



CONTEMPLATIVE COMPANIONS

The Bimonthly Centering Prayer Newsletter of Contemplative Outreach of San Diego

September-October 2008

Fall Issue

Volume 13: Issue 5

Fall Issue Highlights:

-] Co-Coordinator's Corner ∴ CJ Carlo & Karen Downs..... page 2
-] "Faith is Nothing and Everything" ∴ Article by Richard Rohr, OFM page 2
-] "El Camino de Santiago y Oración Centrante" ∴ Artículo por David Herrera page 3
-] "The Lasting Joy of Centering Prayer" ∴ Article by C.J. Carlo..... page 4
-] "The Hunger for Something Deeper" ∴ Article by Joe Delano..... page 5

How can the God of Infinite Goodness have put up with Rwanda, Kosovo, the Holocaust? In other words, *Who is God?* "Maybe I'm a fool to serve this God. ... Why should I bother to pray?" ... But at some point the God who truly is and was and is to come gets tired of being an abstraction and says: "Don't you want to meet me as I am?" And since there's no chance of our changing without being challenged, God allows all kinds of misadventures and difficulties and usually hits us where it hurts the most. God has an uncanny capacity to put the divine finger on the thing that we most love, as if to say, "Would you kindly give me that?" To which our answer is, "Not a chance." ... I think we need to get bounced around a bit by life before we can really get into this thing at a deep level. ... The spiritual journey is a process and we're each at different levels of the process. That's why the question *Who is God?* is different for each of us.

∞ Abbot Thomas Keating in *Who is God?*



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

September 2008

- 13..... **Half Day of Prayer** • All Hallows Church • La Jolla Area • 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
- 20..... **CONSD 2008-2009** • Beginning date for the CONSD Seven Session "**Living Flame Program**" – 1st Session: "**Lectio Divina**" • [Other Dates for 2008 are October 25 & November 22] • For more information phone Sue Hagen at (760) 745-8860.
- 24-28 ... **Contemplative Outreach International Conference** • Pittsburgh, PA

October 2008

- 18..... **12th Annual Friends Gathering** • Mission San Diego de Alcalá • 6:00 to 8:30 p.m.

November 2008

- 8..... **Half Day of Enrichment with Fr. Justin Langille** – "The True Self: Who I Am in Christ" • St. Louise de Marillac Church • El Cajon Area • 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

December 2008

- 10..... **Taizé Prayer Service** • Mission San Diego de Alcalá • 7:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Advance Calendar for 2009

- January 16/17.....CONSD Workshop with Cynthia Bourgeault** • St. Bartholomew's • Poway Area
- February 21.....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 16**Special event with Abbot Thomas Keating in North County • Location and time to be decided.

Co-Coordinators Corner

After Karen and I attended the wonderful Half Day of Prayer at El Cajon Presbyterian Church we came to a remarkable conclusion; the “Half Days of Prayer” given by our individual Prayer Groups are an indispensable part of our effort to bring the contemplative dimension of the Gospel to our prayer-groups, and through them to the world.

Half Days of Prayer reinforce all aspects of “Centering Prayer” through community, education, silence and the love of Christ in our lives. These half Prayer Days are actually mini-spiritual retreats.

Once registration and informal greetings are over, the day starts off gently with a 20 to 30 minute session of Centering Prayer. This much needed silence establishes the tone for the day. The Prayer Group, which helps host the day, often surprises us with wonderful ways of

experiencing God in our lives. Whether it be with Lectio Divina, music or singing, a brief film with sharing, a candle lighting ritual or other spiritual exercises ... the ways are as individual as the Prayer Groups themselves, and we always come away with a renewed and deeper relationship with God.

Of course, yes, it is a great blessing to have spiritual leaders like Maria Tasto, Richard Rohr, Thomas Keating and our own local Spiritual Director, Justin Langille, to help form our spiritual maturity with their knowledge and wisdom, but it’s the Half Days of Prayer that sustain us, that revitalize our practice and bring us together as a Contemplative Chapter.

We thank God and our Prayer Groups for these Half Days of Prayer. ☐

CJ Carlo and Karen Downs

Holy Freedom

If my pain and my darkness console you,
Do what you want with me, my Lord Jesus.

If my separation from You puts others on Your path and if their love brings You joy,
Then Jesus, I readily suffer that which I am suffering.

