
CONTEMPLATIVE OUTREACH OF MIDDLE TENNESSEE



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WAR, DAILY LIFE, AND PRAYER

by Tom Ward
University of the South, Sewanee

Now that war has broken out in Iraq, I am even more grateful that centering prayer found me fifteen years ago. Everyday I face the same dynamic. First, my own emotions emerge; then there are the emotions of others. And I struggle in my role as chaplain in a university setting to find ways for individuals and groups to listen to God in the midst of the inner and outer confusion that this war has evoked. It reminds me of my response to the war in Vietnam more than thirty years ago. The difference is that now I have a place to go with all those boats coming down the stream of consciousness.

In *The Mystery of Christ*, Thomas Keating writes, "daily life is the fundamental practice." (p. 103) What I understand him to mean by this is that it is in turning and facing whatever happens to us in the course of each day, listening for God in these events, acting where we are called to act, and letting go of what is not our vocation, that we live faithful lives. Applying that to my life in these days, I find that I need to let go of much that emerges within me and around me in relation to this war. I need to listen to others when they speak, watch my tongue in all my relationships, and seek to allow Christ to use me in

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AN INVITATION TO LOVE AND COMMUNION

by Louise Merritt
St. Augustine's Chapel, Nashville

My journey has been & will hopefully continue to be one of much meandering - a meandering which led me to Father Keating's words & works a year ago. *Open Mind*, *Open Heart*, *Intimacy With God*, *An Invitation to Love*, & *The Mystery of Christ* are four of his books that have been feeding this hungry heart with a spiritual food called Centering Prayer.

Centering Prayer is a discipline and practice of sitting for 20-30 minutes at least once a day, preferably twice a day, with the intention of developing an ever-deepening relationship with God. During these periods of quiet, God asks us to rest in His Love, His very Essence, by learning His Language of Silence. In this communal silence with Our Creator, Divine Love is awakened. And as the power of His Love is made known to us, our openness & willingness to be transformed grow.

I am repeatedly reminded that it is in & from a place of internal solitude that the foundation for transformation lies. The practice of Centering Prayer is the antidote to the internal restlessness & loneliness that only Divine Love can calm & fill. As we come to rest in the Ultimate Being With, we realize as never before that we are never without. In coming to trust His ever-abiding Presence, we can face our daily lives with a renewed sense of meaning & purpose. What we once knew as the theological ideals of faith, hope & charity are given new life through regular daily practice and become the seeds & fruit of our very being. The nourishment - the loam of birth, the water of life, & the sunlight of spirit - is found in the simplicity of setting aside this precious time for God. For, as Father Keating reminds us, we are called forth to live an ordinary life with extraordinary love. ⊕

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From the editor

On March 17th, everyone enjoyed a grace-filled day at Mercy Convent for our annual global prayer day for peace. Twenty-four participants kept silence and entered into the peace and tranquility of the day.

Another opportunity for silence and centering is offered the first Saturday of each month at St. Mark's Episcopal Church. We have a lending library with books and tapes to share. We are building this library each month and have received donations from some in our local group who wish to remain anonymous and a generous gift was received from the Church of the Nativity in Huntsville, AL. We are grateful!

First Saturday "Morning of Silence" is increasing in numbers as well as joyfully anticipated by all who attend. A deep bond of communion is developing among all the prayer support groups of Middle Tennessee. Truly this is the work of the Holy Spirit.

E-mails are working well for updates and current events throughout the Mid-South Cluster region. Please send us your new e-mail addresses and changes of address to facilitate an up-to-date mail list. We are always pleased to offer Introductory workshops throughout Middle Tennessee. Just contact me if you know of any group wishing to experience contemplative prayer. ⊕

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Crossroads Conference Birmingham, AL by Thomas Keating

"A practice of quieting the mind is the direct road to transformation."

"The Holy Spirit speaks without the sound of words."

"Prayer is real energy!"

War, Daily Life 1

the ordinary circumstances of my life. This is my fundamental practice.

Further along in the passage I mention above, Thomas emphasizes the importance of our daily encounter with God in contemplative prayer so that we might discern where and how we are called to act, and where we are called to let go. Of course, the assumption is that God is present and active both within and without at every moment of each day.

