are bringing harm to the living, breathing, vibrational being that is the Cathedral. Just as the exquisite tones of The Ensemble du Fulbert contribute to the energy and inspiration of the being that is the Cathedral, so does the ill behavior of some visitors harm and detract, bringing in a lower resonance. One very clear lesson from this week's intensive is appreciation for the huge power we carry through the vibrations of our speech and actions.

During her presentation, Dr. Caroline Myss said that if we believe thoughts have power, then we must believe that bad thoughts are like bullets. Whether voiced aloud or

registered internally, our thoughts emit vibrational patterns, a music of a special sort. We are continuously adding to the harmony or discordance of our cosmic reality. In comprehending all of creation as animated, all creation is in continual flux and flow, changing with the output of the music of life. Myss stressed this as she outlined her Seven Graces. She explained how her Seven Graces - wisdom, knowledge, counsel, fortitude, understanding, piety and reverence - are to sensitize us to the extreme, so we are in constant awareness of what we are adding to the vibrational mix. We must be extremely careful in choosing our thoughts and intentions as well as our words and our actions. She was completely on target when she said that we are past the point of ordinary choice – we need major wisdom.

Our vibrational rising was brought to higher resonance through two on-going groups. The first was the morning meeting of Dr. Apela Colorado's dream work group. Each morning the group shared what was coming forth in our dreams. As the week went on, dreams were synching up, with similar themes and events showing up collectively. Artist Carlotta Tyler tracked our dreams each day, mapping them out in caricature form. At our closing session, this visual dream journal was presented to the larger group. As the dreams were shown and narrated, the coherence was amazing. True harmony happened. And an even greater affirmation of this harmony came from Lynn Bell, our wise astrologer from Paris. After our dreams were presented Bell said, "Of course these themes would be in our dreams." She then proceeded to describe the movements, forces, and actions of the planets and stars over the week. Our dreams were expressing on a micro-level what the cosmos was expressing on a macro-level. It was profound! We spent the week learning to sing in harmony with each other, exchanging song with the

Cathedral and dancing in relationship with the planetary patterns (choreocosmos). Our very dreams were literally in tune with the motions and music of the universe itself.

Bell continued to wow us with her presentation on, “The Sun and Sound, the Eternally Resonating Cosmic Music.” Particularly riveting was the consideration that music is not just sound, but also the silence in between the sounds and how this related to the helio-pause, the balance between solar and interstellar winds. Bell downloaded a Stanford University blog of a NASA recording of the sound of the sun – the plasma, liquids, gases and the sound that their constant interaction makes. It was a magical moment, in the purest sense, of hearing music from space. To me, it sounded like the same sound dolphins use to communicate.

Bell talked about the 2007 breach in the earth’s magnetic field by an incredible burst of energy from the sun, an action no scientist believed could happen when the earth was aligned north. It changed the vibrational magnetic power of the earth. As she said, “Apollo’s arrows of energy are coming to earth.” Solar blasts can affect the energy system of earth, setting up shifts in our universe, in our bodies, our cells, the labyrinth, everything is vibrating at this new level.

As above, so below references the macro-micro interaction. It is literally the music of the spheres. We are living in extraordinarily powerful times, where we are called to be in harmony with the music of ourselves, of earth and of the heavens. Our work, and our responsibility, is to tune in and to align ourselves with the highest vibrations of the energetic fields.

Behold,

Arithmetica

When going back makes sense,
you are going ahead.

Wendell Berry



The Icon

This particular icon mystified me for a while. Why was Therese of Lisieux intuitively presenting herself as Arithmetica? Therese was a young nun in France who's autobiography, *The Story of a Soul*, has been considered such an exemplary revelation of piety that she became one of only five women raised to the status of Doctor of the Church (Roman Catholic.) Because of her humble and God-adoring soul she came to be known as the "Little Flower." Many images of St. Therese show her surrounded by roses. She was often quoted as saying that when she dies she will shower the earth with roses. It took a bit of meditative practice to see that her mystic arithmology is embedded in the roses.

The structure of rose petals follows the Fibonnaci structure, a numerical sequence so prominent in sacred geometry. Between 1723 and 1728 an Italian mathematician, Guido Grandi, named a principle curve pattern the Rose Curve, because it emulated the shape of rose petal. (Or perhaps, the rose petal emulated the number in this curve pattern?) The rose pattern is a shape used in architecture, especially noticeable in churches and cathedrals.

The rose has also long been associated with Mary. Stories tell of people praying for her presence and smelling the sweet scent of roses. Contemplation of a rose will unfold the flower's numbers in an intuitive mystic arithmology.

Chapter 6

Arithmetica

“Leave behind everything you know, so that you can return to what you knew.” These were Jim Garrison’s words at the start of Arithmetica, our fifth intensive. Initiation into the Quadrivium asks us to seek wisdom from the numbers in the universe. Much of this wisdom has been lost and it is time for its return. Initiation into Arithmetica called us to seek out this wisdom of numbers within the universe. Musica opened up what Plato called the Number in Time. The liberal art of Geometrica is Number in Space and the art of Astronomy is Number in Space and Time. Arithmetica is Number, out of which the Quadrivium arises. Keith Critchlow reminds us that “Remembering – the point of education – literally means putting the separate members back into wholeness...” (Critchlow, 2010, pp.3-4). Re-membering and re-assimilating the wisdom of all of the seven liberal arts is crucial to our education and to our survival. While we are quantitatively connected, through current, ever-expanding technology, we have lost much of the qualitative wisdom found by a different and deeper connection to Number.

Our intensive began with Jim Garrison asking us to imagine ourselves as archers with a bow. We have to stretch the bow, pulling it back into our deep past in order to load the bow with the much needed wisdom necessary for release into the future.

It reminded me of a similar meditation with which I had been working. This meditation involved loading a slingshot with re-membered and renewed wisdom and then releasing it into the future. This slingshot image relates to the biblical reference of the story of David and Goliath. David was a small person, seemingly insignificant on the world’s power

scale, who brought down a mighty Goliath with a well-loaded and well-aimed shot. To aid us in loading our slingshots with the wisdom that will be vital to taking down the Goliathan giants of this world, we must imagine and conceptualize the nature and order of the universe through the lens of Arithmetica.

During the early decades of the 21st century the word “embedded” rose into our consciousness during the war in Iraq. There were embedded reporters, embedded intelligence personnel and embedded aid workers. The word took on a hunkered down, keep out of sight context. Unfortunately, no other word in English conceptualizes the presence of number in the universe better than the word “embedded.” Number is embedded everywhere and in everything. Number is not hunkered down and hidden. The patterns, rhythms, structures and forces of the cosmos are everywhere, all bearing witness to the presence and function of number. Music, geometry, and cosmology are all created through Number:

Nature manifests herself in her organic and inorganic forms the principles of numbers as if through shaping filters or templates...All nature's shapes represent invisible forces, fundamental principles and cosmic processes made visible. The geometer's step by step motions are a metaphor of the world's drama...By learning to recognize nature's calligraphy and observing the world through its shaping principles, the geometer can read nature like a book and understand something of nature's intention. (Schneider, 1994, p.348).

Here Schneider calls us to recognize within nature the representations of “invisible forces, fundamental principles and cosmic processes made visible.” We must learn to read nature like a book and understand something of nature's intentions in order for us to be observant of, and literate in, the reading of “nature's calligraphy”. This calligraphy is a prime quality of number that is embedded everywhere. We are meant to read it and to

teach others how to read it. When we do so we leave behind everything we know and re-member everything that we knew. We need to load up the sling shot with both the knowledge of today and the deep wisdom of our past as we prepare to shoot it into the future.