Your will is everything I desire.

Now I know that You have never abandoned me. ☐

☞ Mother Teresa of Calcutta (1910-1997)

Faith is Nothing and Everything

└ Richard Rohr, OFM, from “*Image and Likeness: The Restoration of the Divine Image*”

Knowledge of God cannot be proven, processed, reasoned, justified or legitimated. This God-knowing and God-energy always risks being misunderstood (as God also risks) and risks being misinterpreted (as God puts up with) and even risks not being appreciated (as God also feels).

To live in faith – which is to live with God – one has to risk looking and feeling like nothing – nothing that can be possessed, bargained for, developed, controlled, sold, bought, measured, merited, applauded, or even rightly communicated. Faith, finally is beyond the world of power, function, and purpose.

I must say it or I would deny the entire history of faith from Abraham to Jesus to Francis of Assisi to our own Donny Flowers and Erwin Wolke: Faith is beyond any reasonable and objective process that even good people can devise. There is no community program or structure, no matter how perfect or how much we own it or invest in it, that will ever make biblical faith unnecessary. Faith is faith is faith. And God can only be known

by faith (see Romans 3-5). I wonder why religious people so easily forget that?

Faith is finally to stand in nothingness, with nothing to prove and nothing to protect, knowing itself in an ever-alive charity that urges us to surrender, to let go, to give away, to hand over, to forgive, walk across, to take no offense, to trust another, to lose oneself – while being quite sure that we are going to find ourselves afterward.

A consumer-oriented, functional and materialistic age finds faith almost impossible. We want religion, but surely we do not want faith. Because if faith is nothing, the faithful person is a nobody. In our shallow culture, trust is called naïveté. Forgiveness always looks like being soft and conceding to the enemy – even speaking the truth will not win you any votes or look patriotic on the evening news. Faith is nothing in this age and culture. Faith always has been nothing. ☐

“It takes a long time to understand nothing.”

☞ Edward Dahlberg, (1900-1977) American Novelist/Essayist

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

El Camino de Santiago y la Oración Centrante

Artículo por David Herrera

Este verano hice una peregrinación por tercera vez en el Camino de Santiago en España, el cual ha sido recorrido desde el siglo X por santos, reyes y reinas, personajes famosos en la historia y, sobre todo, por muchos miles de personas como nosotros.

En esta ocasión, fuimos siete los que caminamos parte del Camino de la Costa, desde la frontera de Francia en Irún hasta Santander. Recorrimos 260 kms en 12 días. El hacer este tipo de recorrido requiere varios hábitos similares a la Oración Centrante. Por ejemplo, la disciplina de levantarnos a las 5 de la mañana, saliendo a caminar a las seis para evitar lo más posible el sol; la dedicación para lavar la ropa todos los días por la tarde; o abandonar la comodidad al cargar solo lo absolutamente necesario en la mochila.

En las caminatas en años pasados, veía esta jornada como un desapego al confort y las cosas materiales, pues se tiene que tolerar el dolor de los pies por tanto caminar, el dormir en lugares pequeños e incómodos y el comer alimentos no acostumbrados. Por añadidura, este año tuvimos lluvia y lodo casi todos los días.

Este año tuve un reto mayor. Me lastimé una rodilla al bajar una pendiente pronunciada y lodosa y tuve que ir a un hospital y dejar de caminar por varios días. Me fue difícil despedirme de mi hermano y amigos por las mañanas e ir por taxi a esperarlos en el próximo pueblo. Al principio, me

fue difícil renunciar a caminar pues no había tenido lesiones en mis caminatas anteriores y había practicado intensamente por meses caminando en subidas y bajadas en los cañones en San Diego.

Fue al lastimarme donde, además de los hábitos mencionados anteriormente, encontré un sentido adicional en el Camino y su relación con la Oración Centrante. Percibí entonces la peregrinación como algo más significativo: *el Camino no es solamente el caminar*. Me invadió una tranquilidad inesperada al cambiar mi perspectiva sobre mi situación. Estaba en el Camino con mi hermano y cinco amigos, y podría compartir la peregrinación con ellos a la hora de comer, al hablar con otros peregrinos, al compartir las reflexiones personales durante la jornada. No era *indispensable* caminar.

