

# Consd News

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## Perspective and Presence Silent Retreat

The assessments were finished, the meetings held, the observation over, the classroom lesson plans completed, the laundry done, and my bags packed as I heaved a big sign of relief and headed out the door to my yearly pilgrimage at the Prince of Peace Abbey. As my car climbed the winding driveway, I knew my place of refuge awaited my arrival. I checked in, pulled my soft blanket and squishy pillow out of my suitcase, and fell into my bed as God's arms enfolded me and I settled into the sheer luxury of a nap. My weekend had arrived. My weekend with the safety of silence, the protection of solitude, the power of prayer, and the grace of no demands being placed upon me. This weekend was for God and I alone.

Each year, on the 3rd weekend in October, CONSD holds its Centering Prayer Silent Retreat at the Prince of Peace Abbey in Oceanside, California. The weekend holds opportunities for Centering Prayer, reflection, confession, worship, Lectio Divina, walks through the grounds (including the stations of the cross with breathtaking views), and yes, sleep! And while this marks my 7th retreat at the Abbey, each year is unique and holds a different message or gift for me.

At the opening gathering, Chris Hagen read Father Keating's interpretation of the transfiguration. I began pondering the concept of perspective; specifically, valleys and mountains. We all know the story of Jesus going up the mountain with Peter and James. At the top, they experienced visions, symbols of their faith and insight as to who Jesus truly was. It was so beautiful and exhilarating that they could have remained there forever! Yet Jesus led them back down into the valley. Important work, learning, and being a presence in the valley was their calling. For me, the retreat offers shadows of a similar experience. On Saturday, I went for a walk. I decided after a huge delicious lunch, lots of sitting, and sleeping, that I need movement. And so I thought it a good idea to walk down to the bottom of the driveway and back up. That certainly should get my blood flowing! On my descent, I sensed the busy life below; cars swiftly driving to and from their destinations, noise, and the general chaos of life. I could imagine that each person had their business to attend to with their perspective from the valley. (continued on next page)

## Perspective and Presence Silent Retreat

They probably were not experiencing the silence, stillness, and rest from the world like I was. I eagerly ascended back up the driveway ready to return to my mountain. I thought how different, slow, quiet, spacious, nurturing, and clear life at the Abbey is for us there on retreat. Life has more clarity, God is more apparent and easier heard, and life just makes better sense with perspective from the mountain. There is a much larger picture.

About halfway up the driveway, I heard loud shouts of exhilaration. I looked down around to me to see where they were coming from, but saw nothing. The shouts persisted. This time, I looked up and saw half a dozen parachuters sailing down from great heights in the sky. Imagine their perspective!!! Life must have a dynamic perspective from those heights! This led me to think about God. God's perspective of all things, all people, throughout all eternity is just something we cannot comprehend. How perfect it must be. I believe God invites us to participate in that perspective through presence. Centering Prayer prepares us for that presence. It offers us a chance to slow down step away into our own silent mountain... even if for only 20 minutes twice a day. Centering Prayer is a practice that prepares us for the gift of contemplation. And even just a split second of it can be transformative. Contemplation is the sheer gift of entering God's perspective. It is a sort of timeless experience when one enters into God's time or eternity. In that moment, "kairos" (God's time) and "chronos" (linear time) are wedded. I believe this deeply impacts mankind. Offering ourselves up to the present moment, via Centering Prayer, invites healing into the world through us.

I am so grateful to Chris, Sue, Linda, and all the others who made our retreat possible. As I packed my bags and made my bed, I was filled with love, gratitude, rest, and the ability to carry on. Life isn't always easy. Sometimes, it just plain hurts. But one of the effects of practicing Centering Prayer for me is the certainty that I am never alone. And so I pick up those burdens that I had put down on Friday and embrace them. It is time to return back to the valley with renewed perspective, to be a presence, and for God and I to shine our light. We have work to do and life to live.

~Jenny Alcazar

### Faith

If we have faith, God will answer our prayers, even if the answer might be "not yet," or "that is not what you really need. Think about it and pray again."

~Br. David Allen  
*Society of Saint John the Evangelist*

## St. Mark's Catholic Church Introductory Workshop

All Introductory Workshops have a story. Usually an individual who is committed to Centering Prayer steps out in faith and contacts his or her church about having a prayer group there. Sometimes the clergy is eager, sometimes not sure what Centering Prayer is, and sometimes opposed to the idea. In Jim Ullman's case, Fr. Bruce Osborn of St. Mark's Catholic Church received Jim's suggestion warmly and even offered to promote the proposed Introductory Workshop to his parish months beforehand.

