

Theological Principle #13 of Contemplative Outreach:

We acknowledge that any good accomplished by Contemplative Outreach is the work of the Holy Spirit.

COMW to Host Facilitators Appreciation Dinner

The Servant-Leadership team would like to honor those that volunteer as facilitators in COMW. We are planning a facilitator appreciation dinner and fun time at Guy and Dana Semmes home in Potomac, Maryland in February. If you facilitate a Centering Prayer group, please send your name, address, e-mail address and phone number to Dana Semmes to make sure that we have you on our list. Dana's contact information is thesemmes@comcast.net or (301)983-1857.

Call for Volunteers

COMW wants to serve your needs, including possible opportunities to put your talents to use to serve the contemplative community.

We are looking for people who are interested in helping to coordinate centering prayer facilitator support. For more information or to express your interest, please contact Gigi Ross at fulcrumfire@earthlink.net.

We are looking for volunteers who would be interested in joining a service team to organize two upcoming Centering Prayer retreats at Dayspring Retreat Center in Germantown, Maryland. The first event is a weekend Centering Prayer retreat led by Reverend Thomas Ward on February 16 – 18, 2007. The second event is a five day intensive Centering Prayer retreat with Father Bill Sheehan from October 31, 2007 – November 4, 2007. Please contact Dana Semmes if you are interested at (301)983-1857 or thesemmes@comcast.net.

We are still seeking volunteers to help with its prison ministry. If you are interested, please contact Dana. Dana's contact information is thesemmes@comcast.net or (301)983-1857.

New opportunities are emerging to bring Centering Prayer to a variety of communities, for instance young adults, military personnel, hospice, etc. If you feel called to explore development of a service team in any of these or other areas, please contact Laurel LaCivita at Laurel_LaCivitas@ita.doc.gov or (703)370-3305.

COMW Servant-Leadership Team

Editor's note: Below is biographical information about the members of your Servant-Leadership Team. If you would like to become a member of the Servant-Leadership Team, please volunteer on one of our service teams so that we can get to know you. Also, please feel free to contact us and get to know us better.

Dear Friends,

It has been six months now since the transition in leadership in COMW. In this issue, we introduce you to the members of the Servant-Leadership Team, who are committed to bringing quality Contemplative Outreach programs to the Metropolitan Washington area. Ron Barnett remains accessible and involved as we need him. As the number of people who know about COMW and the assistance we provide has grown, we are receiving more and more requests for information, retreats, workshops, etc. In keeping with the theme the "Year of Listening" of the 2006 Contemplative Outreach annual meeting, we have been focusing our attention on finding out what programs you want and need. While we still focus primarily on introducing groups, churches and individuals to the practice of Centering Prayer, we recognize that once a Centering Prayer practice has been established ongoing support and inspiration is helpful.

There are now many programs that Contemplative Outreach and COMW are offering locally to support you in your spiritual growth. Many are outlined in this newsletter or will be in future communications. Other than many new Intros, a weekend retreat, an intensive 5-day retreat at the Dayspring Retreat center, several other exciting things are planned for the year. A first ever Intro will be offered in early 2007 in Baltimore, Maryland, the Living Flame Program will begin this October in Virginia, and a Facilitator appreciation dinner is planned for February 2007.

In July, I attended the Servant-Leader and Facilitator Formation Training at St. Meinrad's in Indiana. Moira Notargiacomo of the COMW Servant-Leadership team and Bob Gullo of the new Virginia service team joined me and about 60 other volunteers from around the country to learn how to serve your needs and to preview some of Contemplative Outreach's plans. We were all surprised at how many programs Contemplative Outreach now offers. I highly recommend this program to anyone that has a desire to serve in the Contemplative communities. This annual program will again be offered at St. Meinrad's on August 17-24, 2007

We truly hope that in these ways COMW helps and encourages you to continue to grow in your relationship with God. I also invite you to listen to your heart to see if you feel called to volunteer in helping serve these needs.

