

Consd News

THE NEWSLETTER OF CONTEMPLATIVE OUTREACH OF NORTH SAN DIEGO
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Contemplative Outreach of Northern San Diego

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The **VISION** of Contemplative Outreach of North San Diego is to foster the process of transformation in Christ in one another through the practice of Centering Prayer.

The **MISSION** of Contemplative Outreach of North San Diego is to: pre-
sent the method of Centering Prayer, build a Christ centered community,
and support the contemplative life.

CORE VALUES

Value – Christ Centered

We will know we are living by this value when we: Commit ourselves to be faithful to the practice of Centering Prayer twice a day. Embrace the inspiration and direction of the Holy Spirit in accomplishing our Vision and Mission. Share the method of Centering Prayer with utmost charity and humility.

Value – Humility

We will know we are living by this value when we: Acknowledge that any good accomplished by CONSD is the work of the Holy Spirit. Are transparent in our actions. Treat everyone we meet, within and outside of CONSD, in a non-judgmental manner. Respond to every issue that comes to us in a non-judgmental manner.

Value – Utmost Charity

We will know we are living by this value when we: Reach out with compassion, understanding, and joy in the pursuit of our Vision and Mission Statements. Accept and value each person wherever she/he may be on their spiritual journey. Treat every person and issue with utmost patience.

Value – Community

We will know that we are living by this value when we: Cultivate and foster a spirit of unity and utmost charity throughout the spiritual network. Honor and respect people within and outside of our Christian tradition regardless of differences in outlook, theology or practice. Hear, share, learn, and grow in union with one another with God as our center.

The Lord is My Shepherd A Contemplative Response to the 23rd Psalm



On November 9, 2019 over seventy centering prayer practitioners gathered at St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church in Poway for a half-day journey to rediscover the Lord as shepherd. The day was led by our own esteemed speaker, Elena Andrews and complemented with chanting, led by Avril Bland. After Linda Dollins welcomed everyone in attendance, she turned the floor over to Elena, who served as a guide in navigating through one of the most often quoted pieces of scripture, the Twenty-Third Psalm.

A Daunting Challenge

One of Elena's biggest challenges in tackling this Biblical selection is that it is so well-known that almost everyone has a preconceived notion of what it already means. Breaking down these barriers to attach new insights is a daunting effort. But Elena was up

to the task. To aid her in this effort, she drew insights from the book, *Rabbi Rami Guide to Psalm 23 & Jesus' Two Great Commandments: Roadside Assistance for the Spiritual Traveler*.

Bite-Sized Scripture

There is an age-old question that asks, "How does one eat an elephant?" The answer? Why, one bite at a time, of course. Elena's decision to break down the entire psalm into three smaller subsections proved helpful, as it allowed the recipients of this powerful work the freedom to consume it a bit at a time without the fear of being somehow overwhelmed by the entirety of the

whole.

Handouts were used as a precursor to each section to introduce us to several verses from Psalm 23 along with an associated chant. This also included quotes from spiritual masters for consideration during the reflection periods. But the focal point to each movement was Elena's insightful sharing and Avril's soulfully-moving vocals. This served to draw us more intimately into the path of the journey that this psalm invites us to.

Chants – A Cornerstone of the Day

As for the various chants that were included this day, Avril began with a beautiful, solo rendition of an Anglican chant on the 23rd Psalm. A more appropriate selection could not have been made than this one, although the other chants added touching elements to the spoken and written words. (Continued on next page).

The Lord is My Shepherd

A Contemplative Response to the 23rd Psalm

For the first scripture section Avril guided us through the chant “*Seek the Treasure, Seek the Light*”, which was followed by “*Lord as you will, Lord as you know*” and “*Pour out through me, Lord of Glory, Lord of Grace*” for the two respective sections that occurred later that morning.

Beginning the Journey

The Anglican chant served as a segue to a centering prayer sit. Then, twenty minutes later Elena guided us into the first section.

