

CONSD NEWS



United in Prayer Day

SPECIAL INTEREST

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On March 15 members and guests from both Contemplative Outreach of San Diego and North San Diego came together in unity with their contemplative brothers and sisters around the world to share in a United in Prayer Day. We gathered at St Bartholomew's in Poway and were graciously greeted by flurries of soft pink flowering pear petals that carpeted the stairs leading to the patio.

After enjoying healthy and delicious snacks and tables delightfully adorned in Lenten and Easter decorations, we centered together. There is something quite special in the silence and peace that pervade a room as 62 people become present to Presence.

After a short break we came together to watch a series of DVD presentations from the International Conference which was held in Houston last fall. Frs. Richard Rohr, O.F.M. and Thomas Keating, O.C.S.O. both shared their thoughts on: *Truth, Beauty and Goodness*. *Continued on page 2*

A Day with Fr. William Meninger "The Process of Forgiveness"

Fr. Meninger is a Trappist monk from Snowmass CO. He is a very vital part of bringing Centering Prayer to the secular world. He has published numerous books and audio presentations related to Centering Prayer, and is a highly sought speaker. In his seminal book, "The Process of Forgiveness" he states "It is extremely important from the very beginning to understand that the primary consideration and motivation for forgiveness is ourselves. We forgive others, in the first place, for our own sake. ... Only when we allow our wounds to heal and let forgiveness occur will we free ourselves from our self-imposed prison cells." You will not want to miss this opportunity to explore with Fr. Meninger *why* we must forgive and *how* to forgive.

Date: Saturday, May 10

Time: Registration 8:30 am -9:00 am

Presentation: 9:00 am - 3:00 pm

Location: St. John the Evangelist

Catholic Church, 1001 Encinitas Blvd.,
Encinitas

Suggested donation: \$40.00 Donation at the door: \$50.00

For more information contact Sue Hagen (760) 745-8860

sue.hagen@sbcglobal.net

United in Prayer Day—continued

In listening to Frs. Rohr and Keating it was easy for me to get distracted by one powerful statement and then miss the next two or three.! Here are some of the one-liners that caught my attention:

“God does not love us because we are good, but because God is good.”

“All creation is the womb of God – one sacred universe.”

“The Incarnation solved the space problem of separateness.”

“There is no place to go to ‘get transformed’ because we have already got it programmed in our DNA.”

“Contemplative prayer is about receptivity, not passivity.”

Fr Keating, in one of his talks, discussed the different aspects of material, emotional, mental and spiritual beauty.

Not surprisingly, he mentioned that “Silence is the most beautiful of the most beautiful.” Fr Thomas ended by saying that we are “not to receive beauty, but to BE beauty.”

After being delighted and challenged by both Fr’s Rohr and Keating, there was a time of ‘faith-sharing’, another period of centering and a gentle and inspirational closing. The morning sent me forth with a renewed peace and inner stillness as I breathed in the beauty around me and descended the stairs carpeted with pink flower petals.

Corinne Helena

About Centering Prayer

“The method of centering prayer is designed to turn off the ordinary flow of thoughts, that reinforces our habitual way of thinking of ourselves and of looking at the world. It is like turning a radio from long wave to short wave. You may be used to a long wave set and the stations it picks up but if you want to hear stations from far away, you have to turn to the other wavelength. In similar fashion, if you turn off your ordinary thinking and emotional patterns, you open yourself to a new world of reality.”

Fr. Thomas Keating

Open Mind, Open Heart

The Newsletter of CONSD: The North San Diego Chapter of Contemplative Outreach, Ltd.

Editors: Sue and Chris Hagen Layout and Design: Anne Alferos

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and the Prayer Groups from Poway and Rancho Bernardo

Website: www.consd.com

Contemplative Dying Part II

“Those Who Lose Their Life Will Find It: Contemplative Dying Part II”

Early in February 2008, just a few days before Ash Wednesday -- and directly following the delightful “Sacred Rhythm” morning retreat – a group of San Diego contemplatives gathered once again to ponder several facets of contemplative dying under the guidance of Bryan McNutt, spiritual counselor at the Silverado Hospice and Centering Prayer group facilitator at St. Paul’s Episcopal Cathedral. Bryan offered an apt segue from the morning retreat’s focus on sacred dance with this Kahlil Gibran quote: *“It is only when the earth claims our body that we shall truly dance.”*

As those on the contemplative journey learn, continually consenting to the presence and action of God within leads to an expansive embrace of ambiguity and paradox – the state of awareness that Jesus apparently spoke from when he said *“Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it”* (Mt 10: 39). Jesus’ wisdom is echoed in these words of Thomas Merton thousands of years later: *“To enter the realm of the contemplative life, one must, in a sense, die.”*

How is it that *finding leads to loss* and that *loss leads to finding*? In one sense, Jesus’ quote speaks to the inextricable connection between life and death and finding and loss. What we “find” with life – be it success, prestige, security – or even intangible riches like love, hope, and joy – are ever-changing and temporal and will inevitably be lost. And yet, all that is lost *“for my sake”* will bring forth life – a deeper *way of being* rooted in the compassion and wisdom that emerges as we die to the false self and are raised to a new, transformed life in Christ.

