

Consd News

THE NEWSLETTER OF CONTEMPLATIVE OUTREACH OF NORTH SAN DIEGO
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Giving Birth to God in the Contemporary World

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“Giving Birth to God in the Contemporary World” was the title of Edwina Gateley’s second retreat at St. Bartholomew’s on September 11 and 12, 2015. Edwina’s description of the retreat was: “In the midst of our violent and hurting world, we will explore how God, as Lover and Healer, ever invites us to new possibilities and to believe in our potential to make a difference. We will also look at our own call to become mystics and prophets for our times.”

As in her previous retreat, she wove her teaching through the fabric of her story. She explained that we tell our stories to inspire, encourage and affirm one another, to make connections, to share a little bit of light. Inevitably all our stories, she says, are about rising and falling, failing and getting up; our journey goes forward, backward and sideways while God is always with us offering us love and healing.

Do we believe this? She shared Julian’s wisdom that “we are incomplete without God but God is incomplete without us.” We must believe that we are “loved that much” and that God is ever waiting for us to turn around and accept the invitation to “Come dance with me.” “God is at home, soaked in our reality, but we go out seeking God as if God were lost,” and “despair comes when we are out of touch with our own divinity.” But God is there waiting for us to discover ourselves as “walking tabernacles,” “drops of water in the ocean of God,” “a tree rooted by living water” “carrying the seed of God within us.”

So God invites us to dance. How do we respond? We begin with our intention to enter into relationship, a dance, with this God who lives in the sacrament of ourselves and our daily lives. We pause, ponder, listen in the silence to the God deep within us. (In Edwina’s experience, 3” above her belly button!) In the silence “we create a space for God to sew a new seed.” From that space will arise God’s revelation of ourselves in the love of God. And if we have eyes to see and ears to hear we also discover a way we are to bring God to incarnation in the world, our individual call, our way to leave this world a little better than we found it. Then comes her warning, “He will take advantage of us!” explaining God as a “God of the back door, always looking for cracks/vulnerability to convert, receive, welcome.” (continued on next page)

Giving Birth to God in the Contemporary World

Edwina says, “The God you start out with must not be the God you end up with. God must get bigger on our journey. God is BIG. Our task is to recognize God wherever God may be.”

What we find is that we are surrounded by sacrament and most importantly that we are seeing with the eyes of love. These eyes of love begin to see “God breaking open all over the place; even in hidden and unexpected places, in “the other,” “the forgotten,” the different, the outcast, the “little ones” of the gospel.

Then we are on our way to becoming mystics.

“So what is a mystic?” she was asked. Her definition was that mystics are deep lovers who enter into the mystery of God’s radical love. A mystic is called to say yes, to share the crazy, divine dream of love, compassion, equality, peace and mercy. Sometimes they may seem a little kooky, even threatening, and are often misunderstood. Mystics are “our only hope against despair,” she challenged, “we must all be mystics or nothing at all.”

What is the way of the mystic? A mystic “must be a spiritual acrobat, having one foot in the gospel and the call to transformation and one foot in the world of violence,” says Edwina. A mystic must carry a light into the darkness and dare to proclaim, “God is here, love is here to give itself away.”

We are called as mystics to loosen the earth for God to plant the seed and then stand back and trust God’s ways, holding on in faith even when everything seems dead. This is what it means to “give birth to God.” We must be willing to live in the mystery, in the contradiction, of going all in with love and then stepping back into the darkness of insecurity, doubt and fear, allowing the seed of God to

gestate and letting God do what God wants to be done. In that space lies the “energy of God’s grace.” Speaking as the voice of God, Edwina boomed, “I bear fruit – even, especially, in the desert, in dry and empty places!” God’s grace allows us to see with a deeper vision where God is bearing fruit.

Edwina had much to share of her journey in and through darkness, of falling down and getting up, returning to solitude and silence to listen to God’s call, and then starting over in faith. She spoke from experience when she shared that “anything that comes from God must go through a trial of suffering.” Her life is a shining example of following God’s voice telling her, “I will never leave you but you must be faithful to the journey. Let go, do not possess, move on, continue the journey, trust in my ways. Everything is provided.” So her journey and ours continue, journeys impelled by the love of Christ. “Love is preeminent, love trumps all.”

