

CONTEMPLATIVE OUTREACH OF CHICAGO

Quarterly Newsletter

March 1, 2009



UNITED IN PRAYER DAY

March 21, 2009 – 9 am to 4 pm
Chapter-wide Event
Our Lady of the Resurrection Medical Center
Addison & Central, Chicago

Moderator: Cathy Jarrett

For Details see below Extending the Practice

Contemplative Outreach Annual Conference

September 24-27, 2009

Wyndham O'Hare Hotel, 6810 N Mannheim Road, Rosemont, IL 60018

For more details read "From the Coordinator by Bob Gordon".

Extending the Practice of Centering Prayer 2009

March 21, 2009 – Chapter-wide
United in Prayer Day.

Moderator: Cathy Jarrett

This day of renewal is the international program for sharing prayer and some fresh teaching from Fr. Thomas Keating and Fr. Laurence Freeman from the 2008 Annual conference. The day contains two hours of centering prayer, videos with guide for listening provided by the International Resource Center and small group reflection. A portion of the fee for this day is sent to the

International Office to offset the cost of video production.

April 25, 2009 Women in the Contemplative Heritage – Presenter: Penny Jaworski

Last year we studied many of the men in the Christian Heritage but none of the Desert Mothers or other women's contributions. This will be a day to pray with the desert mothers.

To register for any Saturday, contact Penny Jaworski at 847.375.9291



From the Coordinator – Bob Gordon

“Consenting to Divine Love” 25 Years of Contemplative Outreach

“Come to Chicago!” We just may be saying that a lot this year to our friends and acquaintances who practice Centering Prayer. Why not? It will be a memorable event. As stated in our previous newsletter, this could be Father Thomas’ last physical appearance at a conference. For many, it may be the last opportunity to see, hear and pray with him in person. It is also the silver anniversary of the organization he founded and the one we gratefully participate in. So say it often, “Come to Chicago”! Put out the red carpet. “Welcome, welcome.” “Yes we can.”

The national conference committee has obtained excellent rates from the Wyndham O’Hare Hotel at 6810 N Mannheim Road, Rosemont, IL 60018 where the conference is being held, Thursday, September 24th through Sunday, September 27th. This is good news for these hard economic times. You may have noticed that the conference is also one day shorter. Here is another monetary benefit on the practical side. Saturday will be the day of enrichment with Father Thomas as the featured speaker. Here is a wonderful opportunity for Chicago to show its solidarity.

We are also in need of volunteers. At least 30 are requested. There will be a day of prayer and orientation on Saturday May 9th for those who do volunteer. It will be held at the hotel. I thank those who have already volunteered. For those with the desire, please send me an email. Write to: robert@centeringprayerchicago.org.

How should one prepare for the hospitality we will be offering? Pray. Twenty minutes twice daily we consent to divine love. In doing so, we open our hearts to the divine indwelling within ourselves and those who we encounter. Sacred self will encounter sacred self. If the harried pace of your day or the struggle of the times has taken from your prayer time, try to renew your commitment. Pray. Just pray as you can when you can. We have been taught that prayer is a relationship and a discipline. Renew the discipline and the relationship will grow. For those who the discipline has become a *habitus* (habit), you already know the love.

This and That around the Chapter



Want to Volunteer with Contemplative Outreach Chicago?

The Chicago Chapter leadership team is looking for new persons who would like to join the Retreat Team, the Formation Events team, the Book Sales team, and the Hospitality team. If you are interested in working any one of these teams, please contact Bob Gordon at robert@centeringprayerchicago.org. Additional teams will be formed as the chapter prepares to be the host chapter for the 2009 Annual Conference.

An Introduction to Centering Prayer and An Introduction to Lectio Divina

Allen Harper coordinates presenters and presenters-in-training for An Introduction to Centering Prayer and An Introduction to Lectio Divina programs. To schedule either program, contact Allen Harper at allen@centeringprayerchicago.org. Allen also is responsible for presenters' on-going enrichment and skill building.

Plan Ahead!

July 7-14, 2009 is the time for the intensive/post-intensive retreat for this summer. A brochure is available at www.centeringprayerchicago.org. The contract has been signed to hold the event at Portiuncula in Frankfort. There is a minimum of 15 participants and a maximum of 25 participants. Please register early with Mary Maraist at mkmaraist2@aol.com.

July 19-26, 2010 A Lectio Divina Retreat: The Christian Journey and the Human Condition With Sr. Maria Tasto and Bob Gordon. This time will include three hours of centering prayer each day and new presentations exploring the interplay of the human condition and scriptures using the Lectio Divina method.

