

Consd News



THE NEWSLETTER OF CONTEMPLATIVE OUTREACH OF NORTH SAN DIEGO

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The Seven Stages of Centering Prayer

The essence of Centering Prayer is consenting to God's presence and action within. The seven stages of Centering Prayer outlined below dispose us toward ever – deepening self – surrender. These seven stages might be called the process of Centering Prayer. I summarize them as follows:

Silence is consenting to God's presence – what Jesus calls the Kingdom of God – within and among us. External silence supports this movement.

Solitude flows from interior silence. Disregarding our interior dialogue leads to "resting in God" (St. Gregory the Great), and to consciousness without particular content.

Solidarity is the awareness of the increasing oneness with God, with the whole human family, and with all creation.

Service is following the ever – present inspirations of the Spirit not only during the time of formal prayer, but in the details of everyday life. It is a spontaneous expression of solidarity: God in us serving God in others.

Stillness is what Jesus called "prayer in secret" (Matthew 6:6). This is the experience of God's presence beyond rational concepts, beyond preoccupation with one's personal thoughts and desires.

Simplicity is the integration of contemplation and action, a growing capacity to live in the midst of duality – the ups and downs of daily life – without losing the non-- dual perspective. Contemplation is not the same as action. They are distinct but they are not separate.

Surrender is the total gift of self to God, a movement from union to unity. It marks the beginning of what Jesus calls "eternal life" as an abiding state.

As we are moved through the stages of grace, our perspective changes in regard to Centering Prayer, the contemplative life, and God. In between the steps there are many delightful plateaus as well as dark nights, all of which have physical, mental, and spiritual consequences. The most transforming dark nights seemed to be primarily psychological states, and the darkest of all is the purely spiritual suffering that arises from just being a creature, apparently unequipped for the hazards and trials of this life, but going through them with invincible confidence in God's love.

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~Fr. Thomas Keating

CONSD 2012 Annual Retreat

As I drove to our annual retreat at Prince of Peace Abbey in Oceanside, I admit I felt a bit ambivalent. I was looking forward to a time of peace and quiet with my centering prayer community and, as always, feeling the tug of leaving behind the loose ends of my busy life. Driving up the steep, winding driveway however, seeing the pine trees, feeling the difference in the air – is it the coastal climate or “monastery air”? I immediately let out a sigh of relief, and felt very glad to be at the abbey again!

For those who have never attended a retreat at Prince of Peace Abbey Retreat Center, let me describe it for you. It sits atop a ridge overlooking the ocean. Comfortable private and semi-private rooms with bath are available for retreatants. The food is fresh and delicious. There are lovely, spacious grounds to stroll. The abbey church is a sacred space worthy of a visit whether or not you're on retreat. Behind the altar hangs a huge, magnificent icon of the risen Christ with arms outstretched. In one side chapel stands a beautiful statue, a replica of the black virgin and child of Einsiedeln. The other side chapel houses the tabernacle which is built in the shape of the Ark of the Covenant. The stained glass in the church is brilliantly colored, nonfigurative and contemporary. The west-facing windows, behind the altar, look out over the Pacific. And then there are the gentle, smiling, black-robed inhabitants of the monastery – chanting the liturgy of the hours, serving meals, making themselves quietly helpful.

As for the retreat itself: Chris and Sue created a wonderfully flexible retreat schedule based on the theme of “Silence, Solitude, and Simplicity.” Chris provided inspiring handouts that encouraged us to “Imagine a way of being quietly rooted in ongoing awareness of

the Indwelling Presence...” practicing “the contemplative life. Fully alive. Fully aware.” We had numerous optional periods of centering prayer as well as a period of lectio divina available to us. We were welcome to attend the liturgy of the hours and Roman Catholic masses with the monks. Chris and Sue also arranged for us to have our own optional ecumenical service with Fr Al Smith on Sunday morning.

As happens so often in God's loving synchronicity, I picked a perfect book to take along on retreat and started with a perfect page: *The silence of life is that art of making silent the activities of life that are not life itself in order to reach the pure experience of life. We frequently identify life itself with the activities of life. We identify our being with our feelings, our desires, our will, with everything that we do and everything that we have.... Plunged into the activities of life we lose the faculty of listening, and we alienate ourselves from our very source: Silence. God. (The Experience of God: Icons of the Mystery, Raimon Panikkar, p24)*

The time we spent on retreat actually wasn't very long at all, but because the offerings were so well-planned, because the setting is so special, and probably because God knows this is all that many of us can manage at the moment, it was possible in such a brief weekend to plunge into that well of Silence which we contemplatives love, where we find it a bit easier to listen for “a still small voice.”