In thinking about my desire to read nature's calligraphy, as well as the instructions to leave behind all I know in order to re-capture all I knew, I paused to remember the previous summer. Following the Chartres Intensive on Musica, I traveled with Apela Colorado, Jim Garrison and a group of Wisdom University students to the Dordogne, south of Chartres between the Loire Valley and the Pyrenees mountains. It is a region known for its caves. Time spent in these ancient sanctuaries of the Earth made visible nature's shapes, representing "invisible forces, fundamental principles and cosmic processes." (Schneider.1994. p.348)

We began our cave explorations with the experience of the Lascaux cave. Our guide was well versed in not only the history, but in the power of the cave art. At one point he turned off the lights and left us in profound darkness. Next, he turned on his flashlight and waved it back and forth, causing the painted animals on the cave walls to appear to move, to practically dance. Because the paintings were rendered in harmony with the undulations of the cave walls, they appeared multi-dimensional. Our guide explained how these cave paintings are an art of high intelligence, employing painting techniques that Renaissance masters thought they had invented. He made it clear that these works are not just for decoration but are an intense showing of how the ancients conceptualized the "calligraphy of nature." Standing in the cave, viewing artwork that is estimated to be 17,000 years old, was a very deep experience.

The journey into the next cave took us even deeper into the profound experience of our pilgrimage. Lascaux is a painted replica. The original cave was discovered by young boys in 1940 and it soon became apparent that the breath of so many people touring the cave was causing the ancient paint to deteriorate. An exact replica was built near the original cave. However, as exciting as the re-created paintings were, the resonance of original work came with our next stop.

Font-de-Gaume is a cave that still maintains its original artwork. To preserve this ancient artwork, only 25 people a week are allowed to enter. The original artwork was mesmerizing. Beholding these 20,000 year old works of art dynamically makes clear the words of author William Faulkner:

The aim of every artist is to arrest motion, which is life, by artificial means and hold it fixed so that a hundred years later, when a stranger looks at it, it moves again since it is life. (Faulkner, 2024)

Whether it is a hundred years or 20,000 years, the principle remains the same. Life is held within the artwork until later generations come to behold it once again. The cave paintings were, in their own right, icons coming to life again through the beholding of the art.

The experience of wild, primal awakening, and the need to re-member what we once knew, came several days later. Apela Colorado had a friend living close by who had a cave on his property. Each participant had the rare opportunity to be in the cave, alone, naked and painted with symbols from herb paints made by Colorado. A huge fire was kept continually ablaze in the front of the cave. I sat there in the dark, with only fire, smoke, rock and the water from an internal stream. Here in this Dordogne cave 20,000

years melted away, taking with them all the philosophies, theologies, politics, wars, the civil and social constructs of the ages that followed. All of it lifted, leaving me with nothing but earth, air, fire and water. The experience was one of connection with my primordial inner-ancestor. Each pilgrim had only a brief time in the cave, but it was enough to re-wire the brain. I will always remember what it felt like, even for just a few minutes, to leave behind everything I know in order to re-member what I knew.

Dr. Richard Henry, our main presenter for both *Arithmetica* and *Geometrica*, had a great passion for reading the calligraphy of the universe. He was a true alchemist, turning base lead to gold as he revealed the universe's majestic numbers dance. Suddenly, pinecones were not just pinecones, but emissaries of the Fibonacci cycle. Single snowflakes carried the wisdom of hexagonal tessellation that "extends the circle's principle of 'equality in all directions' in a balanced sharing of space, materials, time and energy." (Schneider, 189.) We learned how a jury of our twelve peers mirrors the integrated twelvefold cosmic canon applied by the ancients "to every detail of their terrestrial affairs. [For] not only was the overall pattern of society based upon the duodecimal frame, but multiples of six (particularly 12, 24, 36, 60, 360, 600) were used to coordinate measures of structure and space (distance, area, volume), of functions (weights, coinage, administration) and of order (timekeeping)." (Schneider, 1994, p.208) The key to unlocking the universe's mysteries is literacy in the language of number.

If the usage of the term embedded is the most appropriate English word for the saturation of numbers in the cosmos, then the term conceptualization is the best English word for describing how we integrate numbers into our lives. How we conceive of the embedded numerical patterns literally creates life, history, culture, the whole hologram of

existence. This understanding of how we qualitatively conceptualize numbers which then shape our views was brought to life by Dr. John Hanagan during his presentation on “The Tao of Zero.” He spoke about how the conceptualization of a numerical system without zero, and its corresponding irrational numbers, has had a massive impact on our human history, especially in the West.

As Hanagan was speaking, I continually visualized the symbol for infinity. The number one is at the infinity symbol’s cross path in the middle. For centuries, up until the twentieth century, numbers were conceptualized as quantitative only. In other words, it was like repeatedly tracing over only one half of the infinity symbol, never crossing the middle. You could only cycle through rational numbers, or take the central 1 down into fractioned parts, $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{1}{4}$ etc. It was a very truncated conceptualization, like cutting off the yin from the yang. It attends to only half of the possibilities of creation.

But then in the 20th century, the conceptualization of qualitative numbers was restored to the missing half of the infinity symbol. This unified view of numbers moved us into a wholeness of creation. No longer is the dark, the mysterious and the irrational other dismissed, but all is brought into wholeness.

To explain this concept of zero and its importance in our conceptualization of life, Hanagan discussed quantum physics. For years, *every thing* came down to *one* thing, the atom. We could build by adding atoms in an infinite number or come back to the one in the middle and take it down into fractions: protons, electrons, neutrons. But with quantum physics and the conceptualization of qualitative numbers, we could take down the atom itself, past the one thing, because the core of an atom is *no* thing. It is pure vibrational energy. The *no* thing is zero. And now we can begin to conceptualize the

other arm of the infinity symbol. Now we can conceptualize ideas like wormholes and time vortexes and things beyond the one thing interpretation of the universe.

To see beyond the quantitative aspect of number and play in the qualitative field is to unlock the grandeur of the cosmos. Here is the core of Arithmatica. There is wholeness in the universe, a unity. In her book, *Sacred Number: The Secret Qualities of Quantities*, author Miranda Lundy opens up about Mystic Arithmology and the qualities of number:

All science has its origins in magic, and in the ancient schools, no magician was ever unschooled in the power of number. These days the lore of sacred number has been usurped by a tide of merely quantitative numbers, not covered in these pages. This book is a beginner's guide to mystic arithmology, a small attempt to unveil some of the many secret and essential qualities of number contained within Unity. (Lundy, 2005, p.1).

Mystic arithmology is the missing half of the infinity symbol. Perhaps, if centuries ago qualitative arithmology had survived alongside its quantitative partner, life on our planet may have unfolded differently. Now we can leave behind our truncated mathematics and with it our truncated structures of society, where previously any divergence from the *one* thing had not been tolerated.

A glaring example of this truncated view of *one* thing has been the structuring of our society around a vertical construct of who is on top and who is beneath (patriarchy). This restoration moves us closer to Schneider's circle described earlier, where the vertical structure is replaced by the unity of a circle where lines radiate equally out from a center point. It is no coincidence that when the 20th century brought qualitative numbers back into play there was a revolution in our social constructs. In the 20th century, women's suffrage, the Civil Rights movement, LGBTQA equality and other previously non-included

groups began rising up from their bottom rungs in the patriarchal hierarchy. They advocated for restoring unity to the whole.

This new paradigm calls us to leave behind what we thought we knew to explore a more primordial, integrated world view. It is now time for the stories of our ancestors.

To the ancient philosophers, myths were like our scientific and mathematical formulas. The gods and goddesses represented *principles* with certain physical properties and attributes associating them with mathematical archetypes. The relationships between gods and goddesses corresponded to the relationships among numbers and shapes, arithmetic and geometry. (Schneider, 1994, p.224).