That was in April. Then the preplanning began: finding a place to hold the workshop and a date, advertising it in the church's weekly bulletin, and finally directly promoting the workshop. Fr. Bruce spoke from the pulpit, and Jim and Marjo Gray handed out flyers to folks after every mass. A few weeks before the workshop, Jim arranged to have all of us meet to see the workshop room and to review questions and concerns. About 12 of us attended that meeting, representatives from St. Mark's and CONSD servant leaders.

Other critical planning was spurred by the San Marcos Lutheran Church. Pastor Karla Halvorsen in 2014 had hosted a workshop at her church resulting in a prayer group that meets on Wednesday mornings and is led by herself and Jim. She wanted her congregation to have another opportunity to attend a workshop in San Marcos, and she wanted to donate several hundred dollars to the workshop from a special fund to encourage us not to ask for a registration fee. Because of this funding, the Servant Leadership Team agreed with Pastor Karla's and Jim's request to drop the \$25 charge to attend the workshop and follow-up sessions, and to collect a free will offering instead. The team also agreed to drop the \$25 fee not just for this workshop but future work-

shops as well.

Instrumental in reaching out to other churches in the area is the calling and emailing that Gail Carr does, and has done, for each workshop. About a month before, Gail calls each church on her long list to inquire if the church would be willing to advertise for us. If so, she follows up with an email which includes a letter to the pastor with information about Centering Prayer and a notice for the church bulletin.

The day of the workshop was August 12<sup>th</sup>. The Introductory Workshop Team arrived around 7:30 and included Gail Carr, team leader, Diane Oldfield, registration, and Vicki Rehkopf, Merrilee Melvin, Jan Simpson, and Rita Ohlman. Everyone had all come with donations for the hospitality table as did Jim and Marjo and St. Mark's hospitality person. Team members placed large signs around the church campus and arranged the prayer circle environment in the middle of the circled chairs. Meanwhile the presenters, Chris Hagen and Diane Langworthy, set up the projection equipment and became comfortable with the microphone in an adjacent room.

Almost 50 people attended this workshop, many from St. Mark's and San Marcos Lutheran but others from the neighboring area. We heard Chris present the history of the prayer and then Conference 1 on Prayer as Relationship and Conference 3 on Thoughts and the Use of the Sacred Word. Diane presented Conference 2 on The Centering Prayer Method and Conference 4 on Deepening Our Relationship with God. Once again, the teaching of a prayer that has become a cornerstone for many of us, spoke through Chris and Diane's wisdom, tenderness, and grace. (continued on next page)

## St. Mark's Catholic Church Introductory Workshop



After the workshop, almost half of the people signed up for the follow-up sessions, but because the sessions were at an inconvenient time for some, about 12 people came to them. From there, St. Mark's has formed a prayer group on Tuesday afternoon from 1:30 to 3:00 under the leadership of Jim and Marjo. Their gift of furthering the prayer from the idea of hosting an Introductory Workshop to the formation of a prayer group has been an inspired journey, and we are grateful to them.

There was also a moment which will be recalled by everyone as a further demonstration of wisdom, tenderness, and grace. One of the attendees had brought her very young child. She had sat with the child in the back of the room during the presentations, but she was concerned about joining the prayer circle. Once we were all seated in the circle, Chris spoke for all of us, declaring our desire to have her remain, even if the child became restless. And she stayed for some time. The child, however, eventually needed to move, so they did

If you would like to participate in the Introductory Workshop program in any way, please let Linda or Sue know. Workshops present the gift of Centering Prayer and help us to reach out to others who may otherwise never know of it. Donations toward the workshops are also appreciated.

~Linda Dollins

### Living by the Spirit

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us be guided by the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, competing against one another, provoking and envying each other. *Galatians 5:22-26*

## Contemplative Outreach Conference in Denver and Snowmass Visit

I hadn't been feeling well for six to eight weeks. I can't remember exactly how long it was because one of my symptoms was major brain fog, in addition to fatigue and abdominal pain. I felt like my brain was functioning on only two out of six cylinders. When it came time to pack to go to the Contemplative Outreach conference in Denver, my brain fog was really bad. I said a fervent prayer to my current concept of God, reminding her/him that Linda Dollins was counting on me to take this trip with her and, in about 10 or 15 minutes, the fog lifted and I had energy! I was pretty energized for the rest of the day. Being with Linda and around other people helped.

