

CONSD News

The Newsletter of Contemplative Outreach of North San Diego, Volume 18, Number 2, May 2023

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Each Hour a Miracle A Reflection on United in Prayer Day, 2023

Editor's Note: Since 2021, Contemplative Outreach's international United in Prayer Day has been hosted on Zoom. This year's event was held on March 3 and 4, thanks again to the skills and dedication of Mary Jane Yates and Pamela Begeman.

Each hour a miracle. A miracle of technology and of silent prayer. Together they create a deep and expansive pool of prayer. I dip the toe of my awareness into each pool. As I breathe deeply, settle comfortably, the miracle takes over.

During the 23 hours, I am transported in the silence to the Philippines, then to Hawaii and on to Sydney. I nod off for a bit and find myself in Korea, then sleep through South Africa and Slovakia. In the wee hours, I awake in London and then pray for hope with the people of Ireland. I share the silence with those in the Bahamas, then sink into the prayers of Germany as I hear the Lord's Prayer as translated from Aramaic.

Later, the silence of Minneapolis reveals beautiful calligraphy, making our shared silence into a piece of art. Each hour, an incarcerated person without internet joins us in silence. For the energy of silence is not bound by prison walls or technology or time zones or geography.

In Wales, I join in the contemplative walk around my space, leaving behind things no longer needed with each step. The

French language welcomes me to Quebec and the Peace Circle Dance gets me moving in Maryland. As the 23rd hour approaches, the silence invites us to join in a testimony to peace.

Miracle upon miracle. Prayer upon prayer. The silence embraces us, washes away all that divides us. Each of us changed in ways that words are too clumsy to describe. But we feel a silence that knows no bounds, a silence that is always there, ready to welcome each of us, all of us. All we can say is "thank you".

~Sue Kenney, Centering Prayer Practitioner in California, USA From the March 2023 E-Bulletin of Contemplative Outreach, Ltd.

Our Greatest Treasure

I have been crucified with Christ; yet, I live—no longer I—but Christ lives in me. — Galatians 2:19.

The awakening of the eye of faith, which is the awakening of the contemplative process, is to begin to see the Divine Presence in everything. You see everything as it is, but you also see it in its source... and then you are meeting God in the physical presence of other people and things. This is the presence that predominates in deep prayer or contemplative prayer and when it's pretty well established, the fruits are available in everyday life in the awareness of the presence of God. To see God as present is an enormous elevation of the capacity to see, because it's seeing the Source and the Love and the Person of the Trinitarian relationships that are present in the smallest particle that we know of and beyond...A new level of Christian life opens up ... a unity in which God takes over the faculties more and more...suggesting what the right response to every situation is from the perspective of divine love. In the no-self situation, there's only the doing what has to be done without self-reflection. This is non-duality. This is heaven on earth, that's for sure. But it's extremely down-to-earth... It's just leading ordinary life from this extraordinary perspective of allowing God to manifest in us rather than ego....God goes slow so not to overwhelm... So weakness then becomes our greatest treasure, because transformation comes about only from God and through his gratuitous generosity, not through anything we can do.

~Father Thomas Keating, God Is Love: The Heart of All Creation, 93-94.

Three Tastes of an Intensive Silent Retreat

"Letting Go and Hearing God's Gentle Voice..."



I had the privilege and wonderful opportunity to attend the recent 5-day Silent Retreat sponsored by Contemplative Outreach of San Diego and held at the beautiful Prince of Peace Abbey in Oceanside. The setting was magnificent, the grounds bursting with flowers everywhere you looked – the yellows, blues, reds, and purples in a riot of celebration after the recent rains. The ½-mile Stations of the Cross loop was bordered all along with huge bunches of white and yellow daisies that just waved at you as you walked by—so peaceful.

After arriving and settling in on Monday afternoon, we had dinner that evening and an orientation session before beginning our period of silence that would extend into Thursday evening's ice cream social. Our days would start with a period of Centering Prayer, breakfast, a DVD presentation of a chapter of Thomas Keating's *Spiritual Journey Series*, a double dose of Centering Prayer, lunch and free time, another double dose of Centering Prayer, DVD presentation, dinner, and a final DVD presentation before bedtime. There was also the opportunity to observe the Canonical Hours and Mass every day, if one so chose.