In the same passage Thomas writes of the virtue of peacemaking. He says, "Peace is not a naïve simplicity, but the perfect harmony of immense complexity." (p. 104) So this war offers us the opportunity to practice peacemaking, beginning with ourselves and our daily practice of centering prayer, including those with whom we share domestic space, and extending to the ends of the earth. The opportunity here is to be a part of God's work of reconciliation in the world. Thomas ends this section with a glimpse of that vision:

God's top priority is the creation of a world in which the goods of the earth are equitably distributed, where no one is forgotten or left out, and where no one can rest until everyone has enough to eat, the oppressed have been liberated, and justice and peace are the norm among the nations and religions of the world.

This is a vision worthy of our best efforts, and it has its beginning and end in the practice of centering prayer twenty-minutes, twice a day. In this way we become peacemakers. ⊕

PRESENTER FORMATION TRAINING JULY 11 - 18, 2003

OUR LADY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT MONASTERY
CONYERS, GA

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CONTEMPLATIVE OUTREACH PRAYER SUPPORT GROUPS

MIDDLE TENNESSEE

Nashville	Christ Church	Rev. Geoffrey Butcher	615-255-7729	Sun 10:00am, Thur noon
Nashville	Christ Church	Stuart McCloy	615-661-4590	Tue 5:30pm
Nashville	St. George	Dr. Carroll Young	615-385-2150	Mon 4:45 to 6:15pm
Nashville	St. Edward	Patricia Flandell	615-832-0873	Wed 11:30am
Nashville	Christ the King	Carolyn Goddard	615-386-3412	Fri 8:00am
Nashville	Sister Eileen Pistor, RSM		615-463-2776	Thurs 6:00pm
Antioch	St. Ignatius	Carnie Harmon	615-834-1259	Fri 9:00am
Antioch	St. Mark	Gretchen Miller	615-794-6720	Sat 8:00am, Wed 6:30pm
Clarksville	Immaculate Conception	Dr. Ron Oakland	615-358-9471	Sat 9:00am
Dickson	St. Christopher	Corena Harris LSCW	615-446-2134	Mon 4:15pm
Fayetteville	First Presbyterian	Farris Raulston	931-433-0652	Tue 7:00pm
Franklin	St. Paul	Frank F. Baugh	615-347-4705	Wed 5:30pm
Murfreesboro	St. Rose	Kay Curtis	615-848-3081	Mon 7:30pm
Murfreesboro	St. Rose	Patricia Darrell	615-896-2742	Mon 7:30pm
Sewanee	Otey Parish	Jennifer Michael	931-598-5094	Mon 7:00pm
Sewanee	Otey Parish	Beth Shrader	931-598-5428	Fri 12:00 noon
Sewanee	St. Augustine	Rev. Tom Ward	931-598-1274	Thur 2:30pm
Chattanooga	St. Peter's	Joani Koch	423-877-3140	Tue 5:30 - 7:00pm
Chattanooga	Grace Church	Kathy Russell	423-517-0645	Thur 5:00pm
Chattanooga	First Christian Church	Rev. Lanny C. Lawler	423-267-4506	Tue 4:00pm
Knoxville	St. James	Rev. Lou Tucker Parsons	865-523-5687	Mon 5:30pm
Knoxville	John XXIII Student Center	Beverly Fronig	865-426-4411	Mon 7:00pm
Knoxville	Lakeview Center	Barbara Haning	865-671-0766	Thur
Clinton	Clinton Centering Prayer Group	Sandy Berger	865-457-3170	
Lookout Mt.	Our Lady of the Mount	Brit Oehmig	423-756-4118	Tue 8:00am before Mass
Lookout Mt.	Good Shepherd	Rev. John Talbird	423-821-1583	Sun 9am & Wed 4:30pm
Saturday "Mornings of Silence"				
Antioch	1st Saturday at St. Mark's	Gretchen Miller	615-794-6720	Sat 9:00am
Chattanooga	2nd Saturday at St. Paul's	Rev. Margaret Marshall	423-757-9580	Sat 9:00 am

SKETCHES OF SILENCE

I.

The moment holds me
as fog holds trees:
filling every crevice,
feeling each knot.
The bark breathes in vapor
and quietly exhales.

II.

A crow's call
scratches the silence
leaving a red streak
that slowly fades.

III.

The voice of resurrection:
the hush of dead reeds
in a frozen lake,
the slow crack of the sun
striking the ice.

—Jennifer Michael
St. Mary's Retreat Center
January 2003