WORKSHOP II

THE LANGUAGES OF FAITH AND THE DYNAMICS OF INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION THE SOCIAL PRE-CONSCIOUS

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AGENDA

- 15 minutes—Meet, introduce ourselves, and any technical adjustments needed.
- 15 minutes—Introduction and framework. Examples given by the leaders.
- 40 minutes—Dialogue and interaction on the images.
- 20 minutes—Application to our work situations.
- 90 minutes total

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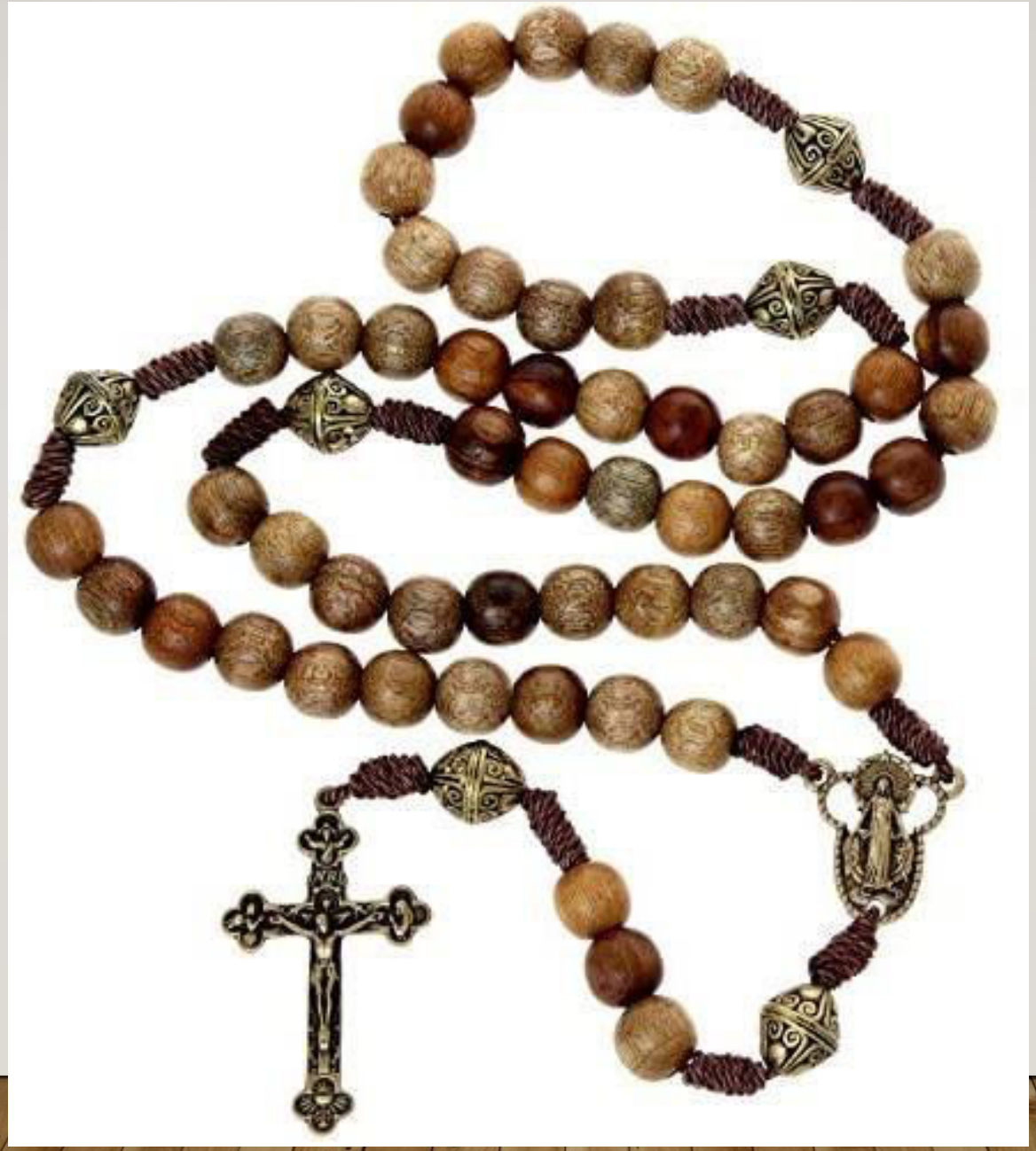