As Schneider noted in *A Beginner's Guide to Constructing the Universe*, our early stories were more than just stories. They were carriers of the truth of numbers. The principles of qualitative number are present in the stories. For example, imbuing star constellations with names and backstories helps to connect us to the principles Schneider explains above. It is a way for us to enter into relationship with the numbers embedded within the stories.

In the book *Quadrivium*, Miranda Lundy begins her section on Arithmetica by sharing the history, breadth and scope of numbers:

We all know certain things about certain numbers: six circles fit around one, there are seven notes in a scale, we count in tens, three legs make a stool, five petals make a flower. Some of these elementary discoveries are actually the first universal truths we ever come across, so simple we forget about them. Children on distant planets are probably having the same experiences of these elementary quanta.

The science and study of number is one of the oldest on Earth, its origins lost in the mists of time. Early cultures wrote numbers in pottery markings, weaving patterns, notched bones, knots, stone monuments, and the number of their gods. Later systems integrated the mysteries under the medieval Quadrivium of arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy – the

four liberal arts required for a true understanding of the qualities of number. (Lundy, 2005, p.11).

Lundy's book shares insight about numbers zero through 12. For example, she describes the qualities number 3:

The third leg of a stool gives it balance, the third strand of a braid makes a plait (knots can only be tied in three-dimensional space.) Stories, fairy tales and spiritual traditions abound with portentous threes, juggling past, present and future with the knower, knowing and the known. As birth, life and death, the triad appears throughout nature, in principle and form. (Lundy, 2005, p.16)

Lundy writes how our stories, fairy tales and spiritual traditions lift up Arithmetica before us. Generation after generation, our mythic stories have been our teachers for reading the calligraphy of nature. Mythologist Joseph Campbell describes the importance of attending to these stories.

In his description of the four functions of mythology, Campbell assures us that, as we pay attention to our stories and myths, we are able to leave what we know and return to what we knew. He opens up the importance of seeing through the lens of embedded number:

First is the mystical and metaphysical function of linking up regular waking consciousness with the vast mystery and wonder of the universe. This is the most essential service of a mythology, opening the mind and heart to the utter wonder of being – arousing and maintaining in the individual a sense of awe and gratitude for the mystery of life, the mystery of existence, the mystery of the universe – which is the mystery of one's self.

...And the second [function] is presenting an image of the cosmos through which that awe will be communicated, so that the whole universe itself will be experienced as a holy picture. (Campbell, 2023, pp.24-26)

The elders and shamans of today cry out that now is the time to bring forth the ancient stories. We must heed the mystical arithmology of the original teachers and the number patterns embedded in the planets, the stars, the trees, the birds, the bees, the spiders,

the flowers, the earth, air, fire and water. These teachings shape us. As Campbell said, it is about linking up our regular waking consciousness with the wonder of the universe.

Humans have brought earth to a crisis, where many of us can no longer hear her song. Qualitative celebrations will teach us how to save her. As part of these celebrations we can, and must, mourn our own lack of responsibility and the rapacious greed which have brought us to this moment. Brian Swimme and Thomas Berry and others believe the way through this crisis is celebration:

If we were to choose a single expression for the universe it might be "celebration," celebration of existence and life...

We belong to this community of Earth and share in its spectacular expression...While the human situation is definitely changed from this earlier period, we remain genetically coded toward a mutually enhancing presence to the life community that is around us.

The universe we might consider as a single, multiform, sequential celebratory event...For even the afflictions endured cannot diminish the songs that resonate throughout the natural world. (Swimme & Berry, 1992, pp. 263-64).

Listen to Earth's songs. If we listen to earth and seek out the embedded numbers, and the mythic stories that incarnate these numbers, we will be loading deep wisdom into our slingshots. Then we are ready to shoot that wisdom into the future. Our invitation to read the calligraphy of nature is in front of us. Arithmetica provides our guidance.

Behold,

Geometrica

Geometry existed before creation.

Johannes Kepler



The Icon

This icon is titled Christ Circumscribing the Universe. Variations of this image were prominent during the 12-14th centuries. In his book, *Chartres: Sacred Geometry, Sacred Space*, Gordon Strahan includes a picture from a 14th century French manuscript called Christ the Pantocrator, showing Christ creating the world using compasses. Strachan writes that, “geometry was considered to be the closest liberal art to the Divine Mind...It was also for this reason that God himself was likened to a geometer and why in many medieval manuscripts he is pictured creating the world with a huge pair of compasses.” (Strachan, 2003, p. 40)

Michael S. Schneider presents the symbol and meaning of the compass:

Medieval geometers contemplated the compass as an abstract symbol of the eye of God. In their world view its legs represented rays of light and grace shining from heaven to earth, from deep within us outward toward the periphery of our ordinary awareness. The compass has only one role: from a central seed-point it creates the transcendental hole called the circle. It opens up a divine space of light, awareness, and potential configuration. Remember that every circle you construct is a Monad, the complete universe. (Schneider, M. 1994. Pp6-7)

Also included in his book, *A Beginner's Guide to Constructing the Universe: The Mathematical Archetypes of Nature, Art and Science*, Schneider includes a picture of the pattern upon which this icon is based. (Schneider, 1994, p.xxv)

This is the only icon in this dissertation that is not written by my hand. It is a manufactured reprint I purchased on-line from Sam Matthews at Orthocelts. I related to this icon so strongly when it was shown during a meditation with my painting group at the Sophia Icon Studio. The icon is a representation of the archetype of the harmony of the universe, created by and with Divine intention. There is a future possibility of a writing intensive based on this icon at The Sophia Icon Studio, but it would not be timely for the completion of this dissertation.

In Schneider's book introduction he writes, "We grope in a world we consider dangerous, accidental, and chaotic but one that is actually harmonious and awaiting our cooperation. If only we could see with the eyes of the ancients." (Schneider, M. 1994. p. xxv)

Chapter 8

Geometrica

Session six of The New Chartres School was, more than any other year, an experience of what it means to enter into the power and wisdom of Chartres Cathedral. It was about entering into her transformative energetics.

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines “energetics” as a branch of physics that deals primarily with energy and its transformation. Engaging with the energetics of the Cathedral was transforming in ways I would have never guessed. There was a feeling among some of us that the previous five years functioned as the build up to this denouement.

During the first two years at the school, we took our meals in the monastery building across the road from St. Yves. On a glass wall in the dining room was a modern picture in stained glass. Against a clear glass background there were infused shapes of large jigsaw puzzle pieces. Each individual puzzle piece was of stained glass, created in the style of the windows of the cathedral. As I ate my meals I would gaze at the jigsaw puzzle window and think about the process of assembling separate pieces into a larger whole.

Participants each brought their own puzzle pieces to complete the larger picture of this intensive. Every experience and initiation, every encounter and discussion led to the placement of each piece of the puzzle. As with the assembly of a jigsaw puzzle, there eventually comes a growing sense of excitement when the puzzler can begin to see it take shape. Such was the experience of Geometrica.

Dr. Richard Henry returned as our main presenter. The week began with our group sitting in the St. Charles room, twirling our compasses and creating geometric shapes and forms. Michael Schneider, author of *The Beginner's Guide to Constructing the Universe*, says this about our process:

The cosmic creating process is deep within us and can emerge through our hands with the help of the three traditional tools of the geometer – the compass, the straightedge and the pencil...

The roles and motions of the geometer's three tools in geometric construction replicates the universe's own creating process whereby ideal patterns are approximated in natural design on all levels...

