



The Black Madonna  
A Contemplative Liturgy  
December 17, 2020  
6-7pm PST  
**Lessons and Chants of the Black Madonna**  
(inspired by Matthew Fox)

*“The Black Madonna...is known as the healer of crippledness, the healer of harmed women, hurt men, and injured and abused children...she is mother mild and tender, mother most alert and tending to, mother most fierce and protective, and mother who heals the worst of the wounded.”*  
-- Clarissa Pinkola-Estes, *Untie the Strong Woman*, p. 145 (this quote is on the website to promote, not read. )

*Every archetype has its seasons. They come and go according to the deepest, often unconscious, needs of the psyche both personal and collective. Today the Black Madonna is returning. She is coming, not going, and she is calling us to something new (and very ancient as well). This offering is inspired by the work of Matthew Fox.*

**Lessons and Chants of the Black Madonna**

We will keep 1 minute of silence after each chant.

(inspired by Matthew Fox)

**CANDLES LIT**

Bell Tolls Three times

Let us begin with a few moments of silence.

**Reader 1.** The Black Madonna is Dark and calls us to the darkness..

Meister Eckhart observes that “the ground of the soul is dark.” Thus to avoid the darkness is to live superficially, cut off from one’s ground, one’s depth. The Black Madonna invites us into the dark and therefore into our depths. This is what the mystics call the “inside” of things, the essence of things. This is where Divinity lies. It is where the true self lies. It is where illusions are broken apart and the truth lies.

She encourages us to be at home there, in the presence of deep, black, unsolvable mystery.

Eckhart calls God’s darkness a “super-essential darkness, a mystery behind mystery, a mystery within mystery that no light has penetrated.”

*My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord;  
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,  
for you have looked with favor on your lowly servant.*

CHANT – **“Sometimes I feel like a motherless child... a long way from home.”**

*1 minute silence.*

**Reader 2.** The Black Madonna calls us to cosmology, a sense of the whole of space and time. Because she is dark and leads us into the dark, the Black Madonna is also cosmic. She is the great cosmic Mother on whose lap all creation exists. The universe itself is embraced and mothered by her. She yanks us out of our anthropocentrism and back into a state of honoring all our relations.

*From this day all generations will call me blessed:  
you, the Almighty have done great things for me,  
and holy is your Name.*

CHANT – **“Sometime I feel like a motherless child...a long way from home.”**

*1 minute silence.*

**Reader 3.** The Black Madonna calls us to our depths, including the depths of awe, wonder and delight—joy itself is a depth experience we need to re-entertain in the name of the Black Madonna. She calls us to enter into the depths of our pain, suffering and shared grief—not to run from it or cover it up. She calls us to the depths of our psyche which, as Meister Eckhart says, are “dark” and to the depths of the earth, which are surely dark and to the depths of the sky that have also been rediscovered for all their darkness. Black holes abound in space as well as in the mysterious breadth of our souls. We need to explore them.

*You have mercy on those who fear you  
from generation to generation.*

CHANT – **“Sometimes I feel like I’m almost gone... a long way from home.”**

*1 minute silence.*

**Reader 4.** The Black Madonna calls us to Grieve. The Black Madonna is the sorrowful mother, the mother who weeps tears for the suffering in the universe, the suffering in the world, the brokenness of our very vulnerable hearts. In the Christian tradition she holds the dying Christ in her lap but this Christ represents all beings for all beings suffer and the Black Madonna, the Great Mother, knows this and empathizes with us in our pain. Grieving is an emptying, it is making the womb open again for new birth to happen.

*You have shown the strength of your arm,  
and scattered the proud in their conceit.*

CHANT – “Sometimes I feel like I’m almost gone... a long way from home.”

*1 minute silence.*

**Reader 5.** The Black Madonna calls us to Celebrate and to Dance. The Black Madonna, while she weeps tears for the world, as the sorrowful mother, does not wallow in her grief, does not stay there forever. Rather, she is a joyful mother, a mother happy to have being and to have shared it with so many other creatures. Sophia or Wisdom in the Scriptures sings to this element of pleasure and eros, deep and passionate love of life and all its gifts.

*You have cast down the mighty from their thrones;  
and have lifted up the lowly.*

CHANT – “I know I rest in the arms of God along way from home...”

*1 minute silence.*

**Reader 6.** “Maat” is the name for justice, harmony, balance and compassion among the African peoples. The Black Madonna calls us to Maat. To balance, harmony, justice and compassion. In both Arabic and Hebrew, the word for compassion comes from the word for “womb.” A Patriarchal period does not teach compassion, it ignores the womb-like energies of our world and our species. We are not whole—we are not ourselves—until we partake in the carrying on of compassion. Meister Eckhart taught that the name of the human soul properly is “Compassion” and that until we are engaged in compassion we do not yet have soul.

*You have filled the hungry with good things,  
and the rich you have sent away empty.*

CHANT – “Oh, Mary, don’t you weep, don’t you mourn...Didn’t Pharaoh’s army get drowned?”

*1 minute silence.*

**Reader 7.** One of the symbols of the Black Madonna, which derives from Africa’s goddess Isis, is that she wears a headdress that includes a *bell!*

It is like a fire alarm, it is, a *summons to attention, a shaking of her children in the service of liberation deeper knowledge and outpouring into action of a galvanized love.*

A movement beyond nationalisms and jingoisms and patriarchal games of power-over instead of power-with and passion-with (compassion). Might the global threat of the coronavirus contribute in profound ways to a more mature humanity?

*You have come to the help of your servant Israel,  
for you have remembered your promise of mercy,  
The promise you made to our ancestors,*

*to Abraham and his children forever.*

**CHANT – “Oh, Mary, don’t you weep, don’t you mourn...Didn’t Pharaoh’s army get drowned?”**

*1 minute silence.*

5 minutes Prayers Murmured

*The Song of Mary (Magnificat)  
My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord;  
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,  
for you have looked with favor on your lowly servant.  
From this day all generations will call me blessed:  
you, the Almighty have done great things for me,  
and holy is your Name.  
You have mercy on those who fear you  
from generation to generation.  
You have shown the strength of your arm,  
and scattered the proud in their conceit.  
You have cast down the mighty from their thrones;  
and have lifted up the lowly.  
You have filled the hungry with good things,  
and the rich you have sent away empty.  
You have come to the help of your servant Israel,  
for you have remembered your promise of mercy,  
The promise you made to our ancestors,  
to Abraham and his children forever.*

*Closing CHANT Taize Magnificat*

*Bell Tolls 3X. Candles extinguished*