



CONSD News

The Newsletter of Contemplative Outreach of North San Diego, Volume 19, Number 1, February 2024

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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: present 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 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. Reach out with utmost hospitality in all that we say and do.

Value -- Encourage and Support

We will know we are living by this value when we: Offer the Centering Prayer Introductory Program regularly. Present programs/events that encourage spiritual illumination, growth, and transformation regularly. Hear and respond to the needs of the CONSD membership. Affirm each member's desire to develop a closer relationship with God.

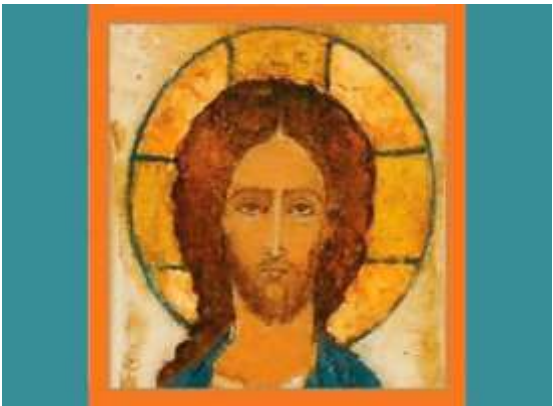
Thomas Keating's Call to Wisdom

"May the next years see the increase of Centering Prayer, and the creative addition of other Wisdom aspects that might enhance what we are doing, or at least help us to do what we have learned out of our tradition, with complete commitment."

– Thomas Keating, *A Life Surrendered to Love*

Jesus as Wisdom Teacher

Thomas Keating often wrote of Wisdom and our need for it within the Centering Prayer community and in our greater world. He reminds us that Jesus, the great Wisdom teacher, emphasized transformation of human beings, to the full potential of the Divine Indwelling inherent within us. In *Meditations on the Parables of Jesus*, Keating said, "When rightly understood, the parables help us to see how extraordinary a wisdom teacher Jesus really was, and how revolutionary, in the best sense of the word, was the content of what he taught and to which he bore witness by his life and death."



As a Wisdom teacher Jesus was teaching a path, or spiritual discipline, for transformation. In his saying "my yoke is easy" the word for yoke in Aramaic, *nira*, was colloquially known in the Aramaic-speaking world he lived in as the way or path of a teacher. Jesus encouraged dying to the small egoic self and all its desires (which in Keating's framework may be called the emotional programs for happiness: safety and security, esteem and affection, power and control), to rely instead on the living water of the Spirit. And he encouraged us to open up to the Kingdom of Heaven, which he assured us was within us and all around us, rather than in some remote place we might earn the right to go to someday.

The Wisdom practices taught over millennia help to train us from our tendency to focus on our egoic selves, directed by our emotional programs for happiness, to letting go, as Keating invites us in the 2018 film *A Life Surrendered to Love*, to "accept

God's unconditional love for us." When we learn to live from that love and to fully embody it in a conscious way, our world is transformed along with us.

Cynthia Bourgeault, an Episcopal priest and long-time student of Thomas Keating's, has revived the Christian Wisdom tradition in a very practical sense. She lays this out, for example, in *The Wisdom Jesus*, in *Centering Prayer and Inner Awakening*, and in *The Wisdom Way of Knowing*. In the latter she writes,

"When I use the term Wisdom, I am designating a precise and comprehensive science of spiritual transformation that has existed since the headwaters of the great world religions and is in fact their common ground. This science includes both theory and practice. The theory part consists of a unified cosmology – in other words, a comprehensive vision of our human purpose and destiny. The practice involves a systematic training for growing into that purpose."

Three-Centered Knowing

Both Bourgeault and Keating emphasize an integrated, experiential, full-bodied experience of God in contemplative practices. As Father Thomas wrote in *Open Mind Open Heart*, "The word contemplation is an ambiguous term because over the centuries it has acquired several different meanings. To emphasize the experiential knowledge of God, the Greek Bible used the word *gnosis* to translate the Hebrew *da'ath*, a much stronger term that implies an intimate kind of knowledge involving the whole person, not just the mind." Cynthia puts it another way in *The Wisdom Jesus*: "Wisdom isn't knowing more, it's knowing with *more of you*."