~Elena Andrews

A Moment of Reflection

To hope for something better in the future is not the theological virtue of hope. Theological hope is based on God alone, who is both infinitely merciful and infinitely powerful *right now*. Here is the formula to deepen and further the theological virtue of hope with its unbounded confidence in God. Let whatever is happening happen and go on happening. Welcome whatever it is. Let go into the present moment by surrendering to its content. The divine energies are rushing past us at every nanosecond of time. Why not reach out and catch them by continuing acts of self-surrender and trust in God?”

Joint Prayer Group Facilitator Meeting

Contemplative Outreach of North San Diego
Joint Servant Leadership-Prayer Group Facilitator Meeting Report, October 24, 2015,
9:00am – 12:30pm

On Saturday morning, 18 people members of the CONSD Servant Leadership Team and many of CONSD's Prayer Group Facilitators gathered in the Social Hall of the First United Methodist Church in Escondido. This annual meeting is held to build community among the servant leaders. Bea Doblado, Hospitality Team leader, provided refreshments and digital media from the CONSD mobile library was available for check out.

The meeting started with a period of centering prayer, and then Linda Dollins reviewed the support roles of Contemplative Outreach Ltd., and the CONSD chapter structure. After that each attendee spoke briefly and described either their involvement with the Centering Prayer practice and their prayer group as a facilitator or their current servant leadership role. Linda Dollins then shared highlights and insights from the weeklong CO Servant Leader Workshop she attended this summer. After-

ward we viewed a short DVD about Contemplative Outreach's 30th Anniversary.

Chris Hagen then reported on the progress of the five priority needs identified at the CONSD Visioning Day. The entire group reviewed the proposed 2016 CONSD calendar to evaluate the financial and service team personal time commitment as well as the number of weeks between each event. Gail Carr of the Introductory Workshop Team invited us to look for opportunities to host workshops and share those with the team. She explained some of the optional materials and formats for workshops and reminded us that anyone who has already attended a workshop is welcome to attend for no charge. The next workshop will be January 16th at St. James Catholic Church in Solana Beach. We also discussed the need for volunteers with computer skills to enhance our capabilities to do more media outreach, and the Financial Services Team needs a backup volunteer with QuickBook skills. The meeting ended as Linda Dollins and Sue Hagen anointed all the attendees, thanking them individually for their specific service to the chapter.

About Centering Prayer

Centering prayer as a discipline is designed to withdraw our attention from the ordinary flow of our thoughts. We tend to identify ourselves with that flow. But there is a deeper part of ourselves. This prayer opens our awareness to the spiritual level of our being. This level might be compared to a great river on which our memories, images, feelings, inner experiences and the awareness of outward things are resting. Many people identify with the ordinary flow of their thoughts and feelings that they are not aware of the source from which these mental objects are emerging. Like boats or debris floating along the surface of a river, our thoughts and feelings must be resting on something. They are resting on the inner stream of consciousness, which is our participation in God's being. Since we are not in immediate contact with that level, we have to do something to develop our awareness that makes us most human. The values that we find there are more delightful than the values that float along the surface of the psyche. We need to refresh ourselves at this deep level every day. Just as we need exercise, food, rest, and sleep, so also we need moments of interior silence because they bring the deepest kind of refreshment.

Learning How to be a Servant Leader

Every summer at the end of July, Contemplative Outreach offers a one-week Servant-Leadership workshop in St. Louis, Missouri at the Marianist Retreat and Conference Center. The Center is located on beautiful wooded acreage in the Ozark Mountains and the valley of the Meramec River. CONSD sent me to this workshop to learn more about being a chapter co-coordinator, to learn any new policies Contemplative Outreach was implementing, and to meet other servant-leaders from around the country.

The workshop also included inspiring worship. After Centering Prayer in the evening--we had two large group periods of prayer every day--we maintained silence until we convened for instruction mid-morning. We also began and ended the week with beautiful services in the prayer room. That room itself blessed us with its morning light, artwork by one of the talented brothers, and the presence of other contemplatives.

