

## GENE GOLLOGLY, PORTRAIT OF A MICHAELIC INDIVIDUAL

by Neill Reilly

*“Precious in the eyes of the LORD  
is the death of his faithful ones.”*

Psalm 116:15



Gene Gollogly, our dear friend, passed away on January 7, 2021, from a heart attack in Great Barrington, New York. He was born October 4, 1950, in Guisborough, North Yorkshire, England.



*Guisborough, North Yorkshire (walking toward the woodland)*

He was seventy years old, the biblical age of a full life of three score and ten years. And it was a full life!

I first met Gene at a Spiritual Research Conference he ran at The Kimmel Center in New York City. I went because another dear friend was speaking on a panel. One friend led to another. This is a constant theme in Gene's life. The Kimmel center sits at the bottom of 5th Avenue. The conference was on a top floor which offers a fantastic view of Washington Square Park, with the gorgeous arch designed by Stanford White, 5th Avenue and the iconic buildings of uptown New York City. At night the spectacular lights of New York City dazzled your eyes.



*Gene introducing the 1st SteinerBooks seminar in NYC, 2004*

I entered the room with about 200 seats arranged for the conference with tables of SteinerBooks in full display. A small, thin man who looked like a Marathon runner with the air of a leprechaun, went to the podium to speak. "Friend, friends, friends, good evening, good evening, good evening!" Please take your seats, we will start in ten minutes." I could not figure out if Gene had an Irish or English accent. It was a distinctive voice. It was filled with warmth and humor. He then dashed off the stage and went and spoke with multiple people and shook hands and made sure everyone was ready to speak. He was in charge, but seemed to be in a constant state of activity. Gene smiled at every individual and then darted to the next spot, like

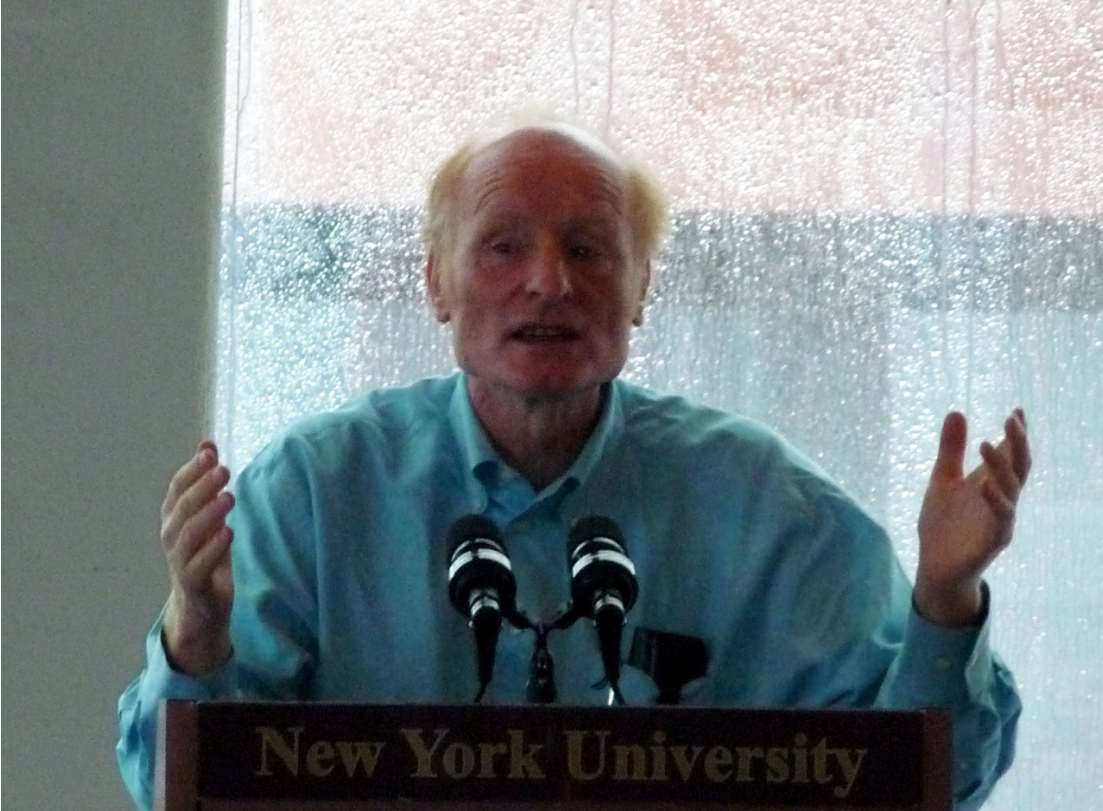
a humming bird going from flower to flower, hesitating in space, then reversing direction. Somehow, he could hover in one spot, but only with a great effort. The next flower was beckoning.



*Gene with Robert Powell, 2009*

Gene hushed the crowd and gave an overview of the evening and the next day. It was obvious that he had the Irish trait of loving language. Gene loved to speak and relished the activity. His style was cheerful, emphatic and loud. He had the style of a polished speaker and used repetition to make sure you got his point.

