

Engaging the Generative Life:

A Further Look at an Incarnational Spirituality

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Each of us has the capacity to be a source of empowerment and blessing in our world. Like a sun, we may each manifest a presence that radiates the creativity and richness of life. We may each lead a generative life.

The generative life is the life we dream of, the one that honors and fulfills our potentials as a person. It is a life of love, of inner power, of manifestation, and of blessing for us as well as for others. Just as stars generate the building blocks of creation, so the generative individual, like a star, produces the psychological and spiritual elements that build a vital and rewarding world. The generative individual creates opportunities and conditions within which our finest potentials are nurtured and sacredness may emerge.

The generative life is something we already possess. We do not earn it or evolve towards it in our future as much as we learn to engage it in our present.

One way to do this is through the practice of incarnational spirituality.

Incarnational spirituality is several things. It is a worldview, a way of perceiving and envisioning ourselves and the world in which we live. It is a celebration and practice of individual sovereignty and personal growth. It is training in practical, creative life skills. At a deeper level, it is a spiritual practice, a way of relating ourselves to the Sacred and to the Spirit within all things. It provides a foundation for the development of empowering and liberating communities. It is a call to service and to co-creative participation in the world. And it is a continuing exploration into undiscovered reaches of our personal and transpersonal potentials.

A WORLDVIEW

Incarnational spirituality is a worldview. Among its perceptions are the following insights:

- There is an innate spiritual power in the particular and the specific, as well as in the universal and the transcendent. In part this power is generated from differences as defined by boundaries and limits.
- There is a spiritual and creative presence that exists in the sovereignty of each unique individual.
- There are accessible spiritual resources within the personal dimension of our lives as well as within the transpersonal. The personality can be an ally to spiritual and creative growth, not an obstruction.
- The physical world is a spiritual domain, so the act of incarnation is not one of leaving a spiritual realm behind. It is one of entering spirit in a new way through the material world.
- The act of incarnation itself is a spiritual act, generating spiritual energy.
- Incarnation is not just an event (such as being conceived or born) or a condition (such as having a physical body). It is a spiritual force to which we may attune. It is a capacity or skill that we can practice and develop.

As a worldview, incarnational spirituality rejects the dualism that separates the personal from the transpersonal or the world from spirit, privileging the latter over the former as being more desirable or more real. Instead, incarnational spirituality embraces a robust holism that sees all the forms and dimensions of life—personal and transpersonal, physical and spiritual—as part of an ecology of co-creative partnerships and alliances.

SOVEREIGNTY AND PERSONAL GROWTH

Incarnational spirituality celebrates the power of our individual sovereignty. Sovereignty is more than just the right to be oneself and to choose one's own direction in life free from coercion from any outside agency. We are each unique individuations of the Sacred. In our uniqueness lies our power to bring to the world what no other person can bring and to become what no other person can become. We each incarnate as a gift of love to the world. The power of that gift, and its unfolding and blessing, lies in our sovereignty.

Therefore the practice of incarnational spirituality is one of honoring our individual boundaries as sacred and of finding the creativity that arises at those boundaries in engagement with the world. It is one of honoring and fostering each individual's "will-to-be-and-to-become," the force for growth and fulfillment within that person.

Incarnational spirituality rejects a "sun-satellite" model of human relations or spiritual training in which one person is seen as being the center—the single radiant source of all that is good and wise and desirable—while others are simply reflections of that person's light and followers of his or her will. Instead, incarnational spirituality celebrates a "star-galaxy" model in which each person is a generative, radiant source with something vital to contribute and in which all parties co-create together the conditions in which growth, learning, empowerment, and emergence may occur.

In keeping with this perspective, incarnational spirituality encourages all forms of personal growth and means of self-understanding. It sees the person as a vital source of those values, qualities and actions that promote love, healing, communication, and community, as well as the wellbeing and spiritual growth of the world. It offers insights and techniques to foster the generative life within us.

TRAINING IN PRACTICAL LIFE SKILLS

Because incarnational spirituality is grounded in the life of the individual person in a co-creative relationship with his or her world, it incorporates practical life skills in its teaching. These include:

- Training in understanding one's unique personality structure and the traits and parts that manifest either as habits and automatic reactions or as allies for better communication and growth.
- Training in the understanding and use of imagination as a creative force in one's life and as a connection with spiritual resources.
- Training in the use of intuition and the "felt sense" within the body that conveys wisdom and information.
- Skills in evaluation, motivation and making healthy life choices.
- Training in techniques to shape and manifest the life we wish to lead.
- Training in the power to create and hold "open spaces," conditions of expectant opportunity and invitation in which healing, blessing, inspiration, and empowerment may take place.
- Training in understanding and transforming the shadow elements in one's life.
- Training in integrating and transforming mental, emotional and physical energies.

A SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

At its heart incarnational spirituality, as the name suggests, is a spiritual practice. It is a practice that synthesizes what are usually called the spiritual and the mundane, the transpersonal and the personal aspects of our lives. It is a practice that honors and unfolds the sacredness of the self and the particular in relationship with the sacredness of the cosmos and the universal.

In addition to normal spiritual practices such as prayer, meditation, and contemplation, exercises that can be part of the practice of incarnational spirituality include

- Attunement to the light and presence of the Self as an individuation of the Sacred.
- Deepening into the sacredness of one's particularity and uniqueness, the innate spirit of one's embodied, incarnate life.
- The practice of Blessing: gifting ourselves and others with everyday acts of unobstructed love.
- The practice of Standing: the creation of states of alignment with spirit and groundedness with the world
- The practice of Holding: the creation of states of fostering, empowerment, and support.
- The creation of "Grail Space" as the invocation of the sacred into one's everyday surroundings and affairs.
- The practice of Presence, the heart of the generative life.