She prefaced the psalm with this thought from Rabbi Rami. “*It speaks to us where we are, reminds us of what is available to us now in the midst of our fear, grief, and sadness. This is not a hymn to past glory or future redemption, but an invitation to walk with God here and now.*”

Psalm 23, Part 1

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures.
He leadeth me beside still waters.
He restoreth my soul:

Rabbi Rami points out that “*I shall not want*” does not mean, “*I shall not desire*,” but rather, “*I shall not lack*.” He adds that “*when you allow God to shepherd you, you dare to leave the path for the pathless, the known for the unknown.*” Thus, opening ourselves to being shepherded offers us both “*blessing and liberation*” as he puts it. “*One cannot be a catalyst for blessing and liberation until you know what it is to be blessed and free. So God makes you lie down.*”

This is where the parallel to centering prayer begins to become apparent, for the very act of

centering is to lay down our very presence before the transcendent, loving creator so that the fruit of this simple act can allow God to be God, shepherd and all. And therein lies the freedom that all humanity truly thirsts for.

As Rabbi Rami often points to in his writings, we have the possibility to become what we are given. And so, when we reach the oasis of blessing and liberation, it seeks to overflow into the lives of those we know and love. Both blessing and liberation cannot be constrained, cannot be held back, when God lavishes them upon us. And centering allows us to open our eyes and hearts to this experience that the scriptures hint of.

Psalm 23, Part 2

He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

I will fear no evil for Thou art with me;

Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me.

Thou prepares a table before me in the presence of mine enemies.

Rabbi Rami points out that the shepherd walks alongside his flock, not in front where he can lose sight of them, or behind them where the sheep can encounter danger first. And so, when a sheep faces danger, the shepherd faces it at the same time. “*It is because the Shepherd is with you that you walk without fear. Not that tragedies won’t happen, but that you will not face them alone. This is what David realizes, and why he suddenly stops speaking about God, and begins to speak to God: ‘Thou art with me.’*”

(Continued on next page).

The Lord is My Shepherd A Contemplative Response to the 23rd Psalm



The rod and staff represent “*care, concern, safety, and liberation.*” He points out that we experience them when we are helped out of a crisis or are warned of impending danger. And when we benefit from God’s rod and staff, the comfort we gain allows us to become God’s rod and staff to others. In the end, God is restoring us to our rightful place as the image and likeness of God, “*that you might walk without fear to bring comfort, blessing, and liberation to all you meet.*”

Rabbi Rami notes that “*Peace is the ultimate gift of being shepherded by God.*” He concludes by saying, “*True Shalom [peace] is the realization that God is with you, inside and out.*” The thought that we can become a partner with God in bringing His spirit and His peace into a darkened world is both a hope and a realization of the fruit of our practice of centering prayer.

Psalm 23, Part 3

Thou anointest my head with oil, my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, And I will dwell in the House of the Lord forever.

Rabbi Rami points to the final verses of the psalm when he says, “*Where does the overflow of your cup go?... the spillage is always downward. Like the still waters in verse 2, your cup spills into low places that the water prefers. Goodness and mercy, David says, shall follow you. Goodness and mercy are behind you not beside you. Goodness and mercy are not only gifts you receive, but gifts you bestow... they are the wake your life journey leaves behind when you allow God to shepherd you.*”

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The Lord is My Shepherd A Contemplative Response to the 23rd Psalm

Closing

Following the last fifteen minute reflection period and final centering prayer sit, the participants were invited by Elena to share any observations and experiences of the day. What resulted was heartfelt expression on the power of the chanting, stories of overcoming challenges, such as cancer, a conversion to CP, dealing with enemies, remembering those who have passed on, seeing centering as a gift, and last but not least, an appreciation for the inspiring words and music that helped produce meaningful feelings and thoughts on this biblical work.

Finally, special thanks was extended to Linda, Chris Hagen, Joan Thompson, Carole Morales,

and a host of others whose help in the background helped to make the experience a special one for many of those who were there. This event was a call to re-discover both the power and the beauty of the twenty-third psalm, as well as to make them *our* words, and to embrace them into *our* journey as Elena has challenged us to do. And for the vast majority of those attending, there is no doubt that they will serve as a lasting legacy.