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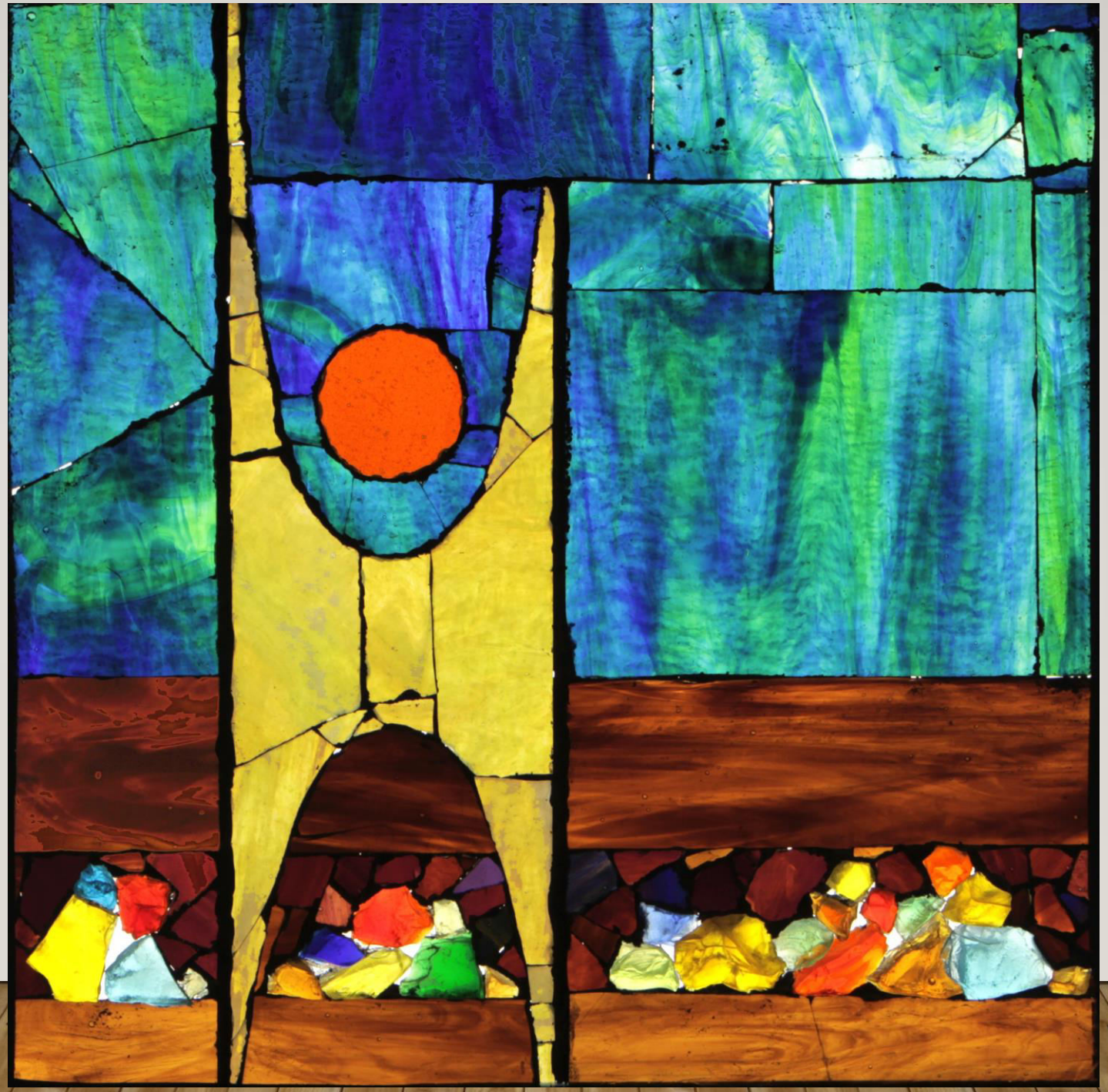