As Bryan and several other contemplatives pointed out, death occurs daily in a variety of ways: lost opportunities, a shake-up or shift in our belief system, retirement, the loss of an intimate relationship, the

“empty nest” as children leave home, illness and loss of former health and strength, the recognition of our own flaws and weaknesses ... Rather than avoiding or ignoring such deaths, we might begin to open ourselves to their life-deepening and transformative possibilities by pondering such questions as: What is dying within me? What new expression of my true self is emerging? How might I be a midwife to that true self that is emerging? In discovering the answers to these questions, Bryan explained, we can begin to hold the tension between two seeming opposites – life and death – and allow that tension to invigorate us. We then might discover, as Rinpoche noted, that *“death is a mirror that reflects our true self.”*

One of the ways of being a “midwife to the true self” – a wise ally during the dying-and-birthing process – is through the ongoing practice of contemplative prayer and the increasingly magnanimous participation in the Spirit-rooted life that it fosters. Thank you yet again, Bryan, for an afternoon of thoughtful exploration and contemplative invitation!

Mary Williams

Prayer Group Affirmation meeting

On April 5th eleven prayer group facilitators gathered at the Lutheran Church of The Incarnation to support and affirm one another through the mutual sharing of experiences and ideas. After a brief period of Centering Prayer we enjoyed the fellowship of a community lunch. Following lunch each prayer group facilitator shared the status of their prayer group including the formation material they are engaged in at the moment. Many helpful ideas were shared as we discussed challenges that sometimes arise in prayer groups. We initiated a discussion of Fr. Keating's concept of "soul friending"

that occurs in the safety of a Centering Prayer group. We will continue this discussion at our next meeting. Our gathering ended with a presentation by Susan Siciliano of a beautiful method of Lectio Divina. Our next meeting will be on 9/6/08. The location will be announced. We encourage all prayer group facilitators to participate in these vital quarterly meetings or send a member of your prayer group when you can not attend.

Chris Hagen
Co-Coordinator

Living Flame Update

Registrations are still being accepted for the Living Flame Program presented by nationally known speakers from Contemplative Outreach, Ltd. It begins on Sept. 20, 2008 and will be held one Saturday a month for seven months (excluding December) from 9:00AM to 4:00PM at St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church in Poway. The Living Flame Program is spiritually enriching and is experiential as well as informational. Participants are given the opportunity to evaluate, validate and share their own experience of Centering Prayer in

the context of a contemplative community. The topics are as follows: Lectio Divina, Refinement of the Centering Prayer Practice, Formation of the False Self, The False Self in Action, Divine Therapy, Night of Sense and the Welcoming Prayer. The cost for the entire program is \$200.00 and is due no later than July 1, 2008. For more information please call Sue Hagen at (760) 745-8860 or email her at consd@cox.net.

Have you changed lately?

Have you recently changed your home address, email address, and/or phone number? If you have please send us the changes so we can keep our data base up to date. Please call Sue Hagen at 760-745-8860 or email her at consd@cox.net

A Moment For Reflection

"We are not human beings having a spiritual experience. We are spiritual beings having a human experience."

Pierre de Chardin

The Sacred Rhythm Retreat

After greeting some friends and sampling the sumptuous refreshment table we began to take a seat in the large circle and to gaze at the graceful sacred environment in the center. A cloud of white cloth hosted three scarlet amaryllis and a trinity of bold red candles amidst flickering votives and translucent red and gold ribbon. Gradually the environment and the gentle guitar music merged quieting us into stillness.

Our Sacred Rhythm Half Day Retreat on February 2nd was God's rhythm of love: a rhythm of beauty, of personal quiet, of peaceful sharing, of evocative chanting, of mindful walking, of creative dancing, and, of course, of yummy eating.

