



CONTEMPLATIVE OUTREACH

SILENCE
SOLITUDE
SERVICE

of Metropolitan Washington (COMW)

www.mindspring.com/~comw/home.htm

Winter 2006 Newsletter

Moira Notargiacomo, Editor

Contemplative Life Program Personal Reflections

Editor: In 2005, Contemplative Outreach, Ltd initiated The Contemplative Life Program (CLP). The CLP consists of booklets on core contemplative practices which are mailed to subscribers about every 50 days. The booklets explore how to increasingly abide in the presence of God in the midst of ordinary life. In 2005, the booklets addressed Centering Prayer, Welcoming Prayer, Lectio Divina, Discernment, Forgiveness, Active Prayer, and Intention/Attention.

Here are reflections by *Stasha Seaton* who subscribed to CLP in 2005.

Why? I was intrigued. I was curious. I wanted to learn everything about Centering Prayer. This *gift* from Contemplative Outreach started with the *Centering Prayer Module* which seemed so small, so little. And when I plunged in, it seemed like a vast ocean of sun filled with life. I literally started to wake up. Next, the *Welcoming Prayer Module* came. I attended welcoming prayer workshops but this module spoke to me in my pain, and the need to acknowledge this pain. As I was using the beautiful meditations, and following the suggestions I started to *awake* some more in dealing with my pain. Following that was the *Lectio Divina Module*. I have practiced Lectio Divina in groups and by myself, but I have seldom experienced the quiet sense of holiness as I walked through this module and discovered that: "Each of us is a spoken word of God." The rich suggestions for further study and helpful suggestions are priceless.

The *modules on Discernment and Forgiveness* were invaluable. How can one make a sound decision without proper *guidance*? Follow the *spirit* instead of helplessly sorting out through the attic of one's cluttered mind. How do you forgive when it is so difficult to forgive or know you have really forgiven? This module points you in the right direction.

I am now practicing my active prayer as I tiptoe through the holy pages of the *Active Prayer Module*, going backward and forward, savoring the beautifully laid out print, coming across the *Perfume of Prayer* by St. Isaac the Syrian: when the Spirit takes its dwelling place in someone, the spirit prays constantly, when he lies down or when he does any work, the perfume of prayer will breathe in his heart spontaneously. The booklet is rich in suggestions to pursue further study in this area. My life has definitely improved and I am definitely more awake.

I have subscribed to Year II of the CLP and I am looking forward to growing more in spirit and in sharing the joy of my discoveries. The modules are my constant companions as I walk through and reread parts as I feel the need. I am deeply grateful for this program.

Editor: You can subscribe to CLP at www.centeringprayer.com/clp.htm or by calling (973) 838-3384 for either the *Year One: Practice (2005)* or *Year Two: Developing Contemplative Attitudes through Practice (2006)*,

Dear Friends,

Warm Winter Greetings - Time marches on and so do Coordinators it seems, as new opportunities can emerge to serve the spiritual network of Contemplative Outreach. This past fall the voting membership of Contemplative Outreach, Ltd. elected me to the Board of Trustees. I feel honored to have this opportunity to work with Thomas Keating (Chair) and the members of the Board.

The Board is very active and I have a full-time professional job. Hence, I feel I am unable to both serve the Board and our local chapter as Coordinator. The timing right, as I have been Coordinator for 6 years (the typical maximum period) and a cohesive and inspired *Servant-Leadership Team* is here to carry on "the tradition" and support COMW.

The *discernment* of a new Chapter Coordinator is underway. I ask for your prayers of support for this process, as prayerful assessments are made and there is an increase in "listening to the heart". If you wish to learn more about the discernment process or attend the discernment meeting on March 4th in Bethesda, please contact Gigi Ross at (202) 483-6588 or at fulcrumfire@earthlink.net. Our new Coordinator will welcome us in the next issue of this newsletter.

In closing, please join me in welcoming *Moira Notargiacomo* of North Potomac to the Chapter Servant-Leadership Team. Moira facilitates Centering Prayer groups at St. Nicholas' Episcopal Church in Darnestown and at her workplace; and she will soon be a commissioned presenter of Centering Prayer. Moira is also the new Editor of this newsletter. Thank you for all you do Moira!

