



Teachings from Reverend Robert John

Initiation Service

*You who live in our hearts,
awaken us to the immensity of your spirit,
to the experience of your living presence,
deliver us from the bonds of desire,
from the slavery of small aims,
from the delusion of narrow egohood.*

*Enlighten us with the light of your wisdom,
suffuse us with the radiance of your love,
which includes and embraces the darkness,
like the light which surrounds
the dark core of the flame,
like the love of a mother
that surrounds the growing life
in the darkness of the womb,
like the earth protecting
the tender germ of the seed.*

*Let us be the seed of your living light,
and give us the strength
to burst the sheath of selfhood.*

*Like the seed which dies in order to be born,
let us fearlessly go through the portals of death
so that we may awaken to the greater life,
to the all embracing life of your love,
and the all embracing love of your wisdom.
So shall it be.*

IT IS GOOD TO BE TO BE WITH YOU tonight for this special celebration. I am here on behalf of both the Meriti, Reverend Antoinette and myself, and although I am here in person, Antoinette assures you that her presence is here, her thoughts are with you and we engage in this work together as you enter into new life as Initiates within The Centre.

Tonight I'm taking as my text the beautiful prayer with we prayed at the commencement of this Initiation Service. You might have noticed that there are three very strong images in that prayer and which are carried forward throughout the Initiation Service.

One is the image of the darkness of the core of candlelight. You'll notice that in the flame of a candle is the light that we can see and it surrounds a little dark patch in the middle, the bit where there is light, but it is very hard for us to see. And it is a little bit like that invisible heart in the candlelight in which we can find ourselves surrounded and protected.

The second image that is presented to us in the prayer is that of the life growing in the womb of a mother. A new life that we know is there but as yet cannot see. We can only see the form, the presence of the mother that surrounds and protects that growing life.

And the third image is that of a seed that is held within the darkness and the warmth of the earth, waiting to 'die' and through that death to burst forth in new life.

These are all images of what it means to go through this process of initiation. It is a time when you, as Initiates-elect, have worked to surround that invisible part at the very heart

of your being with light, with a nurturing love and with whatever is necessary to enable that life, that new life to grow within you. And it is a fruit of that work, that inner spiritual work that you've done over many years; it is as a fruit of that, as a result of that, that you are here with us tonight ready to be admitted into the Guild of Initiates in our Centre.

One of the other things that that prayer tells us is that our seed needs to become the living light. To us – to that beginning of light, that beginning of life within us – Christ's light needs to be added. It is the two together – our light with the addition of Christ's light – that brings about a transformation within each one of us. And for you as new Initiates, that is what we seek to do in this service, to add Christ's light to the light that you've been nurturing and growing within your being so that it is strengthened, so that it becomes brighter, so that the light that shines from you in your lives and in everything that you do is a light for the people around you. So that you can shine Christ from your hearts, from your minds, from the very fabric of your being in every moment of your life.

But to do that, we have to be willing to burst the sheath of our selfhood. A sheath is something that wraps around whatever is in the middle of it. It is a bit like you buy a really nice salami or sausage from the supermarket and it is wrapped in that plastic wrap, that they shrink and vacuum pack it with. And you know that there is a good sausage inside, but you've got to go through a bit of work to get the plastic open and get the good contents out. Well, that is also necessary for you in becoming Initiates. The plastic wrap, that sheath, is the ego. It is the very ordinary, everyday part of your existence but it is like plastic in that it is not the real you. It is necessary to open that, to break it open, so that the goodness inside can come out.

The initiation that you receive tonight is your initiation. It is you who is initiated. It is you to whom Christ's light is added. But it is not

done for you. It is done *to* you, but not *for* you. Each one of you – Elly, Maria and Monique – are being initiated for the sake of others and that is the big step you are taking tonight. You are saying: I am willing to offer something of my life to enrich and to benefit other souls, other people. In the material that you studied and worked with in your preparation, you remember that there was some talk of initiation being connected with you receiving a new image – a new image of yourself and a new image of every person you meet. That new image is of the spirit that lies within, and part of the work and part of the life of being an Initiate is to more and more see yourself as a spiritual being. To see that what you do is an expression, a manifestation of spirit. But it is also your responsibility and your commitment as new Initiates to see that in each person. So whenever you see Wim, you need to now, more than ever, see Wim as a spiritual being. His body, and what he does and what he creates in his life is spirit made visible in matter. And all too often, we see the matter of Wim's being, but we forget to look for the spirit. Tonight you are committing yourself to looking for the spirit in Wim. To looking for the spirit within each and every person here. To looking for the spirit in every situation in life, in every encounter, every relationship, every communication, every physical action. To more and more striving to see the spirit at the very heart of that thing. That is another important point for us to remember.