Susan Komis led the daily information sessions which included explanations of Contemplative Outreach's vision, theological, and administrative principles, who we are and how we serve, what a chapter is, building consensus groups, the Contemplative Outreach Resource Center, Contemplative Outreach programs, formation and growth of centering prayer groups, collaborative leadership, the visioning process for chapters, and operational and financial guidelines for chapters.

Susan Rush led our spiritual enrichment sessions and reminded us of the nature of service by asking, "Who are you serving?" She explained that contemplative service is serving without expectations and that we are called to be Beatitudes. "We do the prayer and the prayer does us," she would repeat. Another

important point was that our prayer practice leads us to deeper unity and inner connectedness which then leads to service. Susan said, "I believe we were made for service. Service has a connotation of emptying ourselves. It's a relationship between two people." She also quoted Meister Eckhart, "The seed of God is in us. Pear seeds grow into pear trees, nut seeds into nut trees, and God-seed into God."

Having served on the Introductory Workshop Team for 5 years, I was most interested in the program changes that C.O. has recently developed. In our chapter we have always had a half day workshop presentation on a Saturday morning with 6 weekly follow-up sessions at the host church site. But sometimes workshop participants cannot attend the sessions. Contemplative Outreach is now suggesting we look at different scheduling options such as combining follow-up sessions so that there are 3 longer meetings rather than 6 shorter ones. An exciting new resource is the Introductory Workshop kit with new DVD talks by Gail Fitzpatrick-Hopler and Fr. Carl Arico. These talks have essentially the same information as Fr. Keating's DVD presentations which we have used for many years.

Since our CONSD chapter is working toward having an 11th Step Introductory Workshop for people in recovery, I was interested to hear Joelle Mitchell who is the Contemplative Outreach Service Team leader of 12-Step Outreach. She has 30 years of experience in this area and was instrumental in developing the 11th-Step Method of Centering Prayer brochure released in 2005 and noted that there is also a C.O. website for 12-step groups. Joelle explained the format for 11th-Step groups. The meeting is called an 11th-Step Meditation meeting with 20 minutes of silence and the use of conference approved literature. (continued)

Learning How to be a Servant Leader

The group can practice any form of meditation and participants can talk about their type of practice. Afterward the regular 12-Step program begins.

Another presentation I especially valued was Susan Rush's talk on volunteerism. She reminded us that it can take time for groups to embrace the vision of volunteering and to be patient. She said, "We sit, we sit some more, and we realize we have a need to serve, and then we realize who we serve." Practically, Susan suggested when we train a volunteer we keep the guidelines short—no 7-page explanations. We should also avoid promoting programs we can't sustain. Susan recommended the book by Ken Blanchard, *The Servant Leader*, and reminded us that there is now scientific information that volunteering has value for the volunteer as well as the recipient.

Another important benefit of the workshop was being able to meet servant-leaders from all over the country—Texas, Florida, New Mexico, Arizona, Washington and the north-east. During lunch and dinner as well as our free time, we talked about the concerns of our chapters and shared information and ideas. But, as often happens, we also shared ourselves and our desire to allow the Holy Spirit to lead us. Knowing that throughout the country new coordinators are getting ready to encourage Centering Prayer is inspirational and supportive.

Having time this summer to reflect in quiet walks along the Meramec River, to learn from excellent presenters, to meet with other participants, and to practice Centering Prayer in this encouraging setting was a tremendous gift to me in my new role.

~Linda Dollins

Thanks Be To God

Thank you for your Goodness,
 Ever Giving God,
 For the goodness of this place and work,
 For the goodness of one another,
 For the goodness of all creation,
 And even for our own goodness,
 All of which is merely a part of Yours.
 You volunteer your Love to us, freely and without limit,
 You volunteer to come among us as a human being in Jesus.
 You volunteer to be wherever the pain is,
 Wherever people are poor, rejected, ignorant, and alone,
 You volunteer to be on both sides of everything.
 You have taught us how resurrection happens.
 You are the Great Outpouring God,
 You are the Eternal Yes of Jesus,
 You are the Abiding Presence of Spirit in all things.
 We offer this prayer in thanksgiving because you are first praying
 In us, through us, and with us
 Amen.

~Fr. Richard Rohr

Interior Silence

Interior silence is the perfect seedbed for divine love to take root. In the Gospel the Lord speaks about a mustard seed as a symbol of divine love. It is the smallest of all seeds, but it has an enormous capacity for growth. Divine love has the power to grow and transform us. The purpose of contemplative prayer is to facilitate the process of inner transformation.