Incarnational spirituality is not a set of prescribed techniques, rituals, and procedures. It is not a religion. It is a perspective that, like a grail, can hold the essence of a person's faith tradition. There are exercises and practices that can enhance its transformative and empowering work within a person's life, but these need to be individually chosen and configured to each person's sovereignty and existing spiritual practice.

Incarnational spirituality is a pathless path, one that encourages improvisation, exploration, and the freedom of spirit to meet the Sacred within the immediacy and specificity of each moment.

A FOUNDATION FOR PARTNERSHIP

The focus of incarnational spirituality is also on the sacredness of relationship and the power of gathering in the name of something larger than oneself. In particular, incarnational spirituality supports the fostering of partnerships and alliances.

These partnerships can lead to communities that offer:

- Mutual support
- Liberation to be ourselves in relationship with others
- Opportunities to learn together and to generate new knowledge and capacities
- Opportunities to invoke greater power for collective acts of service

Such communities, which may be temporary or long lasting, are empowerment communities. Metaphorically they are like “galaxies” in which each participant is both a unique, generative star and a partner in the emergence of a creative space, a wholeness, greater than the sum of its parts.

Strong, healthy, sovereign individuals can create strong, healthy sovereign groups, and vice versa in a mutual dance of partnership, empowerment, and liberation.

In addition, incarnational spirituality sees the world as an expression of an ecology that includes the physical and the non-physical, the human and the non-human. Partnerships and alliances are possible both with the lives that share the natural world with us, the plants and animals that are our partners upon the earth, and with the lives that exist in spiritual and immaterial domains. These beings and forces also share in a concern and passion for the well-being, the wholeness, the evolution, and the sacredness of the world.

Therefore the teaching and practice of incarnational spirituality honors but is not limited to the everyday world around us. It includes an awareness of non-physical, energetic, and spiritual forms of life and consciousness and offers means of joining with the goodwill, love and wisdom of such beings in service to the larger whole.

A CALL TO SERVICE & CO-CREATIVE PARTICIPATION

At the heart of incarnational spirituality is a call to service, particularly at this time of planetary opportunity and need. Incarnation is an act of engagement, a means by which sacredness manifests in ways appropriate to our world and its nature. We come as souls into our lives not only for ourselves but also for each other. We come both for the spirit that can only be revealed through our sovereignty and uniqueness and the spirit that can only be revealed through our togetherness.

The universe of incarnational spirituality is a participatory one. We are all participants in the ongoing co-creation of the cosmos. We are all shapers of the world. We need each other, and we are called to be with each other. Likewise, we need the world, and it needs us, and here too we are called to be with each other in mutual service and love.

Modern astronomical cosmologists speak of a basic formative force that has been shaping the evolution of the universe since its inception. This is the impulse towards self-organization and complexity. In a spiritual context, this impulse could be called the power of the “will-to-be-and-to-become.” The power of this will is a force moving through all things, a sacred force expressing the Will to Be of the primal Generative Mystery itself.

Incarnation is the manifestation of this force. It is the energy of engagement and participation that serves this impulse of growth, integration and emergence. It is in this sense that incarnation is more than an act or a condition. It is a force, an energy, a striving of spirit within creation. We have a capacity to attune to and express this force, which is the practical side of incarnational spirituality. It is the practice of doing incarnation and not just being an incarnation.

This means developing and exercising the skill of engaging with and supporting the incarnational force, the will-to-be-and-to-become, in ourselves, in others, human and non-human, and in the world around us. This is a skill of honoring, of loving, of empowering, of supporting, and of blessing. It is a skill of being a partner in the enhancement of each other’s lives, individually, socially, and ecologically. It is the skill to give to one another life more abundantly as we go about our daily business, removing the obstructions to the sweet flow of the presence of the soul from which our incarnations emerge. It means learning to engage the generative life for others as well as for ourselves.

In the perspective of incarnational spirituality, this is our calling, one we all share with each other.

AN EXPLORATION

Incarnational spirituality is an evolving worldview and practice. It is an exploration. It has no final answers, no dogmas carved in stone, no single path. It honors the idea of a pathless path, one that we generate each moment as we live out our unique sovereign relationship with the Sacred, with the earth, with each other, and with the potentials within us. Incarnational spirituality offers a perspective on walking itself rather than dictating the path that should be walked upon.

As we walk our spirituality, we learn. We explore. We improvise. We discover. The Sacred is infinite Mystery, always revealing itself in new ways. Life is much the same. Rather than enclose the Sacred in a box that we can carry in our pocket, comforted that we have “the truth,” we wish to open ourselves to all the unforeseen and unexpected ways we may be transformed by it.

To incarnate is not to enter into a pre-programmed plan that we now must follow. It is to stand at the edge of Mystery with wonder and love, knowing that in the next step we take, something will be revealed that has never been seen before and something will be learned that has not been learned before. The generative life is a life of discovery.

AN INVITATION

We believe that incarnational spirituality offers a genuinely new exploration into the depths of spirit within ourselves and into the depths of life around us. It is more than just a shift in our mental and emotional perspective; it is a shift of incarnational “posture” as well, the way we position ourselves energetically, imaginatively, and spiritually in relationship to the world.

There is certainly much more to it than this little booklet can convey. More importantly, there is much more to incarnational spirituality than we have yet learned. The adventure is just beginning. The meaning of the generative life is just unfolding.

We invite you to explore, to adventure, and to learn with us.



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Further Steps

If you would like to explore the possibilities and usefulness of the ideas in this booklet, please visit our website, www.Lorian.org. There you will find information and exercises for both personal and planetary explorations. And if you would like to go further, we offer regular classes on this and other topics of an incarnational spirituality. You can learn about these classes and programs on our website as well. Please visit us! You will be most welcome.

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