When we talk about knowing with the whole person, not just the mind, one way to frame it is as three-centered knowing. Our three centers can be designated as the moving, emotional, and intellectual centers. The emotional center takes in signals from the environment around us, including other people, in an intuitive way in which our mirror neurons and other unconscious processes help us to assess the emotional timbre of a situation much more rapidly than we could with mental processing. It is also highly active in our appreciation and participation in the creative arts. The moving center includes the knowledge of the body with its inner

"Wisdom isn't knowing more, it's knowing with *more of you*."

**--Cynthia Bourgeault,
*The Wisdom Jesus***

rhythms and outer movements, including its facility for fluid movement such as riding a bicycle, or the mechanics of learning a new language. This center is not quite as rapid as the emotional center, but also can process information more quickly than our mental center. Our intellectual center engages in mental processing, thought, and planning. With highly attuned mental centers we can plan cities, design technology, and research medical health, among many other things. All three centers are highly useful and important, yet we tend to reside mainly in one of them. For Western society the main emphasis is usually on the mental center, although you also likely know people whose main focus is on emotionality or physicality.

What are Wisdom practices, and how are they complementary to Centering Prayer?

Centering Prayer retreats, including the intensive and post intensive retreats, are powerful containers in which to sink into one of the primary Wisdom practices: Centering Prayer. With this practice, as we return over and over to our sacred word or breath, we build up what Cynthia Bourgeault calls a “muscle of release,” of consent to God’s presence and action. This practice is one of surrender, sometimes also called by the Greek word *kenosis*, or self-emptying, in which we let go of our usual thoughts, emotions, etc and offer ourselves to the Divine Indwelling.

Our Centering Prayer practice can deepen as we move to include more of our whole personhood, including all three centers. Our human nature is seen as holy and is fully offered to God in our practice. As Keating wrote in *Open Mind Open Heart*, “Centering Prayer is not so much the absence of thoughts as detachment from them. It is the opening of mind and heart, body and emotions—our whole being—to God, the Ultimate Mystery, beyond words, thoughts, and emotions ... According to the Baltimore catechism, ‘Prayer is the raising of the mind and heart to God.’ In using this ancient formula it is important to keep in mind that it is not we who do the lifting. In every kind of prayer the raising of the mind and heart to God can only be the work of the Spirit.”

As a balanced complement to the surrendered stance of Centering Prayer, there are additional Wisdom practices that can help with the skill of focused attention, and integration of our three centers. These include chanting, sacred movements and body prayers, witnessing presence, conscious work, and some other explicit practices of attention. All of these practices are done as prayer, as part of building and acknowledging our relationship with the Divine Indwelling. Contemplative Outreach

has always endorsed practices of awareness and devotion in addition to Centering Prayer, such as Welcoming Prayer, Lectio Divina, and an active prayer sentence. These can also be done in a way that emphasizes participation of our full, embodied being. As Father Thomas reminded us in *Open Mind Open Heart*, “We should communicate with God on every level of our being: with our lips, our bodies, our imaginations, our emotions, our minds, our intuitive faculties, and our silence. Centering Prayer is only one rung of the ladder.”

Father Thomas’ words invite us to participate in prayer with all of our being. This is in resonance with three-centered presence, in which we are awake and aware not just in our intellectual, moving, or emotional center, but in all three. This integrated, three-centered awareness becomes an awake, present state from which we can offer our full consent: body, emotions, and mind, to the Ultimate Mystery. The additional Wisdom practices also help to ground our Centering Prayer – when we are grounded in three-centered being, we have a more present, awake place to let go from; otherwise Centering Prayer can become a bit dreamy and diffuse.