If you haven't had an opportunity to go on retreat at Prince of Peace Retreat Center, I highly recommend it. And thank you, Chris and Sue, and everyone else who in any way helped to make this retreat happen!

~Deborah Lewallen

Thank You

We would like to express our deepest thanks and appreciation for our 44 CONSD Sustaining Members. We welcome those of you who still might want to contribute to CONSD. Your annual tax deductible donation of \$25.00 or whatever is comfortable will help sustain CONSD's ability to **TEACH** Centering Prayer, **BUILD** a Christ centered community and **SUPPORT** the contemplative life of its members.

~Sue and Chris Hagen, Co-Coordinators

Special November Speaker

David Frenette, a long time close associate of Fr. Thomas Keating, will be with us November 16th and 17th, 2012. His talk is titled "The Sacred Breath of God." This will be the first time that this highly sought speaker and retreat facilitator will share his wisdom to the West Coast. Please read David's article "Let It Be, So Be It" in this newsletter for a taste of what he will bring to us.

David began searching for meaning as a young man in the 1970s and started practicing daily meditation in Hindu and Buddhist traditions. He became a Christian in 1981 and changed his contemplative practice to centering prayer. In 1983, he met Father Thomas Keating, who became his mentor and whom he still considers to be his spiritual father.

David has taught centering prayer since 1985, when he co-created and co-led a contemplative retreat center in upstate New York for ten years under Father Keating's auspices. He has served in many leadership and consultative roles within Contemplative Outreach, Father Keating's international organization, including

guiding long term centering prayer practitioners.

He is on the staff of the Center for Contemplative Living in Denver and leads annual retreats at the Garrison Institute in New York and at St. Benedict's Monastery Retreat House in Snowmass, Colorado. He has an MA in transpersonal counseling psychology, guides clients as a spiritual director, and is an adjunct faculty member in the Religious Studies Department at Naropa University.

Although David still dedicates significant time each day to solitary contemplative prayer, after spending much of the last thirty years in monastic retreat, he increasingly experiences God when engaged in the ordinariness of everyday life. He enjoys travel, music, film, mountain walks, coffee shops, and life in Colorado with his wife, Donna.

David's new book, *The Path of Centering Prayer; Deepening Your Experience of God* will be published in September by Sounds True. For more information on his work, visit his website davidfrenette.com.

Breathing Underwater

Father Richard Rohr's clarion call for transformation to a non-dualistic mind was evident throughout the March 17 workshop, "Breathing Under Water." Sponsored by Surrender 2 Mystery, Father Rohr was joined by John McAndrew, Director for Spiritual Care at the Betty Ford Center. The coordinated talks by both men was a living metaphor of non-dualism. With each man speaking once in the morning and again in the afternoon, the experience manifested as two viewpoints reflecting a union of perspectives. Sharing their insights on Twelve Steps spirituality, Father Richard Rohr proceeded from the Franciscan point of view while John McAndrew spoke as an alcoholic man living in active recovery.

An initial emphasis upon body/soul togetherness emerged. Seeing Jesus as both human and divine is "Christianity's trump card" said Fr. Rohr. While the early Church and monastic life engaged in the contem-

plative dimension of prayer, the Church later asserted hundreds of years of external authority with its stress on dogma, creeds, theology, belief systems. Western religion lost sight of the inner experience revealed in the "prayer of quiet." Thankfully, it has been returning to the Church, including the laity. Mr. McAndrew noted that, with group support, the addict understands two ways of choosing to deal with pain and suffering in life: to either blot out consciousness (reactive), or to accept spiritual help (responsive). He defined recovery as coming home to one's body and reconnecting spiritually because "what one does to the body, one does to the soul."

Within this context of the union of our physical nature and our spiritual nature, both men spoke of the great need for practice-based religion. (Continued on next page).