Each step we take symbolizes a cosmic motion...By doing geometric constructions on paper, or with a stick in the sand, we are recalling the ageless process of creation, replicating with our minds and hands the generative principles by which the world is evolving. (Schneider, 1994, pp.xxix-xxx),

As the week progressed we moved from drawing on paper to building three dimensional structures, in teams, helping each other with assembly. The end of the week culminated in the whole group building a huge 3-D geometric structure in a St. Yves courtyard. We all stood inside the geometric shape and had a group photo taken. We became Geometrica.

Over the past five years we were formed and informed by the Cathedral. The geometry of Chartres Cathedral is such that, as Dr. Jim Garrison put it, there is no ornamentation. Every square inch of the cathedral is geometrically designed to create resonance. And in a strange and thrilling way, the same thing began happening with our group.

We began to function like the cathedral. There was no ornamentation. What happened felt cosmically designed to create vibrational pattern. As we worked on our ever more complex geometric shapes, synchronicities abounded. The Dream Circle became thematically aligned. Each presenter's lecture interlocked with the others. Every conversation connected to the truth of another conversation. During the labyrinth walk we were steeped in our own mysticism, as we found stronger connections. We tangibly felt the presence of the Divine. Meals, chance encounters, even our interaction with the Diocese of Chartres added to our collectively becoming resonant as we vibrated like a single organism.

This mystical awareness of such collective, evolutionary interaction led the New Chartres School participants into uncharted waters. On multiple occasions I mused if this was how the students of the original Chartres School felt as the liberal arts led them into whole new arenas of awareness and cooperation. I felt connected to those ancient students, forming a kinship with them.

The sense of interconnectedness as we became geometry echoed the words of Dr. Peter Merry. In his book, *Evolutionary Leadership*, Merry describes seeing the patterns in which everything relates to everything else. He believes that our interconnected web of relationships is not static, but that we are expanding outward together into the universe. (Merry. 2009)

For years I had envisioned the inter-connectedness of all life as a spider web or a beautifully woven tapestry, both images gorgeous but both images a bit dimensionally flat. This image of our interconnected life force spiraling into the universe offered a fresh picture. From this enhanced viewpoint of deeper dimension, we are not static or

flat. We are like geometry, multi-dimensional, fluid and able to spiral through the universe to peek behind its veil.

And what is it we see? We see that as shy as the cosmos is in revealing herself, we are afforded enough glimpses behind her veil to usher us into new directions that leave our linear world behind and bless us with participation in a life that extends well beyond our 3-D vision. We are invited to move beyond our mundane world and into a place where magic is made manifest by the marriage of the cosmic (universe) and telluric (earth) fields of energetics.

In his book, *How the World is Made*, John Michell writes that: “Geometry has many practical uses...Its proper use, however, is for cosmological purposes, for investigating nature and bringing to light the wonderful range of patterns and types within the fabric of the Creator’s universe.” (Michell, 2009, p.3) We felt immersed in cosmological purposes.

Chartres Cathedral is magnificent in its resonance. It is a fully realized archetype of the cosmos. Schneider writes that, “Cathedrals in general are among the greatest symbols of Divine manifestation in the world and of spiritual regeneration and return to the Divine within ourselves.” (Schneider, 1994, p.344) Engaging with these vibrational patterns of full cosmic realization is a process of attuning ourselves to this archetype. And with this process of attunement comes experiences beyond our “normal” grasp of reality.

Our resident astrologer Lynn Bell asked us to consider the question of how geometry sets us up, or sets up the opportunity, to see behind the veil. It is difficult to relate

experiences from behind the veil since our comprehension of reality is often limited by our three dimensional perceptions, as is our vocabulary.

Much of my response to Bell's question came through engaging with the mystical vibrational patterns held in Chartres Cathedral and the process of attunement with the cathedral's sacred geometry. It was in this context of cosmological purpose that a group of us had an astounding experience of peeking behind the veil. It is with the full permission of my four other adventurers, Dr. Calen Rayne, geomancer and energetics practitioner; Dr. Krista Stanley, telepathic field guide; Dr. Peter Merry, energetics practitioner and social enterprise leader; and Rev. Kay Rackley, Episcopal priest and energetics practitioner, that I offer an experience in response to Lynn Bell's question about geometry opening up the opportunity to see behind the veil, to move with different resonance into different dimensions.

Peter Merry arrived at the intensive intrigued by a Google Earth map he had found showing the intersection of many lines of energy crossing at a location 35 miles west of Chartres. When enlarged, the map showed the form of a cathedral imprinted on the earth. Excited to see this energetic site, Merry joined with Calen Rayne to investigate. With Krista Stanley and Kay Rackley, they rented a car and headed west. They arrived in the village of Boissy-Maugis to find that the village is twinned with the village of Castle Cary in England, which is the local train station for pilgrims to Avebury and Glastonbury, two well-known energetic sacred sites.

The area turned out to be a horse paddock with land dimensions commensurate with the floor plan of Chartres Cathedral. There was a large mound in the area corresponding to the placement of the labyrinth in Chartres. Corresponding with the

tabernacle - the location of the reserve sacraments kept in the cathedral - Merry found a spiraled metal rod standing in the ground, apparently left by earlier investigators who also found the location to be of very high vibrational energy. Such rods can be used as channels for tapping cosmic energies. Rackley shared her experience when they dowsed the site:

When we dowsed this site using a scale based on the Fibonacci sequence we recognized that it had 'the God spin' which indicated that this site was indeed related to another dimension...it was here that Calen set up an altar with the intention of energetically connecting this 'cathedral' with Chartres Cathedral. Upon setting up the physical altar, he sounded his Himalayan singing bowl to activate the intention and to call into being the energetic connection. Two members of the group who have the gift of seeing into the spiritual realm reported the area lighting up as the singing bowl sounded. After completion of the ritual that enabled the two sites to be joined (we believe they were connected in the past), we returned to class. (Rackley,2012, unpublished Chartres post-paper)

Rayne suspected that underneath the paddock mound there was a dolmen, a structure of two upright rocks capped by a third rock. This dolmen was energetically connected to the dolmen under Chartres Cathedral so he set up a grid of geometric shapes and used his 600 year old Tibetan singing bowl to re-establish an energetic channel back to Chartres. After the experience of the bright light, the group assumed that their work to re-connect the powerful energy of Boissy-Maugis, (which the group termed the "ghost cathedral,") with the cathedral in Chartres was complete. They headed back to Chartres, and, to their amazement, they were accompanied the entire way by a huge cloud in the shape of a winged bird!

It was back in Chartres where my connection to this narrative began. I was in the cathedral before class. As I was getting ready to head to class I happened to put my

hand in my pocket where I found a copy of an ancient chant. This chant was found etched on a blade discovered by Dr. Apela Colorado in a tiny Chartres museum. The language of the chant was strange, it was not Greek, Roman or early French. The museum speculated that the blade and a matching chalice bore an early Celtic/Gallic inscription. Before the Roman Church claimed the hill for worship, the hill and surrounding area were embraced as a worship site by early Druidic cults and the chant is possibly from that time. During the Musica intensive, Dr. Colorado shared the chant with the class. Before doing so she had several powerful elders clear it, confirming this chant as a positive invocation and assured us that it would bring no harm:

Echar

Chor

Dru

Aha

Drax

Bros

Stna

Halcemedme

Halcehaler

Halcemedme

After learning this chant from Dr. Colorado, I used it in meditation the subsequent winter. I began having dreams of the hill where the cathedral stands as being empty. The surrounding town did not exist. Large flocks of owls circled above the mound. Returning to Chartres the following summer for Geometrica, I reported this dream to the Dream Group. It was both affirming and fascinating to see how, as the week went on,

many in the Dream Group reported dreams of owls circling the empty mound, of green hills flying through the sky and images of the original Druidic grove manifested. Much of this synced dreaming came after the energy return from the ghost-cathedral.