Part of Fr. Keating's *Spiritual Journey Series* covered the Four Consents, which addresses the larger segments of our lives (childhood, adolescence, adulthood, old age and death) and how to appropriately transition between them (I'm greatly simplifying here!). The part that really spoke to me was when he talked about the things we need to consent to letting go of in our elderly years, not only saying goodbye to the dear ones that pass before us, but letting go of the activities and skills acquired over our lifetimes that our bodies and minds will no longer allow us to do. For me, this includes hiking, running, surfing, skiing as well as losing the ability to play the classical guitar as I used to be able to do – all of this due to progressing arthritis.

As I was reflecting on this while sitting in the small courtyard behind the conference room where the DVD's where shown, I became absorbed in the beautiful tree that was its centerpiece. Probably a sapling 50 years ago, it had grown into a balanced, healthy mature specimen, but what caught my attention was the evidence of numerous sites of pruning done over its lifetime. What a poignant example of letting go of things we think are vitally part of who we are so that we can become what God intends for us to be! I really appreciate the confluence of contemplation, spiritual teaching and nature coming together in that beautiful setting to allow me to hear God's gentle voice.

~Rick Martin





In our everyday lives we don't usually think much about seeming paradoxes like: "going on retreat in order to engage," "using a deep silence to wake up, not go to sleep," or "creating solitude in order to deepen a relationship." As unfamiliar as these ideas might seem, I have to say that my recent time with Contemplative Outreach of San Diego's five-day Centering Prayer retreat offered some experience with these seeming paradoxes. I offer these reflections as my take on what I believe might have also been true for others, which I have drawn from the feedback at the end of the retreat.

We were alone together; silent yet aware of each other. Early in the week we listened to a talk by Father Thomas about

Centering Prayer as a relationship with God, not as a pathway to isolation. Working behind the scenes, our silence bonded and alerted us to realms of unseen togetherness that we often miss in our ordinary attempts to "communicate." We drank in the relief of being together in person after years of Zoom contact.

The silence opened the way for us to engage and plumb the depths of our own hearts and minds. In our solitude we were uplifted by the sacred environment of the Prince of Peace Abbey itself as well as the vibrant display of spring flowers which surrounded the pathways and accompanied us on our prayerful walks.

In the end we celebrated and rejoined each other as members of the "talking world" commenting on how a sense of community could grow so rapidly and deeply. Some of us had enough for this time, others left hungry for more. Deep appreciation was expressed to the tireless planners and organizers who made this happen for all of us.

~Alan Javurek, Ph.D

"Entering the Path of Beauty..."

Crossing the threshold behind the hallowed walls of the Prince of Peace Abbey, I pondered what gifts the Holy One might bestow in the upcoming five days of silence—if anything. Holding all things with an open hand or so I thought. A hush was felt at first. Ah, this is what I have been longing for. Silence. Finally! Then the real noise began.

Sounds became pronounced and echoed raucously within me. What? I came to bask in the quiet, but there was a disturbance in the air.



When would the noise quiet? Then the Spirit revealed the real noise that existed, was within me. The exterior noises that first disturbed "my peace" were like gardening tools in the hands of sacred Presence pruning my expectations and leading me into an interior silence. As the interior noise fell away, it was then the silence began.

Entering the path of beauty, a joyous greeting took place and joy spontaneously overflowed within me. An abundance of lush yellow flowers, flitting insects, soaring birds, assorted rocks, and the cool ocean breeze filled the air with "the sound of music" — perhaps only heard in times of slowing and silence. It was as if stepping through a portal opening into a place of mystical encounter and revealing the reality of sacred community. A sense of creation singing praise where the hills are alive and an invitation extended towards me of welcoming, belonging, and oneness. Then the realization arose that I was one with the dirt beneath my feet too. I came from this glorious dirt and would return to this holy ground.

(Continued on next page)



Poem. I pondered how we were connected with each other during the pandemic. In movies, we have seen how two people experience a sense of connection, even when apart, as they realize they are gazing at the same moon. This is my version, but with the breath.

This Breathing is a Miracle

The breath of creation inhaling and exhaling in unison as one.
Belonging to each other.
Sustaining one another.

Invitation into the flow of divine rhythm and cosmic dance.
Each breath is a miracle.
Each breath an encounter.

Immersed into divine
Love embracing all
Creation.
Inhaling Love's presence.
Exhaling sacred breath.

~Rita Gramme, ©2002



St. Peter's Centering Prayer Group in Del Mar

My journey in Centering Prayer actually began in India in 1998.

After returning home to California, I realized there was a Centering Prayer group established at St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Del Mar by John and Mary Wavrik. While this was not the form of meditation I had practiced in India or before, it was certainly more convenient and comfortable! I started attending, somewhat unevenly, until Kathy Agnew restructured the format.