“We should communicate with God on every level of our being: with our lips, our bodies, our imaginations, our emotions, our minds, our intuitive faculties, and our silence. Centering Prayer is only one rung of the ladder.”

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

This synchronicity of Wisdom practices and Centering Prayer works the other way as well: the muscle of letting go that is built up in Centering Prayer as we return over and over again to our intention to consent to the presence and action of God becomes the kenotic basis of these other practices of attention. For example, the muscle of release that is strengthened as we practice Centering Prayer helps us to see through our tendency to pay attention with just our minds, often unconsciously swayed by our emotional programs for happiness. In the case of Welcoming Prayer, for

example, this tendency to lead from our head can lead to a form of spiritual bypass where we try to jump to a welcoming of what we may not yet have integrated. But with the foundation of kenosis cultivated in our Centering Prayer, our sense of physical embodiment, and the “focus and sink in” part of the Welcoming Prayer and some of the other embodiment practices comes from a deeper place. It is not our

ordinary self but the deeper awareness within, the spiritual awareness and the Divine Indwelling, that do this work for us and with us. This is at play also in chanting, when we feel the tones resounding within the moving and emotional centers. It's not about singing out or beautifully, but *heartfully*, offering our full being to God. Body prayers undertaken with a kenotic stance can become a beautiful offering of our full incarnational being in service to the Holy.

How do we incorporate Wisdom practices into our Centering Prayer retreats?

Practices from the Christian Wisdom tradition are included in Centering Prayer retreats throughout the Contemplative Outreach network. In a Centering Prayer Wisdom retreat we have the option to explore topics and core tenets of the Christian Wisdom tradition, drawing from mystics such as Saint Teresa of Avila, Catherine of Siena, Julian of Norwich, Thomas Merton, Beatrice Bruteau, and many others. These teachings are surrounded with times for Centering Prayer, and can include chanting, body prayers and other sacred movement, and practices of attention. On many retreats, these practices are all permeated with Silence, a time to go more deeply within. Contemplative sharing and free time provide additional opportunities to integrate these contemplative practices with the rest of our daily activities, preparing us to integrate them with the rest of our lives as we return to our homes: our inner life, our families and living environments, our work, and service.

In *Open Mind Open Heart*, Father Thomas reminds us of the need for integration of presence into all of our tasks:

“The Divine Presence is very close and immediate when we are doing the most ordinary actions . . . As God brings the ‘new man’ to life in interior silence with the world view that Christ shares with you in the silence, God’s view of things becomes more important to you than your own. Then, God asks you to live that new life in the circumstances of everyday life, in your daily routine, contradicted by noise, opposition and anxieties. The alternation between deep silence and action gradually brings the two together. You become fully integrated, a contemplative and yet fully capable of action at the same time. You are Mary and Martha at once . . . established in the contemplative dimension of the Gospel, which is a new and transformed state of consciousness.”

The rhythm offered at a Centering Prayer Wisdom retreat can cultivate this type of integration.

In a Wisdom retreat there is also more emphasis on what we do together as a group, in addition to what is going on within us. It may follow the Benedictine rhythm of *ora et labora*, or prayer and work, both alone and together. Centering Prayer hones the prayer part of this: the prayer alone and together. A Wisdom School may explicitly



Sacred Movement group led by James Tomarelli in Santa Fe, NM

include the *labora* part: work alone and together. In conscious work we are present with our task, be it tending to plants, washing windows, or whatever else needs tending to, and we are also aware of and respectful of those around us. Doing a task slightly differently, e.g. with the non-dominant hand etc. helps to keep us aware of the present moment, and regular bells call us to mindfulness of our intention. But the work together is

experienced in other practices as well. In our chanting we may harmonize, blending our voices with others to form a synergetic whole. In sacred movement we are encouraged to broaden our awareness of others and what the group is doing as a whole. All of these practices are done as an integration of our three centers, honoring the sacredness of this human vessel.

