



CONTEMPLATIVE COMPANIONS

The Bimonthly Centering Prayer Newsletter of Contemplative Outreach of San Diego

November-December 2008

Winter Issue

Volume 13: Issue 6

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The prologue of John introduces us to the eternal plan of God in which Christ has the central position. The Eternal Word, the silence of the Father coming to full expression, has entered the world and manifested as a human being. Because of His infinite power, the Eternal Word has taken the entire human family into His divine relationship with the Father. We who are incomplete, confused, and riddled with the consequences of original sin constitute the human family that the Son of God took upon Himself. The basic thrust of Jesus’ message is to invite us into divine union, which is the sole remedy for the human predicament.

Abbot Thomas Keating in *The Mystery of Christ*

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 manifests 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 (spiritual reading of Scripture) particularly its movement into Contemplative Prayer, which a regular and established practice of Centering Prayer facilitates.

We identify with the Christian Contemplative Heritage. While we are 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. ☐

Calendar of Contemplative Events

November 2008

- 1.....**Servant Leadership Team Meeting** • All Souls’ Church • 8:30 to 11:30 a.m.
- 8.....**Day of Enrichment with Fr. Justin Langille** – “What is the True Self? Living with the Mind of Christ” • Santa Sophia Church • 9800 San Juan Street • Spring Valley Area • 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. • Suggested Donation \$30.00 • **Bring a sack lunch**
- 20-23 **Centering Prayer Weekend Retreat** • Viña de Lestonnac • Call COSD Office

December 2008

- 10.....**Advent Taizé Prayer Service for World Peace** • Mission San Diego de Alcalá • St. Francis Chapel • 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. • *A Love Offering for the poor will be collected*

January 2009

- 16/17 **CONSD Workshop with Cynthia Bourgeault** • St. Bartholomew’s • Poway
- 31.....**Half Day of Prayer** with Fr. Mark Campbell • Maloney Center, Our Lady of Grace Church • El Cajon Area • 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

February 2009

- 21 **Workshop with Sister Maria Tasto**: “Exploring Your Dreams/Uncovering God’s Gifts through Journaling” • 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. • All Hallows Church • La Jolla

May 2009

- 16.....**Special event with Abbot Thomas Keating in San Diego County** • Location and time remain to be decided.

Co-Coordinator's Corner

Oneness: Unity in Contemplation, Modeled by Fr. Thomas Keating and Fr. Laurence Freeman

This year, the 2008 Contemplative Outreach Annual Conference was held at the Pittsburgh Airport Marriott in Pennsylvania. It took a day and a little jet lag to get across country. Arriving at the hotel, I was immediately joined by Sue & Chris Hagen, CONSD co-coordinators, Rebecca Crowley, and other contemplatives of all denominations from around the world. A sense of unity and God's love descended upon the group and stayed with us all the days we were together.

The Marriott Pittsburg is a smaller hotel which made a cozy environment for all participants. My room had a lovely forest view reminding me that I really was on the East Coast of the United States. During that time we began to see Fall colors in the trees each morning. There were about 150 Contemplative Outreach members attending the five-day Conference. Mary Wyman, Chapter Coordinator from San Francisco, and I were roommates. This was a fantastic opportunity for us to learn all about our chapters and also discuss our favorite subject ... Centering Prayer!!!

After greeting and meeting friends, finding the bookstore ... then having dinner, Gail Fitzpatrick-Hopler, National Director of Contemplative Outreach, and Fr. Thomas Keating welcomed us in the large ballroom. The ballroom (and adjoining rooms) became our sanctuary for the lectures and meetings that followed. Summing up Thomas Keating's opening remarks, he said that we have everything within us (the Trinity) to do whatever we need to do to continue the work of the organization and to help spread Centering Prayer.

A contemplative environment and culture was set by two daily sessions of Centering Prayer, excellent rotating workshops (called Wisdom Circles), and evening meetings. Some of the sessions I attended were New Technology, Consensus, and the Unity Statement. In the evening there were sessions on Prison Ministry, the Living Flame, Extensión Contemplativa, and Lectio Divina. Fr. Arico's lecture, *The Practice of Forgiveness*, was one of the highlights.