May peace be with us.

Yours in Christ,

Ronald Barnett, Coordinator

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Contemplative Outreach Theological Principle #11

Following the teachings of Jesus, we exercise leadership as service, especially being alert and responsive to the growth and needs of the spiritual network of Contemplative Outreach.

which includes *Spirituality of Money; Contemplative Service; Silence and Solitude; Simplicity; Prayer; Hospitality; and Faith: An Advent Companion.*

The 14th Annual United in Prayer Day

Each year Contemplative Outreach celebrates the worldwide network united in a bond of Centering Prayer around the globe. The 2006 Day includes a video presentation of *Living the Contemplative Life* plus a *Closing Homily* wherein Fr. Keating explores various dimensions of the contemplative life and how it is lived out in today's contemporary life. The homily explores more deeply Matthew 6:6 and how it blossoms us into new levels of intimacy with the Lord. COMW will host the local 14th Annual United in Prayer Day on Saturday, March 18, 2006 at the Andrew Chapel United Methodist Church in Vienna, Virginia from 9 am to 1 pm. A \$5 donation is suggested. See www.andrewchapelumc.org for directions. Contact Gigi Ross at (202) 483-6588 or fulcrumfire@earthlink.net for more information.

Invitation to Participate in a Prison Ministry Project

*When I was in prison it was you that came to see about me.
Matthew 25:36*

Sharon Farra, director of Jail Addiction Services (JAS) at the new Montgomery County, Maryland jail in Clarksburg, has asked COMW to support an ongoing meditation program for men at the facility. There is interest among the inmates, and meditative prayer is a service that JAS values, but does not have the resources or skills to offer.

Because of the steady turnover of residents, the typical 7-session Centering Prayer Introductory Program would not be suitable. We are exploring the possibility of providing regular quarterly or biannual half-day Introductory Workshops led by two commissioned presenters and supported by a regular weekly Centering Prayer group facilitated by volunteers.

Volunteers could make a commitment of once a month or every six weeks, for example. The weekly program might consist of 20 minutes of Centering Prayer, viewing of a Spiritual Journey tape or a book reading, and discussion. The final format would develop over time and in conjunction with JAS guidelines.

If you feel called to help with this project or just want to learn more about it, contact Guy Semmes at home (301)983-1857 or work (301)840-9121 ext 15 or at guy@hopkinsandporter.com.

The Living Flame Program

COMW is delighted to offer the Living Flame Program for the first time in metropolitan Washington DC beginning October 2006. The program is known for galvanizing the prayer life of its participants. It includes seven full-day offerings of in-

depth spiritual study presented by members of the Resource Faculty of Contemplative Outreach. Each day is designed to teach the *vital conceptual background needed to support a faithful practice of Centering Prayer*; to offer *encouragement and support in a small community setting*; to *heighten the awareness of the purification process*; to help *discern when the support of psychological skills can be helpful tools on the journey*; and, to offer the *opportunity to give and receive support and to share personal experience about the spiritual path.*

The topics are: Lectio Divina; Refinement of the Centering Prayer Practice; Formation of Emotional Programs for Happiness; The False Self in Action; Divine Therapy; Night of Sense, and the Welcoming Prayer. Each day's program includes morning and afternoon Centering Prayer and the opportunity to share in a small group setting.

The program will be hosted by *Falls Church Presbyterian Church* (Falls Church Virginia) and will be held on Saturdays. The cost of the program will depend on the number of participants, but we estimate \$25 to \$40 per person, per day for speakers, supplies, coffee and refreshments. The schedule is:

Lectio Divina	21 October 2006
Refinement of CP Practice	18 November
Formation of Emotional Programs for Happiness	20 January 2007
The False Self In Action	17 February
Divine Therapy	17 March
Night of Sense	21 April
The Welcoming Prayer	19 May

The Living Flame Program is an advanced program of study. The pre-requisites for participation include a regular daily practice of Centering Prayer for at least 6 months; a commitment to attend all seven Saturdays; familiarity with *Open Mind Open Heart*. In addition, it would be helpful, but not required, to have a knowledge of Thomas Keating's Spiritual Journey video tapes and to have attended at least one 10-day intensive retreat.

