



The Vision of Contemplative Outreach:

The intent of Contemplative Outreach is to foster the process of transformation in Christ in one another through the practice of Centering Prayer.

The Greatest Adventure

“Contemplative prayer is the world in which God can do anything. To move into that realm is the greatest adventure. It is to be open to the infinite and hence to infinite possibilities.” This is part of a quote from Fr. Keating’s book Open Mind, Open Heart. This quote is read at the end of the Centering Prayer Introductory Workshop. I have read or heard it many times but when I read it at a workshop a few months ago the words “greatest adventure” jumped out at me. This journey in Centering Prayer has been and continues to be the greatest adventure for me. Every day I consent to God’s presence and action in me even though I don’t know what that will be. But I do know God is present with me always and that He works in my life in many ways. With God there is gentleness, love and lots of surprises. There are also trials and difficult times when He calls me to trust and be filled with joy even in the midst of things I don’t understand.

I have been practicing Centering Prayer for close to 20 years. I start my day early with Centering Prayer, usually sometime between 5 and 6 am. At first I got up early because that was the only time it was truly quiet in my house. It quickly became a special time to sit in the quiet morning with my God. My second time of prayer is late afternoon or early evening. I find myself looking forward to that time, putting aside my concerns of the day to be with God.

One day when I was getting ready to pray, the birds outside were being especially vocal. It sounded like a convention of birds! I was thinking about waiting until later for my prayer but decided to sit anyway and let the sound be in the background. After all they were “making a joyful noise to the Lord.” About five minutes later as I settled on my sofa and closed my eyes I realized that the birds had stopped! –not a peep, not a twitter—and I almost laughed out loud. How often I forget that God is present in the simple, every day occurrences of my life.

When I put myself in God’s hands, let His Spirit guide me, let go of my own agendas and consent to whatever God has for me, there are infinite possibilities and the greatest adventure continues!

Kathy Di Fede, Coordinator

If God is present everywhere, it follows that under no circumstances can we ever be separated from him. We may feel that we are; we may think that we are. But in actual fact, there is no way that we can ever be apart from God even if we try. Thomas Keating, *Manifesting God*

Invitation to Prayer
Ilse Barthold
Queretaro, Mexico, July 14th, 2009

While visiting San Diego last May, my sister invited me to her Thursday Centering Prayer Group meeting; the first experience I have had of this sort.

In our present day world, amidst the hustle and bustle of our lives and its constant distractions, the Centering Prayer Group offered me at the time a respite from the outside world, a little corner of silence and time out for the soul to reach out for the Ever-Presence of Our Lord.

Even though and as I said before, it was my first experience participating in a Centering Prayer group in which I most probably didn't fulfill its objective in its entirety; I feel that it did send me on a personal quest for a deeper knowledge and practice of Centering Prayer.

The *Lectio Divina* conducted by the leader of the group with a few words from Holy Scripture and then eliciting the comments of each of us, did have a dynamic of its own as these few words and their many-fold meanings, were understood and discussed in a thought-provoking manner and on a more personal level which I found very enriching.

I am thankful to my sister and the group for having had the opportunity to join them: hopefully it will be a good start for me in the practice of Centering Prayer. God Bless,

Come walk with us

The Saint John of the Cross Centering Prayer Group is sponsoring a half day of prayer which will include an outdoor labyrinth walk. Please dress accordingly.

Date: Saturday, November 7, 2009 Time: 8:30 a.m. - 12 noon

**Place: Saint John of the Cross Catholic Church, Kirk Center (behind the rectory)
8086 Broadway Ave., Lemon Grove, CA, 91945**

Phone: (619) 749-4141 - Please RSVP with COSD to help us plan for the event.
Refreshments will be provided. A Free Will Offering would be appreciated.