“Friends, friends, friends, welcome, welcome, welcome to our Spiritual Research Conference.” I later realized that Gene thought that everyone was his friend or would become his friend so his words which seemed hyperbolic were actually factual. Gene made tons of friends and many felt Gene was her or his best friend. To Gene friendship was the air he breathed. It was a religious experience. Gene could make a friend in one conversation. Rudolf Steiner has a wonderful phrase that is a definition of Gene, “unprejudiced interest in our fellows.” (*Staying Connected*, p. 134)



Gene also used his accent and his emphasis on syllables to great effect. He could mesmerize a crowd with his intonations. It was magical and delightful to experience and observe. He might seem theatrical and he was! But it was all in the service of his goal, to create a larger community of spiritual researchers. Gene, similar to many Michaelic individuals, had the almost contradictory ability to use his individuality to create community. His mastery of speech was an understanding of the importance of human community. We are not alone, singular egos floating in the universe. We are connected and intimately involved with one another. The WORD or the Logos is what connects us.

We use words and speech in a prosaic way every day. Genesis starts with spiritual facts. "And God said, Let there be light: and there was light" (Gen.1:3). St. John echoes this fact. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). St. John emphasizes this reality. "And the Word was made flesh" (John 1:14). For Gene, language and speech were sacramental, communion with one another and the spiritual world.

The Trivium is the heart of liberal education and started with the Greeks. We still use the same terms such as grammar school. Education is built around these ideas: Grammar, the ability to read and write, Rhetoric, the art of speaking and presenting an idea and Dialectic, a discussion between individuals with questions and answers. Gene was a master of all three. Great speakers use the art of Rhetoric to create images that we can dwell in. Think of the influence of Lincoln's *Gettysburg Address*, Churchill's *Dunkirk* speech and Martin Luther King's *I Have A Dream* speech. Of course, Rhetoric can be misused as can Dialectic. But in the hands of a moral person, they can do great good.

Gene used his Rhetorical skills for the common good. He advanced spiritual research. He constantly advised individuals to write a book. He was an incubator for burgeoning writers. He assumed everyone had spiritual experiences that should be explored, duly noted, promoted and enjoyed. Then he created conferences where you could meet the authors of the books and speak with them face to face.

Gene was ebullient at these conferences. He was a serial introducer. He seemed to know how to aid in making karmic connections. I was on line at a conference and Gene came up and

stated, “Neill, Neill you must meet Paul O’Leary. You must, you simply must.” He would then get Paul O’Leary and drag him over to meet me with the same refrain. “Paul, Paul, you must meet Neill Reilly. You must, you simply must.” After he introduced us, he walked away and never stated why we must meet one another. Paul looked me up and down, “Well you look like you could take a shot.” Paul paused and then stated, “And give one too!” Paul and I talked and we became lifelong friends. The three of us were rarely in the same spot at the same time. We met at SteinerBooks conferences. When we were together, it felt like a pub in Ireland. You could almost hear the fiddle warming up in the back. Of course, the fiddle was drowned out by our raucous talking and laughter. Paul and Gene were mid-wives to my books.



*Gene with Paul O’Leary at seminar in NYC (ca. 2006)*

### **Gene and the Irish**

Gene asked me where I was coming from. I told Gene I was an ICA. He looked non plussed. Gene, asked, “What is an ICA?” I said it is an acronym where each letter stands for a word that contradicts the next word. Gene looked perplexed. I stated, “ICA is for Irish Catholic Anthroposophist. Each word contradicts the next.” Gene roared. Gene loved all things Irish. When I pointed out Steiner’s quotations on Ireland, he was elated.

Ireland, during the first Christian centuries, was an excellent shelter for spiritual life—an exceptionally good one, protected against all possible illusions. More than any other region on earth, it was real protection from any possible illusion. This is why so many of those who wished to spread Christianity during its early centuries originated in Ireland. They had to work with a naïve population, however, because the Europeans among whom they worked in those days were somewhat primitive. Whereas they had to consider the naïveté of the people, they themselves had to know and understand the great impulses of humanity.

During the fourth and fifth centuries in particular, Irish initiates were active in Central Europe. They began there while preparing for what would take place in the future. To a certain extent, they were influenced by the initiate knowledge that the fifth post-Atlantean era would begin in the fifteenth century (in 1413, as you know). They also knew that they had to prepare for a completely new age, that naïve humankind must be protected for this new period. What could they do at that time to keep harmful influences from entering this unsophisticated population, surrounding it with a fence, so to speak? What did they do?

Evolution was guided by well-informed and honest groups, so that gradually all oceanic travel was eliminated—the kind of journeys that had been made previously from the northern lands to America. Whereas in the past boats had crossed from Norway to America for certain purposes (I shall say more about this another time), it was arranged that knowledge of America would be completely forgotten by the Europeans. Thus, the connection with America was gradually obliterated. By the fifteenth century, Europeans knew nothing of America. This development was directed in particular by Rome, so that the connection with America would be gradually lost, and Europeans would be sheltered from American influences. The initiate monks from Ireland, who had spread Christianity throughout Europe, were especially involved in this process of protecting European humanity from American influences. (*The Reappearance of Christ in the Etheric*, pp. 147–48)

In the past, some of those who were familiar with Ireland expressed its particular characteristics in fairy tales and legends. I would like to point to an esoteric legend that expresses the essence of Ireland in relation to the earthly organism. It was said that humankind was cast from paradise because Lucifer had misled humanity there, and people were thus scattered across the rest of the world. The rest of the world, however, was already there when humanity was forced to leave paradise. Thus, one can distinguish (according to this fairy tale) between the paradise of Lucifer and the rest of earth, into which humanity was expelled. In this sense, Ireland is not part of earth; before Lucifer entered paradise, its likeness had formed on the earth and became Ireland. (ibid., p. 164)

You should fully understand that Ireland is the area of earth that had nothing to do with Lucifer. It would have prevented Lucifer from entering paradise, therefore Ireland had to be separate so that an earthly likeness of paradise would arise. According to legend, Ireland was a separate area that would have hindered Lucifer from entering paradise. Lucifer could not enter paradise until Ireland had been separated from it.