~Thomas Keating,
Open Mind Open Heart p. 45

Q & A with Fr. Carl J. Arico

Q: Many years ago Basil Pennington came to the Diocese of Corpus Christi to introduce Centering Prayer. As I recall, Fr. Basil commenced with remarks that the Pope had told or encouraged the Trappists to take this prayer life from the monasteries out into the life of the faithful. How did the Pope come to ask the Trappists to introduce the faithful laity to Centering Prayer?

A: In 1971 when the leaders of the Order of Cistercians of the Strict Observance (Trappist) were meeting at Rome in General Chapter, Pope Paul VI welcomed them to the Vatican (as I understand it, Thomas Keating was there as an Abbott and Basil Pennington was there as his canon lawyer expert). In speaking to the Abbots and Abbesses, he asserted that there could never be a true renewal if there was not a renewal in depth of the members of the church themselves in their prayer life, their union and their communion with God. He urged them to do whatever they could to help their fellow Catholics in the west to recover the contemplative dimension of their Christian lives. Abbot Thomas Keating took this invitation seriously at St. Joseph's Monastery in Spencer, MA. As the fruit of the prayer, study and research, and life experiences as praying monks, they developed the method of Centering Prayer as a response to the Pope's request and began to explore ways of sharing the Christian contemplative tradition.

Q: I am interested in knowing the history and significance of the bowl chime for the Centering Prayer practice. Our group rings it three times to begin (I'm not sure why), and uses a stop watch to end the time, which can jolt one out of the sweet time of silence. Yet we still then ring the bowl. Where did this practice start? What is the significance of ringing a bowl? Is there a better way to end the 20 minutes than a stopwatch?

A: In the monastery the ringing of the bell has always been a call to prayer, an end of prayer, or the call to some activity. I remember in the seminary we would have spiritual reading during our meals and when the rector decided that it was time to end the reading, he would ring the bell and the meal would continue in silence. The bowl is an extension of that tradition. It is a gentle way of entering into and ending the Centering Prayer period. It is rung three times to allow the group to gently enter into the prayer and then three times to gently end the prayer. I agree with you that it does not make sense that the timer goes off and then the bell is rung. It has always annoyed me but I let it go. It seems that the one leading could just look at a watch or have a quiet vibrating timer and then end the prayer session. This is a little refinement that could be encouraged.

Check out the Contemplative Prayer Website

Check out the CONSD website at www.consd.com. You will find a wealth of information about Centering Prayer. You can read 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 retreat centers. This is just a taste of what you will find so check it out.

Prince of Peace Abbey Centering Prayer Retreat October 2015

I believe that one aspect of our spiritual journey forms a sort of circle. A cycle between prayer and action. As we become aware of the contemplative life within us, this cycle becomes more prevalent. God nourishes us through our life of prayer and consent, and at the same time we are being sent out to love the world. I am not sure if one happens before the other. Prayer and action are more like two sides of the same coin. For me, it is a journey of being loved by God, sharing that love with others, and returning back into His arms to be loved some more. The spiritual journey is a non-dualistic cycle where the acts of being and doing coexist.

I am a mother of 4 children, and just recently returned to teaching. I teach the Intensive Behavior Intervention class for children with severe Autism. I love the children, the parents, and the instructional aides with whom I serve. However, it is called 'intensive' for a reason! I am often tired, drained, and stretched to limits I didn't even know I had. When doing any ministry, it is essential that we remain close to God, listen to His voice, and take care of ourselves. One of the ways I take care of myself is through silent retreats.

The Centering Prayer Retreat at the Prince of Peace Abbey is one of those places I find refuge. The Abbey sits high above Oceanside. It has offered me so much. A lovely church that is filled with monks faithfully chanting psalms at various times of the day and night. A quiet, lonely chapel to shed my tears for the pain of God's people. A meditation garden just outside my room. And a nature walk guiding us through the stations of the cross. As I enter the Abbey, I turn off my phone. The only ringing I

will hear is that of the church bells calling me into awareness of God's presence in and around me.