May God's love be present to you and in you now and always,

Guy Semmes

Guy Hopkins Semmes is Coordinator for the Servant-Leadership Team of the Contemplative Outreach of Metro Washington (COMW) chapter, and Commissioned Presenter of the Centering Prayer method. He has been practicing Centering prayer for 10 years. He co-facilitates a Centering Prayer group with his wife Dana Semmes at St. Francis Episcopal Church in Potomac, MD where he is also a member on the Vestry. He is a founder of Hopkins and Porter Construction a Custom residential design and build company in the DC Metro area. He studied Archaeology at the University of New Mexico. Outside of his work and volunteer activities, Guy cultivates his apiary of honey bees. The retreats and other workshops that COMW offers are increasing, and that is good news. The down side is that we are short handed on the Servant Leadership Team making it hard to manage this new load. **Call for volunteers:** It would be a real help to have a Service Team Leader that just focused on coordinating this one area. If you are interested please contact Guy. Guy's contact information is Guy@Hopkinsandporter.com or (301)983-1857.

Laurel LaCivita In 1993, I discovered Holy Cross Abbey, in Berryville, Virginia, where I learned about Centering Prayer. Although Holy Cross Abbey has been my spiritual home for 13 years, I am a member of Holy Comforter-St. Cyprian Roman Catholic Church in the District. I have served on the COMW Servant-Leadership team since 1997, and now lead the Virginia Service Team, which is hosting the local Living Flame Program. I am a commissioned presenter of Centering Prayer, and a presenter-in-training for the Welcoming Prayer and *Lectio Divina*. I have attended many extended retreats. In my "spare" time, I play the piano, harp and bassoon. I love to travel, and have found work that has nourished my lifelong love of seeing the earth's most exotic and isolated places. Laurel's contact information is Laurel_LaCivitas@ita.doc.gov or (703)370-3305.

Dana Semmes has been a member of COMW's leadership team since 2000 and has had a regular practice of Centering Prayer since 1996. She is especially interested in taking Centering Prayer into the prisons. She and her husband Guy are co-facilitators of a Centering Prayer group at their church St. Francis Episcopal in Potomac, Maryland. She is a Contact person for Contemplative Outreach in Maryland, and a commissioned presenter of Centering Prayer. Dana works part-time doing public relations for Hopkins & Porter Construction, Inc. She grew up outside New Brunswick, New Jersey and moved to Maryland in 1977. Her educational and professional background is Theatre Arts, and she has taught, directed, and acted for many years. She has two grown children and many dogs and cats. **Call for volunteers:** COMW is seeking volunteers to help with its prison ministry. If you are interested, please contact Dana. Dana's contact information is thesemmes@comcast.net or (301)983-1857.

Gigi Ross first began practicing centering prayer in 1988. She has been a member of the COMW Servant-Leadership Team since 2003, mainly focusing on facilitator support. She is also the Contemplative Outreach contact person for Washington, DC. Additionally, she is a member of St. Margaret's Episcopal

Church. Other activities include serving as a spiritual director, presenting on various aspects of contemplative spirituality, and recently giving a sermon incorporating a group *lectio divina* experience. Gigi's contact information is fulcrumfire@earthlink.net.

Carol Leach has had a daily practice of Centering Prayer since 1994 and has attended Intensive and Post-Intensive retreats at St. Benedict's Monastery in Snowmass, CO. She facilitates a weekly Centering Prayer group in Annapolis, Maryland, is a Contact Person for Contemplative Outreach, and has been a member of the Servant-Leadership Team since 2003. Carol is also in training as a commissioned presenter of Centering Prayer. Along with being a member of St. Anne's Episcopal Church, she leads occasional Quiet Days and small retreats. Carol, a retired psychotherapist, has two adult children and lives with her husband in Annapolis where they enjoy sailing, gardening, and spoiling their grandchildren. Carol's contact information is Carolleach@aol.com or (410)263-1752.

Moira Notargiacomo began Centering Prayer five years ago with the Germantown group. In addition, Moira started a Centering Prayer group at St. Nicholas' Episcopal Church in Darnestown, Maryland and her workplace. She was a member of the service team which organized and brought Fr. Thomas Keating to the Metropolitan Washington area in 2005. She became a member of the servant-leadership team in 2005. She took the servant-leader training in 2006 and is in training to teach the Introductory Course. Her primary responsibility to the servant-leadership team is editing the newsletters. She also serves as a member of the Living Flame Service Team. Moira has degrees in economics and law and enjoys her work as a trial attorney. She is married and has two grown children. Moira's contact information is msmoira@verizon.net or (301)977-2206.