Unfortunately, the fatigue and pain persisted for most of the trip, but I was able to attend the majority of the conference, and it was a little slice of heaven! Imagine more than 150 contemplatives, each of whom is giving off warm and peaceful vibes, all together in one room! Some long-time Contemplative Outreach members gave informative talks, including Marie Howard ("Timeless Centering Prayer: New Vision, New Energy"), Mary Dwyer ("The New Vision of Contemplative Outreach"), Pat Johnson ("Back to Basics: The Spiritual Journey Series and Invitation to Love"), and Therese Saulnier ("Contemplative Outreach Resources and Suggestions for the Future"). We also saw a number of films and videos with Fr. Thomas Keating and his teachings.

Meals with other attendees were informative and fun. I ran into a young man from Ohio who was in my class at Richard Rohr's Living School, and I met a woman from Texas who had just graduated from Living School a couple of weeks prior to the conference. Linda and

I also connected with two different women who were going to be coordinating Living Flame programs in their chapters, and we picked up some tips from them. Sue and Chris Hagen, and Joan and Terry Thompson, were also in attendance, and we all kept running into each other.

But the highlight of the conference for both Linda and myself was participating in our small groups. There was a total of fifteen groups of ten people, and our assignment was to do *Lectio Divina* on three of the new C.O. Guidelines and three of the new C.O. Guiding Principles that Fr. Thomas Keating, with help from a number of other people, had revised. There was an immediate sense of trust in our respective small groups, and the warm feelings we developed with our group members carried over into meal times and other times when we were together. I also got some good ideas from my small group for things that CONSD can do in the future.

On Sunday, the last morning of the conference, I had to skip the religious service and breakfast because my brain fog was back with a vengeance. Even though I didn't have to make any choices about what to pack - I just needed to throw everything I brought into a suitcase and a backpack - I just couldn't figure out what to pack first or what should go where. It was frustrating and somewhat scary. I started to wonder if I was having a stroke, in part because I was slurring my words. So I prayed again to my current concept of God, and - you guessed it - my brain started to work fairly well and I could pack. (continued on next page)

## Contemplative Outreach Conference in Denver and Snowmass Visit



Then we went to the bookstore to wait for Fr. Charles. Both Linda and I were tired, not very hopeful about meeting Fr. Thomas, and unsure about what we would say to him if we did get a chance to meet him. We also assumed the meeting, if it happened, would only last a few minutes. Fr. Charles was late and he apologized. I asked if he knew if Fr. Thomas was up to meeting with us, and he said he would find out. He mentioned that Fr. Thomas had been receiving people in the past few days, so I started feeling both hopeful and scared – what were we going to talk about?

After that things went smoothly, and we picked up our rental car and headed to Snowmass. We had some rain as we were driving through the unfamiliar mountains, which was a little disconcerting, but we made it to our motel in Basalt in good shape. Linda, who is a great appreciator of nature, spent a lot of time enjoying the magnificent scenery. After a very nice dinner at the local bar and grill, we retired. The next morning it was 29 degrees outside, and I had to scrape frost off the windows of our car!

Sue and Chris had asked Fr. Thomas Keating if he would meet with Linda and me in Snowmass when we visited after the C.O. conference, and he said he would if he were up to it. The Hagens made arrangements with Fr. Charles to be our host and to meet us at the bookstore. On our way to Snowmass we got a little turned-around, but we got there in time to see the hermitage of St. Bernard, where Sue and Chris always stay when they go there. We also did a quick sit at the retreat center, and we found another Living School classmate of mine, Brother Gabe, who remembered me.

Fr. Thomas was up to seeing us, so we walked through the monastery to a kind of library/sitting room and a tall but somewhat stooped man was standing in the doorway waiting to greet us. Sweet Linda started to cry, and Fr. Thomas - with wonderful, old-fashion manners – said gracious things to her and invited her (and me) to come sit by him. Fr. Thomas asked us about the C.O. conference in Denver. I think he said it was the first one he had not been able to attend. We told him about it, including how much we liked the small group activity, and he was pleased. He talked about the process he and others had gone through to revise the C.O. Guidelines and C.O. Guiding Principles. He said they will probably need to be revised again in another five years. At some point Fr. Thomas and I started to engage in some good-hearted “spiritual gossip” about people we knew in common, including David Frenette, who is my spiritual director and Fr. Thomas’ long-time protégé. We also discussed Philip St. Romain, who wrote the book *Kundalini Energy and Christian Spirituality*, with a forward (continued on next page)