On Friday morning Marie Howard, Western Regional Director, led our Regional Meeting. We were a group of 15 chapter leaders from as far away as Hawaii. We each gave overviews of chapter events, speakers, other fund raising events, and how we approach servant leadership. We all agreed on the common need to develop stronger servant leadership teams, to develop new leaders, and assist the chapter coordinators. We unanimously agreed that there seems to be an increasing number of people within our chapters who want to know more about Centering Prayer. *Our cup runneth over!*

The Annual Business Meeting was held on Friday afternoon with Fr. Thomas presiding. He described the progress of Contemplative Outreach's new governance model which was reached by consensus in a non-hierarchical, Spirit-driven, no-vote, decision-making process. The new model appears to be more leadership appropriate to a contemplative organization, one manifesting the Will of God, the movement of the Spirit, where membership is at the center and a 'Circle of Service' exists to support the membership. Attitudes would be motivated by trust, utmost charity in all situations, and in general, entrusting the process to a new chairman, Jesus Christ. Fr. Thomas assured us in good humor that Jesus Christ is now the Director and in charge of finances, as he has shown us in previous experience. It was a delightful and surprising meeting.

The brilliant talks and dialogue between British monk, Fr. Laurence Freeman and our North American monk, Fr. Thomas Keating, was one of playfulness and intent. I will not go into detail as many of you will hear this topic at our 2009 United Day of Prayer. I will say, that wouldn't it be wonderful if more people would understand the common roots, process, and intent of the two Christian meditation groups as we were urged to comprehend them at the Annual Conference, and that there is *Oneness: Unity in Contemplation*. ☐ *CJ Carlo*

To Experience God: "Desire Nothing"

Those two times of daily meditation a day become times of spiritual work and time of powerful recreation. As times of renewal and refreshment the effects of those short periods of desirelessness overflow into daily life. You are not merely recharging your batteries; you are making contact with an inexhaustible source of energy, the energy of divine being.

As we make contact with it, it flows into every corner of life with all its unlimited power. The contact with the ground of being is why those two simple and ordinary half-hours of meditation each day have such a transforming effect upon our lives. As they are times of being, not for wanting, do not even want any spiritual experience. Do not want anything to happen. Do not want God. Do not want the Spirit. Do not want to want. ☐

~ Laurence Freeman in *The Selfless Self*

If you are interested in sharing your experience of Centering Prayer in our COSD Newsletter, please contact Rachel Cave at (619) 596-7665.

✍️ Extensión Contemplativa de San Diego

Mi Relación con Abbá

Artículo por Cristina G. Romero

Casi todos nosotros hemos tenido una crisis existencial y yo no fui la excepción. Hace tiempo me preguntaba porqué a pesar de tener salud, un marido excelente con el que me llevaba muy bien, bendecida con 3 hijos y sin problemas económicos, tenía un vacío en el alma. Tuve la suerte de recibir una luz que me dijo que lo que me hacía falta era tener una relación con Dios.

Esta inquietud me llevo al Altillo, un Centro de Espiritualidad de los Misioneros del Espíritu Santo en la Ciudad de México en donde me inscribí al curso, "El Sistema de Evangelización para Adultos" del Padre Anselmo Navarro. En la primera clase la maestra dibujó un círculo en el pizarrón y nos dijo, este círculo representa a cada uno de ustedes y nos preguntó donde estaba Jesús en nuestras vidas. Me di cuenta que Jesús estaba totalmente fuera del círculo y en ese momento tome la decisión de hacer a Jesús el centro de mi vida.

Ese encuentro con Jesús me llevó por muchos caminos hasta que al tomar un taller de Oración Centrante en mi parroquia en San Diego, hace 11 años, comencé a tener una relación con Jesús de una amistad a una intimidad, de una conversación a una comunión. Aprendí a ser dócil a las inspiraciones del Espíritu

Santo sin embargo aún me faltaba una relación con mi Padre Celestial.

Jesús dice: "Nadie conoce al Padre si no es a través de mi." En el Evangelio leemos con mucha frecuencia que los apóstoles buscaban a Jesús y lo encontraban orando solo. Con la sensibilidad que caracteriza la relación entre Jesús y su Padre en una total entrega de amor filial; un buen día, una palabra totalmente ajena a la teología y la opinión pública de Israel emanó de su boca, la palabra, Abbá, "Papacito querido," algo nunca escuchado. En ese momento Jesús experimentó la cúspide de la experiencia religiosa más importante de todos los tiempos.

Jesús que conocía a Dios verdaderamente, nos anuncia cosas espléndidas, diciendo que aquel a quien Israel llamaba el innombrable, el todo poderoso, el eterno, el incomparable y que lo sigue siendo, es ante todo: Abbá, "Papacito Querido" y que a pesar de tener millones de hijos cada uno de nosotros somos su hijo o hija predilectos. Nos ama sin hacer preguntas, con amor incondicional porque esencialmente El es Amor. Llenémonos de gozo por tener un Padre Celestial como el nuestro. ☐

Enter the Cloud of Unknowing

Choose one word or a little phrase which will express your love for God; and then go on repeating it in peace, without trying to form thoughts, motionless in love before God who is Love.