Inspired by the chant, I sat quietly in a seat near the altar and recited the chant about 20 times under my breath. Moving to the center of the labyrinth, I repeated my chanting. Next I felt a strong urge to move to what some of us had come to recognize as a powerful energy stone near the south portal. While chanting from there I felt an intense sensation of being pulled down into the well and the standing stones underneath Chartres Cathedral. Then came a tremendous shaft of intense light from the roof down to the altar. The cathedral began to feel like a rumbling rocket ship taking off and then the whole place seemed to lift and ascend into the sky. The extreme sense of electromagnetic power caused me to tremble violently. It was only a moment in time, but it was visceral, I felt the energy deep in my bones. Rushing outside, I sat on the cathedral steps and wrote out my experience, asking a friend to pass my note on to Calen Rayne.

Later that day Peter Merry, Krista Stanley and Kay Rackley came to my apartment to tell me that Calen Rayne was very excited by my experience. He felt that the chanting had opened up the cathedral to receive the energy released from the “ghost cathedral.”

That evening, when we shared our “ghost cathedral” peek behind the veil with the class, another student shared photos she had taken in the cathedral when I had been chanting. She passed around the photos that she had taken of a very bright light over the altar at the same time I was having my “rocket ship” experience.

When I returned from Chartres I began reading Chris Hardy's book, *The Sacred Network: Megaliths, Cathedrals, Ley Lines and the Power of Shared Consciousness*.

(Hardy, 2008) I noticed a close similarity between Hardy's experience and mine. The trembling that I felt in Chartres returned when I read about her experience at a concert in Reims Cathedral:

When Tangerine Dream started the second part of the concert, the crowd was instantaneously enraptured. Within a few minutes of the playing of a powerful electric organ, the walls and pillars and the whole architecture of the cathedral began to tremble and oscillate on its foundations. Somewhat panicked, I started pondering whether sound alone could bring such a building to collapse, but I decided to trust the cathedral builders who had conceived the magnificent arches resting their weight on the flying buttresses. The cathedral – a mandala of stone based on golden proportion – was like a well-tuned instrument, a single, magnificent resonance chamber. All this was high speed thought. The oscillations climbed to a peak, and suddenly, the whole building took off, tearing off the last chains that anchored it to Earth. It took off and started to dart out into space, heading toward the grand, cosmic eye. The cathedral turned itself back into what it had been conceived as: a magnificent vessel of cosmic proportion and cosmic purpose. (Hardy, 2008, p. 39)

Hardy continued her description of the Reims Cathedral concert:

For the remainder of the concert, the cathedral-spaceship, together with its five-thousand-plus souls on board, soared through the immensity of a luminous, golden space. Together with the sacred vessel, we had fused into one giant spirit who, liberated from the weight of matter, had recovered that wholeness of its being and its boundless consciousness...

The Cathedral is mostly spirit, only a small part of it is matter. It has been spiritualized by sacred geometry and the golden proportion as much as by the builders' intention...the sacred semantic field of the cathedral pervaded all our minds and linked them in a network, a harmonized consciousness field made up of five thousand vibrant, interconnected cells. (Hardy, 2008, p. 39)

Andrew Harvey has described Chartres Cathedral as alive, functioning as a huge resurrection machine. (Harvey, 2012) Its emission of vibrational energy is for resurrecting the Divine within human hearts. As Garrison said, there is no ornamentation, every square inch of the Cathedral is designed to create resonance.

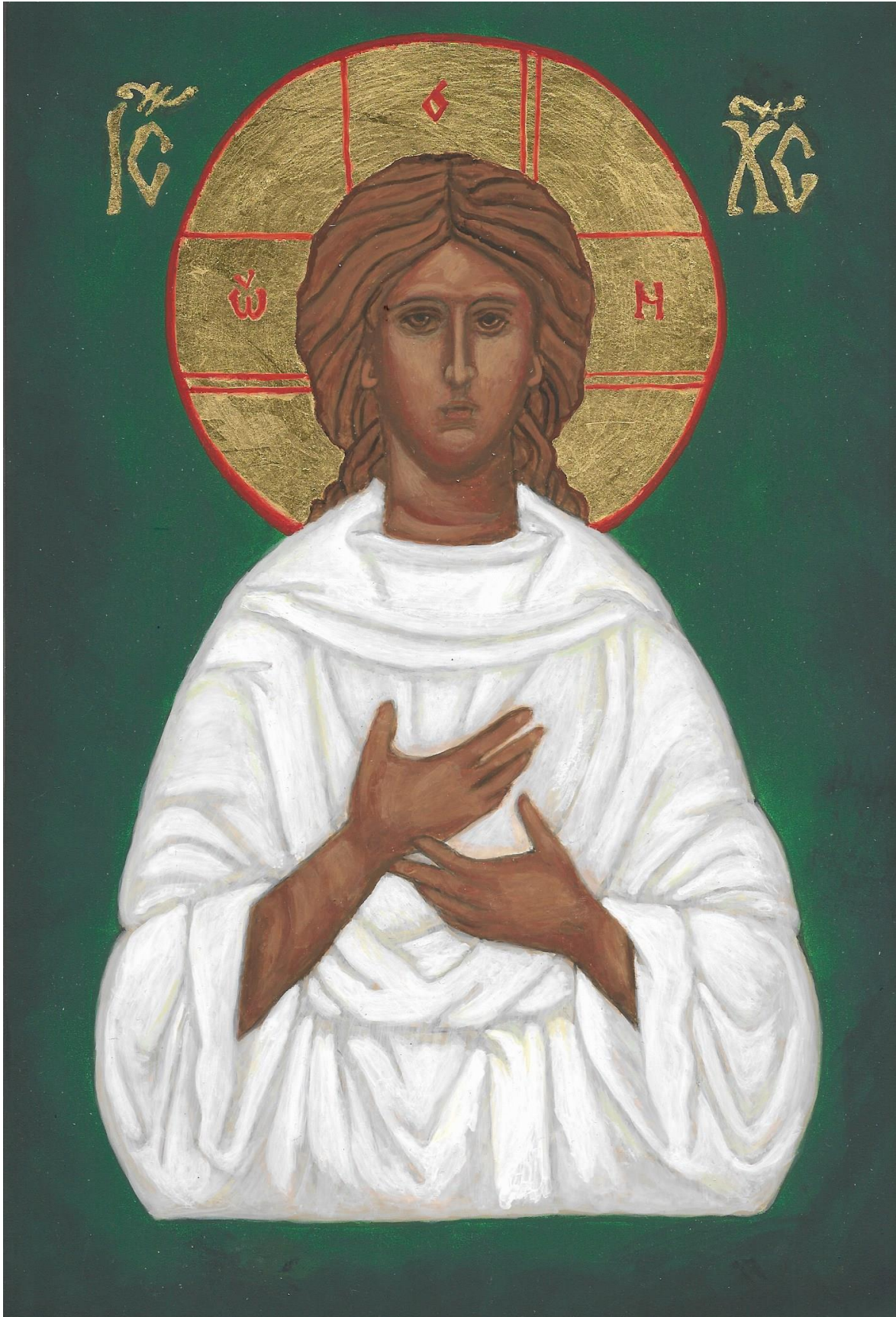
Many volumes of books have been written about the sacred geometry of Chartres Cathedral. However, I have learned that nothing can compare to actual experiences of what the sacred geometry can manifest. These experiences imprint themselves upon us, both individually and collectively. They jolt us into greater dimensions of awareness. Chartres Cathedral is not a story about the liberal art of geometry, it is the living experience of the liberal art of geometry. It is, in fact, a rocket ship thrusting us into greater dimensions.

Behold,

Astronomica

We are star stuff, contemplating the stars.