Evie McGreevy began by saying, "I love and trust retreats," and how the words of Christ, "Come with me and rest a while," evoke the mysterious power of God. She continued by describing how the Trinity can be represented as a sacred rhythm in the following way: God is the dance floor; Jesus is the lead partner; and the Holy Spirit is the music. She also reminded us of the symbols of the Trinity in the amaryllis and candles on the altar. Evie then shared an idea from Cynthia Bourgeault's *Wisdom Jesus* about the Trinity. Rather than imagining the Trinity as a triangle, we can see the Trinity as a wheel going round and round with the Father pouring himself into the Son, the Son pouring himself into the Spirit and the Spirit pouring herself into the Father. This creates a dance of self-emptying love transforming the hard and resistant into movement—soft, smooth, and flowing.

Ange Dee then led us in a chant using the words "Be still and know that I am God." Our thin voices soon swelled into a multilayered chord as we repeated the chant letting Ange's beautiful voice ride on ours. The chant then faded and we moved into centering prayer followed by personal silent time either in or out of doors. When we returned we shared some personal thoughts. One participant gave her recollection of Fred Astaire dancing not just on the floor but on the walls and the ceiling. If God is the dance floor, we might not limit that floor to the ground below us. Another participant de-

scribed her necklace; a triangle intertwined with a circle like the two symbols of the Trinity Evie had shared. And then another participant quoted a poem with the line "In the silence of His spirit may we do His will and that only."

Later Ange's evocative music led us in a mindful walk. Evie reminded us of the words of Thich Nhat Hanh who said to walk "as if you are kissing the earth with your feet". During this time, I was especially moved. I had never walked slowly and meditatively before and the repetition of walking around the circle to the music of lyre and chimes lulled my physical senses yet opened others, and I felt a closeness to God in all things. After another period of centering prayer, Elena Andrews simply and gracefully expressed herself in a fluid and inspirational dance. By dancing before us she encouraged us to express ourselves in God's sacred rhythm. She then explained how the Holy Spirit gives us our own rhythm: we no longer have to dance the dance of others. And then we were invited to dance. Some sat, dancing in their hearts, while others found a place in the room and danced spontaneously. .

What a contrast was this retreat from an often noisy world—a world whose rhythm is often not sacred. Our beautiful retreat environment was created by Alicia Annas, Pat Worret, and Elena Andrews. Rebecca Crowley and Janet Williams greeted us at the Welcoming Table, and Sharon Hoffman, Beth Ward and others from the host church, San Dieguito United Methodist church, graciously prepared the food and secured the room. All of these efforts served to bless each and all. How fortunate we are to have so many talented and gracious people willing to make a retreat like this possible. Thank you.

Linda Dollins

CONSD Weekend Retreat

Save the dates of October 29-31, 2010 for our first Annual Weekend Retreat at Prince of Peace Abbey in Oceanside. There are 18 singles and 13 doubles available and the total cost for the weekend is \$130.00. The Retreat will begin at 3:00PM on Friday and conclude at 1:00PM Sunday. Check future Newsletters for more information.

Sue Hagen

Q and A with Fr. Thomas Keating

Q. *I have been meditating for many years, yet I have no spiritual experience. Can you address that?*

A. Many people meditate because they receive consolation once in a while. Every now and then they get a ray of light or a sense of peace that supports them on the journey. But someone who is not receiving consolations and still perseveres deserves the first prize. John of the Cross is a great help here. One of his major contributions to the knowledge of the spiritual journey is the alternative he describes for the exuberant mysticism of Teresa of Avila. He teaches that there is also a mysticism of pure faith, which he calls the "hidden ladder," which is characterized by darkness and habitual dryness all the way to transforming union. The ladder of pure faith is like taking the back stairs of Teresa's *Interior Castle*. But what difference does it make when you are trying to get to the top of the castle whether you take the main staircase with its gilded banisters or the back stairs assigned to the servants? The main thing is to reach the top. In John of the Cross's view, the Night of Sense does not necessarily lead, as Teresa seems to think, to the exuberant mysticism of the prayer of quiet union and full union. Some and perhaps even most persons who are led into the Night of Sense continue in it until it turns into the Night of Spirit, without a period of profound spiritual consolation.

Ruth Burrows in her book *Guidelines for Mystical Prayer* distinguishes between "lights on" spirituality and a "lights off" spirituality. According to her, both ways lead to the transforming union. Those who go the path of exuberant mysticism (lights on) run the risk of becoming attached to their spiritual experiences. The way of pure faith or the hidden ladder--John of the Cross's contribution to the mystical journey--is a great consolation to people who have spent years on the journey and felt that they got nowhere because they had no consolation. My answer to the question is, "You are very close to the top, just keep going."