Después de tres días, reanudé la caminata, aunque solamente en lugares planos. Pero me sentía ya satisfecho de lo que había descubierto en mí: la paz al *desapegarme* de cumplir con *mi* plan y no sentirme desilusionado. Estoy convencido de que esta tranquilidad me invadió por mi práctica de la Oración Centrante. Ante un reto nuevo, me ayudó a ver claramente y a *aceptar* que no tenía control ni poder (físico en este caso) para proseguir la peregrinación según mi plan y comprender que hay desapegos más allá de los materiales en el Camino de Santiago. ☐

♪ Playing a Blue Guitar ♪

The man bent over his guitar, a shearsman of sorts.

The day was green. They said, "You have a blue guitar, you do not play things as they are.

The man replied, "Things as they are are changed upon a blue guitar."

☞ Wallace Stevens, American Modernist Poet (1879-1955)

✂

Subscription Form for COSD's *Contemplative Companions* Newsletter

\$15.00 Annual Donation (Annual Cycle: July 1st to June 30th)

Your Name(s) _____ Phone _____

Address _____ City _____

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

Prayer Group/Church _____ Donation Amount: \$15.00 ≠ Amount Enclosed \$ _____

{ Visa { MasterCard αCard Number { } { } { } { } - { } { } { } { } - { } { } { } { } Exp. Date _____ { Check

{ I will offer a donation of \$100.00 or more and receive a free annual subscription. Amount Enclosed \$ _____

{ I will offer \$15.00 or more for someone who is in financial need of a subscription. Amount Enclosed \$ _____

{ I am financially unable to afford the \$15.00 for the annual subscription but would like to receive the Newsletter.

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

Contemplative Outreach of San Diego • Post Office Box 7796 • San Diego, California • 92167

Your subscription helps COSD meet our various contractual obligations for administrative support, production, editing, printing, and postage.

The Lasting Joy of Centering Prayer

Article by C.J. Carlo, Co-Coordinator and Alls Souls Episcopal Church Centering Prayer Group Co-Leader

Many years ago when I first started practicing Centering Prayer, after having attended two Centering Prayer Introductory Workshop Programs, I was still struggling with the suggested twenty minutes of sitting in prayer.

Oh, I was great at reading scripture before the prayer but I was unable to actually sit for the allotted twenty minutes of Centering Prayer. The phone and other sounds would greatly interfere and I would stop the prayer for what I determined was some more important immediate intrusion that I just had to attend to.

Something happened to me one day during Centering Prayer, I found Joy. I found a most profound heavenly nourishment within the Prayer that I had never experienced before. From that time on I couldn't wait to do my 20 minutes or more ... plus my Lectio Divina.

I was having a lot of trouble in my life at the time, or what I perceived as "trouble." My husband's former wife was diagnosed with a life threatening medical condition. Nic, my husband's son, a 15 year old at that time, moved in with us because of discipline problems. Bill and I had been married for 6 months. I had only known Bill for 9 months and I have never had children. Bill had 4 children. I guess I wanted all Bill's attention, like that of a child.

Anyway, I started doing the "Prayer" as many times a day as I possibly could. It was becoming an escape or obsession; (I was having a problem with detachment and didn't know it!). I noticed that I wasn't happy unless I was doing Centering Prayer!

That was when the Holy Spirit gave me the realization I was *attached* to joy within the Prayer. My

attachment to the feeling of joy in the prayer was interfering with my joy outside of the Prayer. We have all been taught in the Introductory Workshops, to detach from all thoughts, and that means feelings of ecstasy as well.

I know Fr. Keating says we are not to judge our prayer time. There is a real reason for this; I believe it must be a part of the Divine Therapy Fr. Thomas attributes to the Prayer.

Learning to detach myself from the feelings of joy, I had finally accepted the discipline of doing a Centering Prayer period for at least 20 minutes, twice a day, one that is required for deeper transformation and spiritual maturity. I do not use the Prayer as an escape anymore. I feel like I have "grown up spiritually" in the Prayer and outside the Prayer as well.

I wish I could say that I found the Prayer because of my great joy of living but the real truth is that I seemed to have had to pass through a crisis of trust for deeper spiritual growth. In order for me to go deeper into the prayer and depend soulfully on the Holy Spirit for maturity, I had to let go of joy inside my Centering Prayer experience. That was very hard for me.