Carl Sagan



The Icon

Blessed Silence

After seven years of learning and reading, of inward dialogue and conversations with others, I am left with a profound silence. This icon immediately leapt forward as Astronomica. It is a beholding of the sacred and mystic power and pull of The Cosmic Christ.

This icon has no embellishments, no buildings, no stars, no props or adornments. Behold the Unity of the cosmos, the sacred and mystic power of the Cosmic Christ.

Chapter 9

Astronomica

As a child, one of my favorite amusements was watching “Fractured Fairytales” on *The Rocky and Bullwinkle Show*. (Ward, J., Producer, 1959-1964) To see familiar stories broken open and presented in a new light was both really interesting and also a bit disconcerting. Familiar things splintering, breaking open and shifting so a new creation could come of it – that was the experience of Chartres VII, Astronomica. The fracturing of Astronomica was my grown-up version of Fractured Fairytales, also really interesting and quite a bit disconcerting.

Chartres VI offered a deep dive into the sacred geometry of the cathedral that left me with the sense of the cathedral throbbing with vitality. However, stepping back into Chartres Cathedral the following July for Astronomica had a very disorienting, fractured effect. The cathedral didn’t feel like herself.

The restoration and reconstruction project of the cathedral that began in our fifth year continued to create a splintered and disjointed sensory experience. The walls had been scrubbed down and places that couldn’t be restored to the original color were faux-painted to look like stone. There are those who hailed this transformation as a glorious undertaking, returning the cathedral to her “original” look. However, the restoration involved a vigorous scrubbing of the walls. This scouring of the stones erased the breath of all who have prayed and walked and made music and celebrated sacraments in Chartres Cathedral for over 800 years. This made a palpable difference in the resonance of the church. And now, everything was so white! The west Rose Window was now surrounded by glaring white plaster. Dr. Apela Colorado quipped that even the

Black Madonna is a nice little white lady now. The place gleamed! But it didn't feel right.

At the conclusion of his work, *Chartres: Sacred Geometry, Sacred Space*, Gordon Strahan shares about guiding a pair of tourists around Chartres Cathedral. The wife was not terribly interested in what Strachan was sharing about the geometry of the place, but when she walked into the South Transept, she was suddenly awash with tears. "It's about darkness, isn't it? It's about darkness." Strahan was deeply struck by her outburst:

Above and beyond all the confirmations of Dionysian influence, I heard Lois' voice repeating, 'It's about darkness.' It was this that ultimately convinced me that, even more than the Abbey of St. Denis itself, Chartres embodies the most profound expression of the Dionysian divine darkness that the world has, or probably will ever see. For Chartres, even in summer, is always dark, and yet, its darkness is by no means ordinary, for it has a *jeweled* darkness.

It was my experience with Danny and Lois that convinced me that the primary reason why pilgrims still flock to Chartres, consciously or unconsciously, is to experience the beauty of this dark, alchemical light. It also convinced me that, quite apart from the historical, political, economic, social and ecclesiastical reasons for its original erection, the primary reason for building it architecturally in the way we see it today, was to express and embody the mystical theology of Dionysis, and to increase the possibility of *experiencing* the darkness of God as on the mystical journey – through the vibrations, the aura, the subtle body of the *building itself*, with or without the liturgy of the mass. (Strahan, 2003, pp. 99-100).

Strachan wrote these words in 2003, before the "renovation." Is he now grieving the loss of the "jeweled darkness" in the cathedral?" I wonder. As Strachan notes, "No one can be entirely free from the possibility that their soul will be touched by this beauty, which speaks of the darkness and of the light of God together; of light in darkness and of light behind darkness...This is the journey towards the darkness of God in which,

paradoxically, we eventually find ourselves nearer to the transfiguring light of his presence.” (Strachan, p.100.) So much was lost when the breath of the ages was scrubbed away. The jeweled darkness was gone.

It felt like the cathedral was in pain. In their efforts to “re-create” the beauty of Chartres Cathedral, the workers had not been kind. Large equipment had been brought in to scrub and paint the high places, causing damage to the floor tiles, the walls and to some pillars. The labyrinth stones were chipped. My favorite seating spot by “my” pillar had a large chunk of stone nicked out of it. Pebbles were scattered all over the Cathedral, crumbled bits from the old stones. I sat against the pillar and nursed the wounds as best I could. Discordant energy prevailed.

It came as no surprise when our three Master Astrologers – Richard Tarnas, Robert Powell and Lynn Bell – began by speaking of the archetypal energies of Saturn, the ruling planet of Liberal Art #7. Saturn’s energy is Big. It can be disruptive to what we think we know, breaking us open and allowing space for new concepts of how we can continually advance toward a wholeness within the cosmos to emerge. Also called “the Lord of Karma”, Saturn holds our feet to the fire, calling us to be more responsible. Saturn requires us to take deep dives into ourselves. This planet shakes things up! We cannot stay as we are. As our week’s work continued to challenge us, and shifting appeared on both overt and covert levels, over and over again participants were heard to mutter, “Ah, that’s Saturn.”

Dr. Tarnas spoke one morning about every experience having its archetypal reasons. He said we participate constantly in the archetypal patterns, and that the soul cannot be, except in these patterns. Plato, Tarnas said, believed that all fundamental

governing patterns of the cosmos are the archetypes. This is why we need to return to our stories and our myths, and through them steep ourselves in these archetypal patterns of the universe. These archetypal patterns are what heals us, what makes us whole.

Astronomica is the liberal art of reading the signs in the cosmos and decoding them.

In his book, *Cosmos and Psyche*, Tarnas quotes Plotinus:

The stars are like letters which inscribe themselves at every moment in the sky...Everything in the world is full of signs...All events are coordinated...All things depend on each other; as has been said, 'Everything breathes together.' (Tarnas, 2007, p.77)

He continues;

Instead of the linear causal mechanisms of matter and force assumed in a Newtonian universe, the continuous meaningful coincidence between celestial patterns and human affairs seems rather to reflect a fundamental underlying unity and correspondence between the two realms – macrocosm and microcosm, celestial and terrestrial – and thus the intelligent coherence of a living, fully animate cosmos. The postulation of a systemic correspondence of this kind implies a universe in which mind and matter, psyche and cosmos, are more pervasively related or radically united than has been assumed in the modern world view. (Tarnas, 2007, p.77).

Everything breathes together. This simple, elegant phrase holds within it all the complexities of the galaxies and dimensions. Our modern reductionist theories cannot effectively grasp the truth of this statement. True, it is a staggering load of responsibility to think about continuous connectedness to all that is. Our brains naturally start in a smaller place to approach this staggering responsibility. We personalize and think of what is immediate to us. This helps us to comprehend and thus participate in the great

drama of the universe. Our microcosms are reflective of the cosmic macrocosm. One of the most important things I learned during my years at the Mystery School is that things are only true in one part if they are also true in the whole. Jim Garrison expressed this by saying, “If it is not true for the whole, it is not true.” Truth in the Bible must also be truth in the natural world, truth in the macrocosm must reflect truth in the microcosm. “Everything breathes together.” We cannot cling to what we hold as truth in our small scenarios if it is not “breathing together” with the whole macrocosm.

In his book, *Star Wisdom & Rudolph Steiner*, David Tresemer stresses the idea of the cosmos needing to be included in considering what we describe as the *whole* truth. He writes, “Biographers seem only to look down at the earth, indeed often into the dirt of life, without ever casting their eyes heavenward. They seldom ask what event took place ‘up there’ that may have had something to do with the lives that they study. How can a life be understood when the whole heavens are left out of the picture.” (Tresemer, 2007, p.16). We are asked to look with larger, more comprehensive eyes.