The Living Flame Series Program 1

(A seven month course, meeting one Saturday a month)

Presented by Contemplative Outreach Ltd. faculty

- ***Topics include:*** *Lectio Divina, Refinement of the Centering Prayer Practice, Formation of Emotional Programs for Happiness, False Self in Action, Divine Therapy, Night of Sense, Welcoming Prayer*
- ***Prerequisites:*** *Making a Centering Prayer Introductory Workshop and having a daily prayer practice for at least 6 months, some knowledge of Fr. Keating's Spiritual Journey series, reading of Open Mind, Open Heart, a commitment to attending **all seven sessions** of the program.*
- ***When:*** *Begins September 11, 2010. Where: St. Paul's Cathedral, San Diego*
- ***More details in the next Newsletter.***
- ***Registration information:*** *Call Kathy (619) 749-4141 or CJ (619) 226-4486 or (619) 884-8153*

“Be still and know that I am God.” Psalm 46:10



Prayer Groups of Contemplative Outreach of San Diego

	Area	Leader(s)	Telephone	Location	Meetings Day & Time
1	Chula Vista	Adela Detrinidad	619-216-2538	Saint Rose of Lima Catholic Church 293 H Street, Chula Vista	Mondays: 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. Business Office-Chapel
2	Del Cerro	Sue Gossman Rosemary McGeary	619-466-3150 619-582-9508	St. Therese Catholic Church 6016 Camino Rico, San Diego	Saturdays: 10:00 a.m. Adult Ministry Office
3	El Cajon (1)	Anne Clark Lisa Davis	619-444-9700 619-444-9700	1 st Presbyterian Church of El Cajon 500 Farragut Circle, El Cajon	Saturdays: 9:00 a.m.
4	El Cajon (2)	Anne Clark Lisa Davis	619-444-9700 619-444-9700	1 st Presbyterian Church of El Cajon 500 Farragut Circle, El Cajon	Tuesdays: 3:00 p.m.
5	El Cajon (3)	Irma Eichinger Crissa Campbell	619-449-8400 619-589-8583	Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church 2766 Navajo Road, El Cajon	Mondays: 9:00 a.m. Knights of Columbus Hall
6	La Jolla (1)	Karen Downs	858-488-1014	All Hallows Catholic Church 6601 La Jolla Scenic Drive South, La Jolla	Wednesdays: 5:00 p.m.
7	La Jolla (2) (Spanish Speaking)	Cristina Romero Antonia Villalpando	858-457-4120 858-454-8342	Mary, Star of the Sea Catholic Church 7669 Girard Avenue, La Jolla	Saturdays in the Library: 9:30 to 11:00 a.m.
8	La Mesa	Susan Jarboe	scj123@cox.net	Home of Veryl Snowhill 6335 Southern Road, La Mesa	Thursdays: 7:00 p.m.
9	Lemon Grove	Mary Kay Sieckman	619-588-4107	St. John of the Cross Catholic Church 8086 Broadway Avenue, Lemon Grove	Saturdays: 8:45 to 10:15 a.m.
10	Mission Valley	Ardy Woodmansee	858-279-7278	Mission Basilica San Diego de Alcalá 10818 San Diego Mission Road, Mission Valley	Mondays: 7:00 p.m. In the California Room
11	Old Town	Fr. Mark Campbell	619-295-4148 X32	Immaculate Conception Catholic Church 2540 San Diego Avenue, Old Town	Thursdays: 7:00 p.m. Fr. Junipero Serra Hall
12	Point Loma	C. J. Carlo Ginger Ramos-Dunn	619-226-4486 619-823-5075	All Souls' Episcopal Church 1475 Catalina Boulevard, Point Loma	Wednesdays: Library Annex: 5:15 to 6:00 p.m.
13	San Diego City (1)	Lucinda Parsons	619-282-1462	Saint Paul's Senior Homes & Services 328 Maple Street, San Diego	Thursdays: 5:30 p.m. Meets: St. Paul's CCC Chapel
14	San Diego City (2)	Bryan McNutt	619-540-6560	Saint Paul's Senior Homes & Services 328 Maple Street, San Diego	Mondays: 7:00 p.m. Meets: St. Paul's CCC Chapel
15	San Diego City (3)	Rev. Wilbert Miller	619-234-6149	First Lutheran Church 1420 3 rd Avenue, Downtown San Diego	Wednesdays: 7:00 p.m. Meets in the Church Sanctuary
16	Spring Valley (1)	Mary Jane Weismann	619-463-9743	Santa Sophia Catholic Church 9800 San Juan Street, Spring Valley	Mondays: 8:30 a.m. Bell Tower, Upper Room
17	University City	Michele Lambotte	858-558-9386	Our Mother of Confidence Catholic Church 3131 Governor Drive, San Diego 92122	Thursdays: 9:00 a.m. Katharine Drexel Room



Theological Principle # 1

Contemplative Outreach is a community of individuals and Centering Prayer Groups committed to living the contemplative dimension of the Gospel in everyday life.

