



*We embrace the process of transformation in Christ both in ourselves and in others, through the practice of Centering Prayer. Contemplative Outreach is a network of communities and individuals seeking the inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit and to contribute to the renewal of the Christian contemplative tradition through the practice of Centering Prayer. Vision Theological Principal 1*

Dear Fellow Mystics,

Greetings from my hermitage, now day 188, more than half a year.

We seek to spread the love of God to all in Theological Principle #12: **“The practice of Centering Prayer deepens our awareness of the oneness of all creation and our compassion for the whole human family: Centering Prayer inspires ever-increasing regard for others, especially for the poor and those abandoned or exploited in the various throw-away cultures of our time.”**

Now we face more squarely our fragile existence in this pandemic. Fear and desperate action pervade our current political climate. Many are looking for leadership to guide us safely through this storm. Where does Centering Prayer fit in this chaos?

Centering Prayer is the anchor in the storm, the beacon showing us the way to go, and the strength we need to carry out the mission of love and compassion for our human family. The contemplative vision is a deeper wisdom about the truth of our universe that is founded on love. It is not swayed by the volatile fear and violence we are seeing spread throughout our culture.

Fr. Thomas taught us “Contemplative prayer is a major contribution to the diminishing of world problems of injustice, prejudice, health, and peace. If enough people progressed in contemplative prayer, they could reduce a sizable portion of the negativity in our world...Contemplative prayer enables people to clean up their lives through the insights of self-knowledge that flow from such a practice, so that at least they don’t continue to pour negative energy into the atmosphere. We would all do everyone on earth a great favor if we would die to our false selves and pour the divine energy of pure love into the atmosphere instead of the energy of our selfish drives for happiness. When contemplative persons get together in prayer, there is an enormous amount of positive energy generated, especially if they have been practicing a long time. (Thomas Keating, *The Better Part*, pp 107-8)

Our mission in this pandemic and period of crisis is to double down on our Centering Prayer practice because our world especially needs these divine energies of peace and love now. Let’s follow Fr. Thomas’ advice when he reminds us “John of the Cross has this challenging saying, ‘If you find that you are working so much that you don’t have enough time for your regular time of prayer, just double it!’” (*The Better Part* p.96) Now is a sacred time. We are called to bend into the wave and meet the challenges before us with our increased Centering Prayer.

Together we may we be the strength in the storm through Centering Prayer.

Peace, love, and prayer,

*Maggie*

## Cultivating Peace in Troubling Times

*Vernon Dixon*

These are indeed troubling times. Fr. Thomas once said that all politicians should have to complete the spiritual journey before they would be allowed to run for political office. Our current state of affairs certainly reflects that. The rhetoric coming from both sides of the aisle is filled with anger and bitterness. The only way we can ever solve the monumental problems of our day is to treat each other with respect and dignity. We all want what is best for America, and I believe we are all basically good people. We share common values of believing in human dignity, the value of hard work, the need to care for all our people, fairness, and wanting a better life for our children.

It almost seems that we have forgotten that we are Christians. As such, we are called to love all people, even those who disagree with us. I hope we can return to the Christian value of loving our neighbor. We are all neighbors. In the end, though, it is up to each of us to find our own inner peace. If we all did that, there would indeed be peace on earth.

So, what is the best way to do that? The best way I know is to practice my Centering Prayer twice daily, and to try and deepen that practice, perhaps even to increase it during these difficult times. Elections come, and elections go. Our life comes, and it goes. Our earth was born, and it will end. But the truth of who you are, at the deepest level of your being, remains unchanging, eternal, at peace. To know yourself at the deepest level of your being is to know yourself as eternal, at one with the Ultimate Mystery, forever at peace. Knowing yourself at this level and living a life of peace and love is the reason we were created. The best way I know to do this is thru my daily Centering Prayer practice.



We will have a great opportunity for immersed, increased Centering Prayer at our retreat October 26-30<sup>th</sup>. Come join us on our 5-day Zoom Centering Prayer retreat and deepen your practice. You will find the peace that the world cannot give, certainly no election can give. No charge. I am also planning on extending my retreat in the days until the election. I welcome all to join me. To sign up, please email Maggie [here](#).



Thanks to Stephen Hoffman of Tampa Bay Contemplative Outreach who sent this Playing for Change song around the world: [“Leaning on the Everlasting Arms”](#) featuring Dr. John. (skip the ads) “The good accomplished through this ministry is a gift of the Holy Spirit.” Theological Principle #14. Enjoy!



**At our Sunday, September 6<sup>th</sup> quarterly Coordinating Team Meeting** we discussed our status report; grateful acknowledgements for our donations from Ignatius House, Holy Spirit Monastery, and Contemplative Outreach Ltd.; our 5-day Zoom retreat at the end of October (see Vernon's article); and plans for our first COAtlanta Zoom Intro Workshop in Advent. I am working on fixing some software glitches on our website. We welcome your input at our next Coordinating Team meeting **November 8 at 1:00 pm**. I will send the link next month.

A webinar series presented by the International Thomas Merton Society and the Bernardin Center at Catholic Theological Union will be on the second Tuesday of each month. Free and open to the public. Registration required. Recordings of the webinars will be available on the [Tuesdays with Merton YouTube Channel](#) within a few days of their broadcast.

On September 8<sup>th</sup>, Daniel P. Horan, OFM presented "**Thomas Merton and Black Lives Matter: Spirituality and Racial Justice for Our Time**" Find it on their YouTube channel.

