

*Be still and know that I am God.*

PSALM 46:10

## CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER

Contemplative prayer is a process of interior transformation, a conversation initiated by God and leading, if we consent, to Divine union.

One's way of seeing reality changes in this process. A restructuring of consciousness takes place which empowers one to perceive, relate and respond with increasing sensitivity to the Divine presence in, through, and beyond everything that exists.

In silence we come to know and live from the Divine Mystery within us.

The fruit of contemplative prayer manifests through the growing awareness of God as the Source and Center of all and in the increasing capacity to live ordinary life with extraordinary love.



## CENTERING PRAYER

Centering Prayer is a method of prayer, which prepares us to receive the gift of God's presence, traditionally called contemplative prayer. It consists of responding to the Spirit of Christ by consenting to God's presence and action within.

Centering Prayer facilitates the movement from more active modes of prayer into a receptive prayer of resting in God. It is at the same time a relationship with God and a discipline to foster that relationship.

Centering Prayer is drawn from ancient prayer practices of the Christian contemplative heritage, notably the Fathers and Mothers of the Desert, Lectio Divina (praying the scriptures), *The Cloud of Unknowing*, and the writings of St. John of the Cross and St. Teresa of Avila.



*When you want to pray,  
go to your inner room, close the door,  
and pray to your Father in secret.  
And your Father who sees in secret  
will reward you.*

MATTHEW 6:6

## CONTEMPLATIVE OUTREACH

For over 30 years, Contemplative Outreach has been dedicated to transmitting the living tradition of the contemplative Christian heritage through the teachings of Father Thomas Keating and through programs and offerings that support the contemplative life for those in ordinary life.

While we encourage every practice leading to contemplative prayer our principal purpose is to share the method and conceptual background of Centering Prayer.

Contemplative Outreach is an evolving community with an expanding vision and deepening practice, serving the changing needs of Christian contemplatives.

We seek to listen to and address the cries of our common suffering and divided world.

We seek to listen to the promptings of the Spirit and to respond accordingly. Most importantly, we seek relationship with Ultimate Reality through listening to God's first language: Silence.



*Love the Lord your God with all your heart,  
and with all your soul,  
and with all your strength,  
and with all your mind,  
and your neighbor as yourself.*

LUKE 10:27



Today, Contemplative Outreach annually

- serves over 40,000 people
- provides training and support to 120 active chapters and volunteers in 53 countries
- teaches over 15,000 new people the practice of Centering Prayer and other contemplative practices through locally-hosted workshops
- deepens and enriches contemplative practice through retreats, conferences, online courses, teleconferences, and a mobile app.
- communicates and archives the work of Fr. Thomas Keating and others through books, audio and video media, online courses, teleconferences, articles, and more

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## 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.

## THEOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES



1. Contemplative Outreach is a community of individuals and Centering Prayer groups committed to living the contemplative dimension of the Gospel in everyday life.
2. A commitment to the daily practice of Centering Prayer is the primary expression of belonging.
3. Listening to the word of God in scripture through the practice of Lectio Divina is encouraged, particularly its movement into contemplative prayer, which a daily practice of Centering Prayer facilitates.
4. The source of Centering Prayer is the Indwelling Trinity. Its practice consists of responding to the call of the Holy Spirit to consent to the Divine presence and action within.
5. The Divine presence affirms our basic core of goodness made in the image of God.
6. The Divine action is the process of transformation in Christ which inspires and deepens our consent.
7. The contemplative dimension of the Gospel manifests as an ever-deepening union with Christ and the practical caring for others that flows from this relationship. It reveals the deeper meaning of Christ's life and teaching.
8. Our relationship with the living Christ is the bond uniting us together in mutual love.
9. While formed by our respective denominations, we are united in our common search for God and our experience of Christ through Centering Prayer.

10. We identify with the Christian contemplative heritage in which Centering Prayer is rooted. We recognize this heritage as the common ground for Christian unity.
11. We affirm our solidarity with the contemplative dimension of other religions and sacred traditions.
12. Through the continuing practice of Centering Prayer, we experience a deepening commitment to the needs and rights of each member of the human family and an increasing respect for the interdependence of all creation.
13. We foster a spirit of unity, generosity and utmost charity in all our relationships.
14. Following the teachings of Jesus, we exercise leadership through an attitude of humility, listening and service.
15. We recognize and maintain a spiritual relationship with Saint Benedict's Monastery in Snowmass, Colorado.
16. We acknowledge that any good accomplished by Contemplative Outreach is the work of the Holy Spirit.

## ADMINISTRATIVE PRINCIPLES

*There are different kinds of spiritual gifts  
but the same Spirit;  
there are different forms of service  
but the same Lord;  
there are different workings but the same God  
who produces all of them in everyone.*

2 CORINTHIANS 12: 4-7



1. Contemplative Outreach is an evolving community with an expanding vision and deepening practice, serving the changing needs of Christian contemplatives.
2. As members of this evolving community we are responsible to foster and transmit the Vision of Contemplative Outreach.

3. We fulfill our Vision through attraction to the Centering Prayer practice not by proselytizing.
4. The gift of contemplative practice enables us to bring an attitude of humility, listening and service to our daily activities.
5. We reach decisions through discernment and consensus.
6. We serve in leadership, ordinarily in a voluntary capacity.
7. All who provide Contemplative Outreach services do so in consideration of, and in balance with their personal, family and professional responsibilities.
8. We avoid indebtedness and owning real estate in order to remain free to devote our resources to sharing the gift of Centering Prayer.
9. We employ staff and contractors as our growth may require.
10. We cooperate with church authorities in the areas where we work, but do not seek to become a religious or lay institute.
11. We wish to remain accessible to everyone. For this reason, we do not endorse particular causes or take part in public controversies, whether religious, political or social. As private individuals, we act according to our consciences.



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Photo courtesy of Barbara Cook

# 30 YEARS OF GRACE & GRATITUDE



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