Seeing and Releasing: Ending the Daily 'Avoid-Dance'

One of the blessings of Centering Prayer is to be increasingly aware of the patterns of our living that stunt our growth. When we stop re-identifying with them and see them for what they are, recurring thoughts and emotions are *part of* the process of our transformation. As the desert elders of the early Christian centuries saw, 'the color of our thoughts and emotions dyes our souls.' These contemplative elders offered practical suggestions for releasing recurring "afflictions."

Here is a brief summation of some of their insights. Simply become aware of, without analysis or judgment, the arising of "afflictive" thoughts or feelings. Take heart not to mentally wander or dismiss this opportunity. If you notice yourself slipping back into identification with a particular "affliction," such as a judgmental thought or emotion, simply release it and return to awareness. Alert awareness provides a window with which to *see* these particular thoughts or feelings for what they are. A host of associations and connections opens up, exposing the conditioning behind such thoughts and emotions.

Contemplative wisdom reveals that *life* itself shows us what we need to *see* and *see through* in order to be free. In a very real way, *life* is our primary spiritual practice. Anything we avoid in life returns repeatedly until we are ready to face it and *see* its true nature. Honoring this wisdom, our very afflictions, illusions, and compulsions can become the doorways to freedom if we properly utilize them. A variety of daily "active" practices such as the Jesus Prayer, the Welcoming Prayer, an 'active prayer phrase,' and spiritual journaling are all meant to support and deepen this living-awareness.

Merely considering *why* such afflictive thoughts or feelings are happening to you is not helpful. In fact, this generally leads to more afflictive feelings and thoughts! For example, how often are you even aware that your mental energy is disconnected from your emotional energy? Notice that you can easily understand something very clearly in your mind, but be very conflicted about it emotionally. The key for you is to become aware of which thoughts stimulate which feelings, as well as which feelings stimulate which thoughts. The desert elders encouraged this radical awareness that unifies feeling and thought, body and mind. Thus, just observe your afflictive 'thought-feeling patterns' - a certain thought creates a feeling, and that feeling creates the next thought, which then produces the next feeling. Without dissecting each thought and feeling, you join body and mind together by simply tracing the 'affliction' back to its root. Our awareness is far more intuitive than 'superior rational thought.' True awareness operates *prior to* thought and feeling in the expanse of pure perception.

What your commitment to awareness teaches you is how to stop the daily '**avoid-dance**,' where you run from what life is trying to *teach you*. Simply stay with the momentary 'affliction' in a humble and sustained way. Your steady awareness reveals what needs to be *seen* and then *released*. The rhythm of *seeing and releasing* grows more and more natural and spontaneous. At first it may feel somewhat tedious, but with fidelity, this practice flows with ease. Be gentle and peaceful, remembering that each moment of ego-identification is an opportunity, a wake-up call to freedom. Use it faithfully and wisely. Indeed, the practice of *seeing and releasing* is an act of compassion that frees you to embrace life's daily lessons!

∞ Fr. Justin Langille, COSD Spiritual Director



Centering Prayer Introductory Workshop Registration

Saturday, October 3, 2009

Where **Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church, Maloney Hall**

Time..... **8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.** Suggested donation.....\$25.00

Six continuing sessions begin Mon. Oct. 5. Morning and evening sessions offered.

Tell your friends and family!

Your Name(s) _____ Phone _____

Address _____ City _____

State _____ Zip (+4) _____ E-Mail Address _____

Enclosed Amount \$ _____ Check _____



COSD Calendar of Upcoming Events

October 3, 2009

CENTERING PRAYER INTRODUCTORY PROGRAM • Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church, 2766 Navajo Rd, El Cajon. • Maloney Hall
8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. • Continuing sessions Mon. evening or Wed. morning. Please call Kathy Di Fede at 619-749-4141 or Irma Eichinger at 619-449-8400 for information. Suggested donation \$25.00.