## Contemplative Outreach Conference in Denver and Snowmass Visit

by Fr. Thomas Keating. Because I had a Kundalini Awakening, I read his book and then years later I did a spiritual direction session with Philip, and now we are friends on Facebook. Fr. Thomas said he had corresponded with Philip for many years, until he was no longer able to because of his health. We also talked about Bernadette Roberts, a modern-day mystic. I went on a retreat with her once, during which time she mentioned Fr. Thomas, and he had talked to her in person on occasion. We both agreed that we find her to be something of an enigma.

Fr. Thomas asked me about my experience with Kundalini, including where the energy was at this point, and I shared a few things with him. He made some astute comments, and then asked if I was a Christian. When I said I was, he expressed some amazement and said something like, "Really?" When I said I was again, he asked what denomination I belong to, so I told him that the Catholic Church is my mother church, but I switched to the Episcopal Church because I'm gay, and that I also belong to and facilitate a Centering Prayer group at a Neo-Charismatic church, which seemed to please him immensely.

In his warm and accepting presence, I was inspired to recommend a book to Fr. Thomas, *Is Your God Big Enough, Close Enough, You Enough?* by Paul R. Smith. He said that a visitor had recommended the same book to him just the previous day, so perhaps my additional recommendation was a sign that he should read it. He then suggested a book for me to read, *Belonging to God: Spirituality, Science and the Universal Path of Divine Love* by William Keepin, with a forward by Fr. Keating.

After visiting with him for an hour and twenty

minutes, instead of our anticipated few minutes, it was time to go. We hugged Fr. Thomas and took pictures with him, and then he walked us out of the monastery. As we went through the bookstore, he pointed out the book he had recommended to me, picked it up, and asked if he could make a gift of it to me! He also offered Linda her choice of any book on the bookshelf. Linda and I were in a daze after such a wonderful visit, and we are actually still processing our experience.

The reason I wrote so much about my brain fog and illness is that, after visiting with Fr. Thomas, I felt almost instantly better! On our trip back to Denver, it started to get dark as we approached the city. My "night driving" glasses were in my backpack in the backseat of the car, so I was going to depend on Linda to read the signs directing us back to the car rental agency. Amazingly, I could easily read the signs myself, and a couple days after I got home, I had to switch to an old, weaker pair of glasses! In the following days, not only did my brain fog clear up, but my mind got sharper than it has ever been, I had lots of energy, and all my pain went away! I have always had a problem with my mind being faster than my mouth when reading out loud or talking fast, and that went away completely, too! Unfortunately, exactly one month to the day after our visit with Fr. Thomas, my abdominal pain came back, but it wasn't as bad as it had been. My extraordinary mind sharpness pretty much disappeared, but I'm not experiencing any kind of brain fog. And my mind-mouth connection is back to the way it was, but I have pretty good energy and I'm still wearing my weaker glasses!

~Merrilee Melvin

## Presence and Action

During the passing of my mother last month, the receptive quality we cultivate in a Centering Prayer practice allowed me to be open to God's grace as it sustained both my mother and me. The welcoming of God's loving presence and healing action in my life helped me surrender to and even welcome her passing.

With some regret, my family and I had started to make plans to place my 96-year-old mother in a care facility in Encinitas near me. Instead of a move, she experienced a quick decline. Not knowing what to expect on my next visit, I was pleasantly surprised to find her lying peacefully in bed, comfortable and relaxed. My fears dissipated and I easily snuggled into bed next to her. Whereas the caregivers wanted her to respond to me by saying my name or acknowledging who I was, that was no longer important to me. I just wanted to be there, to look at her small sweet hands and lovely lined face. It was a time for quiet presence, not words. Just like during centering, I sunk into this silent space gratefully.

Over the next two weeks during each visit, she moved further and further away from us. I knew her body's wisdom was steadily guiding her through this natural transition. Earlier I couldn't have imagined how I would let her go. But now I knew I was there to aid her, to give her assurance, encouragement, and comfort. That role was completely new to me, and the fact that I felt so comfortable in it made me realize I wasn't doing this on my own. By God's grace I was given the courage to be fully present. I sensed that my practice of Centering Prayer, Reiki healing and training as a Stephen Minister had been just for this very moment, the moment I had been dreading for over a decade.

