



CONSD News

The Newsletter of Contemplative
Outreach of North San Diego,
Volume 20, Number 3, June/July 2025

A Prayer for Peace and Calm

May today there be peace within.

**May you trust your highest
power that you are exactly
where you are meant to be.**

**May you not forget the infinite
possibilities that are born of faith.**

**May you use those gifts that you
have received, and pass on the
love that has been given to you.**

**May you be content knowing
you are a child of God.**

**Let this presence settle into
your bones, and allow your soul
the freedom to sing, dance.**

**It is there for each and
every one of you.**

Amen.

~attributed to St. Teresa of Avila

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Intro Workshop at St. Bart's Episcopal Church in Poway



On April 26, 2025, CONSD welcomed sixteen people at St. Bart's Episcopal Church in Poway for an Introduction to Centering Prayer Workshop. It was a joy to gather in the church's beautifully appointed Chapel to share, learn, and renew ourselves in the practice of Centering Prayer. Dedicated presenters **Parth Domke** and **Mary Williams** skillfully guided participants through the four conferences on Prayer as Relationship, the Method of Centering Prayer, Thoughts and Use of the Sacred Word, and Deepening Our Relationship with God. We also had two opportunities to practice Centering Prayer as a group and to share questions, responses, and insights on contemplative practice. In the four weeks that followed, CONSD facilitators **Jan Simpson**, **Rick Martin**, and **Mary Williams** hosted the Continuing Sessions for this workshop via Zoom. These sessions included a period of Centering Prayer, video teachings by Fr. Carl Arico or Fr. Thomas Keating, and time for questions and sharing. The gift of Zoom enabled us to record these follow-up sessions and share them with those who were unable to make these weekly meetings. (Continued on next page)



Presenter Mary Williams with Workshop Participants in St. Bart's Chapel

Thank you to **Parth Domke**, a parishioner and prayer group facilitator at St. Bart's, for arranging the time and the space for our April workshop. Gratitude also to **Joan Thompson**, our hospitality hostess who brought us breakfast goodies for our gathering, to **Rick Martin** for contributing the coffee, and to **Susan Wheeler** and **Colleen Clementson** who served as greeters and registrars at the door that morning. And finally – we are very grateful to **Jan Simpson**, our Intro Team's "person Friday," for her generosity in preparing the materials for our workshop, setting up our sacred prayer space, and taking photos. Kudos and blessings to all!

If your church or prayer group would like to host an Introduction to Centering Prayer Program, feel free to contact us at consdinfo@gmail.com . ~CONSD



Intro Presenter Parth Domke



Intro Team Member Jan Simpson

*By waiting and
by calm
you shall be
saved;
In quiet and in
trust shall
be your
strength.*

--Isaiah 30:15



Registrar Susan Wheeler

Q and A with Mary Dwyer

“Centering Prayer and the Sense of Dying”



Q: While practicing Centering Prayer, I suddenly had a very intense feeling of terror come and a sense that I was dying and losing all my loved ones and things I enjoy in the world. I tried to settle into it, but it is so intense and I am afraid it will not end. I have been feeling nowadays an emotionless center within me also. Like beneath whatever I am doing there is a sense of just having no emotion. When I put attention on it I feel fear; sometimes it subsides if I put attention on it and it calms down. Is there any advice you can give about what’s happening? I am afraid I am destroying my life.

A: Thank you for reaching out. Your email was poignant and deeply resonated with me. My heart wants to say, ‘keep going, you’re really being loved into life,’ while I hear your experience of dying. Paradoxical for sure. But the transformative process that Centering Prayer is at the service of, does just that — asks us to let go of everything we think we are and what we think we need. Radical, invincible trust in the Divine Presence becomes the path as the ‘unknowing’ grows.

Be gentle with yourself. The terror doesn’t last, nor does it always require us to move into it. Your acknowledging it may be enough for now. It’s like going up a winding road with a sheer cliff on one side. We see it, but keep our eyes on the road. Whatever we focus on grows. So gently, one breath at a time, we consent/surrender to this mystery loving us.

Fr. Thomas Keating taught that the psychological experience of contemplative prayer often feels as if we’re getting worse. But actually we are just being invited to open our eyes more clearly in the inner room and see the elaborate defense apparatus we’ve been operating out of since childhood. It may have served us well then, but we don’t need it anymore. The death of the false self feels like dying ... but hold out for the emergence of the true self that has been hidden the whole time. **[Con’t on next page...]**

Often our emotions seem flattened. No worries -- they do resurface.

Finally, Fr. Thomas' poem, "The Last Laugh," from [*The Secret Embrace*](#), sums this up for me. Here it is below.

Please feel free to reach out to me if I've totally missed the mark or can be of any help.