This very beautiful esoteric legend (related here in a very incomplete way) explained for many people the unique purpose of Ireland over the centuries. In the first mystery drama I wrote (“The Portal of Initiation”) you find the familiar story of how Europe was originally Christianized by Irish monks. When St. Patrick introduced Christianity to Ireland, conditions were such that Christianity led to great devotion. This legend is given new meaning by the fact that, in those times, Ireland (called *Ierne* by the Greeks, and *Ivernia* by the Romans) was called the Isle of the Saints. The best impulses of European Christianity originated directly from Ireland—from Irish people, lovingly initiated into Christianity. It was called this because of the great devotion that prevailed in their Christian cloisters. (ibid., pp. 165–66)

For further studies of Celtic Christianity, please read Christopher Bamford’s excellent book, *The Voice of the Eagle: The Heart of Celtic Christianity: John Scotus Eriugena’s Homily on the Prologue to the Gospel of St. John*.



Gene also enjoyed my joke that Rudolf Steiner was actually Irish. Here are my proof points.

1. He was very smart and well learned.
2. He was a great speaker
3. He was a great writer.
4. He had a wonderful sense of humor.
5. He was not fond of the British... Okay, I made this one up.

Where did Gene's state of joy come from? Gene was hiking in Ireland and had a bad fall and broke his leg. He had to hang on to the roots of a bush for hours. Otherwise, he could have fallen further and had even more serious consequences. He was saved. He endured. Tragedy and catharsis transform our lives. Rudolf Steiner often talks of encounters with death and tragedy as turning points where a person is saved from a disaster and later turns his life in a more spiritual manner. I do not know this as a fact with Gene, but perhaps this was a turning point. He was clearly dedicated to spiritual activity in all forms from Anthroposophy to meeting with the Dali Lama and to publishing Father Thomas Keating's book on centering prayer. Gene was catholic with a small c as in universal. This is a hallmark of a Michaelic individual.

### **Gene and Mary**

Gene and I had many conversations on the importance of Mary. Gene was always involved in Marian activity. Of course, Gene traveled to Mexico to experience this Marian site. Please see Gene's essay, "Our Lady of Guadalupe," starting on page 20.

### **Gene and Ahriman**

Dr. Steiner stated that beginning in 1933 we are living in the time of the Reappearance of the Christ. Unfortunately, we are also living in the time of the Incarnation of Ahriman. We have chosen to take on this karma. It is necessary for our development. Dr. Steiner noted critical aspects to Ahriman.

### **Ahriman wants to remain invisible**

*"The greatest trick the Devil ever pulled was convincing the world he didn't exist"*

—Charles Baudelaire

Gene was aware of Ahriman. We often discussed Ahriman. If we take even a superficial glance at the 20th century, its materialistic death march is appalling from Hitler to Stalin to Mao. Ahriman seems to be intruding more and more into human affairs. Ahriman loves to destroy groups. Gene arranged a pilgrimage to Auschwitz to bear witness to the death of those innocent souls. Unfortunately, at the last minute, Gene became sick and could not join us. Even though Gene did not make the journey, he had gone in advance and had planned it all out. We stayed near the death camp at a nunnery and had lectures and walks with the directors at Auschwitz. These brave souls are committed to remembering what occurred and turning the numbered prisoners into human beings by finding their names and noting them. Bearing witness to the absolute destruction of a million beings is a sobering, cathartic event. How can you redefine your understanding that humans are capable of such a slaughter of innocence? At one point our guide reminded us that we were probably walking on or near the ashes of a million people.

We often discussed current events such as Covid 19. It seemed self-evident to us that Covid had Ahriman's finger prints all over it. It is diabolically intelligent. It breaks up families, groups and communities. My step mother passed away during Covid. We missed the Irish wake, the solemn funeral mass and the celebration of her life at a nearby pub. We celebrated an outdoor mass. Fittingly, there was a slight rain as if we were in Ireland. We said the prayers and sang the songs, but it was not the same rituals we are used to saying goodbye.

**Ahriman wants to break up groups and then break up an individual.**

Gene knew the sanctity of groups and communities. He took Christ's words to heart. "For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20).

Therefore, Gene was always connecting individuals, creating conferences and promoting fraternity.

**Ahriman wants to seduce humanity into a cold, intellectual materialistic domain devoid of spirituality.**

Gene was warmhearted and filled with *gemut*, heartfelt knowledge. His devotion to Christ, Michael and Mary was deep and sincere. See his essay in the appendix of this portrait on Our Lady of Guadeloupe.

### **Ahriman dislikes old age**

Gene valued older age and he was now seventy. He knew that if we have worked on our spiritual self as we age physically, we can become more spiritual. This gives the lie to Ahriman that it is all about youth and that old age is to be feared. More importantly Ahriman wants to induce fear, fear of aging and more so of death. Gene kept active until his last breath, even spending the night before his death helping another person pass into the spiritual realm.

### **Ahriman is deadly serious and cannot stand mirth**

Gene was serious, but he was also filled with mirth. He enjoyed laughter. He was not deadly serious even about serious matters. There was always a smile waiting to come out to brighten the moment. He was well aware of Steiner's humor and loved the image of mirth in the upper left corner of the statue of Christ standing between Ahriman and Lucifer.