Note: All scriptural references are taken from the King James Version of the Bible. For more information on Rabbi Rami, you may wish to visit www.rabbirami.com.

~Randy Singh

New Intro Workshop Team Leader: Rick Martin

My early life as the oldest child of a naval officer father and teacher mother, with a brother and 2 sisters, was pretty idyllic. It was a very loving family and many of those years were spent here in San Diego, and for me that meant the beach, surfing, camping, hiking, biking, etc., all of which I still do. After spending a few years in the Navy myself, I met my wife, Patty, while working as a lifeguard and attending UCSD where I then worked for 30 years in the IT field (now retired) while living in Poway (still do). We have been blessed with 2 children, Amanda and Daniel, who are both simply amazing people.

I was 21 years old when my mother, a contemplative herself, arranged for our whole family to be initiated into TM. My first 35 years of meditation practice using the TM method were sporadic but very helpful through those tumultuous years.

Having experienced the benefits of periods of regular meditation practice, just over 10 years ago I committed to practice twice a day, every day, and never looked back. However, it wasn't until about 2 years ago that I stumbled upon this thing called Centering Prayer which was the missing link between my Christian faith and the practice of meditation. I attended an Introductory Workshop, watched a bunch of Father Keating's YouTube videos, read books on the subject and got plugged into the wonderful prayer group at St. Bart's. Having the organization of Contemplative Outreach with all the people, programs, events and resources has been a wonderful environment to deepen my practice and enhance my life in God. I look forward to serving in the Contemplative Outreach organization and helping to introduce this wonderful practice to as many people as possible!

~Rick Martin

The Human Condition: Teachings of Fr. Thomas



Beginning on October 16, 2019, Contemplative Outreach, North San Diego Chapter (CONSD), in partnership with the San Dieguito Methodist Church, Encinitas, CA, hosted a weekly, six-session workshop focusing on the work of the renowned Fr. Thomas Keating, O.C.S.O.

A Trappist monk and founder of the Centering Prayer Movement, Fr. Keating entered religious life at St. Joseph's Abbey, in Spencer, MA, and at the time of his passing in 2018, was part of the community at St. Benedict's Monastery in Snowmass, CO. By incorporating the teachings of contemplatives such as St. John of the Cross and St. Teresa of Avila, as well as contemporary knowledge regarding human development and thought, Fr. Keating's work continues to provide powerful insights into some of the common psychological and social blocks to individual spiritual growth.

Video-taped presentations by Fr. Keating formed the core of the workshop, accompanied by readings from Fr. Keating's book *Open Mind, Open Heart* (Bloomsbury Continuum) and *The Spiritual Journey* (St. Benedict's

Monastery), a transcription of Fr. Keating's own 10-day workshop. Some participants, including workshop facilitator Patti Smith, had been privileged to learn from Fr. Keating personally, and all were invited to share their own reflections at the close of each two-hour session.

Rather than looking at faith as static, Fr. Keating presented a journey of understanding that is linked to life experience of each human being. A key idea is that, from the time we are born, each of us is growing and learning, and so our individual capacity for thought and understanding depends on our overall personal development. This capacity then affects all aspects of our lives and relationships.

In his video-taped lectures, Keating vividly described how a healthy environment can foster personal and spiritual growth. Even in a limiting environment, he believed, faith and spiritual growth are still possible, but they can be slowed or even damaged by toxic influences. (Consider the parable of sowing seed on various types of soil in Luke 8:4-18.) For example, societal messages regarding competitiveness, domination, fear, or greed can distract us from prayer, from moving confidently toward a loving Creator, or from expressing love toward others.

In these cases, Fr. Keating emphasized the role of awareness in attaining or reclaiming the inner freedom to follow God's call in our lives (see John 15:10-17).

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The Human Condition: Teachings of Fr. Thomas

To support life-long spiritual health and development, Fr. Keating (along with Trappists Fr. William Meninger and Fr. Basil Pennington) refined and advocated contemplative prayer as a practice that can help individuals toward greater awareness.