It all worked for the good, of course, because I learned that nothing is bad or wrong in the Prayer. I just keep doing it. Thanks be to God. Now, whenever I sense that little inward smile during the prayer, I ever so gently say my sacred word.

P.S. I now see that the best thing that ever happened at that time in my life was that Nic moved into our house with Bill and I. ☐

Passing Beyond Our Own Center

"The easiest way to come to God is to enter into your own center, and then pass through that center into the Center of God. But remember, this movement is the work of the Holy Spirit."

☞ Thomas Merton, (1915-1968) Trappist monk and contemplative

☞ *What is this self I take so seriously?*

To live in the present moment requires a change in our inner posture. Instead of expanding or shoring up this fortress of "I" – the ego – which culture and often therapy try to help us do, contemplation waits to discover what this "I" consists of. What is this "I" that I'm trying to shore up and expand? Who is this self I take so seriously?

☞ Richard Rohr in *Everything Belongs*, p. 75

*"The heart and soul of Contemplative Outreach is
the network of Centering Prayer Groups." ~ Abbot Thomas Keating*

Contemplative Outreach of San Diego: 20 Prayer Groups

	Area	Leader(s)	Telephone	Location	Group Meets: Day & Time
1	Chula Vista	Freda Dunn	619-426-9517	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 (1)	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)	Steve Wardlow	619-220-5108	First Lutheran Church 1420 3 rd Avenue, Downtown San Diego	Wednesdays: 7:00 p.m. Meets in the First Floor Foyer
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.
20	Outreach to Africa Mpika, Zambia	Fr. Prior Willibord Nzota, OSB Audrey Spindler, Oblate	(International)	Katibunga Benedictine Monastery P.O. Box 112 – Nipika, Zambia, AFRICA	Mondays: 6:30 p.m. In the Library

The Hunger for Something Deeper

~ Article by Joe Delano, St. Rose of Lima Prayer Group Member

Someone whom I respect as truly faithful to Centering Prayer asked me to write this article. She thinks I am faithful to this type of prayer, but I am not always so. I may even miss a whole day now and then. When I do that, I feel a great sense of loss, like another opportunity wasted to get closer to the Lord and the Holy Spirit.

Furthermore, I see "centering" as not only the prime cause for my receiving a taste of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, but as a true means for retaining my sanity through some very painful experiences (which I might explain privately).

(Drum roll, please.) It goes like this ... many years ago I was deeply involved in the Charismatic Renewal. It taught me how to praise God. It taught me how to pray spontaneously after decades of clerical/religiously led formal prayer. The renewal opened me up to the love and greatness of the Spirit. Yet, after many years of growth

and consolation from this kind of prayer I felt the need for something deeper.

Centering Prayer has helped fulfill that need. And the beautiful part of it is that I can't make a mistake (except not to do it) and I don't really have much to do other than to present myself for whatever the Holy Spirit chooses to do (or not do) with me even when I falter.

I can see some of the change in me (over 12 years of doing it). I'm more patient, less defensive, and I am more willing to "surrender," even when my ego/false self says not to.

Not everybody can become a monk and not everybody can give up even a little control of life, but both are worth a try. And you can live at home with Centering Prayer.

I feel as though I am the lucky guy who has found this "pearl" of prayer and I can't let it go ... and I don't want to. ☐

Time Now to Switch Operating Systems

The great escape-artist, Harry Houdini, had a standing challenge that he could break out of any locked jail within 60 minutes, provided that his challengers would allow him to enter the jail cell in street clothes and not watch him work.

A true story records how Houdini received a challenge from a township in the British Isles that had just completed a state-of-the-art, escape-proof jail. Houdini accepted the challenge to break out of their new prison. Wearing street clothing, Houdini was escorted by a constable to the prison cell. A locksmith had been hired to turn the lock and close the massive steel door. The townspeople were gathered outside, waiting for Houdini to appear after working his magic.

Houdini had hidden a long, flexible steel rod inside his belt with which he planned to trip the lock. He began to work on the lock, but it would not trip. Thirty minutes, forty-five minutes, then an hour passed, and still no success. He patiently kept his ear close to the lock, but the lock would not budge.