From "The Better Part" Fr. Thomas Keating

DONATIONS

CONSD is a volunteer organization. We have no grants or other forms of financial support other than from those who desire to support CONSD's Vision and Mission through their compassionate donations. While we have no paid staff we do incur expenses. For example the expenses incurred in the daily operation of the CONSD office, the production and mailing of our newsletter and other forms of written communication with our members as well as the provision of Centering Prayer events. Since we are a non-profit organization all donations are tax deductible. Should you want to make a donation please make out your check to CONSD and mail it to CONSD 908 Via Linda Escondido, CA 92029.

We thank you for your support!

Sue and Chris Hagen
CONSD Co-Coordinators

7 Day Intensive Retreat

Go On A Seven Day Retreat! Try It! You *Will* Like It!!

Recently, a group of twenty nine individuals from various chapters of Contemplative Outreach came together to participate in a "7 Day Intensive Centering Prayer Retreat" sponsored by the Pacific Coast/West Region of Contemplative Outreach held at the Center for Spiritual Formation in Orange, CA. Marie Howard and Father Carl Arico were the experienced and knowledgeable facilitators who accompanied us as we all became a prayerful community for a week surrounded and supported by the gift of continual silence. Father Carl and Marie guided us through seven days of extended opportunities for Centering Prayer. Father Carl reminded us that coming to prayer signifies our intention to consent to God's Presence and Action in our lives. They led us in thoughtful, reflective and humorous ways through a number of meaningful videos of Father Thomas Keating. Marie warmly encouraged us to "Listen with the ear of your heart." and mentioned that there are new and deeper awarenesses brought forth each a video is revisited. Spiritual Direction and Soul Friending were provided for those who chose to sign up. This was offered throughout the retreat and was appreciated by many. The time of Eucharist that ended some days included a meaningful homily that one night included an invitation for retreatants to identify: "What have I become aware of in the last 24 hours that needs to be healed? How did I paralyze myself? What...needs to be forgiven? What...needs to be celebrated? The beautifully landscaped ground at the Center for Spiritual Development showed the evidence of great love, creativity, and tender care from hard-working hands. We all enjoyed walking paths that wound around a large variety of: trees, greenery, plants, and flowers. We were encouraged by Father Carl to "Walk in the Presence of God as the Lord heals us on deep levels." We also had comfortable rooms and ample food- but the real comfort and nourishment of this intensive retreat came through experiencing a deeper and further understand of the practice of Centering Prayer and a clearer appreciation of being brought into greater intimacy with God as our False Self Programs continue to be evacuated and the Holy Spirit begins to infill those newly opened spaces. And...for those of you who wish you could have been there...there will be another "7 Day Intensive Retreat" from Father Carl and Marie next year- April 24-30, 2009 at the same location!!! Carol Kierulff

Nativity Prayer Group

Nativity Centering Prayer Group has been together since January, 2001, meeting every Saturday morning at 9:00. During these years many people have come and gone but through the structure of centering prayer, as taught by Fr. Keating, our group is bonded together as we seek to spend time in the presence of the Lord. Ages, life experiences, occupations, and church affiliations are diverse, but a commitment to prayer and centering prayer and deepening spiritual awareness are the unifying thread. As one person simply put it: "We like each other."

We are blessed by having a special and lovely meeting place in the small chapel of Nativity Church. We physically let go of worldly concerns as we walk the path past the fragrant orange grove, past the sculptures of the Stations of the Cross, and past the prayer garden on our way to the Chapel. It is a haven to go there and retreat into the simple setting where we can hear the burbling of the large fountain outside and the softly playing Gregorian chant from the speakers in the courtyard. The bells ringing at 9:00 signal the beginning of our prayer time.

During February we arranged for a weekend Lenten Retreat, led by Sr. Justine Lyons at the Spiritual Ministry Center in Ocean Beach. This was an incredible experience for each person who attended and the lingering effects of this wonderful time together with periods of silence and centering prayer are still with us. Our group is truly blessed in so many ways.