If you wish to participate or have any questions, please contact Laurel LaCivita at (703) 370-3305 or at Laurel_LaCivita@ita.doc.gov. Directions to Falls Church Presbyterian Church are located on their website at www.fallschurchpresby.org/map.php.

If you would like to assist in planning this event, Laurel is anxious to hear from you! The first planning meeting is scheduled for Saturday, February 11, 2006 from 10:30 am to 1 pm at the Falls Church Presbyterian Church.

Lectio Divina and the Welcoming Prayer

COMW has in the past held two well received workshops on the Welcoming Prayer and one on Lectio Divina. Each of these spiritual practices 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 – details forthcoming.

A **Welcoming Prayer** workshop is scheduled for Saturday, April 29, 2006. Welcoming Prayer assists in facilitating the dismantling of the false-self and reinforces our intention to consent to the presence and action of God in all aspects of our life, through an active process of letting-go, in daily life, of the false-self's unrealistic and exaggerated demands for security and survival, esteem and affirmation, and power and control.

If you would like to assist with planning and preparing for either of the above workshops or might consider hosting a workshop in your church or parish, please let us know. If you would like to attend either workshop or need additional information, please contact Laurel LaCivita at (703) 370-3305 or at Laurel_lacivita@ita.doc.gov.

Other Happenings

A Prayer in Search of a Group!

COMW has received a growing number of inquiries from people interested in finding a Centering Prayer group that meets in *Alexandria*. However, we are not aware of any groups in Alexandria. *Susanne Whitt*, who recently relocated to Alexandria from Oregon, has generously agreed to facilitate the process of keeping a list of persons in search of a group in Alexandria. If you are interested in forming or joining a Centering Prayer group in Alexandria, please contact Susanne at susannew@full-moon.com.

Spiritual Journey Video Series

The Centering Prayer group at Sacred Heart Catholic Church, 12975 Purcell Road, Manassas, VA, is presenting Fr. Thomas Keating's *Spiritual Journey* video series during their regular Thursday 7:00 PM meetings. The 31 hour series provides Fr. Keating's most comprehensive explanation of the Method of Centering Prayer and the Spiritual Journey, Developing Centering Prayer, Model of the Human Condition, Paradigms of the Spiritual Journey, Contemplation: the Divine Therapy, and Divine Love: The Heart of the Christian Spiritual Journey. The evening will begin with 20 minutes of Centering Prayer followed by a half hour video session. For more information contact Bob Gullo at (703) 590-3334 or at bobrag@gmail.com.

Weekend Intensive Centering Prayer Retreat

Dayspring Retreat Center, Germantown, Maryland
February 10-12

Leader: Fr. Bill Sheehan, OMI. For information contact Dayspring at (301) 428-9348. **Full – waiting list available.**

An Introduction to Centering Prayer: How to Access the Inner Room

Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church, Chevy Chase Circle,
Washington DC
February 12, 2006 from 7 – 9 pm

Leader: Fr. Bill Sheehan, OMI. For information contact Ellen Kadow at (301) 656-2855. Fr. Thomas Keating's follow-up videos will be shown each week for six weeks.

Day of Silent Prayer and Meditation on the Passion of Our Lord

COMW will hold a day of silent prayer and meditation on the Passion of Our Lord. It will provide an opportunity to deepen our relationship with God in prayer through silence in community. It will include two sessions of Centering Prayer, Lectio Divina on the Passion of our Lord according to Luke and readings from the Song of the Suffering Servant of Isaiah. Holy Comforter-St. Cyprian Church, Chapel
1357 East Capitol Street, SE Washington DC
April 8, 2006, 9 am – 1pm
Suggested Donation: \$5
Contact: Laurel LaCivita at (202) 482-4243 or at Laurel_lacivita@ita.doc.gov for more information.

Other News, Etcetera

Invitation to Centering Prayer Groups: COMW invites local groups to make announcements concerning Centering Prayer events in upcoming COMW newsletters. Contact Moira Notargiacomo, Editor, at msmoira@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 the e-mail list that receives the COMW newsletter, please 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.