☞ Carlo Carretto, (1910-1989) in *Letters from the Desert*

✂

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Your subscription helps COSD meet our various contractual obligations for administrative support, production, editing, printing, and postage. The annual subscription rate of \$15.00 is an excellent way to share your support for COSD.

Precious Seasons of the Spiritual Journey

✍ Article by Anne Clark, Centering Prayer Group Leader, First Presbyterian Church, El Cajon

In 2002, the Rev. Jan Hearn, Parish Associate at First Presbyterian Church of El Cajon, introduced me and other members of my church to Centering Prayer. She organized a workshop by Contemplative Outreach of San Diego, which was also attended by people from the community. A group was formed and Jan led the group until she moved to Oregon, at which time she asked me to take over.

I had been searching for some means to deepen my spiritual life for quite a while. In 1986 my husband and I visited the island of Iona, off the western coast of Scotland. I learned about Saint Columba and the Celtic missionaries who introduced Christianity to England. In my reading, I became interested in the lives of the fourth century desert fathers and mothers in Egypt. Imagine my delight when I discovered that Centering Prayer was developed by Fr. Thomas Keating and others, out of the teachings and experiences of those holy men and women.

My daughter, Lisa Davis, and I have been on retreat at the Benedictine Monastery in Snowmass,

Colorado, twice. We are going again in January of 2009. Each time I go I come away with a deepened awareness of the unity of all life. The silence and abiding peace there contributes to the prayer practice, and heightens my awareness of God's presence and action within.

There are now three Centering Prayer groups at my church and I am active in two of them. We have watched the Spiritual Journey video series by Fr. Thomas Keating and are planning to see it again. The journey constantly presents me with surprises. Each time I see one of the lessons, something pops out at me that I hadn't noticed before. My fellow travelers are avid readers, and I am adding to my knowledge and understanding continually, by books that they suggest. There are so many authors who have added to my journey: Henri Nouwen, Richard Rohr, Eckhart Tolle, Kathleen Norris, Thomas Merton, and many others.

I am truly blessed to have found my way on to this path. ☐

In Thanksgiving to You!

We are so very grateful to *all of you* who have supported Contemplative Outreach of San Diego throughout this 2008 calendar year, especially during a time of great transition! Your support affirms that you believe in this contemplative work and the transformation of humanity. Let us continue to remain united in supporting all of our contemplative companions around San Diego and Imperial Counties.

☞ The COSD Servant Leadership Team

The Cave of the Heart

The joy of Christmas, you know, is not only the crèche. The crèche is just a sign. It is into the cave within the heart that we should go to hide ourselves, lose ourselves, forget ourselves. This is the true cave where Jesus is born in us, and being born in us, He makes us into Himself. The cave is the bosom of the eternal Father, where the Word is born and comes to be from all eternity.

Our joy at Christmas, joy in the family, joy in worship, etc., all that is so little beside the true joy, the joy of Jesus awaking to being that night in Bethlehem, the joy of the Divine Word awaking to being in the bosom of the Father in eternity! Live in this cave in the depth of your heart! ☐

☞ Henri Le Saux, Abhishiktananda, (1910-1973) Benedictine monk in *His Life Told Through His Letters*

***“The heart and soul of Contemplative Outreach is
the network of Centering Prayer Groups.”*** *≈ Abbot Thomas Keating*

Contemplative Outreach of San Diego: 19 Prayer Groups

	Area	Leader(s)	Telephone	Location	Group Meets-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-Adult Ministry Office 6016 Camino Rico, San Diego	Saturdays: 10:00 a.m.
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 Church 8086 Broadway Avenue, Lemon Grove	Saturdays: 8:45 to 10:15
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 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	Spring Valley (2)	Rom and Kay Smith	619-460-4723	Santa Sophia Catholic Church 9800 San Juan Street, Spring Valley	Mondays: 6:30 p.m. Bell Tower, Upper Room
18	University City (1)	Elaine Warner	858-453-4006	Home of Elaine Warner 3272 Mercer Lane, University City	Fridays: 7:00 p.m.
19	University City (2)	Michele Lambotte	858-558-9386	Our Mother of Confidence Catholic Church 3131 Governor Drive, San Diego 92122	Mondays: 4:00 p.m.

Centering Prayer for Me

≈ Article by Shirley Weaver, Member of Mission San Diego & St. Paul's Cathedral Prayer Groups

To tell the truth, the incredible journey Centering Prayer has opened for me cannot really be expressed in mere words. The interconnectedness with all of reality isn't just a concept, but to try to express it with writing or any other form of human communication, is a huge, and only partially successful undertaking. So, with that said, I'll try to share some of the changes the practice has brought me.