Blessings,
Mary Dwyer

The Last Laugh

*I watch the seductive dance of everyday
life, But the desire to join has ceased.*

*Two crucial questions arise:
Where are you?
Who are you?*

*Nowhere is my destination.
And no one is my identity.*

*My daily bread is powerlessness.
Temptations can be overwhelming.
Gone is every hope of help.*

*An abyss opens up within me.
I am falling, falling,*

Plunging into non-existence.

*Is this annihilation?
Or, is it the path to the Silent Love
That we are?*

*As the false self disappears,
The true self is born.
Then the dance of human nature with
That Which Is
Takes on a wholly new perspective,*

*And those who take part in it
Are overwhelmed with laughter
Too deep to be heard.*

~Thomas Keating, "The Last Laugh,"
from *The Secret Embrace*

Contemplative sung prayer
in the style of Taizé'

An offering to nourish your souls. Join us for this ecumenical, candlelit service of music, silence and prayer which includes music from Taizé' and some newer sacred chants.

Come to join in the singing
or just listen.

All are welcome!



Led by The Rev. Susan J. Latimer

WHEN: Thursday, July 31 @ 6:30PM
WHERE: All Saints' Episcopal Church
651 Eucalyptus Ave, Vista 92084





You are invited to CONSD's
"Space for
Grace"

A Quiet Morning of Communal Prayer
SATURDAY, AUGUST 9, 2025
9:00am to 11:30am

ST. THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC CHURCH
1450 S. Melrose Dr., Oceanside, CA 92056

- *Hospitality
- *Two Centering Prayer periods
- *Lectio Divina
- *Contemplative Sharing

To RSVP,
Please send your
name, email and
phone # to
consdinfo@gmail.com
(access the clickable
link below)



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.

ONGOING: OPENING MINDS, OPENING HEARTS: A Podcast Series by Contemplative Outreach, Ltd., first launched in November 2022. With Colleen Thomas and Mark Dannenfelser. Seasons 1, 2, and now 3 of this podcast series are complete and available [HERE](#) or through your favorite podcast provider platforms. Interviewees include Carl McColman, Dr. Lerita Coleman Brown, Fr. Adam Bucko, Pastor Tia Norman, Fr. Greg Boyle, Carmen Acevedo Butcher, Heather Ruce, Dr. Rory McEntee, and others. In season 3, we are shifting the dialogue to honor Thomas Keating's legacy of hosting interspiritual dialogues by embracing guests from various spiritual traditions. We want to learn about contemplative prayer from their perspective. In Keating's later works and teachings, found in books like [Reflections on the Unknowable](#), [God is All in All](#), and his poetry penned in [The Secret Embrace](#), Father Thomas explores Christian nonduality, or unitive consciousness, experienced as a Oneness with God and with all of creation. Our conversations this season are grounded in these common "points of agreement" that emerged amidst Father Thomas and his friends at the Snowmass Conferences held between 1984 and 2004. Click [HERE](#) to access these podcasts.

Eight-Day Intensive / Post-Intensive Retreat, with Sr. Chris Machado and staff.

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. We will be in grand silence. The Intensive also provides a conceptual framework for 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 at the Holy Spirit Retreat Center in Encino, CA, Sunday, June 29 at 4:30pm Pacific Time to Sunday, July 6 at 1:00pm.** For more info, visit the Holy Spirit website [HERE](#) or call Sr. Chris at 818-285-3354.

Reflections on the Rule of St. Benedict, with the Monks of Valyermo. The St. Andrew's Abbey monks invite retreatants to reflect deeply on the Rule of St. Benedict. Individual monks will offer personal reflections and insights on selected passages of the Rule to further enrich our understanding of the Rule of St. Benedict, explore aspects for daily application, and deepen our Christian commitment to live out the Gospel. **In person at St. Andrew's Abbey in Valyermo, CA, July 7 to July 11.** For more info and to register, please click [HERE](#).

St. Clare of Assisi: A Heart Full of Love, with Fr. Stephen Coffey, OSB Cam. To enter into a relationship with Clare of Assisi for this weekend retreat is to go forward securely, joyfully, and swiftly, carried by the momentum of a woman burning with love. Clare, a pilgrim of the interior adventure, always re-directs us on the path of prudent happiness. What a paradox: the cloister of San Damiano – a restricted space – opens to infinite love. The loving kenosis of Christ captivates her and incites her to a Passover, brisk as a dance step, into full communion. This love that fills Clare with life springs forth like a fountain in her heart. **In person at St. Andrew's Abbey in Valyermo, CA, July 18 to July 20.** For more info and to register, please click [HERE](#).