It is the two together – our light with the addition of Christ's light – that brings about a transformation within each one of us. And for you as new Initiates, that is what we seek to do in this service, to add Christ's light to the light that you've been nurturing and growing within your being so that it is strengthened, so that it becomes brighter, so that the light that shines from you in your lives and in everything that you do is a light for the people around you. So that you can shine Christ from your hearts, from your minds, from the very fabric of your being in every moment of your life.

And the third point that I want to make this evening, is in relation to your names. Elly, your name is Elizabeth *Maria* Antonia van der Linde. And then Maria, your name is *Maria* del mar Diaz Marin, and Monique: Monica Johanna *Maria* van de Weert-Duijzings. Have

you noticed what is common in each of their names? Maria. Yes Maria, Mary. It is in each of your names, so I think the third point I am wanting to make in my address tonight is in relation to that. It is a bond between the three of you as you enter into life as Initiates together.

I've got two passages in the gospels that I really love that relate to Mary, to Maria. One is in the gospel of St Luke, right in the beginning. Mary is – I imagine – in her room, and the archangel Gabriel comes to visit and says: "Look, I've got some bad news and some good news. The bad news is that probably your family and your friends are going to hate you because this is going to seem wrong to them. But the good news is: you are going to conceive and bring forth the Christ child." And this is quite a lengthy interaction between Gabriel and Mary. And it is quite a challenging thing for a young woman, who is considered to have been a virgin, unmarried. This spiritual being comes into her room and says: "I am going to make you pregnant." I mean, if that happened to us, any of us, we would probably react in quite a different way, I would think. Probably not like Mary though, for Mary said: "Behold, I am the handmaiden of the Lord. Let it be with me according to your word." I'm not sure that any of us would have the composure to respond to such a confronting and challenging situation in that way.

The initiation that you receive tonight is your initiation. It is you who is initiated. It is you to whom Christ's light is added. But it is not done for you. It is done *to* you, but not *for* you. Each one of you – Elly, Maria and Monique – are being initiated for the sake of others and that is the big step you are taking tonight. You are saying: I am willing to offer something of my life to enrich and to benefit other souls, other people.

To me it is a picture of the correct use of the will. Not in battering and forcing our opinions or desires or our wants upon someone else, but in *willingly* submitting to the spiritual impulses that enter into our being. So I think that what the name Maria represents for each of you is a call, a challenge, a request to you to be willing, to be of service, to be willing to respond to whatever the spirit seeks to

implant, and to create and bring to life within you. Mary is the picture of willingness.

The other story in the gospels that I love, which also relates to Mary, is in the gospel of St John, in chapter 19. It is towards the end of the chapter, and Jesus has been crucified and he is hanging on the cross, but he hasn't died yet. It is just before he dies, and all of his disciples, everyone that has been close to him and travelled with him and worked with him for quite a few years, has fled, except for John who represents love. And with John are three Marys – Mary, the mother of God and two other Marys. It's amazing that those three Marys who represent love and John who represents love are able to be there with Christ in that most painful and bitter ending of his life. How painful would it be for a mother to not only be present at the death of her son, but to be able to show love, to show support and to be there for him, with him in his suffering and agony? That is another great picture of what it means to be Mary: to be of loving service to others, even when it means pain and suffering for ourselves. To go beyond ourselves, like the process to burst the sheath of selfhood in order to be of loving service, loving spiritual companionship to another person. That is also the work of an Initiate.

So it is these things that I want to place before you, to remind you of; things that are especially important in life as Initiates within

The Centre. Things that are also important to each one of us, whoever we are and whatever we do in life. We can shine our light, shine the light of our spirit into the world. We can respond in love to one another. We can seek to see each other as spiritual beings, not just as a lump of flesh. These things are

the work of each of us, but especially they are the work that each of you Initiates-Elect commit yourself to this evening and it is with great joy and with great love that we, your spiritual companions, your family, your friends, share with you in this important step that you each take in your spiritual journey.

So shall it be.

*An address for the Initiation Service of
Elly van der Linde, Maria del mar Diaz Marin and
Monique van de Weert in Holland, 20th November 2008*



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