On my last visit, I told her what was visibly

obvious; she was moving closer and closer to God. With each breath, she was breathing her way into His full presence. Her face was transformed, a transfiguration occurring right before my eyes. A beautiful woman all her life, her face was now sculpted down to its essence: regal, elegant, and luminous. I had never seen her look like this before, my mom but not my mom.

I let her go and thought, "Goodness to goodness." She is on her way.

~Virginia Erickson

### CONSD Calendar

11/11/17: Half day retreat: Integrating the False Self  
 1/6/18: Servant Leadership Team Meeting  
 1/20/18: Living Flame full-day retreat: Refinement of Centering Prayer  
 2/17/18: Living Flame full-day retreat: Lectio Divina  
 3/17/18: United in Prayer Day (COSD)  
 4/21/18: Living Flame full-day retreat: The Human Condition  
 5/5/18: Servant Leadership Team Meeting  
 5/19/18: Living Flame full-day retreat: Divine Therapy  
 6/ 9/18: Half day retreat  
 6/16/18: Living Flame full-day retreat: The Dark Night of Sense  
 7/21/18: Living Flame full-day retreat: The Welcoming Prayer Practice  
 8/18/18: Living Flame full-day retreat: The Discernment Practice  
 10/6/18: Servant Leadership Team Meeting



## A Contemplative Prayer Gathering in the Midst of Tragedy

The tragedy of the Las Vegas shootings would be devastating enough on its own. But this unfathomable trauma has happened in the midst of other tragedies—such as the recent hurricanes affecting Texas, Florida, Puerto Rico, and the Caribbean, the major earthquake in Mexico, and the usual level of local and global violence. Many of us feel shaken to the core, awakening in us a depth of sadness not just for the victims, but also for all of humanity.

Yet what can we do? We feel helpless, distant, isolated, and also needing to carry on with our own lives.

There *is* something meaningful we can do. The Monday evening Centering Prayer group at St. Michael's Church in the Old Town neighborhood of Chicago decided there *is* something meaningful they could do. They gathered together to pray in meditative silence, to chant, and to share in light refreshments following their prayer time. Alan Krema, facilitator of the Chicago prayer group, cast the sense and intent of their prayerful gathering in the following perspective:

“Centering prayer is a contemplative prayer that opens us to a larger reality and deeper connections. It brings us to a place where we see ourselves as if in a vast space, yet we are held, sustained, and loved. In this place we see others as well as our own being all connected to the same source, in the same ground. When we release our grip on the thoughts which dominate our mind, we open to the space of our heart, which can embrace our larger human family.

The immediacy of trauma cannot just be let go of. There is pain, hurt, and violent death. In the light of the violence perpetrated in Las Vegas

on Sunday, we need the touch, companionship, and connection in a physical room together with those who are willing to attempt to allow our hearts to open to the loving embrace of the human family, even while we acknowledge its violence, pain, and aggression. This work of opening, holding, and praying will create a healing energy that we can all share in.

Out of the energy and force of holding our human family in our heart, we will together be able to move forward and allow our mind to serve our heart and lead us to right and mindful actions for the betterment of us all. Let's briefly pause from our busy schedules, gather together in a sacred space—there is no substitute for praying with our feet in this way (by coming together in physical presence)—and uphold both the particular victims and all of humanity in remembrance, by opening our hearts in contemplative prayer. Gathered together in contemplative chant and prayer, we find the courage to open our hearts to embrace both lament and hope. Our lives may seem too small for the task, but our hearts are vast—a reality we learn by quieting our minds—vast enough to uphold all of humanity. And there is strength in numbers. We are not alone!”

~Alan Krema

## CONSD Presents a Half Day Retreat: Integrating the False Self: What's in the Way is the Way

On November 11<sup>th</sup> from 9:00-12:30 at San Dieguito United Methodist Church in Encinitas, Merrilee Melvin, Elena Andrews and Avril Bland will be leading this retreat on the False Self. Merrilee has described a little of what we can expect below. See the flyer in this Newsletter for additional information.