### **Ahriman and handshakes**

There is another characteristic that may be based on a myth, but fits well with Gene. Supposedly while walking up the hill at Dornach, Dr. Steiner shook hands vigorously with a man coming down the hill. Later Steiner came down the hill and the same man was going up the hill. Steiner again went to shake hands. The man stated, "Dr. Steiner, there is no need to shake hands, we already did it before." Dr. Steiner paid him no attention and shook his hand vigorously again while stating, "Ahriman hates handshaking."

If you look at these characteristics that Ahriman can't stand, they clearly define Gene. He bore witness to Ahriman, he created communities, he valued old age, he enjoyed mirth and he loved to shake hands. Gene must drive Ahriman nuts!

Gene was a true student of Rudolf Steiner, which means he was also a follower of Aristotle. Aristotle's students were known as being part of the Peripatetic School. The word derives from *peripatoi* ("walkways," some covered or with colonnades) of the Lyceum where the members

met. Peripatetic derives from the Greek word *peripatētikós*, which means “of walking” or “given to walking about. Who would be a better descendant of the walking about school of philosophy than Gene? Gene never stopped moving. He was a perpetual motion machine. Like Steiner he had an unbelievable appetite for travelling. Many of Gene’s emails back to me had responses such as, “Traveling, I am on west coast. Will be in touch.” Or “Neill I am in Alaska way out in the middle of nowhere—very bad reception. So, I will call when I get back the 12th! best G.”



*Gene on the road—St. John’s grave and Gene’s visit to “the Churches” in Israel*

Gene traveled to exotic distant places such as Israel, India and China. He was a pilgrim in life, always searching. Waldorf schools are growing in China. So, of course, Gene went. He was asked to speak at a conference. Ever resourceful Gene took slides with colorful drawings of letters. He taught the Chinese how Waldorf schools used art even for learning the alphabet. He talked about color and the alphabet. He was a huge success. They wanted him to come back and help with the Waldorf Initiative in China. But first he had to be examined by the Chinese Communist Party. The dour party inquisitors asked very direct questions such as, “Is Waldorf education connected with any political movement?” Gene’s mother did not raise a dummy. He answered the exact questions with minimal exact answers. “No, Waldorf is not connected with any political movement.” The communists asked, “Is Waldorf connected with any religious sect?” Gene hit a forehand cross court shot. “No, Waldorf is not connected with any religious sect.” Point, game and match. Of course, Gene did not talk about Steiner’s core mission on Cosmic Christianity or *The Philosophy of Freedom*. They did not ask him those questions, so he didn’t talk about them. Gene passed the test and was allowed to return to promote Waldorf

education in China. Unfortunately, because of Covid, he was unable to return to China. I called Gene last December while he was travelling to Colorado to attend a conference. I asked if he was flying. Gene said, “No, I am driving. We can have a very long conversation. I am only in Ohio. Isn’t America beautiful and HUGE!” We did talk for a long time as he drove West.

Gene and I had never stopped our never-ending conversation from Christ to Dr. Steiner to Christology to Michael, Mary and St. Thomas Aquinas. A few weeks before Gene passed away, he sent me CDs on early Christianity and Thomas Aquinas. One friend drove us to New Hampshire. She could not believe that we talked nonstop. She tried to figure out how to use the hot air to power a car. She is still working on it. We talked on the phone, emailed, reviewed one another’s writings and had lunches together in NY City. It was an endless gab fest. Silence was not invited. We dined at Luke’s Lobsta for delicious lobster bisque, Cipriani’s downstairs lunch place with fantastic pasta, Joe’s pizza for some of the best pizza in NY and Chinese food. Gene loved Chinese food. We walked around his old publishing haunts on 41st Street, where he pointed out his old offices and Gene described his youth in publishing.

Gene’s name defined him. If we parse out the LLs we have Go and gly or Go glee. Gene was constantly going. He did not stay, he went. He was filled with glee. Go with glee. Gollgly.

Or Golly glee!

Gene invited me to speak at a SteinerBooks conference in Great Barrington. He also invited Linda and me to stay that night at his home in Great Barrington. Here is a classic Gene email.

Neill we are going to invite you give a talk and to discuss your book at a SteinerBooks Christmas holiday reception in Great Barrington at the Rudolf Steiner School on Friday evening, December 8th. There may be one other speaker...not decided yet.

You—we want!

Please hold the date. I am also going to try and set you up for other talks, too.

Very best wishes,

Gene

His home had a huge [life-size] statue of Michael. Who has a large statue of Michael in his living room? Gene, of course! After he showed us our bedroom, he whisked us out the door to get dinner. During dinner Gene was engaged in a thorough conversation with Linda. With rapt attention, Gene noted similar interests in Biodynamics, Zen meditation, and other subjects. I was basically a bump on a log. I do not think I said anything besides, "Check please?" After I had paid the bill, Gene looked over at Linda, cupped his hand and pointed his finger at me. He arched his eyebrows and said, "Linda, the one thing I don't get, is why did you marry this guy!" He laughed and hit me on the shoulder, an Irish sign of affection.