Opening to the Universal Christ: The Interspiritual Invitation of Centering Prayer, with Keith Kristich. Howard Thurman wrote: "In the Presence of God there is neither male nor female, white nor black, Gentile nor Jew, Protestant nor Catholic, Hindu, Buddhist, nor Muslim, but a human spirit stripped to the literal substance of itself before God." Are you looking for a break from the busyness of life to rest in stillness and to reconnect with yourself? Are you longing to step away from the distractions of everyday life and nourish your spiritual center? Join this summer's retreat to get away from the norm and reconnect with your true self and God alive within you. This retreat focuses on Centering Prayer as a path back to the "original religious experience." Centering Prayer with practice may bring us to the immediate experience of God, the Divine Mystery, lovingly present within. Contemplatives of all great traditions speak the same silent language, practicing silence in deep prayer and meditation. We explore how

contemplation leads us toward greater unity among people with different belief systems and returns us to the original spiritual experience. **In person, July 18 to July 21 at the Mercy Conference and Retreat Center in St. Louis, MO.** For more info and to register, please click [HERE](#).

Cinema Divina Retreat: Communicating Hope with Gentleness, with Sr. Jennifer Tecla Hyatt, FSP. *Cinema Divina* combines film with the form of *Lectio Divina*. It is a time of prayer, reflection, and conversation to dive deeper into the story and recognize our call. This unique experience takes the participants on a journey through film as we reflect together on our common human experience and the ability to live a virtuous life. The films we will be viewing and discussing are: *Sight* (2023); *Audrey's Children* (2025); *Arthur the King* (2024). **In person at St. Andrew's Abbey in Valyermo, CA, August 8 to August 10.** For more info and to register, please click [HERE](#).

Centering Prayer and the Reality of Being: A Silent Centering Prayer Retreat with Rev. Amber Sturgess and Catherine Regan, Ph.D. How do we show up in the world? What kind of presence and attention are we able to bring to our daily living? How can we begin to cultivate presence and come from a place of true being in the midst of a world in chaos? The practice of Centering Prayer nurtures the formation of being in us by sitting with the ground of Being, that is God. As we sit in Centering Prayer we begin to let go of all that is not real. All of our filtered lenses through which we receive and perceive life gradually dissolve – so that we can begin to open and perceive reality directly from a place of pure being. . . . In this retreat we will learn how to allow “Being” to grow in us and to perceive how it differs from the mind. We will also explore the qualities of being such as love, compassion, and humility. **In person at the Mercy Center in Burlingame, CA, August 15 to 17.** For more info and to register, please click [HERE](#).

****LOCAL EVENT**** Save the date for “**The Third Way: A Response to Personal, Social, Cultural, and Societal Discord,**” a Zoom Event with Chris Hagen, September 13, 2025. **Stay tuned for more information!**

Wisdom School: Sacred Movements as Medicine for Ourselves, Each Other, and the World, with Heather Ruce, Susan Latimer, and Joy Andrews Hayter. Sacred gestures and movements have been a part of every sacred tradition. They are considered a means by which ancient Wisdom is preserved and passed down to future generations. Through their embodied symbolic language beyond our thinking mind, a deeper perception arises. This perception is anchored in our inner center, in our hearts. In this Wisdom School we will be working primarily with different kinds of sacred gestures and Movements from the Gurdjieff tradition. . . . As we engage these sacred movements with presence, attention, and receptivity, we experience the medicine they offer in widening circles personally and collectively. Join us on the beautiful grounds of Mercy Center Burlingame where we will engage a daily rhythm and practices specific to a 'Wisdom way of knowing'; an integral way of knowing that engages and harmonizes the three intelligence centers: thinking, feeling, and moving (body). The Movements will be our teacher within a balance known in the Benedictine tradition as 'ora et labora' (prayer and work). We will work and pray on the Movements floor, as well as through centering prayer or silent meditation, guided meditations, chanting, and sharing observations. Although this is not a completely silent retreat, silence will be the container. **In person at the Mercy Center in Burlingame, CA, Sept. 18 to Sept. 22.** For more info and to register, please click [HERE](#).

****LOCAL EVENT**** Save the date for **CONSD's Annual Fall Centering Prayer Retreat.** Join us in peaceful surroundings for a 4-day weekend of group Centering Prayer, Lectio Divina, chanting, worship, opportunities to pray the Divine Office, and silent free time. **In person at Prince of Peace Abbey in Oceanside, CA, October 16 to 19.** For more info, contact us at consdinfo@gmail.com.



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, 4:00 to 5:15 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)	Judith Pruess-Mellow; Ann & Mike King	650-823-0559; 760-753-1575	San Dieguito United Methodist Church, Encinitas	Mondays, 11:30 AM
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

(Prayer Group List Continued on Next Page)

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 8:00 PM
13. Poway (2)	Parth Domke	858-829-2664	St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church, 16375 Pomerado Rd	Tuesdays 5:00 to 6:00 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



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