The Centering Prayer weekend is not only deep and quiet, but silently powerful. When 26 people sit in a circle praying in silence, one can feel the Holy Spirit moving in, through and amongst us. We are offered, at this retreat, multiple opportunities for centering prayer. And in this prayer, we are somehow united in God to one another. This is a very real example in my life of what it means to be the Body of Christ.

At the end of our weekend, the lonely chapel in which I offered up the wounds of God's people is transformed into a service of celebration and worship. It is full and bright as we break bread together. The weekend culminates with faith sharing as we bear witness to our own experiences of the weekend. It is so beautiful how God touches us right where we need it in the way and style we can receive Him. Our final meal is eaten in conversation with one another as we prepare for our departure. It is not always easy to leave the peace and return to the world with its brokenness and pain. But if we stayed, who would go for God? It's all part of our calling and the contemplative life. This year, marked my 5th retreat at the abbey. Each year, I am touched in a new and different way. But the sense of coming home into the arms of God never changes. And so the cycle continues from being, silence, and recollection to doing, serving, and being sent. For me, it is sharing in the life of God.

~Jenny Alcazar

Full Day Retreat with Fr. Coffey



On February 6, 2016, Fr. Stephen Coffey will present a Retreat on the Cosmic Christ. Fr. Steve is a Benedictine monk in residence at the Monastery of the Risen Christ in San Luis Obispo, CA. For many years, he has been involved in retreat ministries as well as ministries of spiritual direction, spiritual formation and evangelization.

This workshop is designed to introduce partici-

pants to perceiving Christ as the center and meaning of an evolving universe. The notion of cosmic Christology, rooted in scripture, attained a flowering of thought in many early Christian writers.

Our morning session will give attention to the New Testament writers, the Eastern father Maximus the Confessor, and the Franciscan theology of St. Bonaventure. In the afternoon we will consider three 20th century spiritual writers who have made significant contributions to an understanding of the Cosmic Christ: Teilhard de Chardin, Thomas Merton, and Bede Griffiths. The day will provide a rich sampling of a long tradition of appreciating an image of Christ that can nourish the spiritual longings of the human heart.

Half Day Retreat with Carolyn Metzler



On April 9, 2016, Rev. Carolyn Metzler will present "Discerning a Rule of Life." Rev. Carolyn is an Episcopal priest who has been a hospice chaplain for thirty years.

Carolyn now serves as the Spiritual Life Coordinator for the Center for Action and Contemplation and its Living School for Action and Contemplation.

She has lived on three continents and loves conversations of the Spirit that cross cultural and religious boundaries. She appreciates the deep silence of extended solitary retreats in a

remote New Mexico canyon. A poet, writer and weaver, Carolyn works with individuals to compose rituals which help overcome barriers in their spiritual journey. Mark your calendars now!

Searching for God

This much is certain, that once we make up our minds to seek God, He is already seeking us much more eagerly, and he is not going to let anything happen to prevent His purpose.

~Thomas Keating,
Heart of the World p. 41

Parliament of the World's Religions

The Parliament of the World's Religions is a gathering of practitioners from dozens of Eastern, Western, and indigenous religions that meets every two to five years to connect, pray, commune, and call forth the wisdom within our traditions to skillfully face issues of global concern. The very first Parliament, which convened in Chicago in 1893, is today recognized as the birth of the worldwide interreligious dialogue movement. In 1988, the leadership council for the Parliament described its mission as "to cultivate harmony among the world's religious and spiritual communities and foster their engagement. To achieve a just, peaceful, and sustainable world." The Parliament envisions a world in which religious and cultural hatreds are replaced with understanding and respect – and in which the world's most influential institutions move beyond narrow self-interest to realize the common good.

My heart vowed to find a way to attend this Parliament ever since I read Brother Wayne Teasdale's *The Mystic Heart: Discovering a Universal Spirituality in the World's Religions*. Early in the book, Teasdale describes his experience at the 1993 Parliament as a "second Pentecost" (using a term specific to his own Christian background) in which "the divine showed up and opened everyone, inspiring enthusiasm, mutual trust, receptivity, and a wonderful sense of joy, spontaneity, community, and urgency. The spirit was tangibly present, prying hearts and minds open to receive the impulse of new vision."