Breathing Underwater (continued)

The Twelve Steps are a practical, applied way of living, according to McAndrew, and its practices are more important than belief systems because they give one the experiences. Teach the process, Rohr added. Practice the process, he said, and the content will then take care of itself. Faith, he said, is a code word for the inner experiences that lead one to greater faith, to hope, and to love.

The central focus of both men's talks was the Eleventh Step which states that “we (addicts) sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood (God) , praying only for knowledge of (God's) will for us and the power to carry that out.” Defined in his book, Breathing Underwater: Spirituality and the Twelve Steps, as “an alternative mind”, Rohr notes that the words 'prayer' and 'meditation' are used to describe an entirely different way of processing reality. We have what he calls the “calculating mind” or dualistic mind which is rational, comparative, and engages in either-or thinking. It is the dualistic mind which comprehends spiritual teachings from the first of four levels of awareness: the literal level of awareness. The dualistic mind has difficulty comprehending words as metaphorical symbols. He related that the paradoxes and mysteries inherent in life may only be understood by the non-dualistic or contemplative mind. It is the non-dualistic mind which is able to grasp the five biggies: love, death, suffering, God, infinity.

McAndrew noted the gifts of neuroscience in understanding the workings of the human brain. He observed that addicts, in their thoughts and actions, often circumvent the frontal lobe which controls a person's higher order functions and their abilities for reasoning, judgment, and impulse control. Instead, the neurons generated move directly to what is called the reptilian brain which focuses upon the techniques of fight, flight, and fornication. The repetitions of such thoughts and actions create deep furrows in the brain which over time become familiar ways of reacting to the moment. Familiarity can breed comfort and he shared how people may choose to remain with miseries that are familiar instead of endeavoring to change their response. Still, the brain does retain an elasticity for change and McAndrew pointed out how the prac-

tice of contemplation has the potential and the power to create new furrows of a non-dualistic mind.

Rohr further stressed that unless we change our neural systems, we will not get out of the dualistic perspective. He believes that 98% of human thought is repetitive and useless commentary -what Bill Wilson of AA called “stinking thinking”- and that the practice of contemplation can help us move away from our narcissistic reactions to the moment (false self, addictive self), and from our egocentric likes and dislikes (false self, judging self, addictive self), and from our obsessive thinking (false self, addictive self). Engaging in a regular practice of prayerful detachment (meditation, contemplative prayer) allows the creation of the inner experience of the “compassionate observer” (true self, recovered self). Rohr claims that we are all addicts in the sense that we are all addicted to our own way of processing reality, our own way of thinking.

Within the traditions of contemplative religion and the Twelve Steps, contemplative prayer and the Eleventh Step can become our daily practice in non-addiction and our daily training in the non-dualistic mind. Once again, note the emphasis upon body/soul connection with the stress put upon practice. What motivates a human being towards the process of transformation, towards recovery? Both Rohr and McAndrew stated that it always begins with a vulnerability. Rohr maintains that every advance towards wisdom is an advance through suffering. Suffering, which is “allowing” or accepting the whole of reality -the dark with the light- creates an opening through the breaking of our hearts.

McAndrew spoke of addicts' fears of being overwhelmed if they open themselves to their griefs and losses. He noted that Hinduism compares being torn open in grief to creating an opening for the divine. Failure, suffering, humiliation, the great defeat – this, says Rohr, is what has to happen in order to dismantle the false self and arrive at the true self. He asserts that the false self is a necessary construction in early life. He describes the false self as our initial map of perceiving and processing reality that we learned in our childhood. (Continued on next page).

Breathing Underwater (continued)

Yet, in order to move on to another level of consciousness, he asserts that we need to let the false self die.

Both Rohr, from the contemplative perspective, and McAndrew, from the Twelve Steps perspective, maintain the importance of the Eleventh Step. As a practice and as a process, it becomes a vehicle for transformation into a wholistic (whole, holy) life; a vehicle for recovery into an authentic sobriety. Rohr emphasizes that all of the Twelve Steps can only help one achieve authentic emotional sobriety if they take one beyond dualistic, all-or-nothing, tribal thinking. If they do not serve to do so, one is still living within the false self, or in Twelve Steps vernacular, one remains a “dry drunk.”