The Need for Wisdom in Our World

The mystics and visionaries have often reminded us that as humans, we are an integral part of the universe, and we have a role to fulfill. Our contemplative practice is not just for ourselves or our own betterment, but we are intimately related with all others and with all the cosmos. And this lends a beautiful hope that what we offer in our prayer, and in our full-bodied lives arising out of the core of contemplative Wisdom practices, does make a difference. Modern physics echoes this, as I have described in my latest book, *The Cosmic Web: Hope for Our World Through Spirituality and Science*:

“We are indeed all interconnected: your suffering is my suffering and your joy is my joy. We are responsible to one another, and to our planet. And the more we learn about opening to the vast, interwoven luminous field that shines throughout the cosmos, the more we can become a light. Our smallest actions can shine *[continued on next page]*

and reverberate and effect powerful change starting from within, tapping into a great cosmic heart, honoring our ultimate connection.”

Our planet and social systems are in a deep state of flux, and it is easy to feel overwhelmed. But in this greater context we know that we are not alone. As we offer our consent in Centering Prayer, as we offer our devotion and joy in embodied chanting and sacred movement, as we turn in any given moment and embrace and welcome what is happening within us, there is an alchemical effect: the world is changed. Our own moves toward integration help to integrate our world, and every little bit we do in the direction of wholeness makes a difference. There is an echo of support from the communion of saints, and from the entire cosmos with which we are connected. This is so deeply needed in our world right now.

Wisdom Resources: There are many resources to help you integrate Wisdom practices in Centering Prayer retreats, and in your own practice. One place where a lot of this is gathered is the Wisdom Waypoints website (<https://wisdomwaypoints.org/>) which has many resources including links to online courses, videos, podcasts etc, and offers book groups led by experienced leaders. The Center for Action and Contemplation has multiple Wisdom Schools online (<https://cac.org/online-education/>). Other places offering Wisdom teachings within the Contemplative Outreach network are the Church of Conscious Harmony in Austin Texas (<https://consciousharmony.org/>), and branches such as Contemplative Outreach of Chicago (<https://www.centeringprayerchicago.org/>) and many others. Mercy Center in Burlingame offers Wisdom retreats and training (<https://mercy-center.org/programs/centering-prayer/>), and many other retreat centers do as well. And of course, the Contemplative Outreach site has excellent resources on Centering Prayer and other Wisdom practices such as the Welcoming Prayer, Lectio Divina, etc. (<https://www.contemplativeoutreach.org/>).

In *A Life Surrendered to Love*, Thomas Keating said: “What I’m leaving to my followers (if that’s what you call them): I would hope that they would find ways and means of providing more and more opportunities for spiritual growth; more and more sharing of Wisdom teachers, more and more partnership with other spiritual traditions.” Father Thomas was pointing the way for us to broaden our practices and our viewpoints, all in the spirit of consenting to God’s presence and action in our world, which is in such deep need of this.

~Joy Andrews Hayter

Of Snails and Hospitality . . .

A couple of weeks ago I sat on my deck in the cool, moist, closed-in grey of pre-dawn sunrise. Every plant and tree still, sound muffled without my hearing aids, only an occasional small bird in flight, a mosquito landing - drawn by what instinct? Another morning with constellations and planets obscured.

Among the many plants on my deck, I noticed one blade frond suddenly dip. What was that? A bird, a lizard, a beetle? Some time later I saw the snail slowly making its way down the blade, then across the deck. Would it have enough mucus to get to a damp surface? I recalled that early on in our 1982 well-watered lawn there were dozens of these snails. On the advice of a neighbor, I collected them in a plastic bag laced with salt; they were invaders.



"Snail," image by Mad Max, Creative Commons licensed, May 24 2006.

Seeing this snail, a surprise visitor, I blurted aloud with no forethought, "You're welcome; hope that you find your way to a damp spot." My garden had long since converted to a drought-resistant place. I wondered how this primitive creature could possibly survive.

I recalled how in my early days of visiting my relatives in Ireland, they all answered the door with "Hello, you're welcome!!" I was always startled; I hadn't yet said, "Thank you," my automatic association to "You're welcome." I had no experience of hospitality immediately extended.