Drawing from ancient practices of Christian contemplatives, this prayer form offers a way to encounter the Word, focusing on the depth of the interaction with scripture, rather than on reading large amounts of text. In addition to brief daily prayer, centering prayer groups can be a wonderful resource for exploring this valuable practice today.

~Laura Pasquale



Human Condition group picture.

Back standing left to right: Graciela Garcia de Lum, Karen Downey, Marie Chapian, Sharon Kelley, Mary Williams, Linda Dollins, Joani Mendoza, Laura Pasquale, Susan Wheeler. Front row left to right: Janet Marie Colby, Barbara Hudson, Riti DeAngeli, Rebecca Fontaine, Carole Morales, and Luz Baez-Tackett.

Prayer Clarity

Many people have found that contemplative prayer puts a certain order into their lives. As their minds became clearer and less cluttered, they are better able to choose their priorities. By giving time to contemplative prayer they actually have more time because they stop doing things that before were useless or unnecessary. John of the Cross has this challenging saying, "If you find that you are working so much that you don't have enough time for your regular time of prayer, just double it!"

~Fr. Thomas Keating, *The Better Part*

Q & A with Fr. Carl Arico

Archive Related to the Spiritual Journey

Q: I saw a notation by Fr. Keating about Heaven right here on earth. Does this take away the hope of a better place to go when I die?

A: Not at all. Heaven is being in the presence of the almighty and loving God for eternity - a living and ongoing presence. Here on earth we are also in the presence of God, and if we live a loving and responsible life, we have a little taste of heaven. But that taste comes and goes, not because the presence of God changes, but our receptivity fluctuates. Enjoy - Fr. Carl.

Q: I was wondering how to go about getting a Spiritual Director, who knows about this spiritual journey done through Centering Prayer. Where do I begin to look, short of a monastery, which I am nowhere near?

A: There are a number of approaches to finding a Spiritual Director. First I would recommend looking at our [newsletter](#) or [website](#) to see what Centering Prayer groups are in your area. By connecting with them they may have some leads for you. The best approach is getting recommendations from friends or your minister or pastor. Local retreat houses may have someone who is available or have connections. During one of our Sounds True online Centering Prayer courses, a number of participants were assisted by mentors – soul friends. The mentoring was done over the phone – we could put you in touch with them. Be clear with the director what your expectations are and that they are open to the contemplative dimension of prayer – especially Centering Prayer. Don't give up – spiritual direction is an important part of the journey.

A: I am sometimes discouraged with the ups and downs of the spiritual journey. Does this ever go away?

Q: It is not unusual on the spiritual journey to go through periods of consolation and desolation. There will always be an ongoing experience of both as time goes on. When we are in a period of consolation, it is important to celebrate the joy and peace but be prepared for these feelings to change. When we are in desolation, with feelings of sadness or disappointment, for example, it is important to remain faithful to our spiritual practices and not let them go. In fact the wisdom is to increase times of prayer and meditation - to be strong with God's help knowing that this too will pass. Remember that God is always present no matter what you are experiencing - there is nothing that can separate us from the Love of God. Feelings come and go but our intention and fidelity to our prayer disciplines should remain constant.

Pure Faith

Pure faith will bring you closer to God than anything else. To be attached to an experience of God is not God; it is a thought. The time of centering prayer is the time to let go of all thoughts, even the best of thoughts. If they are really good, they will come back later.