Who is the Current Leadership Team?

Bob Gordon, coordinator, robert@centeringprayerchicago.org
Margie Tomlinson, newsletter publisher and treasurer,
margie@centeringprayerchicago.org
Allen Harper, Centering Prayer & Lectio presenters coordination,
allen@centeringprayerchicago.org
Penny Jaworski, formation events liaison, [847.395.9291](tel:847.395.9291)
Nancy Kremer, hospitality, nancy@centeringprayerchicago.org
Peg Benson, book, tapes, ordering and sales Stephen.benson@comcast.net
Ed Tummillo, Facilitator Training and Formation, ed@centeringprayerchicago.org

Leadership Team Meeting

The next leadership team meeting is May 3, 2009. If you have questions or concerns for our agenda, please send to Bob Gordon, robert@centeringprayerchicago.org

Peace from the Newsletter Publisher,

"Deepening The Practice of Lectio Divina" with Bob Gordon April 17-19, 2009

This weekend retreat will be held at the Shalom Center in Dubuque, Iowa and is the Midwest Cluster annual event. The weekend begins with supper on Friday at 5:30 pm and ends with lunch on Sunday. Brochure available at www.centeringprayerchicago.org

An Introduction to Centering Prayer

March 28, 2009, St Mary's Episcopal Church, Park Ridge, IL March 28, 2009 session 1. Continuing Sessions to be announced. To register contact Phil Jackson at Jaxon900@aol.com or Mary Anne Jackson at mooj58@aol.com

An Introduction to Centering Prayer

May 16, 2009 Rockford, IL area. For more information contact Molly Lovelock at lovelock3@aol.com or Sr. Nadine Meyer at nmssnd@hotmail.com

Save the Dates:

Weekend Retreat with Ted Curtis and Bet Brophy, January 15-17, 2010, Cabrini Center, Des Plaines.

Father Thomas Keating is 86

On March 7, Father Thomas Keating will be 86 years young. Please pray for Father Thomas' continuing good health. We hope you will all be able to hear him in person at the Annual Conference in September, 2009.

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**New Person to Serve  
Chicago Chapter "Bookstore"**

*By Allen Harper*

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Welcome! We welcome Peg Benson as the person who will be responsible for our Chicago Chapter Bookstore. The bookstore provides books for sale at Chicago Chapter events, Introductory programs, and keeps a reserve of books particularly for Centering Prayer chapters who can get books from Peg for their prayer group studies.

Peg Benson works as an attorney at CNA in downtown Chicago. She and her husband

Steve live in Edgebrook, a neighborhood on the northwest side of Chicago. Steve works at The Harold Washington Library. Their son Patrick, 23, a percussionist, is assistant band director at Hubbard High School on the southwest side.

The Bensons are blessed with Peg's mother Eileen who will celebrate her 90th birthday on March 9th, four sisters and a brother and six nephews. Peg's mother introduced her to contemplative prayer many years ago.

Peg centered with Fr. Joe Ruiz during the years he was assigned at St. Edmund's in Oak Park. Steve and Peg enjoy Chicago Symphony concerts and plays at Next Theatre as well as listening to Steve's extensive collection of classical, jazz, folk and vintage rock. Both are also members of the International Thomas Merton Society which has an active Chicago chapter that meets monthly at Immaculate Conception for guest lectures on Merton's many interests.

You can reach Peg at 773.775-9765 or Stephen.benson@Comcast.net for your book request. I thank Peg for volunteering her service.

True Ecumenism

By J David Muyskens
*quoted from
Community
Oneness in Community*

Ordinarily our differences keep us apart. A high school graduate and a Ph.D., an executive and a laborer, Protestants and Roman Catholics, men and women, we come together each week to pray. Twenty-minutes of Centering Prayer, watching a *Spiritual Journey* video followed by some soul-searching discussion. The group gathers not because we are all alike; our consent to God's presence and action unites us. Community results. Community that draws people of various stripes together. True ecumenism.

Community in which we support and encourage one another, fulfilling Jesus' prayer that we may be one, united with a variety of gifts to give each other.