I thought about Mark's gospel and the frequent use of "immediately. . ."

[continued on next page]

These days I greet the morning with my 21st-century mind. I google for anatomy of a snail and learn about the interior complexities of this seemingly blind visitor and how many organs it and I have in common. I try for apophatic prayer, the Centering Prayer practice that Father Keating bequeathed us. I know less and less.

But sometimes my body suddenly falls silent, and I wonder whether I am inhaling a manifestation of the Holy Spirit.

Softest of Mornings

And what will you do today, I wonder,
to my heart?
And how much honey can the heart stand, I wonder,
before it must break?

This is trivial, or nothing: a snail
climbing a trellis of leaves
and the blue trumpets of flowers.

No doubt clocks are ticking loudly
all over the world.
I don't hear them. The snail's pale horns
extend and wave this way and that
as her fingers-body shuffles forward, leaving behind
the silvery path of her slime.

Oh, softest of mornings, how shall I break this?
How shall I move away from the snail, and the flowers?
How shall I go on, with my introspective and ambitious life?

-- Mary Oliver

And I am grateful for all of you in this caravan. Please say hello when we see one another.

~Lynne McKiernan



Q and A with Lindsay Boyer

“What if I only have 15 minutes to practice?”

Q: If I only have about 15 minutes a day to practice Centering Prayer, is this still beneficial?

A: It is wonderful to dedicate some time to resting in God in Centering Prayer every day, no matter how much time you are able to find. If you start with what seems doable, beginning with fifteen minutes a day, that will help you be fully present, rather than fretting that you don't have enough time. Your heart will hold a space to listen for how you are being called into the practice.

My own guess is that once you begin to practice, your heart will begin to long for longer periods of practice and you will find the time. However, this is really between you and God. Twenty minutes twice a day is generally recommended because most people find that they need twenty minutes to allow themselves to settle and that the last few moments are usually the most restful and quiet of the practice period. But perhaps your own experience will be different. Perhaps God is calling you to keep strong boundaries for your practice for some reason that will become clear to you as you continue.

Just because you're spending a limited time in the practice, don't shortchange the four basic guidelines. Don't be in a hurry with God. It can be extremely helpful and grounding when you sit down to your practice to spend a few moments noticing

who God is for you right now, whatever that might mean for you, whether it be a sense of presence, mystery, absence, unknowing, aliveness, awe,

joy, doubt, or confusion. As you set your intention to open yourself to God's action and presence within, your honest sense of the divine will help you feel motivated and energized to enter into deeper relationship with the God of your experience. At the end of the prayer period, remain in silence with your eyes closed for a couple of minutes. This is an important transition for bringing the prayer into daily life and will help your practice to bear fruit. You might for example spend a minute settling into your posture and establishing your consent to God's presence and action within, set your timer for twelve minutes of practice, and then remain in silence for another two minutes after your practice session.

Bask in the gift of spending time with God in this way, resting and listening in sacred space. If you faithfully dedicate these fifteen minutes a day to your practice, your heart will open to where you are being led.

Warm regards,

Lindsay Boyer



Thank You to Our Newsletter Contributors . . .



Joy Andrews Hayter, PhD is a scientist and spiritual director who finds Centering Prayer practice fundamental to our journeys of transformation: surrendering to God's presence and action, we can participate more fully in the interrelated, luminous web of creation. Joy is on the Centering Prayer / Wisdom team at Mercy Center in Burlingame, California, and facilitates introductory workshops and retreats. She is the author of [The Cosmic Web: Hope for Our World Through Spirituality and Science \(Red Elixir/ Monkfish\)](#). You can find out more about her at [joyfulfillment.com](#) .



Lynne McKiernan serves CONSD as Centering Prayer group facilitator at San Dieguito United Methodist Church in Encinitas, California. As a spiritual practice, Lynne also keeps a journal in which she writes contemplative observations and reflections on the day-to-day world of life with nature, scripture, and poetry.