By this time, I needed the support to deepen my personal practice. There, in



St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Del Mar

Kathy's group, I found a regular home, and in the silence, I learned a new way of being with myself and others. Kathy's ability to quietly model support was instrumental to my learning to work deeply and trust that the Spirit within myself, or a group member, was all that was necessary. My intellect was also deeply satisfied with Father Keating's explanations of mysticism and human psychology.

About five years ago, I found myself taking on some of the leadership of the group. At that time, we were meeting at St. Peter's after the bible study and Eucharist on Tuesday mornings, and this format worked very well. Usually there were around 12 people; mostly women, some coming and going, with an average age of "retired." Often for formation we read a book--a variety selected by the group—but always staying close to Father Keating's teachings. His principles still form the basis of all our work together.

During the pandemic, we switched to Zoom. We still have the ubiquitous dozen or so attending, but now we are spread throughout Washington State, Massachusetts, and Orange County. Trust has deepened within the group markedly over these years, and we still are able to absorb a new person occasionally. Formation material

has primarily been drawn from contemplative offerings on YouTube. The selection of videos/talks on all the great contemplatives has vastly expanded, and it is such a joy to spend time perusing them during the week. Next week, we will watch Richard Rohr deliver a talk on the "Universal Christ." We are also blessed to have Diane Quinn, a long-time member, lead an elegant *lectio divina* once a month.

How we will transition back to our prepandemic format remains to be seen. Many prefer the convenience of Zoom, and some would not be able to attend without it. So here we are at present: gratefully acknowledging the benefits of technology that we so often bemoan!

~ Nichola Riggle, Prayer Group Facilitator



Contemplative Outreach of North San Diego Presents: An Introduction to Centering Prayer Weekend Retreat on Zoom May 5 - 7, 2023

Do you feel pulled in all directions?

Do you seek a closer relationship with God?

Centering Prayer may be for you!

Centering Prayer is both a relationship with God and a practice to foster that relationship. It is not meant to replace other forms of prayer but adds a depth of meaning to all prayer. It facilitates the movement from more active kinds of prayer into a receptive prayer of resting in God.

This Program is for: Those who are brand new to the prayer, those in a Centering Prayer group who have never attended an Intro, and long-term practitioners who would like a refresher.

- May 5 from 6:00 8:00pm
- May 6 from 10:00am 12:00 noon and 1:00 2:30pm
- May 7 from 1:00 2:30pm and 3:00 4:45pm

From the comfort of your home, this format offers an entire Introductory Program over the course of one weekend. In the past, CONSD has hosted this as a 7-week program, with follow-up group sessions that met weekly after the initial workshop. This weekend-at-home retreat will provide the complete introductory program, including six follow-up sessions with video recordings by Carl Arico and Thomas Keating—all over a span of three days. Our pace will be relaxed and spacious, with plenty of breaks and opportunities for questions, sharing, and group Centering Prayer.

To register: Please send an email to: consdinfo@gmail.com.

You will receive workshop materials and a Zoom link
a few days before the retreat.



Conference 1: God Is Up Ahead God draws us to become more human.

Conference 2: Follow Me Becoming Jesus' disciple.

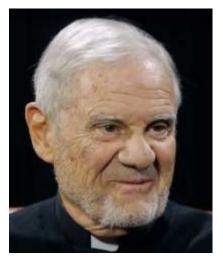
Conference 3: Take Up Your Cross Daily Why is it so hard?

Conference 4: Turn the Other Cheek Responding rather than reacting to conflicts.

To register for this event, send an email to: consd.cal@gmail.com
Questions? Need more information? Email: consdinfo@gmail.com

Q and **A** with Father Carl Arico

Q: Why is 20 minutes the suggested time for contemplation? Historically has that always been the length? Any particular reason for 20 minutes? Can it be shorter?



A: I answer your question from several different directions. When I was in seminary and we gathered for our spiritual exercises as

a community, the tradition was that every aspect of the exercises was for 20 minutes. In Thomas Keating's book <u>Open Mind</u>, <u>Open Heart</u> on page 37 of the original edition, he says "20 to 30 minutes is the minimal amount of time necessary for most people to establish interior silence and to get beyond their superficial thoughts. You may be inclined to remain longer. Experience will teach you what the

right time is." I also know that the suggested time for Transcendental Meditation is 20 minutes. It is also recommended to do aerobic exercises for 20 minutes. The one universal principle coming from all the traditions is DO IT daily. Contemplative Outreach recommends that you pray the prayer twice a day, once for maintenance and once for transformation.