Rohr praised how the Twelve Steps have moved people towards a process and practice of living responsibly. Through this practice and its use of group support and sharing of personal narratives, he sees the Twelve Steps as a unique, American contribution serving to democratize religion. The Twelve Steps relates the process of transformation without using “God” language. It is a practical, applied way of living. It provides a guidepost to handle relational behavior. It uses rituals to create thresholds where something can happen. It uses laughter, prayer, and meditation to change neural pathways. The practice gives the experience, not the belief system.

Both men read the following poem which Rohr used as the inspiration for the title of his book, Breathing Under Water: Spirituality and the Twelve Steps. I share it here in full to illustrate, as only poetic language can, the spiritual connection between the Twelve Steps and the contemplative dimension of religion.

Event Cancellation

We regret to inform you that our August 18th Sacred Saturday has been cancelled. This was due to a conflict with the church schedule. We will try to reschedule.

Breathing Under Water

I built my house by the sea.
 Not on the sands, mind you;
 not on the shifting sand.
 And I built it of rock.
 A strong house by a strong sea.
 And we got well acquainted, the sea and I.
 Good neighbors.
 Not that we spoke much.
 We met in silences.
 Respectful, keeping our distance,
 but looking our thoughts
 across the fence of sand.
 Always, the fence of sand our barrier,
 always, the sand between.
 And then one day,
 --and I still don't know how it happened--
 the sea came.
 Without warning.
 Without welcome, even
 Not sudden and swift, but a sifting
 across the sand like wine,
 less like the flow of water than the flow of blood.
 Slow, but coming.
 Slow, but flowing like an open wound.
 And I thought of flight
 and I thought of drowning
 and I thought of death.
 And while I thought the sea crept higher,
 till it reached my door.
 And I knew then, there was
 neither flight, nor death, nor drowning.
 That when the sea comes calling
 you stop being neighbors
 Well acquainted, friendly-at-a-distance neighbors.
 And you give your house for a coral castle,
 And you learn to breathe underwater.

~Parth Domke

A Moment for Reflection

“We are not human beings having a spiritual experience. We are spiritual beings having a human experience.”

The St. Peter's Centering Prayer Group

Mary and I attended our Introductory Workshop in Chula Vista in 2000. We attended the follow-up sessions there, but it was too far for us to attend the Centering Prayer Group that formed from the Workshop. We decided that we would like to bring Centering Prayer to St. Peter's and eventually have a Prayer Group.

We laid the groundwork for hosting a Workshop and invited COSD to send trained presenters and a facilitator for the follow-up sessions. COSD also sent us their John the Baptist: Evie McGreevy to prepare the way for our Workshop. The Workshop was given in 2002. The co-presenters were the Rev Harry Starbuck and Kathy Di Fede (who is now the coordinator of COSD). Karen Downs conducted the follow-up session. Over 40 people attended the Workshop and over 20 attended the follow-up sessions. Most were members of St. Peter's with some notable exceptions (you might know Chris and Sue Hagen). A Centering Prayer Group was started after the follow-ups. We chose Tuesdays from 4:30 – 6:00 as a time when people could come after work and get home in time to start dinner.

Our weekly sessions start with gathering at 4:30. We usually precede the Prayer by a Taize chant. A 20 minute session of prayer is followed by an "activity" and discussion. The "activity" has ranged from (1) watching tapes (or DVDs); (2) Lectio Divina (we are now using a lesson from the Revised Common Lec-

tionary which will be read in many churches on the coming Sunday); (3) a book discussion. We have used books like "The Cloud of Unknowing", "Interior Castle" by Theresa of Avila; books by Keating, Menninger, Arico, Cynthia Bourgeault. We often pick books that will be the subject of an upcoming CONSD workshop. We decide each week on a reading assignment for the coming week. We then talk, books in hand, about the reading.

Mary and I are Associates (aka oblates) of the Order of the Holy Cross. We invited our Prayer Group to our retreat at Mt. Calvary Monastery in Santa Barbara in 2002. We have often continued extending such an invitation to members of our Prayer Group.

Currently we have about seven members. A second prayer group, meeting on Thursday, was led by Lori Thomas and Sun Spriggs. Sun became a certified spiritual director and wanted the experience of leading a Centering Prayer group. She has recently moved to New Jersey and has started two Centering Prayer groups at her new church. Lori continues to lead the Thursday group.