What is this False Self that we hear so much about? Fr. Thomas Keating equates it with what he calls the "Homemade Self". In the book *The Thomas Keating Reader*, he writes: "Because of the damage resulting from our fallen human condition, we are not normally in touch with our spiritual nature. Our actual psychological consciousness on a day-to-day level consists of our homemade self, manifesting itself and not God... Thinking our usual thoughts is the chief way that human nature has devised to hide from the unconscious. So when our minds begin to quiet down in Centering Prayer, up comes the emotional debris of a lifetime in the form of gradual and sometimes dramatic realizations of what the false self is, and how this homemade self that we constructed in early childhood to deal with unbearable pain became misdirected from genuine

human values into seeking substitutes for God. Images that don't really have any existence except in our imagination are projected on other people instead of facing head-on their source in ourselves."

And how do we integrate this False Self, these images that are both in the way and, if we choose to face their source head-on in ourselves, actually are the way? Cynthia Bourgeault gives us a hint in her book, *The Heart of Centering Prayer*, when she says: "...the recipe for spiritual transformation is basically the same all over: surrender, attention, compassion. One way or another, you will pass through the same eye of the needle no matter what path you're on."

This retreat will be structured around these three basic ideas for spiritual transformation: surrender, attention, and compassion. Participants will be introduced to practices which help to support these ideas as well as experiencing periods of Centering Prayer, chanting, and a time for personal reflection.

~Merrilee Melvin

### The Presence of God

Centering prayer is a way of awakening to the reality in which we are immersed. We rarely think of the air we breathe, yet it is in us and around us all the time. In similar fashion, the presence of God penetrates us, is all around us, is always embracing us. Our awareness, unfortunately, is not awake to that dimension of reality.

~Fr. Thomas Keating  
*Open Mind, Open Heart*

## CONSD Presents a Half Day Retreat

### *Integrating the False Self: What's In the Way is the Way*



*Explore practices that promote the full acceptance of the content of the present moment and the active letting go of thoughts and feelings that support the false self system.*

Saturday November 11, 2017  
9:00 am (Hospitality and Gathering)  
9:30-12:30 pm (Retreat)  
San Dieguito United Methodist Church  
170 Calle Magdalena Rd., Encinitas 92024

*The community that gathers on this date will experience periods of Centering Prayer, presentation, chanting, and time for personal reflection. A free will offering is accepted.*

To preregister call the CONSD office: 760-745-8860 or email Sue at [consd-news@cox.net](mailto:consd-news@cox.net)

## Living Flame 2018

A series of full-day retreats (9:00-4:30) the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of every month (except March) with trained presenters from Contemplative Outreach begins January 20<sup>th</sup>. We have space for 40 participants and are more than half filled. The cost is \$200 including a \$50 deposit for place holding. Participants are expected to attend all retreats. Partial scholarships are available. The retreats are at St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church in Poway and are designed to teach vital background needed to support Centering Prayer. Even if you have previously been introduced to some of the topics, your practice has grown and deepened, and you will hear and understand these presentations at substantially different level. A number of our registrants have previously attended the Living Flame series and wish to participate again, for being a part of the contemplative community. If you want more information, or if you need scholarship help, call Merrilee Melvin at 760-215-0782 or email her at [mtmelvin@cox.net](mailto:mtmelvin@cox.net).



**Susan Rush**  
January 20  
Centering Prayer  
Refinement



**Leslee Terpay**  
February 17  
Lectio Divina



**Jim McElroy**  
April 21  
The Human Condition



**Mary Dwyer**  
May 19  
Divine Therapy



**Susan Komis**  
June 16  
The Dark Night of Sense



**Therese Saulnier**  
July 21  
The Welcoming Prayer



**Cherry Haisten**  
August 18  
The Discernment  
Practice



## CONSD Presents: The Living Flame Program

Starting January 2018, The Living Flame Program, which consists of seven full-day spiritual and informational retreats, will be presented on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of each month (except for March). All presenters are commissioned by Contemplative Outreach, Ltd., and all retreats will be held at St. Bartholomew’s Episcopal Church in Poway. The program is designed to teach the vital background needed to support your faithful practice of Centering Prayer and to foster a contemplative community..