When I heard that Gene passed away, I was stunned. I did not believe it. I called a friend and asked, "Is this true? Can Gene be dead?" One of the most lively, vivacious individuals I had ever met was dead? My friend was also stunned at the sudden and abrupt departure of our friend. How else would Gene leave? He always had to go to the next encounter. I went for a two hour walk reliving Gene conversations, phrases and gestures. I then took solace by reading Chris Bamford's, Gene's close friend, *Staying Connected*. Reading Steiner lectures on the so-called dead was a balm to my soul. These lectures eased my grief and provided deep insights. They did not erase my sorrow, but they mitigated my sorrow and illustrated how to address death.

We seem to give them back to you God, who gave them to us. Yet as you not lose them in the giving, so we do not lose them by their return. Not as the world gives, do you give, O lover of souls. What you give, you do not take away, for what is yours is ours also if we are yours. And life is eternal and love is immortal, and death is only a horizon, and an horizon is nothing save the limit of our sights. Lift us up, strong Son of God, that we may see further; cleanse our eyes that we may see more clearly: draw us closer to yourself that we may know ourselves to be nearer to our loved ones who are with you. And while you do prepare a place for us, prepare us also for that happy place, that where you are, we may also be for evermore. (Bamford, *Staying Connected*, p. 15)

Ever practical Dr. Steiner gives us practices which can connect us with the so-called dead.

If souls who have remained behind make a clear mental image picture of the dead person, and at the same time bring to mind a spiritual train of thought or read from a

spiritual book (in thought, not aloud), then the dead person whose spiritual image stands before them will become aware of it. (Ibid., p. 30)

Gene was Christ-centric. He lived as best he could according to his relationship with Christ. This will have benefits for Gene in his afterlife.

Since the Christ united with the earth, we must come to understand the Christ on earth. We have to take that understanding with us, otherwise we cannot find Christ after death. (Ibid., pp. 51–52)

Gene was an idealist. He knew ideals are real and can be experienced. Gene's idealism will be invaluable in the next realm. He will avoid this reproach.

In the spiritual world, ignoring an ideal is thus a reality and a being of the hierarchy of angels reproaches us. Their gaze makes us feel the reproach; it is the reproach we feel. (Ibid., pp. 81)

As a person lives, so does he prepare for the life in the spiritual realm after death. These words seem to be a definition of Gene. They may explain the source of Gene's joy.

Here I want to make a remark that may seem strange to you. A healthy life—healthy particularly in the ways we develop here—will never lead people, unless their consciousness is clouded, to look on life as something they are weary of and sated by. Rather, a healthy fulfilled life will lead us, even in later years, to wish to greet each day as fresh and new. A healthy attitude will never induce an old person to think, "Thank God my life is behind me," but rather, "I would like to go back forty or fifty years and live it all through again!" And it is healthy when people have acquired the wisdom to take comfort from the thought that they cannot go back and repeat past actions in *this* life, but that in another life they will be able to improve on them. That is a healthy attitude: to regret nothing one has been through—and, if wisdom is needed to accept this, not to crave it in this life, but to be able to wait for it in another. That is the trust that is built on true confidence and hope, actively sustained.

These, then, are the feelings that properly inspire life and at the same time create a bridge between the living here and the living there: gratitude toward the life that comes to meet us here; trust in its experiences; an intimate feeling of fellowship, solidarity; and the faculty of making hope active in life through continually refreshed life forces. These are the inner ethical impulses that, rightly felt can furnish the very best social ethics, for ethics, like history, can be grasped only in the subconscious realm. (Ibid., pp. 200–01)

Dr. Steiner describes how we may accompany the dead.

This, if I may so describe it, is the first act that is unfolded in the life between death and a new birth. Beyond the threshold of death, the beings of the third hierarchy approach what loosens itself from the human being—all that is entrusted to our etheric body as it dissolves away. The beings of the third hierarchy receive it into their care. And we, as human beings on the earth, can utter a simple and good, a wonderful and beautiful prayer, when we think of the connection of life and death, or of one who has passed through the gate of death, in this way, saying, *Angels, Archangels and Archai in the Ether-weaving receive the human being's Web of Destiny.*

When we say these words, we turn our eyes to a real spiritual fact. Much depends upon whether human beings on the earth *think* the spiritual facts or not: whether they simply accompany the Dead with thoughts that remain behind on the earth, or accompany them on their further path with thoughts that are a true image of what takes place in that other realm they have entered.

This, my dear friends, appears so infinitely desirable to initiation science—that we shall have thoughts in earthly life that are a true image of real spiritual happenings. By merely thinking of theories enumerating so many higher members of the human being and the like, we cannot achieve union with the spiritual world. We can do so only by thinking the realities enacted there.

Therefore, human hearts should be ready to hear once more, what human hearts *did* hear in the old ages of Initiation, in the ancient Mysteries, when the words called out impressively, again and again, to those who were about to be initiated—



*“Accompany the Dead in their further Destinies!” “Memento mori” is all that is left of it now, a more or less abstract exhortation which no longer deeply affects the human being, for it no longer expands his consciousness into a life that is more living than this life in the world of the senses. (Ibid., 211–12)*

\* \* \*

I did not want our conversation to end. I did not want Gene to become a memory.

I had a dream on January 11, 2021, four nights after Gene Gollogly passed away on January 7, 2021. I was walking on a cobblestone street in an Irish or English town when I met Gene walking on the street. I asked him, “You are not really dead, are you?” Gene smiled his enigmatic smile and kept walking with me to his car which was a long black Mercedes. It had the steering wheel on the right side. The driver’s window was down. He got in and I leaned over and asked him. “Is this some plan or subterfuge?” Gene said, “I really can’t talk about it right now.”