All in all, we find a Centering Prayer Group an effective support group for those practicing the Prayer. The Holy Spirit is providing nourishment for pilgrims on a spiritual journey.

~John Wavrik

Let it Be

If you asked me for one piece of advice about contemplation, I would say to take to heart the meaning of one word: Amen. If you asked me how you should relate to God, how you might pray, I would whisper, "Amen." If I practice only one simple thing at the end of my own life, I hope it will be amen. "Amen" is used in the Western religions to express profound faith, assent to Mystery, surrender to God. In the Christian tradition, "amen" is the one word that ends every prayer in words, including the Lord's Prayer. Amen means, literally, "so be it" or "let it be." After any petition or prayer, "amen" is the "so be it" or the

"let it be" which releases that prayer or petition into God with a radical trust that nothing more needs to be said, nothing else needs to be done. With amen, your words and actions yield to God's presence. Amen doesn't mean being passive; it doesn't mean that discipline, practice and compassionate actions aren't necessary in the spiritual life. Amen doesn't mean that you do not act in the face of injustice. (Amen means that your prayer is a relationship with God rather than with yourself; it means that rather than trying to succeed through effort, you let the spirit pray in you. (Continued on next page).

Let it Be

Amen means trusting that you can't confront injustice on your own, that at some point you need to let go of your own, self-initiated efforts and agenda and just be, in trust, in God. Centering Prayer; Consent to Amen. We need help to let the spirit of amen fully come forth in our prayer and in our life. The 2000-year-old Christian contemplative tradition recognizes that in order to radically trust in a reality that you cannot see, you need to prepare yourself through actions, disciplines, and practices whose purpose, quite simply, is to bring you more easily to amen. Centering Prayer is one such practice, a profound way of consenting to God's presence and action within, beyond your own self-initiated efforts. Centering Prayer helps you consent to the gift of contemplation. In Centering Prayer, every time you return ever-so-gently to your sacred symbol when you are engaged with thoughts, you refine your own actions from self-effort into trust in God. Gentleness, trust, and lack of striving can inform more of your spiritual life. Willing to let every thought go, willing to let go of effort and strategies, your trust in God unfolds more easily within. Easily and lightly treat every thought as an invitation to rest in God. Learn to let these thoughts be, without fighting them. Let everything be, just as it is, in God. Say yes to practicing amen.

A Deeper Amen. As you continue on the path of Centering Prayer it is possible to learn how to be penetrated more deeply by amen. There are specific contemplative attitudes that, like the different facets of a brilliant diamond, comprise the "skillful means" of deepening contemplation. Practicing contemplation involves dispositions more than techniques, perspectives more than black-and-white directions. These contemplative attitudes evoke your own experience of God and invite you further on the path of transformation in Christ. Practicing these contemplative attitudes allows God—the reality in whom prayer and life is found—to become the source of what you do in Centering Prayer. As your prayer deepens these same attitudes will arise in your active life.

Unconditional Presence. When I provide spiritual direction or contemplative counseling, I find that my most effective "intervention" is not my words but my presence. listening fully to someone means not trying

to change them. You listen deeply and let their concerns, their "story," be in God. The mirror of your unconditional presence allows another person to settle into God. Transformative growth begins with acceptance. Unconditional love is rooted in unconditional presence. My presence to the Divine Presence, through which I am united in presence with another, is the best thing I can offer another person. When I was with my mother as she was in hospice care, I found that I couldn't protect her from the transition that was before her. All I could do was be present to God, and to her, in her passage, in her own dying process. I practiced Centering Prayer next to her while she slept at night. During the day I allowed my breath to simply align with her breathing.

Unconditional love does not mean that you are not concerned about the pain your loved one may be in. Unconditional love means that you trust, radically, that God is present to them, and to you. Being unconditionally present to another means accepting them for who they are, trusting that God is present to them. Love is a practice of amen. From the radical stance of amen, inspired action comes. Letting everything be, just as it is, in God, in the face of death, and life, is the gateway to experiencing the divine in ordinary as well as extraordinary circumstances. Consider your own life. Recall a time when you were blessed by the attitude of amen, a deep acceptance of what is. What happened? How might you be invited, now, to let go of your own isolated self-effort in favor of greater trust? In your prayer or in your daily activities, in your relationship with your loved ones, in your service, how might you practice amen, or unconditional presence, in order to experience that you are not alone, that God is with you in your being and in your doing? With the deep surrender of amen we are aligned with God—the source of freer and more sustained action—more than anything we could accomplish on our own. As we say "amen," as we practice "so be it," God takes over. As we practice amen, God is with us in more and more of what we do, including our care of others and our actions to confront injustice. Amen—"so be it," "let it be"—expresses the true spirit of contemplation.