11.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What specific transference or countertransference patterns do you observe in patients involved in spiritual practice?

In what ways do these patterns change when the patient's practice is the same, similar, or different than your own?

In what ways do you see these practices creating or resolving therapeutic impasses?

What advantages does group psychotherapy offer when exploring the meaning and function of religious experience?

There is a spectrum of immature to mature forms of expression within the languages of faith. Freud, like many others, focused on the immature forms of expression. What keeps one from seeing the healthy forms of faith?

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  - An extensive bibliography: http://www.gapdallas.com/papers/SpiritBib.htm

James W. Fowler's Stages of Faith

In his book 1981 book *Stages of Faith*, James W. Fowler developed a theory of six stages that people go through as their faith matures based on the work of Jean Piaget and Lawrence Kohlberg. The basic theory can be applied, not only to those in traditional faiths, but to those who follow alternative spiritualities or secular worldviews as well. In his 1987 book *A Different Drum,* M. Scott Peck offered a simplified version focusing only on the four most common stages.

	Stage	Description	Simplified version by M. Scott Peck	
1	**Intuitive-Projective**	This is the stage of preschool children in which fantasy and reality often get mixed together. However, during this stage, our most basic ideas about God are usually picked up from our parents and/or society.	I. Chaotic-Antisocial	People stuck at this stage are usually self-centered and often find themselves in trouble due to their unprincipled living. If they do end up converting to the next stage, it often occurs in a very dramatic way.
2	**Mythic-Literal**	When children become school-age, they start understanding the world in more logical ways. They generally accept the stories told to them by their faith community but tend to understand them in very literal ways. [A few people remain in this stage through adulthood.]		
3	**Synthetic-Conventional**	Most people move on to this stage as teenagers. At this point, their life has grown to include several different social circles and there is a need to pull it all together. When this happens, a person usually adopts some sort of all-encompassing belief system. However, at this stage, people tend to have a hard time seeing outside their box and don't recognize that they are "inside" a belief system. At this stage, authority is usually placed in individuals or groups that represent one's beliefs. [This is the stage in which many people remain.]	II. Formal-Institutional	At this stage people rely on some sort of institution (such as a church) to give them stability. They become attached to the forms of their religion and get extremely upset when these are called into question.
4	**Individuative-Reflective**	This is the tough stage, often begun in young adulthood, when people start seeing outside the box and realizing that there are other "boxes". They begin to critically examine their beliefs on their own and often become disillusioned with their former faith. Ironically, the Stage 3 people usually think that Stage 4 people have become "backsliders" when in reality they have actually moved forward.	III. Skeptic-Individual	Those who break out of the previous stage usually do so when they start seriously questioning things on their own. A lot of the time, this stage ends up being very non-religious and some people stay in it permanently
5	**Conjunctive**	It is rare for people to reach this stage before mid-life. This is the point when people begin to realize the limits of logic and start to accept the paradoxes in life. They begin to see life as a mystery and often return to sacred stories and symbols but this time without being stuck in a theological box.	IV. Mystical-Communal	People who reach this stage start to realize that there is truth to be found in both the previous two stages and that life can be paradoxical and full of mystery. Emphasis is placed more on community than on individual concerns.
6	**Universalizing**	Few people reach this stage. Those who do live their lives to the full in service of others without any real worries or doubts.		

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