You also asked if it could be shorter. Of course, you can shorten the prayer time if necessary. But be vigilant of the human condition and its various strategies to avoid transformation and deeper relationship with God. The grace of God and your own intention will assist you in practicing the recommended 20 minutes twice a day.

I hope this has been a help to you. If you have any questions and want to discuss this further just let me know.

~Blessings, Fr Carl

Thank You to Our Local Newsletter Contributors . . .



Rick Martin co-facilitates the Centering Prayer group at St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church in Poway; he also volunteers with CONSD's Introductory Workshop Team.



Alan Javurek, Ph.D, LFMT is a psychotherapist in "virtual" private practice in Carlsbad, CA. He has been involved with CONSD through workshops, local prayer groups, and retreats since 2018.



Rita Gramme is a spiritual director, professional counselor, and a trauma and meditation specialist. Currently an associate with Shalem Institute leading contemplative prayer groups and retreats, she also attends the Centering Prayer group at First United Methodist Church in Escondido, led by Linda Dollins.



Born in England, **Nichola Riggle** attended a French Dominican convent when she was a child. Her family moved to the US in the 1950s, where she studied psychology and religion. Staying close to her Anglican roots, she has been a member of St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Del Mar for 30 years, serving in the choir, on the vestry, and as a Centering Prayer group facilitator.

Do you keep a prayer journal? Are you a poet? An artist? Have you recently attended a retreat, conference, or workshop that inspired you to write a reflection? We invite you to share your contemplative creativity in our Newsletter! For more information, please contact Mary Williams at consdinfo@gmail.com.

EVENTS

Each summary below indicates whether the event is online, on-site, or a combo with on-site and online options. Scholarships for these events and retreats are available from CONSD and from Contemplative Outreach, Ltd. To inquire, please email us at consdinfo@gmail.com.

NOTE: Events are always being added to the Events Calendar at the Contemplative Outreach, Ltd., website. Please click HERE for up-to-date information.

Ubuntu and Contemplation: How an Indigenous African Philosophy Maps Our Spiritual Path to Global Community, with Rev. Michael Battle. Emerging from the ancient cultural traditions of sub-Saharan Africa, the deeply communitarian philosophy known as **Ubuntu** challenges Western habits of mind in ways that complement and complete the experience of contemplation. In Centering Prayer and other contemplative practices, we find a path that opens us up to oneness – both union with God and unity with all human beings, including those who may seem different from us in race, culture, religion, or national origin. As we move into this more connected state of awareness, it is essential to do so communally, rather than just individually – and grasping the message of Ubuntu is a big step toward the ability to love our neighbors as ourselves. In this workshop, we hope to bring together people from diverse backgrounds who share an interest in contemplation. **Sponsored by the CO chapters in Chicago, Atlanta, Colorado, and Maryland/Washington DC. SAVE THE DATE: On Zoom, May 13, time TBD.** For more info and to register, click HERE.

Abide in the Mercy: A Silent Wisdom and Centering Prayer Retreat, with Joy Andrews Hayter, Catherine Regan, and Heather Ruce. In many of Jesus' sayings we can find an invitation to a deeper contemplative way of being,.. 'Abide in my love', for example, can also be translated as 'abide in mercy'...This is the Mercy that surrounds, nurtures, encompasses, and streams through us, bringing us alive. The Semitic root for this word is womb, like a mother loving completely, flourishing and encompassing. So in our Centering Prayer we are invited to abide, or rest deeply, in that generative compassion. The word 'abide' in Aramaic, 'qevah', can also mean to wait, hope for; even to continue, to endure. But in typical Aramaic fashion where multiple levels of meaning can be found in one word or phrase, it also means to collect, to bind together... Join us in person as we gather together and allow silence, Centering Prayer, and Jesus' own language of Aramaic to open us to the limitless depths of Jesus' invitation. We will also include some wisdom practices of chanting, movement, and guided meditation that will help to deepen our Centering Prayer. In person, May 26 thru June 1 at the Mercy Center in Burlingame, CA. For more info and to register, click HERE.

Christian Mystic Summit, hosted by Closer Than Breath in partnership with Broadleaf Books.

This free online summit will offer the wisdom of nine contemplative teachers as they explore the depths of the Christian contemplative tradition. Teachers will include: Carmen Acevedo Butcher, Carl McColman, Lerita Coleman Brown, Justin Coutts, Shawn Ellison, Valerie Brown, Jane Woods, David Cole, and Michael Gungor. **Online, June 18-22, 2023, 6:00 to 9:00 PM Eastern Time.** For more info and to register, click **HERE**.