~Fr. Thomas Keating *Open Mind, Open Heart*, p.57

CONSD & COSD Events 2019-2020

CONSD EVENTS 2020

Introductory Workshop

Date: January 25, 2020

Time: 8:30am-12:30pm

Location: St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church, 16275 Pomerado Road, Poway, 92064
Free Will Offering
For information or to register email:
dollinslinda@hotmail.com

United in Prayer Day

Date: March 21, 2020

Time and Location: TBA

The Deepening: A CONSD Leadership Retreat

Date: April 2-5, 2020

Location: Prince of Peace Abbey, 650 Benet Hill Rd, Oceanside 92058

Cost: \$400

By invitation: For the CONSD Servant Leader Team and CONSD Prayer Group Facilitators

Half-day with Chris Hagen

Date: June 13, 2020

TBA: Time and location

For information on all CONSD events call Linda Dollins at (760) 743-829 or Mary Williams 760-822-3916

COSD EVENTS 2020

7-Day Centering Prayer Retreat

Event: Intensive-Post Intensive Retreat

Dates: April 13-April 19, 2020

Location: Prince of Peace Abbey, 640 Benet Hill Road, Oceanside, 92058

Contact: Kathy Di Fede at 619-840-3781 or kathyjoannemarie@gmail.com

For information on all COSD events, see the COSD website, www.contemplativeoutreachsd.org/workshops-and-retreats/ for a copy of the registration form,

Video by Chris Hagen

There is a video from the workshop, "Putting On The Mind Of Christ. How Centering Prayer Changes the Brain" by Chris Hagen. For the link: click [here](#). For instructions on how to use the YouTube controls: click [here](#).

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CONSD CENTERING PRAYER GROUPS

	Area	Facilitators	Telephone	Location	Day & Time
1	Carlsbad (1)	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 th St.	Thursdays 4:30-5:45pm
3	Del Mar (2)	Kathy Agnew, Nichola Riggle	858 481-8754 760-448-5224	St. Peter's Episcopal Church, 334 14 th 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)	Lynne McKiernan	619-665-6344	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	Barbara Hudson	760-645-0726	(Call for location)	Saturdays 8:30am
9	Murieta	DeeDee Warden	951-265-8557	42753 Settlers Ridge, Murieta	Wednesday 4:00pm
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.	Tuesdays 1:00pm
12	Oceanside (3)	Pat Julian	760 757-3659 x123	Mission San Luis Rey, 4050 Mission Ave.	Fridays 10:00am
13	Poway (1)	Elena Andrews	838-663-6584	St. Gabriel Catholic Church, 3734 Twin Peaks Rd.	Fridays 9:00-10:30am
14	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
15	Poway (3)	Parth Domke	858-829-2664	St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church, 16375 Pomerado Dr.	Tuesdays 5:00-6:30pm
16	Poway (4)	Audrey Spindler	760-215-0782	Order of St. Luke* (call for directions)	Sunday 10:45am
17	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
18	Rancho Bernardo	Audrey Spindler	858 208-8609	San Rafael Parish, Center. Rooms A & B	Wednesdays 3:30-5:00pm
19	Solana Beach	Ann Deakers	858-775-1738	St. James Catholic Church, 625 S Nardo Ave, Solana Beach	Tuesdays 9:00-10:30am
20	San Marcos (1)	Karla Halvorson & Sharon Phelps	760 727-1509 760-533-2437	San Marcos Lutheran Church, 3419 Grand Ave., Sanctuary	Wednesdays 1:30-2:30pm
21	San Marcos (2)	Jim Ullman & Marjo Gray	760-598-8943	St. Mark's Catholic Church	Tuesday 1:30-3:00pm
22	Serra Mesa	Diane Langworthy	619-697-3558	Mary Magdalene Apostle Catholic Community/ Gethsemane Lutheran, 2696 Melbourne Dr.	Tuesdays 1:00-2:30pm
23	Temecula (1)	Pam Bowen, Joan Neidig, & Marigold Velasco	909-938-9932 951-676-2928	Home of Joan Neidig, 42149 Camino Romo, Temecula	Thursdays 6:30pm
24	Temecula (2)	Robin Orner & Pastor Sandy Benz	951-669-3998 951-676-6262 X205	Hope Lutheran, 29043 Vallejo Ave. Classroom 6, Temecula	Tuesdays 6:30pm
25	Vista	Martha Treutle	760-809-2529	United Methodist Church of Vista, 490 S. Melrose Dr. Vista	Mondays 9:30-10:30am