Gene drove off and I went to my office which was in a newspaper or publishing firm. My desk was covered with unfinished writing assignments, one of which was an essay on Gene. It was on the right corner of my desk. My editor came up, put his finger on the essay and asked, “Where are you with the Gene essay?” I told him. “Gene was a multifaceted individual, I am getting closer, but I am not finished.” He asked me what was the ending. I stated that it was amazing that towards the end of his life Gene became involved in helping dying people cross over and that the night before Gene died, he slept in a room with a deceased person’s body. In fact, he slept on the floor. My editor looked at me and stated, “Follow the story, follow the story. You have the ending, finish it!”

He walked away.

\* \* \*

Into cosmic distances I will carry  
My feeling heart, so that it grows warm  
In the fire of the holy forces' working;

Into cosmic thoughts I will weave  
My own thinking, so that it grows clear  
In the light of eternal life-becoming;

Into depths of soul, I will sink  
Devoted contemplation, so that it grows strong  
For the true goals of human activity.

In the peace of God, I strive thus  
Amid life's battles and cares  
To prepare myself for the higher Self;

Aspiring to work in joy-filled peace,  
Sensing cosmic being in my own being,  
I seek to fulfill my human duty;

May I live then in anticipation,  
Oriented toward my soul's star  
Which gives me my place in spirit realms.

—**Rudolf Steiner** (*Our Dead*, pp, 96–97)



*Gene in Denver at a conference on mistletoe, 2020, a basis for the book he initiated, Mistletoe and the Emerging Future of Integrative Oncology (photo courtesy of Kirin Buckley)*

## Our Lady of Guadalupe by Gene Gollogly



The Spaniards arrived in the New World in 1492 and eventually made their way to the heart of the Aztec Empire—what is today Mexico City.

According to legend, the Aztecs had left their lands to the south, led by divine instruction in search of an eagle, perched on a cactus, with a serpent in its mouth. They found the “sign” in a region of seven lakes, where they made their capital city and centered their empire.

When the Spaniards arrived at the capital, they found a religion based on the sacrifice of human lives through a blood offering. Cutting out the hearts of the sacrificed, the Aztecs sacrificed thousands of victims a year to their god, Quetzalcoatl, the feathered serpent. The Spanish stopped the practice, but did not stop the flow of blood. They too killed, tortured, and destroyed, but now in the name of Christianity to “save” souls and bring the true faith to the natives.

Don Nune de Guzman, who was notorious for his torture and killing of the indigenous peoples, was the head of the Spanish local Government in the New World. Conversion was enforced at the point of the sword and came from a state of fear. The Franciscan Bishop, Fray

Juan de Zumarraga, though a fervent evangelizer himself, sent secret letters to Emperor Charles V asking for a new civil authority that would be kinder to the Indians. He also prayed to the Virgin Mary for help, and asked for Castillian roses as a sign that he was being heard. Paradoxically, Zumarraga was not only a great evangelizer (he boasted in a letter that he'd destroyed more than five hundred temples and twenty thousand idols); he was also a defender of the Indians. He wanted them to be alive so that he could convert them and save their souls, and feared that the civil authority was killing them in such appallingly large numbers that the population would be decimated.

In the middle of the city of lakes stood the sacred hill of Tepayac. On it was a temple dedicated to the goddess Tonantzin, meaning "Our Mother," the Aztec goddess of fertility. The goddess did not demand blood sacrifice. The Spanish invaders destroyed this temple, too, along with all the other temples, because it was not Christian. Moreover, they erected a Cross in place of Tonantzin's temple on top of the sacred hill of Tepayac.

Among the local natives was one who had been converted. He was an Indian "peasant" who took the name Juan Diego. His original name in Nahuatl was Cuauhtlatohuac, meaning "he who speaks like an eagle." To be from Cuauhtlatohuac was to be of the noble order of the eagle. The eagle was the representative of the Sun, who was a god. Therefore Juan Diego's name implies that he had some spiritual knowledge and was a messenger of the Sun, although to outer appearances he was simply a poor Indian.

On December 9, 1531, before dawn, Juan Diego set out from home and was crossing Tepayac hill to go to Church. He heard birds singing on top of the hill in a beautiful choir—sounds and songs he had never heard before. Then he heard a voice calling out his name. He climbed to the top of the hill, where he saw a "beautiful lady" who spoke to him in Nahuatl, his native language. The story has been translated in a number of versions and is well worth meditating upon.

The Lady said, "Listen, my most abandoned son, dignified Juan: Where are you going?" Juan answered, "My Owner and My Queen, I have to go to your house of Mexico-Tlateloco, to follow all the divine things that our priests, who are the images of our Lord, given to us."

Then the Lady talked with him, unveiling her precious will. She told him: "Know and be certain in your heart, my most abandoned son, that I am the Ever-Virgin Holy Mary, Mother of

the God of Great Truth, of the One through Whom We Live, the Creator of Persons, the Owner of What is Near and Together, of the Lord of Heaven and Earth.”

Much happens then, but the essence is this: The Lady told Juan Diego to go and tell the bishop that a temple/sanctuary/church should be built on the hill Tepayac and dedicated to her. Juan Diego dutifully went to the bishop and, after being abused by his servants and forced to wait a long time, was eventually granted an audience. He told the bishop his story and what the Lady had said to him, but naturally the bishop refused to believe an old Indian, and had him thrown out.