“Ash Wednesday is full of joy. The source of all sorrow is the illusion that of ourselves, we are anything but dust.”

~Thomas Merton

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.



Contemplative Outreach of North San Diego Presents:
An Introduction to Centering Prayer
Weekend Lenten Retreat on Zoom
February 24-25, 2024

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 Introductory Program, and long-term practitioners who would like a refresher.

From the comfort of your home, this format offers an **entire Introductory Program over the course of one weekend**. This two-day workshop-retreat will provide the complete Introductory Program, including six inspiring follow-up sessions with video recordings by Fr. Carl Arico and Fr. Thomas Keating. Our pace will be relaxed and spacious, with plenty of breaks and opportunities for questions, sharing, and group Centering Prayer.

- **Sat, Feb 24: 9:00am-12:30pm and 1:30-2:45pm**
- **Sun, Feb 25: 1:30-3:30pm**

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.

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.

ONGOING: OPENING MINDS, OPENING HEARTS: A Podcast Series by Contemplative Outreach, Ltd., first launched in November 2022. With Colleen Thomas and Mark Dannenfelser. This is available on all podcast streaming platforms (Apple Music, Spotify, Amazon Music, Google Play) as well as the [CO YouTube Channel](#). Listen to this podcast trailer [here on YouTube](#) (5 minutes).

Lent with the Mystics by Carl McColman, hosted through Spirituality & Practice. Did you know that the word Lent comes from the Old English word for spring? It's helpful to keep this in mind so we remember that Lent is a time of ever-increasing light and warmth (in the Northern hemisphere). And while there is a long history within Christianity of seeing the 40 days before Easter as a period of fasting and self-denial, it's just as helpful to see this season as a period for deep inner transformation: think of Lent as a "spring cleaning for the soul." Some of the greatest guides for this sacred season of Lent are the mystics: persons who have embraced lives of deep meditation, profound contemplation, and prayerful action that arises out of a felt sense of union with the Divine. Like Lent itself, mysticism is a word that can easily be misunderstood or misinterpreted. But the mystics and spiritual guides who will accompany us on this Lenten journey are not navel-gazers or spiritual by-passers: we'll be drawing from the well of amazing visionaries who integrate deep spirituality with an equally profound commitment to justice, compassion, and beloved community. A mystical Lent is truly an earthy Lent. **Online from February 14 to March 27.** For more info and to register, please click [HERE](#).

Welcoming Prayer, sponsored by Contemplative Outreach of Southeast

Wisconsin. In the Welcoming Prayer we invite the Holy Spirit's healing presence into the pain, the anxiety, and fear we experience in our everyday lives. The Welcoming Prayer helps to dismantle acquired emotional programs that underlie what we are experiencing. It addresses them where they are stored – in the body. Gradually, over time, with prayer repeatedly bringing them into the light, the perfect love of the Most Holy, they are healed, removing the obstacles that keep God's all-powerful grace from flowing in and through us and out into a world in desperate need. **On Zoom, February 19 and 26, 6:30 to 8:30 PM Central Time.** For more info and to register, click [HERE](#).

Centering Prayer and Three-Centered Knowing: A Silent Centering Prayer Wisdom Retreat, with Joy Andrews Hayter, Heather Ruce, and Catherine Regan.

In Centering Prayer we practice letting go to the Divine Indwelling, building up a muscle of release, of consent to the presence and action of the Ultimate Mystery in our lives. Our Centering Prayer deepens further when we engage with our whole being: mind and heart, body and emotions, as Thomas Keating urges us. In this retreat we will explore Centering Prayer as a practice, in a way suitable for those new to it, as well as for those who have been practicing for a long time. Along with this, we will explore three-centered knowing, not just with our heads but with our entire physical, emotional, and intellectual being.Join us in person at Mercy Center, Burlingame, California, where we will gather together and practice silence, Centering Prayer, and wisdom practices of chanting and movement that will help to engage our whole being. **In person at the Mercy Center in Burlingame, CA, February 23-25.** For more info and to register, please click [HERE](#).