Future presentations:

- Bonnie Thurston - "...almost as if I had a sister": Thomas Merton & Etta Gullick October 13, 2020, 8 pm ET. [REGISTER HERE](#)
- Christopher Pramuk - What Does God's Gender Have to Do with It? Merton's Awakening to the Feminine Divine-November 10, 2020, 8 pm ET.
- Jonathan Montaldo - Thomas Merton's Contemplative Exercises for Entering the School of Our Lives-December 8, 2020, 8 pm ET.
- Jim Finley - Topic: TBA- January 12, 2021, 8 pm ET.
- Christine M. Bochen - Created for Joy: Becoming Who We Are, Together-Feb 9, 2021, 8 pm

**Fr. William Meninger, OCSO**, will present "**The Cloud of Unknowing as the Spiritual Journey**" on **Saturday, September 12, 2020 at 4:00 pm (EDT)** [Zoom Link](#) Meeting ID: 820-3630-1193 Passcode: 641819

The Omega Center presents A Zoom Conversation with **Diana Butler Bass: "Awakening or Apocalypse: The Promises and Perils of our Time,"** on Friday, September 25th, 4:00 pm – 5:30pm, ET \$25. [Register here.](#)

A McDonald Lecture webinar with support from Aquinas Center at Emory University's Candler School of Theology presents "**The Political Imagination of Jesus**" by **Professor Emerita Dr. M. Shawn Copeland** from Boston College at 11 AM – 1 PM on Wednesday Oct 14. [Register here](#)

**Third Omega Conference- "The Infinite Within: Who We Are and What We Are Called to Be"** with Sr. Ilia Delio, Barbara Brown Taylor, and Cynthia Bourgeault- **Friday December 4th - Tuesday December 8<sup>th</sup>** An *online* conference with innovative talks, hands-on workshops, and spiritual practice. Registration opening in early October.



## On-Line and Virtual Resources and Opportunities

Fr. Carl Arico's talk on the "Fruits of the Holy Spirit": [Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#)

New Zoom Retreats from Monastery of Holy Spirit- [Click here](#)

[The Call to Unite](#) Videos & recordings from Unite event of religious leaders & artists around the world calling the human population to unite & find a new vision for our world, Richard Rohr et.al.

CAC: free [20-video series](#) featuring our five faculty speaking on the pandemic.

Aug 31 to Sept 25 Cynthia Bourgeault offers a course [here](#) on Thomas Keating's Secret Embrace Book of Poetry- Unitive Theology in Haiku Form

[Encountering Silence](#) Podcast by Carl McColman, Cassidy Hall, and Kevin Johnson

James Finley Podcasts: "[Sink into the Taproot of Your Heart](#)" & "[Turning to the Mystics](#)"

The Franciscan Center on the Hillsborough River in Tampa offers many opportunities of retreats, conferences on the mystics, and interfaith worship [click here](#).

Gratefulness [video](#) "A Grateful Day" by Br. David Steindl-Rast featured on their [website](#).

Br. Elias Marechal OCSO presented by Zoom "Our Inner Beauty" June 24, 2020, hosted by Tallahassee Contemplative Outreach, now posted on YouTube. [Click here](#) for the recording.

Fr. William Meninger is on YouTube! [click here](#) for *Julian of Norwich*, *Cloud of Unknowing*, *Ox Herder*, *St. Bernard of Clairvaux* and *What Is a Mystic?*

The International Contemplative Outreach April 30<sup>th</sup> - May 2<sup>nd</sup> Conference with Cynthia Bourgeault featuring "Oneness: The Secret Embrace, Fr. Thomas Keating's Final Gift to the World" video recordings are now public for all to enjoy. [Session 1:](#) [Session 2:](#) [Session 3:](#)  
The book, *The Secret Embrace* [You may order it here in our store](#).

### Welcoming Prayer Resources:

Description of [Welcoming Prayer](#), Review of human condition with a [link to Welcoming Prayer](#)

The [Welcoming Prayer Practice](#) itself, [Nuances of the Welcoming Prayer](#) practice:

[Welcoming Prayer 4:](#) Fruits of the Welcoming Prayer, with Therese Saulnier

[Welcoming Prayer 5:](#) The Dance between Forgiveness and Welcoming, with Mary Dwyer

[Welcoming Prayer 6:](#) The Squirm Point, with Cherry Haisten

[Welcoming Prayer 7:](#) The Relationship between Welcoming Prayer & Centering Prayer, T.Saulnier

[Welcoming Prayer 8:](#) The Transformative Power of Welcoming Prayer, with Jim McElroy

WP by C. Bourgeault-Mary Mrozowski's devel <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= bClyhR2ZPc>

Find a Centering Prayer Group meeting online [here](#).

Join the online Meditation Chapel at Contemplative Outreach Ltd [here](#).  
Several times available

**Calendar of Events**

***We will continue to suspend physical gatherings indefinitely. Details will be developed as we receive more information.***

Centering Prayer groups will be only meeting virtually. Find a group [here](#).

Quarterly Coordinating Team Gatherings for 2020 will be on Zoom until further notice. Sundays – 1-3 pm Nov 8, Feb. 21, May 16. Everyone is a member of our Coordinating Team. Your gifts of service spread and support transformation of our community through Centering Prayer.

Plan to join us for our first 5-Day Zoom Retreat:.

❖ **October 26 to Oct 30, 2020 - 5 Day Zoom Retreat** For details & to register, [email Maggie](#)

We plan to present an **Introduction to Centering Prayer Workshop on Zoom** starting in Advent. Information coming soon on our website.

Be still and know that I am God. Ps 46:10

Silence Solitude Solidarity Service

*As we sit in silence, we realize our oneness with others, not only with those with whom we pray, but with everyone on earth—past, present, and to come. What is deepest in them, their oneness with the divine presence, resonates with what is deepest in us. Hence, their joys, their trials, and their openness to God are part of us.*

Thomas Keating, *The Better Part*, page 70



Contemplative Outreach

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Find a Centering Prayer group, read our newsletters, and see what is coming soon.