Juan then returned to Tepeyac, and told the Lady what had happened. The Lady said he would have to go again to the bishop the next day and then return and tell her what happened. Early the next morning, Juan Diego got up and went to see the bishop. After waiting a long time, he was again allowed to see bishop and tell his story. Again, the bishop did not believe him and told him to bring back a sign if his story was true. Sadly, Juan Diego then returned home.

Arriving at home, he found his uncle Juan Bernadino gravely ill. Juan Diego stayed home to care for his uncle and missed the evening’s appointment with the lady. He stayed home the next day, too, to care for his uncle, who suffered from smallpox. His uncle sensed he was dying, however, and begged Juan to get a priest for his confession. Juan went back to town to find a priest. As he passed Tapeyac hill again very early on the morning of the twelfth, the Lady floated down and told him his uncle was cured. She told him to go to the top of the hill, collect roses, and take them as a sign to the bishop. Juan went up to the hilltop and found many blooming, dew-covered roses. He gathered them in his cloak, a *tilma*,<sup>1</sup> and returned to see the bishop.

Again, Juan Diego had to endure a long wait and abuse from the bishop’s servants. The bishop was meeting with the newly arrived governor of Mexico. Finally, however, Juan Diego was admitted for an audience. He opened up his *tilma* and spread the roses on the floor. Then something unimaginable happened. Suddenly, on the *tilma*, there was also the image of a Lady! Everyone was filled with awe and fell to their knees. The bishop was stunned. He alone knew

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<sup>1</sup> A *tilmàtli* was an Aztec outer garment for men, worn in front like a long apron and frequently used as a carryall or as a cloak wrapped around the shoulders. Several types were used for the various classes in society. Upper classes wore a *tilma* of cotton cloth knotted over the right shoulder, while the middle class used a *tilma* made of *ayate* fiber, a coarse fabric derived from the threads of the *maguey* cactus. It was knotted over the left shoulder. The lower classes knotted the garment behind the neck, where it could serve for carrying. The most famous *tilmàtli* was that worn by Juan Diego and preserved in the shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

that the roses were the sign that he had been asking for—and there, too, was the miraculous image!



Bishop Zumarraga believed and built the church as the “Lady” had asked. Juan told the bishop that the Lady had called herself “Tecoatlazopeu,” which means the lady “who crushed Quetzalcoatl,” the god who demanded human sacrifice. The Spaniards could not quite understand this name and therefore named the lady Guadalupe, after the Sanctuary of Guadalupe de Caceres in Extremadura, in southern Spain, where there is a sixth-century “Black Virgin”—a wooden statue of Mary that is dark because of the wood from which she was made. Indeed, the phenomena of the Black Virgins is well worth studying.



*Black Madonna of Montserrat*

Juan Deigo's uncle, Juan Bernardino, however, said that her name was Tlecuauhtlacupeuh ("she who comes flying from the light like an eagle of fire"). Several variations of her name exist, including Tequantlaxopeuh ("she who banishes those that ate us") and Coatlaxopeuh ("she who crushed the serpent's head").

The native people of the Americas at that time understood a picture language, in both words and images. Both the story and the image convey important signs. The singing of the birds draws the indigenous people into a sacred space; the fact that the birdsongs are so unusual and beautiful says something special is to come.

In the conversation between Our Lady and Juan Diego, she addresses him with respect "Juantzin, Juan Diegotzin"—the ending *tzin* meaning "you are worthy of respect." This means the Lady respects all native peoples. The Lady respects native peoples, speaks their language, and chooses one of their own to communicate to the conquerors and to Church authorities. Native peoples are accepted in their own reality. She does not get angry with Juan Diego when the Bishop rejects him, but encourages him gently to try again. Juan Diego is able to talk naturally and endearingly with the Lady, and she listens and gives him wise counsel. She cures



Juan Bernadino of the illness that the native peoples know all too well. The fact that the roses are covered with dew is also important. Dew is the healing essence of the flower for the soul and spirit. Many of the native peoples understood the properties of roses. They understood that they spoke to the heart. At the beginning of the story, Our Lady asks, “Where are you going?” This is a question that can be asked of all of us. Our Lady is then asking all of us to build a temple—not an outer building, but an inner sanctuary where we can meet her.

The image of Our Lady of Guadalupe revealed and reveals many things. She stands in front of a sun, and is therefore greater than their sun god was. She stands on the moon, and therefore is more important than the moon god. A winged being holds her up, which means she is from the sky; but her hands are joined in prayer, which means there must be one greater than she. The bluish-green cover of her cloak is representative of kings, but her eyes are lowered, so she is bowing to someone else. The black sash beneath her breasts above her stomach means she is pregnant, so she is carrying a baby of royal blood. The white fur at the neck and the gold border were marks of royalty for the Aztecs. The stars on her cloak and the fact that she is being carried means that a new time was coming. She is framed by the rays of the sun in alternating patterns of curved and wide rays and straight and narrow rays. There are sixty-two on her right side, and seventy-seven on her left. (The seventy-seven rays are reminiscent of the number of generations before the Nathan Jesus child of Luke’s Gospel)