Virtual Silent Saturday with Fr. Bill Sheehan. A Silent Saturday provides a few hours that are set aside for Centering Prayer, Lectio Divina, spiritual teaching and reflection. "Come rest awhile with the Lord" in preparation for Holy Week. Fr Bill will discuss "Finding the Place of the Heart ... Encouragement to go Deeper" so that we may listen to the Spirit praying in us, enlivening, enlightening and guiding us. God has pitched a tent on the fertile soil of our hearts. Fr. Bill is a priest and member of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. He was present at the Lama retreat convened by Fr. Thomas Keating OCSO which founded

Contemplative Outreach. He has led countless Centering Prayer workshops and retreats for Contemplative Outreach. **On Zoom, March 2, 8:30 AM--4:30 PM Eastern Time.** For more info and to register, click [HERE](#).

The Way Between Fight and Flight: Choosing the Revolutionary Third Way, with Caroline Oakes and Closer Than Breath. An intentional and consistent Centering Prayer practice can give us the space we need in our mind and in our heart to resist our ego's fight or flight overreactions, and make room for the indwelling presence of God's grace to facilitate a creative and loving choice that is *between* fight and flight — a revolutionary third way of being. During this online contemplative mini-retreat, we will explore: 1) aligning our inner and outer lives -- "on the mat" and "off the mat"; 2) the new brain science of fight/flight stress reactions; 3) Wisdom tradition and Jesus's teachings on living between fight and flight; 4) how Centering Prayer equips us to choose a third way. **Online, March 2, 2024, 10:00 AM to 11:30 AM Eastern Time.** For more info and to register, please click [HERE](#).

United in Prayer Day, with Contemplative Outreach, Ltd. A free, globally-hosted 23-hour day of prayer accessible via Zoom. In the global unity of silence as God's first language, we hold vigil for suffering humanity and all creation, and we honor Fr. Thomas Keating's birthday (March 7), the 40th anniversary of the Contemplative Outreach community and the growing presence of Christ among us. Join in silence and community at any time, as many times as you are able. Each hour will include at least 20 minutes of Centering Prayer, followed by an offering from the hosting group, which may include a video segment, the practice of Lectio Divina, selected readings, community sharing, chanting, etc. **On Zoom, beginning on March 8 at 9:00 PM Eastern Time.** For more info, please click [HERE](#).

Lenten Silent Saturday with Fr. Bill Sheehan. *"Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly."* -- Matthew 11:28-30 (The Message Bible). We are blessed to have Fr. Bill with us

again. This silent Saturday includes breakfast, Centering Prayer, and three conferences with Fr. Bill, including time for Q & A. **In person at Shepherd of the Hills United Methodist Church in Mission Viejo, CA, March 16, 8:30 AM to 1:00 PM Pacific Time.** For more info, contact Jill Yamada at jillprays@aol.com. To register, please click [HERE](#).

Lent Silent Saturday. During Lent, this quiet morning, free from daily activities, gives participants time for a communal gathering in silence and Centering Prayer. Along with scheduled prayers and contemplative walks is unstructured time for private journaling or reflection, and enjoyment of the beautiful grounds of Holy Spirit Retreat Center. The day is open to beginners as well as those experienced in contemplative prayer or silent meditation. All are welcome. A brief introduction to Centering Prayer will be offered for those new to the practice. **In person, March 16, 9:00 AM to 12:00 Noon Pacific Time at the Holy Spirit Retreat Center in Encino, CA.** For more info and to register, click [HERE](#).