RETREATS

Intensive Retreats

8-day retreat July 7-14, 2009, Portiuncula Retreat Center; Frankfort, IL. Staff: Bob Gordon and Margie Tomlinson For details contact Mary Maraist
mkmaraist2@aol.com

8-day retreat June 13-20, 2009, Kordes Center, Ferdinand, IN, Staff: Kathy Bilskie, OSB and Maria Tasto, OSB. To register www.thedome.org

8-day retreat June 13-20, 2009, Melbourne, KY. Staff: Fr. Terry Ryan, CSP. Contact Micki Martin
violamickimartin@hotmail.com

7-day retreat June 14-20, American Martyrs Retreat Center, Cedar Falls, IA, Staff: Juli Powell, Tom Kessler. Contact: Tom Kessler, tom.Kessler@cfu.net

8-day intensive "Lectio Divina and the Human Condition", July 19-26, **2010**, Portiuncula Retreat Center; Frankfort, IL. Staff: Sr. Marie Tasto, OSB and Bob Gordon. For details contact Margie Tomlinson
Margie@centeringprayerchicago.org

What is an Intensive Retreat?

An intensive retreat cultivates a more profound level of spiritual practice in an atmosphere of silence, solitude and community. Persons with an established daily practice of Centering Prayer for at least six months are encouraged to attend. Key elements of an intensive retreat are periods of centering prayer 3 times a day with a contemplative walk, twice daily Spiritual Journey video tapes, mealtime reading of Open Mind, Open Heart, times for questions and answers that clarify the centering prayer practice, private interviews, and one day of complete silent retreat.

Post-Intensive Retreats (Pre-requisite: Intensive retreat)

8-day post retreat July 7-14, 2009, Portiuncula Retreat Center; Frankfort, IL, Staff: Bob Gordon and Margie Tomlinson. For details contact Mary Maraist
mkmaraist2@aol.com

8-day retreat June 13-20, 2009, Kordes Center, Ferdinand, IN, Staff: Kathy Bilskie, OSB and Maria Tasto, OSB. To register www.thedome.org

8-day retreat June 13-20, 2009, Melbourne, KY. Staff, Fr. Terry Ryan, CSP. Contact Micki Martin
violamickimartin@hotmail.com

What is a Post-Intensive Retreat?

A post-intensive retreat provides an opportunity to deepen the practice of Centering Prayer in an atmosphere of profound silence and community support. Persons with at least one year of an established daily practice of Centering Prayer and who have attended an 8-10 day Intensive Centering Prayer retreat are encouraged to attend. The retreat includes 3 to 4 hours of Centering Prayer each day, several days of sacred silence with no eye contact, silent meals and spiritual guidance

CENTERING PRAYER GROUPS

We suggest you confirm the place/time with the contact persons before attending.

To find a prayer group near you, please go to www.centeringprayerchicago.org

CONTACT PERSONS: Please check to make sure your group is listed correctly on the website – www.centeringprayerchicago.org. Send additions, deletions and changes to: robert@centeringprayerchicago.org

REPORTS

Extending the Practice of Centering Prayer 2008-2009 Series

Lectio Divina
Presenter: Bob Gordon



Bob Gordon's presentation was the first time for most people to have seen this Lectio Divina material. For those who had heard the material before there was gratitude for the professional way the Power Point presentation with many graphics enhances learning. Several participants mentioned a desire to incorporate this practice as a daily practice. People enjoyed breaking into groups of four persons to practice shared Lectio. The sharing was rich and varied and taught the group how Lectio Divina moves us to Become the Word of God. Comments included: "This will strengthen my own practice of Lectio Divina"; "I am encouraged to be with all of you"; and "I intend to frequently re-read the handout materials." Additional comments

include "I'd like more silence and less talk"; "would have liked more time in Centering Prayer together" and "Thank you!". What will impact participants praying with scriptures? "Having a richer understanding of how to pray Lectio Divina and "how much easier it is to practice this style".

Margie Tomlinson, reporter

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Make known to me your ways, Lord;  
teach me your paths.  
Guide me in your truth and teach me,  
for you are God my savior.  
Psalm 25: 4-5

**What is this  
Contemplative Outreach Logo?**



The Contemplative Outreach logo is taken from the monogram of Job's Redeemer, which is the symbol of patient waiting. It depicts the alpha and omega, a symbol of God, the beginning and the end; a cross as the symbol of our salvation; flowers, a symbol of the abundance of life and the resurrection; and a circle, a sign of ongoing process. This symbol has been seen in several different locations: on an ancient church in the land of Uz – the residence of Job; in the excavations of Old Jerusalem near the original stairs of the Temple; at the Southern Wall of the Old City near the Huldah Gates; and in a church in Galilee.

# The Vision of Contemplative Outreach

## Theological Principles

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

The intent of Contemplative Outreach is to foster  
The process of transformation in Christ in one another  
through the practice of Centering Prayer.

*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*

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.

Continued next page

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.

*So that they may all be one; just as You, Father, are in me,  
And I in you, may they also be one in us.  
John 17:21*

***This revised statement was approved July 19, 2008***