### Dates, Topics and Presenters

- 1/20/18 Refinement of Centering Prayer, Susan Rush
- 2/17/18 Lectio Divina, Leslie Terpay
- 3/17/18 (No retreat, United in Prayer Day)
- 4/21/18 The Human Condition, Jim McElroy
- 5/19/18 Divine Therapy, Mary Dwyer
- 6/16/18 The Dark Night of Sense, Susan Komis
- 7/21/18 The Welcoming Prayer Practice, Therese Saulnier
- 8/18/18 The Discernment Practice, Cherry Haistens

### COST

The Living Flame program is presented as a single package and requires a \$200 payment before it begins. Partial scholarships are available. To hold your place, a non-refundable deposit of \$50 is

### Registration Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Please Print)  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Please make your \$50 non-refundable deposit check payable to CONSD (Contemplative Outreach of North San Diego). Mail registration form with check to: CONSD, 908 Via Linda, Escondido, CA

For more information call Merrilee Melvin at 760-215-0782 or [mtmelvin@cox.net](mailto:mtmelvin@cox.net)

## Q & A with Fr. Carl Arico

**Q:** I have been advised to NOT do Centering Prayer in conjunction with Lectio Divina. Individually and in a group setting I have practiced doing Lectio immediately before Centering Prayer and found that often the CP time was enriched by the preceding Lectio. Conversely, I have done CP and then Lectio and found that Lectio was enhanced. This is not surprising since both tend to open us to God's presence and thus the second of the two seems likely to be deeper given our readiness bestowed by the first. So why is there a recommendation to not combine these practices?

**A:** You have your finger on the pulse of both prayer practices. They support one another. They are two different prayer practices but they dance together. Centering Prayer helps us let go of over-conceptualization, hyperactivity and over-dependence on self. This means that when we experience Lectio Divina we are more open to take in some new thoughts, move to different action and rely more on God. Lectio Divina reminds us that our Centering Prayer is relational and we are entering into a deeper relation with our God who is already deeply in love with us.

Usually when our prayer groups gather, they do Centering Prayer first and then Lectio Divina. We have found that when Lectio Divina is done first, when it comes to the fourth step of resting, many do not stay with the word and allow it to penetrate more deeply, but move into Centering Prayer—to me this interrupts the conversation.

**Q:** I am very introverted and hear Fr. Keating on a tape say that contemplative prayer may not be a good fit for introverts. I would like to know what other forms of Centering Prayer might be a better fit? His point was that intro-

verts already are inward looking and may need to look more outward.

**A:** What I believe that Fr. Thomas meant is that introverts “may” become more detached and withdrawn. To guard against this temptation, I always encourage practitioners to couple the practice of Lectio Divina with Centering Prayer. Lectio Divina keeps one grounded in the Lord and challenged by the words of Scripture to faithfully live out the Gospel. One of the fruits of prayer is that one becomes more aware of what is going on around them so that it is not always all about them.

Be faithful to your practice of Centering Prayer. Allow the gift of Lectio Divina to enter into your prayer time and see with new eyes what the Lord has in store for you.

~ Fr. Carl Arico

### Intercessory Prayer & Centering Prayer

The period of centering prayer is not the time to pray specifically for others. By consenting to God, you are implicitly praying for everyone past, present, and future. You are embracing the whole of creation. You are accepting all reality, beginning with God and with that part of your own reality of which you may not be generally aware, namely, the spiritual level of your being.

~Fr. Thomas Keating,  
*Open Mind, Open Heart*

## CONSD & COSD Events—2017

### CONSD EVENTS

#### Half Day Retreat

Date: Saturday November 11, 2017  
 Time: 9:00 am – 12:30 pm  
 Facilitator: Elena Andrews  
 Location: San Dieguito United Methodist Church, 170 Calle Magdalena Rd., Encinitas  
 Free Will Offering

#### Living Flame: A 7 Full-Day Monthly Retreats Package

Date: Saturday January 6, 2018, 1<sup>st</sup> retreat  
 Time: 9:00 am – 4:00 pm  
 Location: St. Bartholomew's Church, 16275 Pomerado Rd., Poway  
 Cost: \$200 for all 7

### CONSD EVENTS

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

### COSD EVENTS

#### Centering Prayer as the 11<sup>th</sup> Step Practice

Date: Saturday, December 9, 2017  
 Time: 9:00 am – 5:00 pm  
 Location: St. Brigid Parish, Pacific Beach  
 Free Will Offering  
 To register notify [kdowns2@san.rr.com](mailto:kdowns2@san.rr.com)

#### United in Prayer Day

Date: March 17, 2018

#### Contemplative Outreach Silent Retreat

Date: April 6-8, 2018  
 Location: Prince of Peace Abbey, Oceanside  
 Cost: \$200  
 Deposit to secure place: \$50 to COSD, 4461 Robbins St., S.D. 92112  
 Silent Retreat deposit to secure place by 12/1/17 \$50 to COSD.