So when I heard that the Parliament would convene in Salt Lake City in October 2015, I knew I had to go. Jane Milligan, who had long desired to take a road trip through the Southwest, happily joined me for the five-day event.

Just walking through the Salt Palace Convention Center, where the Parliament was held,

was an interfaith adventure. A wide spectrum of people, colors, music, and smells greeted us, with Sikh turbans, Jewish yarmulkes, Buddhist robes, Christian crosses, Native headdresses, Muslim hijabs, and Hindu saris flowing through the halls. In one area, Tibetan monks created a mandala sand painting. While a small indoor Jain temple was assembled a few feet away. All next to a circle of yogic chanters practicing *kirtan* with musical accompaniment by harmonium. Each day, the Sikh community served a free *langar* ("common kitchen") vegetarian lunch to the nearly 10,000 participants. I understood what Teasdale had meant by "second Pentecost" with so many people of diverse backgrounds purposefully and peacefully *gathered in one place*. They were beautifully expressing the sacred in the language and art of their own religious tradition. This reflected the Parliament's emphasis on religious *harmony* rather than "unity." With each tradition's uniqueness enriching and deepening a broader chorus of mutual celebration.

Like many other conferences, the Parliament included exhibit halls, concerts, films, large plenary sessions with well-known speakers such as Karen Armstrong, Jim Wallis, and Jane Goodall. The Dalai Lama had been scheduled to appear, but health issues kept him at home, resting. As well as hundreds of smaller presentations and workshops to choose from. The plenary sessions focused largely on the world's contemporary issues and crises: War, Violence, Hate Speech; Climate Change, Income Inequality, Women, and Indigenous Peoples. Smaller workshops included discussions of Islamophobia, guidance in deep listening, dialogues between religion and science, exegesis and alternative understandings of difficult religious texts. There was a Black Lives Matter panel, mindful eating, the divine feminine, and an interfaith responses to drone warfare.(cont.)

Parliament of the World's Religions

With so many offerings among important topics, perhaps the most challenging aspect of the Parliament was choosing which session to attend. I was grateful to see that some sessions, particularly the early morning gatherings, created space for silence, group prayer, and varieties of meditation and contemplation. Tai Chi, mindfulness meditation, gospel services, an interfaith office of the hours, nondenominational healing services, Bhakti (devotional yoga) were among the dozens of such practices offered.

In addition, most of the plenary sessions began with a particular group exhibiting one of their forms of prayer, including chanting by Tibetan Buddhist monks and Sufi whirling meditation (dervish dancing). One enlivening interfaith ritual that Jane and I had the opportunity to be a part of was the Cosmic Mass, led by Episcopal priest Matthew Fox. Roughly following the structure of a Christian Mass; the ritual celebrates the unfolding of the cosmos with song, story, visuals, chanting, moments of silence, time for grieving, the kiss of peace, drumming, dancing, and a communal meal of bread and wine. (Unfortunately, time and space constraints meant we had to forgo the communal meal during the Parliament). Another memorable presentation, "Abrahamic Reunion," spotlighted a group of Jews, Christians, Muslims, and Druze (a minority religion in Lebanon, Syria, and Israel) who are praying and working together "to promote love, peace, communication, cooperation, and dialogue among the people of the Holy Land." Several individuals – many of whom reside in Jerusalem and the Palestinian territories – shared their struggles and stories of peace-building in the midst of violence. Their sharing was especially poignant on that particular day, as there had just been several knife attacks and a bus station

shootout in Israel that resulted in the deaths of Israeli soldiers and Palestinians.