2006 Annual Conference in St. Louis

by Laurel LaCivita

In September, I attended Contemplative Outreach's annual conference in St. Louis. The annual conference grew from the need for coordinators around the country to meet periodically to focus on organizational issues and to elect new board members. Over the years, the annual conference has been broadened to include enrichment training and anyone can attend. The theme this year was "A Year of Listening" and more than 150 people attended from the United States, Canada, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Ghana, Costa Rica, and the United Kingdom. We were led through a series of small group listening exercises which were meant to elicit the thoughts and feelings of the participants, and incline our ears to the Spirit, concerning Contemplative Outreach, its directions, current needs and hopes for sharing this prayer throughout the world. I encourage you to check out the Contemplative Outreach website, <http://www.centeringprayer.com> for future postings of a series of images and drawings called "mindscapes" which were posted throughout the room.

Guest speaker, Fr. Joseph Boyle, OCSO, Abbot of St. Benedict's monastery in Snowmass, Colorado demonstrated how our hearing can be impaired or compromised by listening with our heads and not our whole being, which may cause us to miss the point of the communication. He explained that in order for us to hear God's message, we must have a predisposed commitment to "Yes". Otherwise, we cloud, obscure, tune out or ignore the messages we receive.

Fr. Thomas Keating, taught that we are the visible manifestation of God, and that God's idea of happiness is not to be God, which would be as far as one can go in humility. He said that the Christian adventure is to become as God. To become a saint or enlightened is noble, he said, but at the same time are picayune and second rate goals. Contemplative prayer helps to dispose us to receive the sheer gift of God, to get through the crises that face us. Finally, he encouraged us to think big about God, to remember that Contemplative Outreach is bigger than we are, and to allow God to overcome human obstacles whatever they may be.

Update on The Living Flame Program

As we reported in our last issue, COMW is offering the Living Flame program for the first time in metropolitan Washington DC beginning October 2006 and ending May 2007. There are a few spaces still open. The first session will be held on October 21, 2006 and Sr. Maria Tasto will present *Lectio Divina*.

The program will be hosted by **Falls Church Presbyterian Church**. For more information, check out our website. If you wish to register or need more information, please contact Isabelle Robinson at (703)421-0464 or at imjrobinson@comcast.net. Space is limited, so please register early.

Lectio Divina

Lectio Divina is a **companion practice** to Centering Prayer. By **praying the scriptures** through *Lectio Divina*, God begins to dwell in us in proportion to our capacity to receive as we grow in union with the Eternal Word. A *lectio divina* workshop is being planned.

If you would like to assist with preparing for a *Lectio Divina* workshop or might consider hosting a workshop in your church or parish, please contact Laurel LaCivita at (703)370-3305 or Laurel_LaCivita@ita.doc.gov.

Happenings

Advent Day of Prayer

Sponsored by Andrew Chapel Centering Prayer Group
Centering Prayer, Mid Day Prayers, Yoga, Nature Walks

December 5, 2006 9:00 am to 3:00 pm
Dayspring Retreat Center
Germantown, Maryland
Leaders: Phil Stone and Martha Thomas
Cost: \$10
For more information contact Phil Stone at findthedevine@cox.net or Martha Thomas at mmthomas211@hotmail.com

Introduction to Centering Prayer

Baltimore, MD
January, 2007 9:00 am to 3:00 pm
For more information contact Rev. Larry Glover-Wetherington at director@ConsultMin.com or (410)375-0394.

Other News, Etcetera

Website: Remember to check out our website for more information about Contemplative Outreach Metropolitan Washington offerings and other information.

Invitation to Local Centering Prayer Groups: COMW invites local Centering Prayer groups to make announcements concerning Centering Prayer events in upcoming COMW newsletters. Contact the editor, Moira Notargiacomo at mismoira@verizon.net or (301)977-2206.

Additions or Deletions from the E-mail List: If you would like to be added to or deleted from our e-mail for the COMW newsletter, forward your request to go7@mindspring.com.

Contemplative Outreach Vision Statement

Contemplative Outreach is a spiritual network of individuals and small faith communities committed to living the contemplative dimension of the Gospel in everyday life through the practice of Centering Prayer. The contemplative dimension of the gospel manifest itself in an ever-deepening union with the living Christ and the practical caring for others that flows from that relationship.

Our purpose is to share the method of Centering Prayer and its immediate conceptual background. We also encourage the practice of *Lectio Divina*, particularly its movement into contemplative prayer, which a regular and established practice of Centering Prayer facilitates.

We identify with the Christian contemplative heritage. While formed by our respective denominations, we are united in our common search for God and the experience of the living Christ through Centering Prayer. We affirm our solidarity with the contemplative dimension of other religions and sacred traditions, with the needs and rights of the whole human family, and with all creation.