### COSD EVENTS

*For information on COSD events call Karen Downs (858) 488-1014 or Ardy Woodmansee (858) 279-7278*

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](mailto:consd@cox.net)

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**Layout and Design:** D. Conner

## 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)	Barbara Hamilton	480-236-7319	St. Peter's Episcopal Church, 334 14 <sup>th</sup> St.	Thursdays 4:30-5:45pm
3	Del Mar (2)	Kathy Agnew & Virginia Erickson	858 481-8754 760-846-5749	St. Peter's Episcopal Church, 334 14 <sup>th</sup> St.	Tuesdays 8:55-10:00am
4	Encinitas (1)	Shirley Shetula	760-525-6721	(Call for location)	Mondays 10:00am
5	Encinitas (2)	Virginia Erickson	760-846-5749	Beth Lutheran, 925 Balour Dr., Multipurpose Rm., Encinitas	Mondays 4:30-6:00pm
6	Encinitas (3)	Judith Pruess-Mellow	650-823-0559	San Dieguito United Methodist Church, Encinitas	Mondays 1:30pm
7	Escondido	Linda Dollins	760-745-5100	First United Methodist Church, 341 S. Kalmia	Mondays 4:30pm
8	Fallbrook	Ann Keegan	760-723-0855	(Call for location)	Saturdays 8:30am
9	Murietta	DeeDee Warden	951-265-8557	42753 Settlers Ridge, Murietta	Wednesday 3:45-5:00pm
10	Oceanside (1)	Ed Clifford	760-630-1897	Mission San Luis Rey, McKeon Center, Room 12	Wednesdays 7:00pm
11	Oceanside (2)	Mary Williams	760-510-9337	St. Thomas More Catholic Church, 1450 S. Melrose Dr.	Thursdays 1:00pm
12	Oceanside (3)	Pat Julian	760 757-3659 x123	Mission San Luis Rey, 4050 Mission Ave.	Fridays 10:00am
13	Oceanside (4)	Pat Julian	760-757-3659	Retreat Center, 4050 Mission Ave.	Fridays 1:30-3:00pm
14	Poway (1)	Elena Andrews	858-451-2098	St. Gabriel Catholic Church, 3734 Twin Peaks Rd.	Fridays 9:30-11:00am
15	Poway (2)	Colleen Clementson & Rebecca Crowley	858-748-8548 858-748-3801 88 748-3542	Community Church of Poway, 13501 Community Rd.	Tuesdays 6:30-8:00pm
16	Poway (3)	Sue and Chris Hagen	760-745-8860	St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church, 16375 Pomerado Dr.	Tuesdays 5:00-6:30pm
17	Poway (4)	Sherlene Moller-stuen	858-451-6825	Lutheran Church of the Incarnation, 16889 Espola Rd.	Mondays 5:00-6:30pm
18	Poway (5)	Merrilee Melvin	760-215-0782	Rancho Vineyard Church (call for directions)	Sunday 10:45am
19	Ramona	Deborah Lewallen & Cindy Dodson	760-519-1811 602-549-9839	St. Mary's in the Valley Episcopal Church, 1010 12th St., Ramona	Mondays 4:30-5:45pm
20	Rancho Bernardo	Audrey Spindler	858 208-8609	San Rafael Parish, Center. Rooms A & B	Wednesdays 3:30-5:00pm
21	Solana Beach	Bebe Zaniboni	858-755-2545	St. James Catholic Church, 625 S Nardo Ave, Solana Beach	Tuesdays 9:15-10:30am
22	San Marcos (1)	Pastor Karla Halvorson & Jim Ullman	760 727-1509 760 598-8943	San Marcos Lutheran Church, 3419 Grand Ave., Sanctuary	Wednesdays 9:30-11:00am
23	San Marcos (2)	Jim Ullman & Marjo Gray	760-598-8943	St. Mark's Catholic Church	Tuesday 1:30-3:00
24	Serra Mesa	Diane Langworthy	619-697-3558	Mary Magdalene Apostle Catholic Community/ Gethsemane Lutheran, 2696 Melbourne Dr., San Diego	Tuesdays 1:00-2:30pm
25	Temecula	Pam Bowen & Marigold Velasco	909-938-9932	Home of Joan Neidig, 42149 Camino Romo, Temecula	Thursdays 6:30-8:00 pm