Intensive / Post-Intensive Centering Prayer Retreat, with Marilyn Nobori and the Contemplative Outreach Team. Enter into a more profound level of spiritual practice in an atmosphere of silence and community. The Eight-Day Intensive and concurrent Post-Intensive Retreat is designed to strengthen one's discipline and practice of Centering Prayer. The Intensive provides a conceptual framework for the prayer through the viewing of selected DVDs from Thomas Keating's Spiritual Journey Series. This retreat is for those with some experience with Centering Prayer. Post-Intensive is for those who have previously made an Intensive Centering Prayer Retreat. Times of silence and periods of Centering Prayer are increased. In person, Sunday, June 25 thru Sunday, July 2 at the Holy Spirit Retreat Center in Encino, CA. Registration needs to be in by June 11. For more info, contact Marilyn Nobori at 818-815-4480 or contact cpcoordinator@hsrcenter.com.

SAVE THE DATE FOR THIS LOCAL IN-PERSON EVENT: A Day Retreat with Centering Prayer group facilitator and retreat leader Kathy Mendoza. To be held at the Mission San Luis Rey Retreat Center, Saturday, July 22, 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM. Includes lunch. More information will be forthcoming. Questions? Email consdinfo@gmail.com.



Prayer Groups

	Area	Facilitators	Telephone	Location	Day & Time
1	Carlsbad (1)	Rev. Madison Shockley	760-729- 6311ext.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)	Nichola Riggle	858 481-8754 760-448-5224	St. Peter's Episcopal Church, 334 14 th St.	Tuesdays 8:55-10:00am
4	Encinitas	Virginia Erickson	760-846-5749	Bethlehem Lutheran, 925 Balour Dr., Encinitas, in the Sanctuary	Mondays 4:30-6:00pm
5	Encinitas (2)	Lynne McKiernan	619-665-6344	San Dieguito United Methodist Church, Encinitas	Mondays 1:30 pm
6	Escondido	Linda Dollins	760-745-5100	First United Methodist Church, 341 S. Kalmia	Mondays 4:30 pm
7	Fallbrook	Barbara Hudson	818-357-4167	(Call for location)	Saturdays 8:30 am
8	Murietta	DeeDee Warden	951-265-8557	42753 Settlers Ridge, Murietta	Wednesday 4:00pm
9	Oceanside (1)	Ed Clifford	760-630-1897	Mission San Luis Rey, McKeon Center, Room 12	Wednesdays 7:00 pm
10	Oceanside (2)	Mary Williams	760-510-9337	St. Thomas More Catholic Church,1450 S. Melrose Dr.	Tuesdays 1:00 pm
11	Oceanside (3)	Pat Julian and Laura Pasquale	760 757-3659 x123	Mission San Luis Rey, 4050 Mission Ave.	Fridays 1:00 pm
12	Poway (2)	Colleen Clementson & Rebecca Crowley	858-663-6584 858-748-3801 858 748-3542	Community Church of Poway, 13501 Community Rd.	Tuesdays 6:30-8:00pm
13	Poway (3)	Parth Domke	858-829-2664	St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church, 16375 Pomerado Dr.	Tuesdays 5:00-6:30pm
14	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
15	Rancho Bernardo	Barbara Bank & Pat Kilzer	858 395-2654	San Rafael Parish, Center. Rooms A & B	Wednesdays 3:30-5:00pm

16	Solana Beach	Ann Deakers	858-775-1738	St. James Catholic Church, 625 S Nardo Ave, Solana Beach	Tuesdays 9:00-10:30am
17	San Marcos (1)	Sharon Phelps	760-533-2437	San Marcos Lutheran Church, 3419 Grand Ave., Sanctuary	Not currently meeting
18	San Marcos (2)	Jim Ullman & Marjo Gray	760-598-8943	St. Mark's Catholic Church	Not currently meeting
19	Serra Mesa	Diane Langworthy	619-403-6822	Mary Magdalene Apostle Catholic Community/Gethsemane Lutheran, 2696 Melbourne Dr.	Tuesdays 11:00- 12:30pm
20	Temecula	Pam Bowen	909-938-9932 951-676-2928	Zoom only. Contact facilitator for more info.	Thursdays 6:30 pm
21	Vista	Martha Treutle	760-809-2529	United Methodist Church of Vista, 490 S. Melrose Dr. Vista	Mondays 9:30-10:45am

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