Plato’s request, put to the world through the study of *Astronomica*, is a call to look at the big picture. Earth and our psyches are only half the truth. The other half is in the archetypal patterns of the heavens. Plato’s Allegory of the Cave is a preeminent Fractured Fairy Tale: life isn’t what it seems, it is what the puppet masters wish us to see. If we can throw off the chains and move out of the cave into a world so much larger, then we can move into the whole truth of life. Jesus’ parables are also forms of fractured fairy tales. Using familiar, everyday objects like wine, bread, sheep, grain, he breaks open his stories in order to propel his listeners into a much larger reality, a much

greater truth. Breaking open our perceptions of a limited world to give us both psyche and cosmos is the work of *Astronomica*.

How is our psyche and cosmos connected? In his book, *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ*, Matthew Fox offers us Gregory Bateson's most riveting question:

Gregory Bateson wrestled the last ten years of his life with this most pressing question: 'What is the pattern that connects?' What connects the crab nebula in the sky with the genes of a crawfish on earth or the genes in our bodies? The spiritual tradition proposes that the Cosmic Christ is 'the pattern that connects all things.'

...How would a scientist respond to this naming of 'the pattern that connects?' The Cosmic Christ, as seen as 'the pattern that connects,' affirms the scientific quest for such a pattern. It offers hope by insisting on the interconnectivity of all things and on the power of the human mind and spirit to experience personally this common glue among all things.

...Sociologist Robert Bellah describes how Western culture has become a 'culture of separation.' He cites the poet John Donne who aptly wrote of our disease: 'Tis all in peeces, all cohaerence gone.' The Cosmic Christ ushers in an era of coherence, of ending the separations, divisions, dualisms, piecemealness that characterize a world without mysticism, a society without a living cosmology. A cosmos is always a *whole*, a unity, a state of coherence even if the coherence seemingly exists for a time only in the hearts and imaginations of the people, only in hope. (Fox, 1988, pp. 133-135).

Fox challenges our old paradigms of cosmology and offers us a more cosmic model for unity. For us to participate in this new paradigm, Fox proposes a necessary major global shift in consciousness:

We must move from anthropocentrism to a living cosmology, from Newton to Einstein, from parts-mentality to wholeness, from rationalism to mysticism, from obedience as a prime moral value to creativity as a prime moral value, from personal salvation to communal healing, ie. compassion as salvation, from theism (God outside us) to panentheism (God in us and us in God), from fall-redemption to creation-centered, from religion to spirituality, from ascetic to aesthetic. (Fox, 1988, pp.134-135).

Saturn demands that we work hard to facilitate this paradigm shift. Things must change, thoughts must change. And these changes must be comprehensive. Small changes will not bring big results. With the Doomsday Clock now at 90 seconds before midnight, this change in paradigm is urgent! We need our outdated global paradigms to go into full throttle reverse. We return to psyche and cosmos:

If it is true that Mother Earth and the mother principle are being crucified in our time as we considered in part I, then it is also true that those committing the matricide, namely the human race, can cease the killing. But how will this be done? How will we move from crucifixion or matricide to healthy living? The link, I believe, lies in the human psyche's capacity for resurrection: for aliveness, wakefulness, awareness, and rebirth – in short, mysticism...if we can awaken to an authentic mysticism, then a resurrection of Mother Earth is possible. (Fox, 1988, p. 38).

Matthew Fox defines mysticism as:

The creation tradition understands mysticism primarily as our entering into the fullness of the mystery of existence, the gift and blessing of creation itself. The mysterious universe we enter includes the universe of our minds and imaginations, memories and bodies as well as the mysteries of the cosmos itself. But given the wounds of our human condition, to enter these mysteries as fully as possible some letting go is needed, some returning to a space of emptiness and openness and primal ability to wonder. (Fox, 1988, p.40).

Astronomica intensive facilitator Theresa Collins put before us this question: "How do we take these ideals and walk them into the world?" In the tradition of myth this is our quest going forward, and here is yet another paradox: that which is liberating, evolving, compassionate and ethical can also be dark and dangerous. It is the eternal struggle between our best selves and our shadow selves. Saturn would say this is the tough work before us.

Dr. Robert Powell spoke to us about the depth of the darkness in the times we inhabit. In his book, *Prophecy-Phenomena-Hope*, he addresses Collins' question of how we walk our ideals into the world:

Thus the question is raised: What do we do in the face of the unveiling of the Mystery of Evil as we perceive it in our world today – evil at such a level as to be almost incomprehensible? It is important to bear in mind, in the context of humankind's spiritual evolution, that evil has the purpose of calling forth the good. The more one recognizes the extent of evil in the world, the more one is inwardly called to align ourselves with the Power of Good, and this means developing morally and spiritually, increasingly *to become* in one's own being, The Good. (Powell, 2011. pp.17-18).

JK Rowling's Harry Potter book series and Tolkien's Lord of the Rings trilogy have been read avidly for several generations. They are modern versions of the hero's journey and like all great myths they provide road maps that inspire and guide us on our own journeys. Mythologist Joseph Campbell's name for our motivation towards The Good is the hero's journey, the facing of evil because it must be faced, because that is a higher ideal than surviving our current incarnation. Our fears inhibit us, blocking so much of our participation in this cosmic drama to embrace The Good. In discussing the aspects of Saturn's conjunctions with other planets over the most recent years of our history, Rick Tarnas writes:

The natural human tendency is to want to know that the general outlook for the foreseeable future is uniformly positive and will only get better, with blue skies as far as the eye can see. Yet there are advantages to knowing of a potentially challenging reality in advance, facing it squarely, preparing for it and recognizing its signs and characteristic motifs, its dangers and its positive potential when it is consciously assimilated and enacted. Perhaps equally important, it can be psychologically centering and spiritually fortifying to recognize that such periods may represent the

unfolding of larger cycles of archetypal development and human evolution in a context that is in some sense cosmic, subtly ordered and intelligible, rather than arbitrary, random and meaningless. (Tarnas, 2007, p. 469).

To see the universe as intelligent and meaningful is deeply important. Souls are longing for a sense of meaning. My spiritual direction practice has made it manifestly clear that people are looking for assurance that their efforts toward aligning their souls with the impulse of The Good matters, even when there is a continual, often harsh push-back from the shadow side of humanity. There is, in fact, grand reason to continue in the quest of walking our ideals into the world.

Tarnas began our final morning together by sharing that at this time of our final gathering in Chartres, the heavens are in in the exact position, and never repeated until now, as they were when the phoenix began to rise from the ashes of the fires that brought down Fulbert's cathedral in 1194. These particular archetypes have been reactivated in this place, at this time. As Rudolph Steiner believed, the initial energies of the original Chartres School would be brought back at this time to bring great healing impulses to the world. The heavens, it appears, agree with him!

Walking out of St. Yves for the last time was bittersweet. After seven years, the community was dispersing, each of us returning to our own realms of practical work. It is time for our diverse group to bring forward all the healing impulses that we can muster. It felt right, it was time to leave. As our final intensive concluded, Lynn Bell told us that if we did not have Chartres in our bones by now, we never will. The New Chartres Mystery School was a profound initiation, as Andrew Harvey said, into the divinization of our human hearts.

The impact of this pilgrimage through the seven liberal arts continues to evolve. There has not been a day in the twelve years since leaving Chartres Cathedral, the Black Madonna, and the Mystery School when I have not called up some fragment of the Wisdom of Chartres, now embedded in my bones. It is time to bring forward all the healing impulses we can muster. At our closing, Jim Garrison offered this summation of our time in Chartres with these deeply inspirational words for our continued quest as we walked out of the gates of St. Yves:

Our challenge today is whether we can come together with such dedication to the sacred that we, like the Masters of Chartres, transform our lives into building blocks for the betterment of humanity, filled with beauty, holiness, wisdom and light. If we do, we can transform the world.