October 10, 2009

FR. MARTIN LAIRD, AUTHOR OF INTO THE SILENT LAND • Mission San Diego de Alcalá • Mission Valley • St. Francis Chapel
8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

November 7, 2009

HALF DAY OF PRAYER • Saint John of the Cross Catholic Church • Kirk Center • **8:30 a.m. to 12 noon** • Lemon Grove • Centering Prayer and an outdoor Labyrinth Walk. Please call 619-749-4141 for more information or to RSVP.

December 9, 2009

TAIZE PRAYER SERVICE • Mission San Diego de Alcalá • St. Francis Chapel • **7 p.m. to 8 p.m.** • Mission Valley • Love offering taken for the poor.

January 9, 2010

Centering Prayer Introductory Workshop • Guardian Angels Catholic Church • Santee • 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

COSD Donation Form

Your Name(s) _____ Phone _____
Address _____ City _____
State _____ Zip (+4) _____ E-Mail Address _____
Prayer Group or Parish _____ Enclosed Amount \$ _____

I would like to offer a financial donation for someone in need of a scholarship. Enclosed Amount \$ _____

► **Please make checks payable to: *Contemplative Outreach of San Diego (or "COSD")* and mail to:**

Contemplative Outreach of San Diego • 15420 Olde Highway 80, Sp. 98, El Cajon, Ca 92021

No credit cards accepted

Contemplative Outreach of San Diego is an all volunteer organization. The leadership of COSD includes the coordinator, all prayer group leaders and anyone who offers their time and/or talents in support of the vision and mission of Contemplative Outreach. We have no grants or other forms of financial support other than from those who desire to support COSD through their generous donations. Your donations help with the printing and mailing of our Newsletter and supplies needed for the Centering Prayer Workshops and other Centering Prayer events. Donations also help provide financial assistance to anyone who wants to attend a Workshop but cannot afford it. COSD also supports a Prison Ministry and the Spanish Introductory Workshop Program. This newsletter is being sent to everyone in our data base free of charge. We hope that those of you who are able will support Contemplative Outreach of San Diego with your donations. We thank you for your support not only financially but with your time and presence at our gatherings. Kathy Di Fede, Coordinator

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Contemplative Outreach of San Diego & Contemplative Communications

We encourage and invite you to *Save the Date* for

“A Day with Martin Laird”

Saturday, October 10th, 2009; 8:30 am to 3:30 pm
 Mission San Diego de Alcalá
 St. Francis Chapel - 10818 San Diego Mission Road
 (Use “Nazareth Catholic School” Entrance)

Pre-registration Donation: \$35.00
At-the-Door Donation: \$45.00
Please bring a bag lunch

Beverages will be provided at lunchtime only

Martin Laird, O.S.A., will offer a presentation on: “The Stillness that Opens the Eye of Awareness”

Martin Laird is an Augustinian priest and Professor in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at Villanova University. Based on his extremely well-received and highly acclaimed book, *Into the Silent Land*, Martin will offer a dynamic presentation on how to both overcome the obstacles as well as negotiate the gateways along the contemplative path. [It is strongly encouraged that you read *Into the Silent Land* beforehand.]

✂ *****



Registration Form for “A Day with Martin Laird”

Sponsored by Contemplative Outreach of San Diego & Contemplative Communications

Deadline: October 1, 2009 (Walk-ins will be accepted if space is available)

Your Name(s) _____ Phone _____

Address _____ City _____

State _____ Zip (+4) _____ E-Mail Address _____

Registration Fee \$ _____ Enclosed Amount \$ _____ Check _____

I am unable to attend but would like to offer a financial donation for someone in need of a scholarship. Please make registration checks payable to: *Contemplative Outreach of San Diego (or “COSD”)* and send to: Contemplative Outreach of San Diego • 15420 Olde Highway 80, Space 98; El Cajon, California • 92021 • (619) 749-4141