Life for me has been mostly a huge, unknowable puzzle. Feelings having not jibed with what seems to be really happening. Having been practicing Centering Prayer for quite awhile now, I have been opened to some very early events in my childhood which I had repressed very securely in a deep, interior place where they couldn't hurt me anymore.

The more I remember, the more the healing power of the "Divine Physician" can do the work necessary to evacuate much that became parts of a larger puzzle I struggled with over a long period of time. All the "failures" seem to fall into a

sacred space where healing and forgiveness are always present. The concept of "undoing" the false self in the gradual and gentle support of Centering Prayer has been appreciated so much.

The prayer practice, retreats, spiritual disciplines such as the Welcoming Prayer and Lectio Divina, and especially the literature that I have been exposed to, have helped to sustain my life. Authors such as Fr. Thomas Keating, Fr. Richard Rohr, Fr. William Menninger, Fr. Laurence Freeman, Rev. Cynthia Bourgeault, Sr. Meg Funk, Br. David Steindl-Rast, Br. Wayne Teasdale, and so many others, whose vision and writing abilities present spiritual truths, are gradually being absorbed.

What is truly a miracle is that I have not given up on the prayer practice. Sustaining effort is not my strong suit. For me to be faithful to practice is a huge blessing. So you see, I am very thankful to all my teachers, and for a practice which is so life-promoting. ☐

Remaining Teachable Instruments

Not long ago, a wise monk was speaking to a small group of visitors at his monastery and surprised his guests by giving exceptional praise to a certain novice. The inquisitive visitors wanted to know what was so exemplary about this student-novice.

The monk simply replied, “Come with me and see.” He led them inside the house for novices. The monk walked up to one of the rooms and knocked on the door. The visitors could hear that from inside the room a pen was being thrown down, papers shaken, a large book slammed shut, and then heavy footsteps. A young man abruptly opened the door. “Yessss?” he said, in an irritable voice.

“My apologies,” said the monk, “I have the wrong room.”

The monk and visitors proceeded down the hall to the next room where the monk again knocked. Immediately they heard footsteps. The door opened, and a young man with a gentle smile appeared saying, “Yes?”

“May we come in for a moment?” asked the monk. “Certainly,” said the novice. The visitors walked in and saw a page in progress with a large illuminated letter that was half-completed. The novice was still holding his calligraphy pen in hand. He had obviously begun drawing the letter but was interrupted by the knock on the door.

Observing the young novice who remained focused on his guests, the old monk turned to the visitors and said, “You can **teach** someone like **this!**”

The wisdom of contemplative living is much easier to learn when one is willing to drop personal plans and agendas. As we embark on the contemplative adventure, we often feel baffled by the apparent paradoxes, contradictions, enigmas, and ambiguities of this spiritual journey. It takes awhile to observe that contemplative teachings are not **really** contradictory or puzzling, they only **seem** that way to a grasping mind filled with its own assumptions and unexamined positions.

Deepening maturity requires that we loosen our grip on our preferred and cherished ideas, positions, and attitudes with the same freedom that the novice dropped his calligraphic artwork. If we cling too tightly to notions about the world, politics, religion, what’s fair, and especially our own self-image, then there will be resistance to, and interference with, the humility and poise that contemplative teaching urges, and thus we miss **seeing** the Kingdom of God right in front of us.

There’s also the great danger that our grasping, clinging mind will only ‘change’ **superficially**. Ironically, such a mind too often learns to exchange a negative idea for a ‘spiritual’ idea with the same fear, grasping, and anxiety. It is crucial to clearly see the nature of the clinging mind, and until we do so, contemplative prayer remains little more than gobbling down “spiritual” candy. Without a deeper contemplative **awareness**, there is little transformation of mind and heart, and the background static of confusion remains.

A key practice for contemplatives is to **be aware** of the nature of the clinging mind **during** the time afflictive thoughts and emotions arise. The two periods of Centering Prayer are an anchor,

teaching us how to faithfully let go. In active, daily life, just to **clearly see our attachments** frees us to let go! Thus, **daily life** is the principle forum for our contemplative practice.

It’s far too easy to go through the motions with contemplative learning: doing ‘daily sits,’ attending seminars, going to workshops and retreats, reading books, as if contemplation were some sort of self-help course. Centering Prayer is **not** about ‘helping the self.’ It is about **seeing** this separate sense of self for what it is ... an **illusion**.