Marylynne McCulloch

CONSD Centering Prayer Groups

	Area	Leader's)	Telephone	Location	Day & Time
1	Del Mar (1)	John & Mary Wavrik	858-755-8437	St. Peter's Episcopal Church 14 th Street, Del Mar 334	Tuesdays: 4:30 p.m.
2	Del Mar (2)	Kathy Agnew Susan Siciliano	Kathy 858-481-8754 Susan 858-792-6988	Home of Carol Walsh (call for directions)	Mondays: 6:30 p.m.
3	Encinitas (1)	Margo King Shirley Shetula	760-436-4460 760-436-6721	Home of Bernice Taaff (Call 760-942-2165)	Mondays: 10:30 a.m.
4	Encinitas (2)	Mike and Ann King	760-753-1575	Home of Mike and Ann King Call for directions)	Thursdays: 7:00 p.m.
5	Encinitas (3)	Sharon Hoffman Beth Ward	760-635-9463 760-436-6589	San Dieguito United Methodist Church (Call for meeting location)	Mondays: 6:30 p.m.
6	Encinitas (4)	Fr. Larry Hart	760 753-3017	St. Andrew's Episcopal Church Parish Hall 890 Balour Encinitas	Thursday: 6:30 p.m.
7	Escondido	Linda Dollins	760 745-5100	First United Methodist Church 341 S. Kalmia Escondido	Mondays: 4:30 p.m.
8	Fallbrook	Marcy Burge	760-723-2773	Fallbrook Presbyterian Church 463 S. Stagecoach Lane, Fallbrook	Saturdays: 8:30 to 9:30 a.m.
9	Murrietta	Kristin Andersen	951-696-9428	Home of Debbie Linsday 23511 Silverwood, Murrietta	Thursdays: 12:30 p.m.
10	Oceanside (1)	Ed Clifford	760-630-1897	Mission San Luis Rey Parish McKeon Center Room 19	Wednesdays: 7:00 p.m.
11	Oceanside (2)	Mary Williams	760 510-9337	St. Thomas More Catholic Church 1450 S. Melrose Drive	Thursday: 1:00 p.m.
12	Poway (1)	Elena Andrews	858-451-2098	Saint Gabriel Catholic Church 13734 Twin Peaks Road, Poway	Fridays: 9:30 to 11:00 a.m.
13	Poway (2)	Colleen Clementson Rebecca Crowley	858-748-8548 858-748-3801	Community Church of Poway 13501 Community Road, Poway	Tuesdays: 6:30 to 8:00 p.m.
14	Poway (3)	Sue & Chris Hagen	760-745-8842	St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church 16275 Pomerado Road, Poway	Tuesdays: 5:00 p.m.
15	Poway (4)	Sue & Chris Hagen	760-745-8842	St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church 16275 Pomerado Road, Poway	Tuesdays: 6:30 p.m.
16	Ramona	Joan Gansert	760-518-2081	Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church 537 E Street, Ramona	Fridays: 8:30 a.m. Daily Mass Chapel
17	Rancho Bernardo	Maureen Anderson	858-673-8886	San Rafael Chapel	Wednesdays: 7-8:00 p.m.
18	Rancho Santa Fe	Marlynne McCullogh	760-436-1924	Church of the Nativity 6309 El Apajo, Rancho Santa Fe	Saturdays: 9:00 a.m.
19	Temecula	Bob Dudley	951-302-9652	St. Thomas Episcopal Church Sanctuary Jefferson Avenue, Temecula	Wednesdays: 4:30 p.m.

CONSD AND COSD EVENTS

CONSD EVENTS

May 10, 2008

Event: “The Process of Forgiveness” with Fr. William Meninger

Time: 8:30AM to 3:00PM

Location: St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church

1001 Encinitas Blvd., Encinitas

Suggested Donation \$40.00

Donation at the door: \$50.00

August 23, 2008

Event: “Sacred Night” A Half Day Retreat

Time: 9:00AM to 12:30PM

Location: San Rafael Catholic Church

Free Will Offering

September 20, 2008

Living Flame Program begins: “Lectio Divina”

Time: 9:00AM to 4:00PM

St. Bartholomew’s Episcopal Church

16257 Pomerado Road, Poway

Pre Registration for the entire program required

October 4, 2008

Event: “Spiritual Gifts”

Time: TBA

Location: St. Peter’s Episcopal Church, Del Mar

Suggested Donation: TBA

December 6, 2008

Event: Advent with Susan Komis

Time: TBA

Location: TBA

Suggested Donation: \$35.00

2009

January 16-17, 2009

Event: Presentation by Cynthia Bourgeault, Episcopal priest and noted author

Time: Friday evening and Saturday TBA

Location: TBA

Suggested Donation: TBA

May 16, 2009

Event: Regional Event with Fr. Thomas Keating

Time: TBA

Location: TBA

Suggested Donation: TBA

December 5, 2008

Event: Advent Event with Fr. Carl Arico

Time: TBA

Location: TBA

Suggested Donation: TBA

For information on COSD Events

call Lucille at (619) 226-6000

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CONSD Registration Form

Name of Event _____ Date & Location of Event _____
Your Name(s) _____ Phone _____
Address _____ City _____
State _____ Zip(+4) _____ E-Mail Addr _____

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