~David Frenette

Meninger Homily

In Hebrews chapter 4 we read: "The word of God is living and active, and sharper than any two edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart."

One of the many wonderful things that virtually all of the Christian churches have in common is a love of the Bible and an acknowledgment that it is the Word of God. This acknowledgment may be interpreted in various ways but inevitably it includes a belief and understanding that the words of Scripture are words of power and that somehow the Holy Spirit speaks through these words. Now the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ and is given to us to remind us of all that Christ has taught us.

To be reminded 'of all that Christ has taught us' does not mean merely to remember it. It means that the word of Christ is re-presented to us with the same veracity, power, authenticity and meaning that it had when it issued forth from his own lips. It is living and active and sharper than any two edged sword. By living and active we mean that the word of Christ speaks to us today. We acknowledge this when we stand for the Gospel and proclaim before it begins "Glory to you, Lord", and again when it is finished, "Praise the be to you, Lord Jesus Christ."

Listening to the Gospel is a two-way activity. God does speak to us but we must listen to what he says. We must hear him in faith. Hearing him in faith is what we call synergy, that is an activity that involves the cooperation, if you will, of two persons. God gives us the virtue of faith. The word 'virtue' means a strength, a power, an energy. So we have the power of

faith, an energy which enables us to hear the Word of God not simply on a natural level but on a level that speaks to us "to discern the thoughts and intents of our heart and mind."

If we listen to the words of today's Gospel with our faith energy, we receive an extraordinary message. Jesus prays very specifically for us when he says he is not only praying for his disciples but also, and I quote, "for those who will believe in me through their word." He prays for us. But this is an act of synergy, an act of two persons. We must hear and respond in faith and the prayer of Jesus will be answered in us. He prays that we may be one with him as he is one with the Father. That we may be one with each other as he is one with the Father. This indeed is the reason that we must love our neighbor as we love ourselves. He goes on to pray that we may be brought to perfection as one so that the world may know that the Father has sent him and that the Father loves us even as he loved Jesus. Think of what this can do for you when you accept it with the power, the strength, the virtue of faith. Remember what the two disciples said on the road to Emmaus when Jesus appeared to them and explained the Scriptures. "Didn't our hearts burn within us." Whenever Jesus speaks of the future, he is reaching out to us. And so he concludes his prayer, "I have made known to them (the apostles) your name, and I will make it known (to us, as we respond in faith). And the love with which you loved me may be in them and I in them." To receive this prayer in faith will be life-changing.

~Fr. William Meninger

CONSD Half-Day Retreat

This retreat will draw upon the wisdom of Jesus found in his Parable of the Prodigal Son. This will be a quiet time to reflect upon the three phases of returning home as depicted in this parable. We will have several periods of Centering Prayer, prayerful readings, Taize, and periods of personal silent reflection.

Date: October 20th, 2012

Place: St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church
16275 Pomerado Rd. Poway 92064

Time: Hospitality at 9:00am, retreat 9:30–12:30pm

Deepening the Contemplative Dimension

We are still searching for adjectives to express an experience that eludes easy descriptions. We had no idea how deeply we would further our awareness and foster a scriptural understanding of the nature and essence of service in the contemplative dimension. Twenty-eight of us arrived in St. Louis on June 5th to participate in five days of deep prayer, periods of silence, reflection and knowledge. Each day focused on different Conferences and Wisdom Circles. The Conferences were presented by Susan Komis, John Kelsey and Shawn Kafader. The very inspirational topics included Fr. Keating's "Ten Dispositions on Servant Leadership," "Spirituality of the Servant Leader," "Stages of Prayer as Related to Faith Development," "Archetypes of Leadership," "Humility: A Paradox," "Four Levels of Listening," "The Vocation of Sharing the Contemplative Journey," "Members of a Royal Priesthood," and "The Power of Formative Thought." Each Conference included time for lively and deep discussion by the participants.