The Abrahamic Reunion revealed an element of the Parliament that I was not so willing to acknowledge at first: an undertone of anxiety. It had come up earlier when an imam, a speaker at one of the plenaries, joked that his backpack -- on stage with him -- was "really JUST a backpack" (and not a bomb). He was whistling in the dark, but the audience's collective intake of breath suggested that he had struck a nerve. There was, indeed, alongside the joy and beauty of this Parliament, a shared sense of angst and disquiet. Given recent events, it is hard to avoid thoughts about the potential for violence at this kind of gathering. A bit later, religious scholar Karen Armstrong took the opportunity to address these feelings. Explaining that she had been feeling "full of dread and anxiety" lately, she noted that compassion is not "sweet or soft," nor a sentimental form of love or sympathy. Compassion is actually *uncomfortable*, she asserted, and it should be. If compassion is understood as "suffering with," then in our world today, which is full of so much misery, the feeling-sense of compassion *should be* tension, anxiety, sadness, fear. She urged us to *really feel* these emotions – rather than pushing them away – and allow them to "become the grain of sand that disturbs the clam so that a pearl, a jewel of something new, emerges." In other words, transformative change begins with the grace of unsuppressed, uncomfortable compassion. Daily beholding our exquisite gift of a world raw with wounds and anguish, I need to take time away on occasion to gather strength with others in a wide field of care and intention and love. I pray, with God's will, become blessings to our descendants.

~Mary Williams

God Touched My Heart

Today while visiting the Fallbrook prayer group held in Jean Tiffany's rural home, Jean told of a brief personal experience that underscored her deep relationship with God. Each member of the group had been sharing a time when we felt touched by God, and Jean said, "My memory was actually this morning. Every day I take an early morning walk by myself—it is a time for me to be alone with my Father. Today I was saying in my heart how close I felt to the Lord, and then I just asked, 'God, if there is a way that you can reach out to me right now, to show me your presence, I would

be so blessed.' And in the next moment a bird flew overhead and I saw a feather floating down. The small feather landed right on my chest where my heart is. I was so surprised and full of joy, and I said, 'Thank you dear Father for hearing my prayer.'" Her story triggered memories for me of those "little times" when God speaks to us through unexpected connections with nature. On that beautiful Halloween morning surrounded by the wooded area of Jean's home, I had feather on my heart too.

~Linda Dollins

Seeking the Ultimate Reality

Many paths lead to the Source. Some call this Source the Absolute, the One God, the Holy Trinity, Brahman, Great Spirit, Allah, Ultimate Reality or other names, depending upon the cultural or religious frame of reference. For the purpose of this discussion, I use the term "Ultimate Mystery" to designate the meaning that these words are trying to signify. All who seek to participate in the experience of Ultimate Mystery—that is, the meaning of the Reality underlying the cosmos—through the practice of religion, love of nature, science, art,

dedicated service of others, deep friendship are united in the same fundamental search. They can remain in their own chosen path or religious tradition and still contribute to the unprecedented awakening of trans-cultural values that has begun to take place throughout the world. The most significant contribution they can make is to cultivate the experience of oneness with Ultimate Mystery, oneness with all other human beings, and oneness with the cosmos.

~Fr. Keating, *Grace Upon Grace*, (pg. 6)

Above All

Above all, trust in the slow work of God. We are all, quite naturally, impatient in everything to reach the end without delay. We should like to skip the intermediate stages. We are impatient of being on the way to something unknown, something new, and yet it is the law of all progress that is made by passing through some stages of instability—and that may take a very long time. And so I think it is with you. Your ideas mature gradually—let them grow, let them shape themselves without undue

haste. Don't try to force them on as though you could be today what time (that is to say, grace and circumstances acting on your own good will) will make you tomorrow. Only God could say what this new spirit gradually forming within you will be. Give our Lord the benefit of believing that His hand is leading you and accept the anxiety of feeling yourself in suspense and incomplete.

~Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

CONSD & COSD Events—2015-2016

CONSD EVENTS – 2015

Half Day Retreat

Facilitator: Elena Andrews
 Date: November 21, 2015
 Time: 9:00-12:30
 Location: San Dieguito United Methodist Church, 170 Calle Magdalena, Encinitas
 Freewill Offering

Half Day Retreat

Presenter: Carolyn Metzler
 Event: The Rule of Life
 Date: April 9, 2016
 Location: First United Methodist Church, 341 S. Kalmia St., Escondido,
 Suggested Donation: TBA

CONSD EVENTS

For information on all CONSD events call Sue Hagen at (760) 745-8860 or Linda Dollins at (760) 743-8297

CONSD EVENTS – 2016

Introductory Workshop

Date: January 16, 2016
 Time: 8:30-12:30
 Location: St. James Catholic Church, 625 S. Nardo Ave., Solana Beach
 Suggested Donation: \$25.00

COSD EVENTS

For information on COSD events call Kathy at (619) 749-4141

Full Day Retreat

Presenter: Fr. Stephen Coffey
 Event: The Cosmic Christ
 Date: February 6, 2016
 Location: St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church, 16275 Pomerado Road, Poway
 Suggested Donation: \$25.00
 (Please bring a sack lunch)

United in Prayer Day

Date: March 19, 2016
 Location: San Diego
 Hosted by: COSD

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 database up-to-date. This will help us to continue to inform you about the CONSD newsletters and of upcoming special events. 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 online quarterly.