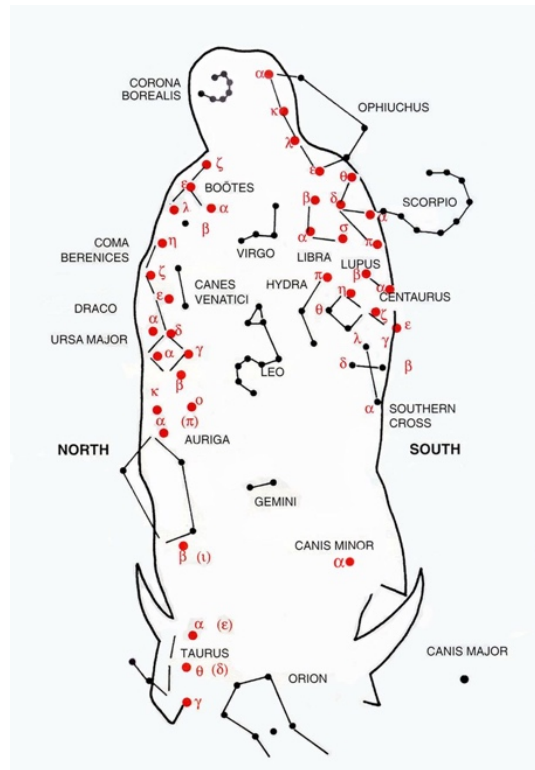
On her cloak she has nine large triangular Mexican magnolia flowers (reminding one of the nine hierarchies). She has a Flower of the Sun—a single four-petalled flower over the child in the womb—which represents fulfillment. The cross-shaped flowers on her cloak are *mamalhuarztli*, which signify new life. The Mexican magnolias symbolize the beating hearts of victims of sacrifice, and as a pregnant woman is wearing them, her issue will be another but final victim. The Lady’s left knee is slightly bent and because the triangular flowers also represent *maracas* (musical instruments), she is seen to be dancing for joy. The Lady’s hair and skin color is dark and olive colored, close to that of the Native people of Central America (and of the Holy Land). Her racial facial features are not those of an Native person or a European, but suggest those of a Mestizo woman, the fruit of the mixing of European and Native peoples, prophetic of a new mixed race. Her hair is parted in the middle and worn under a mantle, a covering similar to the *rebozo* (a kind of multi-purpose shawl) worn by native Indian women. This cover was the

color of the quetzal, a highland bird, whose feathers were valuable and used to denote nobility and sanctity.

In the early 1500s, Raphael painted many remarkable Madonnas. Many have studied these paintings and understand their unique beauty and wonderful picture language. In many of them, Raphael shows the hairstyle of Our Lady of Guadalupe. And in the Cowper Madonna (in the National Gallery in Washington, DC), the color of her cloak is similar to that of Guadalupe.

Our Lady appeared three times to Juan Diego. She also appeared to Juan Diego's uncle, Juan Bernadino, who recovered as he lay dying of smallpox.

Four is the sacred number for indigenous people everywhere. Four represents the four cardinal points and the elements of water, fire, air, and earth. (In some versions of the story, Juan Diego was turned away four times before he could see the bishop).



In a geographical sense, if Tepayac Hill is the Flower of the Sun at the center, the nine flowers are positioned just where the surrounding mountains are. The winter solstice in 1531 took place on Tuesday, December 12. The sky map for that date at 10:40 is on the tilma, with both the Northern constellations and the Southern ones clearly indicated through the position of the stars on the tilma.

Bishop Zumarraga erected the Church to “Our Lady of Guadalupe,” and thousands of people came to see the image. The conversion of millions of native peoples to Christianity then occurred quickly, peacefully, in synchronicity with their spiritual understanding. Tilmas naturally decay after fifteen years or so, but this tilma has survived in perfect condition for nearly five hundred years. In 1660, the Roman Catholic Church named Our Lady of Guadalupe the “Mother of God,” considering her synonymous with the Virgin Mary. She became the Patron Saint of Mexico. In 1921, a bomb placed in a flower pot right under the tilma exploded and caused extensive structural damage to the church (now a cathedral), but the tilma survived untouched.

In 1945, Pope Pius XII designated Our Lady of Guadalupe “Empress of the Americas,” from Eagle Alaska to Tierra del Fuego, North, Central, and South (that is, from the Eagle to the Fire). Endearingly, many Mexicans often call Our Lady of Guadalupe “La Morenita,” or Little Darkling.

Today, there is tremendous interest in Mary/Isis/Sophia. Even in New York City, last December hundreds of young people dressed in red, white, and blue track suits (from the red, white, and blue feathered wings of the supporting angel under Our Lady and symbolizing loyalty, faith, and fidelity) paraded with banners of Our Lady of Guadalupe and celebrated her feast day. The church that is dedicated to her in New York City (on 14th Street and 8th Avenue) is covered with large murals of her apparition to Juan Diego. On Sundays there, both English and Spanish masses are crowded, while other local churches have small attendance.

Our Lady of Guadalupe has also become the heart of “liberation theology.” She is seen as the comforter of the oppressed, the downtrodden, the despairing, and the poor. She appears everywhere—at political events like the Caesar Chavez marches for the rights of farm workers in the 1960s and 1970s and at the recent marches for immigration reform in Los Angeles, Miami, Dallas, New York, and other cities. She is acknowledged throughout Latin America and by Native Americans in the United States.

While in New Mexico and Arizona, I was surprised at how often her image is seen not only in homes and churches, but also in sweat lodges and kivas. Most native peoples, including the Navajo and the Yaqui Indians I visited, show a devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe and include her among their sacred ancestors.

Throughout the Americas, Our Lady of Guadalupe is not just an image, but is also a living presence.



*The Small "Cowper" Madonna*



*San Juan Diego*

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