**Behold,
Returnica**

If we see further than they, it is not by virtue
of our stronger sight, but because we are
lifted up by them and carried to great heights.
We are dwarves on the shoulders of giants.

Bernard of Chartres



The Icon

Our Lady, Wider Than the Cosmos

Time is experienced as a spiral pattern, and here we are, back at the beginning. The Grammatica icon of the Annunciation depicted an awed Mary, receiving the announcement from the Archangel Gabriel that she would become the bearer of the incarnation of God on earth. The next six icons manifest the essence of each ever-expanding liberal art. And now we have returned to “In the beginning.” What could be a more elegant icon than Our Lady, Wider than the Cosmos? Once again, we find a pregnant Mary, but this time, she bears our wakefulness of all that we have learned and all that we have come to be. Her belly holds the stars, the galaxies, the mysteries of the cosmos. The invitation here is to spiral around and around, infinitely moving outward into the wonders of the cosmos and into the astounding implications of creation as born out in the seven liberal arts.

While it feels like we have come to an end, this icon opens a new doorway. Our Lady Wider than the Cosmos is, literally, pregnant with possibilities. Coming at the completion of the seven liberal arts, she is with us as the spiral continues onward and outward. She embodies all that was, is and will become.

Chapter 10

Returnica

When time is experienced as a spiral pattern, we are always returning to the beginning. Time moves in ever widening circles and to ever greater heights. Time is not linear with a fixed beginning, a straight path, and an end point. In a spiral, we continually circle through time returning to our starting points, each now set within a wholly new dimension.

Poet T.S. Eliot captured the essence of this concept of time in his words from “Little Gidding” in his *Four Quartets*:

We shall not cease from exploration, and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time.

Through the unknown, remembered gate when the last of earth left to discover is that which was the beginning... (Eliot, 1971, p.59.)

Journeying through seven years of wisdom gathering with the seven liberal arts has made it abundantly clear that reaching Astronomica is not a finished product, it is only a beginning. The seven liberal arts are presented in a pattern of one art building upon the next, each taking us deeper into ourselves and wider into the cosmos. But there is no endpoint. We return to begin the cycle again and again, coming back to the beginning and “knowing the place for the first time.”

Because I conceptualize time as a spiral, I felt compelled to create an eighth liberal art, Returnica (return.) We return to Grammatica, only this time we are flush with the wisdom of the journey, and open to another cycle. Each continuous *revolution* through

the arts continues our *evolution* into becoming the mystics that Matthew Fox exhorts us to be.

The cyclical pattern of moving through the seven liberal arts is very similar to the pattern of the Christian liturgical year. As a local church minister for over 25 years, I grew to embrace the liturgical year as a way of entering and re-entering time. It is a pattern that is repetitive and yet continually finds us in new places with each turn of the calendar.

Beginning with Advent, we wait in darkness for Light to come. With Christmas we rejoice at the Light born into our world and our souls. Epiphany is a season of illumination when we grapple with what this Light means for our lives. Starting with Ash Wednesday, the somber season of Lent speaks to the wisdom and compassion of Jesus' teachings. The intense events of Holy Week end with crucifixion. The glory of Easter is the proclamation that death is never the end and the blessing of renewed life is for all of creation. Fifty days after Easter begins the longest season of the liturgical year, Pentecost. It is during this time that we, to quote Theresa Collins from the previous chapter, "walk these ideals into the world."

And then, we arrive back at Advent. But we are not the same people, for having traveled through rituals, prayers, celebrations, and life events, we arrive back at Advent, where we started, but now we see the season, ourselves and our world, with new eyes and hearts.

In his book, *Holidays and Holy Nights*, author Christopher Hill presents the liturgical year geometrically:

For most of human history, people experienced time very differently. The pattern was not a line but a circle or cycle. The cycles of the sun, moon and stars; of the seasons; of the life, death and birth of plants, animals and human beings. Everything went away, but then in some way, everything always comes back. We can be sure that people living with this image of time still got anxious about things, but anxiety wasn't built into the system itself.

The image of the cycle contains a lot of truth. It expands the one dimensional time line into a two dimensional circle and so takes in a lot more of reality. It is less abstract than the line, truer to experience and incorporates the fundamental patterns of creation. (Hill, 2003, p.7).

Yet Hill goes on to write that even in two dimensional cycling, there needs to be more, there needs to be room for growth, so he envisions the liturgical year as three dimensional:

It is modeled on the spiral, a circle that grows outward and upward. It grows in a vertical direction as well as horizontally, combining the straight line of the past, present and future with the height and depth of eternity. Like a spiraling tornado, it sucks one dimensional time up in three dimensional reality. It uses time to break us out of time. It hallows or sacralizes time and transforms it into eternity. Year, season, month, week, day and hour, all make concentric circles that lead deeper and deeper into the center, the present moment, where we live in the presence of God. The present is the Presence. And then present time ripples outward again, connecting us with all time and all of the cosmos. (Hill, 2003, p.8).

This same dynamic holds true for the seven liberal arts. Through the seven liberal arts we enter and re-enter time through the dimensional pattern Hill proposes.

The spiral pattern of re-entering time is both a gift and a relief. This on-going pattern means we don't have to absorb everything all at once. It means we have the chance to continually bring our experiences and insights into each new spiral. We are offered new

opportunities to build upon our gathered wisdom and to learn from our past mistakes.

Conceptualizing time as non-linear gives an integrality to the seven liberal arts.

Conclusion

In the spirit of Returnica, I return now to my original question: What is going on out there (the macrocosm) and will an immersion into the seven liberal arts guide me/us (the microcosm) into connection and relationship with the macrocosm? The answer is, overwhelmingly, yes. Focused immersion in the liberal arts brings more than just a defined knowledge of each art. Through a variety of meditations on the icons, initiations and first hand experiences that pushed us beyond our accepted 3 dimensional world, I/we came to see our oneness with the macrocosm in a new light.

The New Chartres Mystery School was a perfect symphony of embracing and enacting the healing mysteries of the original Chartres School recounted through the work of Rene Querido, presented in the introduction to this dissertation. Just as each art expanded upon the previous art, the adventure of digging deep into the arts expanded my/our consciousness, blessing us with the gift of living with a wide, rich view of creation and our part in it.

We grow into unity with the cosmos not through our answers and facts, but through our questions and experiences. My first day of seminary at The Theological School of Drew University began with a greeting to the incoming class by the dean, Dr. Thomas Ogletree. His words were both simple and profound. He was very clear about the focus of a theological education. Dr. Ogletree told us that if we had come to seminary looking for answers, then we were in the wrong place, and should save our time and money by looking elsewhere. However, if we had come to learn how to articulate the questions, then welcome, we were in the right place. He continued by saying we were there to

learn to look at all life through the lens of a greater picture, with focus on the unity of all that is.

In that same spirit, I appreciate this immersion into the seven liberal arts because it has helped me, the microcosm, in articulating questions of how to connect and relate to the macrocosm. Since leaving Chartres in 2012, I find myself continually informed by the wisdom of the seven (eight) liberal arts. The experience of The New Chartres School and Chartres Cathedral has indeed fashioned a new lens for viewing and relating to the cosmos.

Writing icons is my spiritual practice that undergirds this quest of micro-macro unity. Currently, some of the icons presented in this paper are in residence on the wall of the chapel at St. Martin's Episcopal Church in Williamsburg, Virginia. My fellow iconographer Cathy Reynolds and I change the icons according to the liturgical seasons of the church year. The icons presented in this dissertation are now finding a wide audience to appreciate their embodied energy of prayer and their personifications of the liberal arts, which will continue to guide fellow pilgrims along the trail of the divination of the human heart.

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