We also shared three Rituals. At the end of the opening evening meeting we wrote down our burdens and put them in a sealed envelope with our name on it. One by one we brought our envelope to the Prayer Table and said "To be fully present to God in this sacred time, I offer my burdens into God's hands." Then we each took an envelope and were to pray for that person during our time together. Two nights later we participated in a Ritual of washing our Prayer Partner's hands and at the closing we anointed each other with oil and said a blessing. These Rituals were deeply spiritual and each one of us was deeply touched. Since being in St. Louis we feel even more deeply committed than ever to serve the Living Christ through the spiritual network of Contemplative Outreach. Ltd. We are grateful for the opportunity to have been there and to continue our spiritual growth.

~Sue and Chris Hagen

Reflections on Annual Silent Retreat

For about the sixth year in a row, I attended an eight day silent Centering Prayer retreat, always held the last week in June at the Holy Spirit Retreat Center in Encino, CA. Free of distraction, the media, family and work responsibilities, one simply shows up, over and over, in the present moment for the communal call to silent prayer. The daily schedule evolves the same most days--four times called to prayer for two 30 minute sits, with a meditative walk in between. This silence, simplicity and solitude within community invite one to return to the basic essential of Christian service--to make oneself available for intimacy with God and whatever growth God's transformative love might call us to.

Within the Contemplative Outreach community, retreatants are cautioned to simply show up for an extensive retreat, without expectation. Participants are even asked to limit spiritual reading, if possible to just the basics, such as *Open Mind, Open Heart*. Having followed that "rule" for several years, this time I read the basic book on meditation from the World Community of Christian Meditation, *The Light Within*, by Laurence Freeman. Slowly I experienced the call to prayer as an invitation to fuse my spirit with Christ's Spirit. I also gradually began to understand that the saying of The Sacred Word is a call to the present moment and a dying to thoughts of the past and the future.

To make space for The Spirit to pray within, without words, without knowing and without expectation--is this what it means to follow Christ? Could commitment to these moments of being, rather than all my doing, be my most loving service to the world? Retreats give something to ponder and to savor. The Holy Spirit Retreat Center will again offer an eight day silent Centering Prayer Retreat, the last week in June 2013.

~Diane Langworthy

CONSD & COSD EVENTS — 2012 & 2013

CONSD EVENTS 2012-2013

RETREAT

Event: Half-Day Retreat

Date: October 20, 2012

Time: 9:00am-12:30pm

Location: St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church,
16275 Pomerado Road, Poway,
Free will Offering

PRESENTATION

Event: The Sacred Breath of God

Date: November 16-17, 2012

Presenter: David Frenette

Time: 7:00-9:00pm & 9:00-3:00pm

Location: San Rafael Catholic Church, 17252
Bernardo Center Drive, San Diego

Suggested Donation: \$35.00

PRESENTATION

Date: January 11-12, 2013

Presenter: Susan Komis

Time: 7:00-9:00pm & 9:30-3:00pm

Location: TBA

Suggested Donation: \$35.00

PRESENTATION

Date: September 7, 2013

Presenter: Edwina Gateley

Time: 9:00am-3:00pm

Location: TBA

Suggested Donation: TBA

Check It Out!!!

Check out the CONSD website at www.consd.com. You will find a wealth of information related to Centering Prayer. You can read or download past newsletters as well as our current one. A list of upcoming CONSD and COSD events is available. There are numerous links to websites such as Contemplative Outreach, Ltd., Fr. Richard Rohr, Fr. William Meninger, and many more. You will also find links to retreat centers. This is just a taste of what you will find, so check it out.

COSD EVENT 2012

PRESENTATION

Event: "just noticing" Workshop

Date: September 14-15, 2012

Presenter: Paul Ilecki, Ed.D

Time: 6:00-9:00pm & 9:00-4:00pm

Location: Our Mother of Confidence Church,
3131 Governor Drive, San Diego

Suggested Donation: \$55.00

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. This will help us keep in touch with you and reduce our mailing expenses. **It costs CONSD \$1.05 for every newsletter that is returned in order to find the new address.** Please call Sue Hagen at 760-745-8860 or email her at consd@cox.net

Contemplative Outreach of North San Diego is a non-profit ecumenical spiritual organization. The Newsletter is published quarterly. Editors: Chris and Sue Hagen. Email Address: consd@cox.net. Website: www.consd.com. Telephone: (760)-745-8860. Post: CONSD, 908 Via Linda, Escondido, California 92029. Postmaster: please send address corrections to the address above.