This illusory self is forcefully bent on avoiding its demise. That is why we prefer to keep the spiritual journey safely in our heads, with our conceptual models and notions. But it’s only in our **lived experience**, not concepts, that we learn **nonattachment** and how to freely live in this world in a completely ordinary way, without being hypnotized by greed or fear.

Ultimately, we need to abandon the bogus hankering to discover some particular **thing**, to find some particular idea, teaching, or answer that will rescue us. Any **thing** that we cling to cuts us off from the Kingdom of God, because our focused attachment to **that thing** blinds us from pure seeing.

Contemplative teaching is a no-nonsense approach to life. It cultivates an open mind and heart, which is **a way of being**. In such direct experience we notice we can’t enjoy freedom when we live from a perspective of seeing **differences** alone. Such is the way of the false self: to talk, look, and act out of **differences**, out of fractions and separate parts, instead of from divine wholeness. In cultivating radical contemplative awareness, we begin to see ‘the whole picture’ in which we are **all** living, in which **everyone** takes part, and in which **all creation** is sustained.

It’s hard to overlook the fact that we live in a world managed by **experts** instead of **wise leaders**. Our own culture of expediency and consumption blinds us to real wisdom. Because experts are easier to identify and certify, and most wise leaders don’t advertise themselves, we settle for expertise instead of wisdom. Yes, experts do fulfill helpful roles in society, as in the fields of technology and medicine. But because their knowledge is limited to a very narrow range of experience, experts can’t direct us to Truth, Wholeness, Reality, God. In fact, experts very often draw our attention away from wholeness, albeit unconsciously. Whatever conceptual model is held, it can never serve as a substitute for Reality. Regrettably, our world’s institutions (even religious) have attracted far too many ‘experts’ and far too few genuinely wise souls to help mentor us into wholeness. Wisdom always comes out of concern for the Whole. Ultimately, it’s only the wise who can lead and instruct.

The fruit of living in Christ’s wisdom is: **openness** with no trace of tolerating another, **patience** with no hint of putting up with anyone or anything, **compassion** with no shade of differences, **generosity** with no tinge of making a sacrifice, and **service** that is free of trying to fix anyone.

May we be faithful to the anchor of contemplative prayer while remaining teachable instruments of Christ’s boundless Wisdom. Enjoy a blessed Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year! ☐

≈ Fr. Justin Langille, Spiritual Director & Editor

The Four
Guidelines of
Centering
Prayer

1. Choose a sacred word as the symbol of your intention to consent to God’s presence and action within.
2. Sitting comfortably and with eyes closed, settle briefly and silently introduce the sacred word as the symbol of your consent to God’s presence and action within.
3. When engaged with your thoughts, return ever-so-gently to the sacred word.
4. At the end of the prayer period, remain in silence with eyes closed for a couple of minutes.



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The Contemplative Book Nook

The Way to Our Heavenly Father: A Contemplative Telling of the Lord's Prayer, by G. John Champoux, (Sematron Press, 2008, 504 pages). "Our Father who art in heaven ..." Since these words were first spoken by Jesus on the Mount of Beatitudes, countless sermons and commentaries have reflected on Jesus' prayer. Intricately arranged, like the tiles of a mosaic, Champoux's book offers a display of spiritual themes covering a vast range of Christian experience. It is intended as a practical book, a serious guide to intimacy with God, not so much to be quoted as to be lived. The reader will encounter many vivid passages that will expand awareness and deepen faith. An impressive volume!

Forty Days to a Closer Walk with God: The Practice of Centering Prayer, by J. David Muyskens, (Upper Room Books, 2007, 138 pages). "Are you 'efforting' your relationship with God?" David Muyskens reminds us that what relationship with God requires is very similar to what our human relationships require: openness, patience, listening, and attention. Centering Prayer is one way to practice the skills needed for this relationship, a simple and deeply powerful prayer practice. Muyskens invites his readers to spend time focusing their hearts in God, to find the power to be still and aware of the One who is the Center of all. A very accessible book for contemplatives! ☐

"If you dare call God, Father, and live this in reality,
 You must become a newborn child and overcome duality."

≈ Angelus Silesius (1624-77), European Mystic

For the latest schedule of COSD Centering Prayer Introductory Programs, Special Events, Current and Past Newsletters:

<http://www.contemplativeoutreachsd.org>

▶ COSD's Telephone: 619-226-6000 • COSD's FAX (c/o All Soul's Episcopal Church) 619-223-5285 • COSD's E-mail address: COSDNOW@worldnet.att.net.

▶ Contemplative Outreach International Websites: www.contemplativeoutreach.org or www.centeringprayer.com.

Contemplative Outreach, Ltd. International Office Telephone Number (Butler, New Jersey): 973-838-3384. Their e-mail address is office@coutreach.org.

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