After two hours, tired, perspiring, and flustered, Houdini braced himself to announce his failure. Slumping down to the floor in exhaustion, the defeated illusionist leaned against the cell door only to witness it swing open, much to his amazement! The townsfolk had played a trick on the great escape-artist. They had never locked the door! It was only locked in Houdini's mind.

I have long relished this story of Houdini as a parable for contemporary life. We are as unbounded as the wind and only seem imprisoned! We already freely have access to the Mind of Christ but just *don't know* it.

The computer is a ready-made technological symbol for the limitations of the human mind. Certainly, the computer serves as a wonderful communication tool (I'm typing these very words with one), but it is also a symbol for the dualistic mind that tries to differentiate and *objectify* everything, including God.

Computers use an artificial intelligence in a dualistic mode called the "binary system," a system of just two "states" or digits: 1 and 0. In simple language, it is "on or off," respectively. Based on the structure of the human brain, the ego-mind also functions in binary, 'either-or' thinking. Like the computer, the human mind is capable of fantastic speeds of processing information, but its supreme limitation is that it cannot grasp anything *beyond* images, things, and objects.

Most PC's use a "disc operating system" (dos). The architecture of "dos" is structured to process and create *more objects*. The mind works in a similar "dos" mode, one I prefer to call the "*dualistic operating system*." The mind functions in dualities, creating subjects versus objects, differentiating Reality into pieces. Yes, that *is* the mind's practical function, and it works well in everyday life, *until* it takes over the whole of our life and prevents us from seeing *beyond* the mind.

Like the computer, the human mind *has to objectify* everything. Tragically, we only know ourselves in *objects* and are only open to *objects*, which hinders us from being permeated by vast, silent awareness. This is why contemplative practice is difficult for many, because we even want to make what we "do" in prayer an *object* or *goal*. But contemplative prayer is radical *emptiness*, a "waiting without waiting," where we wait upon the One Who *alone* is Real, without

making the waiting a goal. We are never separate from God. Reality is *not two* (dual), it is One, there is no other! Recall what Isaiah the prophet records (45:5), "I am the Lord, and there is no other, besides me there is no God; I sustain you, though you do not *know* me." Our contemplative heritage preserves the truth of the *deep knowledge of God* which is to *know* that we are already one with God. But again, this "deep knowledge" is *not* a thing or object, rather, it is pure awareness *without object*. We can only glimpse the Real (God) with the totality of our being. Such a glimpse does *not go through* the *mind*. That is why contemplation is much more about *un-learning* than learning, *un-knowing* than knowing, *waiting* upon mystery rather than problem-solving with "*dos*."

We have been completely conditioned to ignore the vastly superior "operating system" I like to call the *unitive awareness* system ("*uas*"). At the tender age of 2 to 3, our conditioning 'writes over' unitive awareness *limiting* us to the dualistic mode. Nevertheless, we can always *upgrade* to "*uas*," the divine mode of perception. How so? In *daily contemplation* we actively invite the Spirit of Christ to heal the limits of our awareness.

Here are additional ways to access unitive awareness in *daily life* under the guidance of the Spirit: "practice" looking around you without conceptualization; be free from thinking. In your seeing, refrain from labeling, analyzing, interpreting, or judging. Simply be in pure perception: pure looking, pure hearing, pure touching. In these moments, be free from past and future, free from memory and anticipation, be open and available *in unknowing*. Intuition and creativity are never *thought*, they are only *received*, when we are truly present and available!

Jesus' call to "repentance" in the Gospels does not mean to 'feel like a wretch' but to *switch* operating systems. I am fond of the Greek term for repentance, "metanoia," which suggests "*a change of mind*," a change in *operating systems*, a change of *consciousness*, a shift to a *knowing beyond* thinking. 'Which of you, by anxious thinking, can add a single cubit to your life span.' (Lk 12:25) Don't we spend far too much of our lives in anxious thought, worried about personal security, esteem, self-image, and power, instead of embracing the deep knowledge of God? Daily fidelity to Centering Prayer teaches us *how* to *shift* from *thinking* to that which is *aware of thought itself!*

We cannot perceive the Fullness of Life through self-centered, dualistic *thinking* but only with *unitive awareness*, the "deep knowledge of God." Once we switch "operating systems" we live in 'the glorious freedom of the children of God' (Rom. 8:21) where we *know* God, *not* as Object, but in a deepening, *objectless awareness*. "Be still and *know* that I Am" (Ps 42:10).