The Newsletter of CONSD: The North San Diego Chapter of Contemplative Outreach, Ltd.
Editors: Sue and Chris Hagen
Layout and Design: D. Conner
Printing, copying & mailing thanks to Chris Hartman of Posthaste Mailing.

	Area	Facilitators	Telephone	Location	Day & Time
1	Del Mar (1)	John & Mary Wavrik	858-755-8437	St. Peter's Episcopal Church 334 14 th Street, Del Mar	Tuesdays: 4:30 pm
2	Del Mar (2)		760-753-3207	St. Peters Episcopal Church 334 14th St., Del Mar	Thursdays: 4:30 to 6:00 pm
3	Encinitas (1)	Shirley Shetula	760-436-6721	Home of Shirley Shetula 532 Leucadia Village Ct., Encinitas	Mondays: 10:30 am
4	Encinitas (2)	Mike & Ann King	760-753-1575	Home of Mike and Ann King (Call for directions)	Thursdays: 7:00 pm
5	Encinitas (3)	Sharon Hoffman & Beth Ward	760-635-9463 760-436-6589	San Dieguito United Methodist Church 170 Calle Magdalena, Encinitas	Mondays: 6:30 pm
6	Escondido	Linda Dollins	760-745-5100	First United Methodist Church 341 S. Kalmia, Escondido	Mondays: 4:30 pm
7	Fallbrook (1)	Susan Gross	760-451-0514	Home of Susan Gross 3853 Lake Shore St., Fallbrook	Tuesdays: 1:30 pm
8	Fallbrook (2)	Ann Keegan	760-723-0855	(Call for location)	Saturdays: 8:30 am
9	Oceanside (1)	Ed Clifford	760-630-1897	Mission San Luis Rey McKeon Center Room 12	Wednesdays: 7:00 pm
10	Oceanside (2)	Mary Williams	760-510-9337	St. Thomas More Catholic Church 1450 S. Melrose Drive	Thursdays: 1:00 pm
11	Oceanside (3)	David Butterfield & Martha Treutle	760-434-5650 760-598-1701	First Presbyterian Church 2001 El Camino Real, Oceanside	1st & 3rd Mondays:: 6:15 pm
12	Poway (1)	Elena Andrews	858-451-2098	San Gabriel Catholic Church, 13734 Twin Peaks Road, Poway	Fridays: 9:30 to 11:00 am
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 pm
14	Poway (3)	Sue & Chris Hagen	760-745-8842	St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church 16275 Pomerado Road, Poway	Tuesdays: 5:00 pm
15	Poway (4)	Sherlene Mollerstuen	858-451-6825	Lutheran Church of the Incarnation 16889 Espola Road, Poway	Monday: 5:00 to 6:30 pm.
16	Ramona	Joan Gansert	760-518-2081	Call for location	Thursdays: 11:00 am
17	Rancho Bernardo	Audrey Spindler	858-208-8609	San Rafael Catholic Church 17252 Bernardo Center Drive, San Diego	Wednesdays: 3:30 to 5:00 pm
18	Rancho Santa Fe			Church of the Nativity 6309 El Apajo, Rancho Santa Fe	Saturdays: 9:00 am
19	Serra Mesa	Diane Langworthy	619-697-3558	Mary Magdalene Apostle Catholic Community/ Gethsemane Lutheran 2696 Melbourne Dr , San Diego	Tuesday: 7:00 to 8:30 pm
20	Temecula	Jenny Alcazar	951-696-5657	St. Thomas of Temecula 44651 Avenida de Misiones, Temecula	Tuesdays: 7:00 to 8:30 pm
21	Temecula	Deb Potts	951-265-7502	Temecula United Methodist Church 42690 Margarita Road, Temecula	4th Monday: 6:00 to 7:00 pm

Contemplative Outreach
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CONSD Registration Form

Name of Event _____ Date & Location of Event _____

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