Contemplative Prayer and African Christian Mysticism, with the Very Rev. Michael Battle, Ph.D. The essence of African Christian mysticism (founded in the desert tradition of monasticism) is not taught but caught. Such mysticism is a whole way of life. It is not an esoteric doctrine or a predetermined plan of ascetic practice. It is important to understand this, because there really is no way of talking about the way of prayer, or the spiritual teaching of God's life. African Christian mystics did not try to systematize the way to God; instead, they relied upon the experience of a lifetime of striving to re-direct every aspect of body, mind, and soul to God. There was no Protestant or Catholic dichotomy of salvation based upon grace or work because salvation was caught up in how the community is so much more than the sum of individuals striving for heaven. And yet, personal prayer and personal salvation could be better understood through interpersonal prayer and interpersonal salvation. This is summed up today through the contemporary lens of African Christian mysticism known as Ubuntu: I in You and You in Me. In short, African contemplative prayer is not only an activity undertaken each day, but also a life continually turned towards God. This event will include a session of Centering Prayer. **Online and in-person at the Center for Contemplative Living in Denver, CO, March 23, 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM Mountain Time.** For more info and to register, please click [HERE](#).

PRAYER GROUPS				
AREA	FACILITATOR(S)	PHONE	LOCATION	DAY & TIME
1. Carlsbad	Rev. Madison Shockley	760-729-6311, ext. 207	Pilgrim United Church of Christ, 2020 Chestnut Ave., Carlsbad CA	Wednesdays 6:30 to 7:30 PM
2. Del Mar (1)	Barbara Hamilton	480-236-7319	St. Peter's Episcopal Church, 334 14th St., Del Mar, CA	Thursdays, 4;30 to 5:45 PM
3. Del Mar (2)	Nichola Riggle	760-448-5224	St. Peter's Episcopal Church, 334 14th St., Del Mar, CA	Tuesdays, 8:55 to 10:00 AM
4. Encinitas (1)	Virginia Erickson	760-846-5749	Bethlehem Lutheran, 925 Balour Dr., Encinitas, in the Sanctuary.	Mondays, 4:30 to 6:00 PM
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, Escondido. Zoom Only	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	Zoom Only	Wednesdays 3:30 PM
9. Oceanside (1)	Ed Clifford	760-681-8198	Call for Location	Wednesdays 7:00 PM
10. Oceanside (2)	Mary Williams	760-822-3916	St. Thomas More Catholic Church, currently on Zoom	Tuesdays, 1:00 Pm

11. Oceanside (3)	Pat Julian & Laura Pasquale	760-757-3659 x123	Mission San Luis Rey via Zoom only	Fridays, 1:00 PM
12. Poway (1)	Colleen Clementson	858-663-6584	Community Church of Poway, 13501 Community Rd.	Tuesdays 6:30 to 8:30 PM
13. Poway (2)	Parth Domke	858-829-2664	St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church, 16375 Pomerado Rd	Tuesdays 5:00 to 6:30 PM
14. Ramona	Deborah Lewallen & Cindy Dodson	760-519- 1811; 602- 549-9839	St. Mary's in the Valley Episcopal Church, 1010 12th St., Ramona, CA	Mondays, 4:30 to 5:45 PM
15. Rancho Bernardo	Barbara Bank & Pat Kilzer	858-395-2654	San Rafael Parish Center, Rooms A & B	Wednesdays, 3:30 to 5:00 PM
16. Riverside	Amanda Tromblay, MFT	909-260-5634	St. George's Episcopal Church, 950 Spruce St., Riverside, CA 92507 (In Coleman House behind church)	Wednesdays 5:30 to 6:30 PM
17. Serra Mesa	Diane Langworthy	619-403-6822	Mary Magdalene Apostle Catholic Community / Gethsemane Lutheran, 2696 Melbourne Drive, San Diego	Tuesdays 11:00 AM to 12:30 PM
18. Solana Beach	Ann Deakers	858-775-1738	St. James Catholic Church, 625 Nardo Ave., Solana Beach	Tuesdays 9:00 to 10:30 AM
19. Temecula	Pam Bowen	909-938-9932	Zoom Only. Contact facilitator for more information	Thursdays 6:30 PM
20. Vista	Martha Treutle	760-809-2520	United Methodist Church of Vista. Currently meeting via conference call	Saturdays 9:30 to 10:45 AM



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