The Christian contemplative path is a daily commitment to allow the Spirit to heal our "operating system." With deepening unitive awareness, we no longer *think* our way into a new mode of living, but we *live* our way into a new mode of *being*. ☐

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.

Contemplative Outreach of San Diego

CONTEMPLATIVE COMPANIONS is the Centering Prayer Newsletter of the San Diego Chapter of Contemplative Outreach International...

Editors: Fr. Justin Langille (English) - Rachel Cave (Spanish) Layout & Design: Fr. Justin Langille
CC Staff: Rachel Cave, Renée Daniels, Minnie Miller, Marlene Rogers, and Mary Jane Weismann
Mailing Committee: Mary Jane Weismann and the Newsletter Team.
Printers: Parker Systems Printing
POSTMASTER: Please send address changes to: Contemplative Companions, POB 7796, San Diego, California 92167-0796

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind.

Romans 12: 2

Separate yourself from all twoness. Be one on one, one with one, one from one. Meister Eckhart (1260-1327)

Circle of Compassionate Benefactors Pledge Form

Name(s) Phone Address City State Zip+4 E-mail address Parish Pledge Amount \$ { Monthly { Quarterly { Annually { One-Time Gift Donation { Check { Credit Card { Visa { MasterCard alphaCredit Card Number { Exp. Date

Thank You for Supporting COSD with Your Compassionate Generosity!

Please Mail to: C.O.S.D. • Post Office Box 7796 • San Diego, California • 92167-0796

COSD accepts MasterCard & Visa for all events!



COSD Registration Form

ALL-INCLUSIVE REGISTRATION FORM FOR WORKSHOPS, RETREATS, AND SPECIAL EVENTS

Name of Event Date & Location of Event Your Name(s) Phone Address City State Zip (+4) E-Mail Address Prayer Group or Parish Registration Fee \$ Enclosed Amount \$ { Visa { MasterCard alphaCard Number { Exp. Date { Check { I would like to offer a financial donation for someone in need of a scholarship. Enclosed Amount \$

Please make registration checks payable to: Contemplative Outreach of San Diego (or "COSD") and send to: Contemplative Outreach of San Diego • Post Office Box 7796 • San Diego, California • 92167



Contemplative Outreach of San Diego
 Post Office Box 7796
 San Diego, California 92167-0796

NON-PROFIT ORG.
 U.S. POSTAGE
 PAID
 LA MESA, CA
 PERMIT NO. 17

ADDRESS SERVICE



Have You Renewed Your Subscription?

□ ↑ **The Contemplative Book Nook** ↑ □

Echoing Silence: Thomas Merton on the Vocation of Writing, edited by Robert Inchausti, (New Seeds, 2007, 224 pages). Entering the monastery in 1941, Merton seemed to leave a very promising literary career. When his book, *The Seven Storey Mountain*, propelled him into fame overnight, he struggled with a nagging feeling that the vocation of the monk clashed with the vocation of the writer. Merton came to accept his twin vocation as a source of creative transformation. This work taps into a whole spectrum of literary topics: the role of the Christian writer in a secular society; writing as a spiritual calling; the mysteries and joys of poetry; and Merton's ruminations on other famous authors. An instructive reflection for all those who love to write and journal!



In the Heart of the Desert: *The Spirituality of the Desert Fathers and Mothers (Treasures of the World's Religions)*, by John Chryssavgis, (World Wisdom, 2003, 200 pages). Many contemplatives hunger to better understand the wisdom of the early desert elders. The teachings of these 3rd and 4th century ammas and abbas remain an essential resource for a deeper understanding of how to navigate the contemplative life. Flowing from their own lived experience, these desert mentors left us a record of how we too can live from a depth of awareness in everyday life. John Chryssavgis draws forth into the light of contemporary consciousness what to many has appeared as distant and eccentric. Wisdom in plain English for contemplatives! ☐

“All that we know is nothing, we are merely crammed wastepaper baskets, unless we are in touch with that which laughs at all our knowing.”

≈ D.H. Lawrence (1885-1930), English Novelist

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**.

Not part of a Prayer Group? Want More Information about Events? Send us Your Email Address!