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

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CONSD CENTERING PRAYER GROUPS

	Area	Facilitators	Telephone	Location	Day & Time
1	Carlsbad	Rev. Madison Shockley	760-729-6311 ext.207	Pilgrim United Church of Christ, 2020 Chestnut Ave. Carlsbad	Wednesdays 6:30-7:30pm
2	Del Mar (1)	Kathy Agnew	858 481-8754	St. Peter's Episcopal Church, 334 14 th St.	Thursdays 4:30-6:00pm
3	Del Mar (2)	Kathy Agnew	858 481-8754	St. Peter's Episcopal Church, 334 14 th St.	Tuesdays 8:55-10:00am
4	Encinitas (1)	Shirley Shetula	760-525-6721	984 Carmen Ct., San Marcos.	Mondays 10:00am
5	Encinitas (2)	Mike and Ann King	760-753-1575	Home of Ann and Mike (Call for directions)	Thursdays 7:00pm
6	Encinitas (3)	Susan Elmore	760-518-8387	Call for location	First and third Mondays 6:30pm
7	Escondido	Linda Dollins	760-745-5100	First United Methodist Church, 341 S. Kalmia	Mondays 4:30pm
9	Fallbrook (1)	Barbara Hudson and Susan Gross	760-645-0726 760-451-0514	St. Peter the Apostle, in the Upper Room 450 S. Stagecoach Lane	Wednesdays 9:15-10:00am
10	Fallbrook (2)	Ann Keegan	760-723-0855	(Call for location)	Saturdays 8:30am
11	Oceanside (1)	Ed Clifford	760-630-1897	Mission San Luis Rey, McKeon Center, Room 12	Wednesdays 7:00pm
12	Oceanside (2)	Mary Williams	760-510-9337	St. Thomas More Catholic Church, 1450 S. Melrose Dr.	Thursdays 1:00pm
13	Oceanside (3)	Pat Julian	760 757-3659 x123	Mission San Luis Rey, 4050 Mission Ave.	Fridays 10:00am
14	Oceanside (4)	Kelly Jo Farnum	760 529-2350	Retreat Center, 4050 Mission Ave.	Fridays 3:00-4:30pm
15	Poway (1)	Elena Andrews	858-451-2098	St. Gabriel Catholic Church, 3734 Twin Peaks Rd.	Fridays 9:30-11:00am
16	Poway (2)	Colleen Clementson and Rebecca Crow- ley	858-748-8548 858-748-3801 88 748-3542	Community Church of Poway, 13501 Community Rd.	Tuesdays 6:30-8:00pm
17	Poway (3)	Sue and Chris Hagen	760-745-8860	St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church, 16375 Pomerado Dr.	Tuesdays 5:00-6:30pm
18	Poway (4)	Sherlene Moller- stuen	858-451-6825	Lutheran Church of the Incarnation, 16889 Espola Rd.	Mondays 5:00-6:30pm
19	Rancho Bernardo	Audrey Spindler	858-740-9055	San Rafael Parish, Cntr. Rooms A & B	Wednesdays 3:30-5:00pm
20	San Marcos	Pastor Karla Halvorson and Jim Ullman	760 727-1509 760 598-8943	San Marcos Lutheran Church, 3419 Grand Ave., Sanctuary	Wednesdays 9:30-11:00am
21	Serra Mesa	Diane Langwor- thy	619-697-3558	Mary Magdalene Apostle Catholic Com- munity/Gethsemane Lutheran, 2696 Mel- bourne Dr., San Diego	Tuesdays 7:00-8:30pm
22	Temecula	Jenny Alcazar	951-696-5657	42758 Settlers Ridge, Murrieta	Thursdays 3:45-5:00pm