

CONTEMPLATIVE OUTREACH OF CHICAGO

Quarterly Newsletter

March 1, 2010



Events for 2010

Chapter-wide United in Prayer Day

The Divine Economy plus The Symbol of the Cross

With Video from Father Thomas Keating

March 20, 2010

Our Lady of the Resurrection Medical Center

Process and facilitation by Nancy Kremer. Because of the change in the Resurrection System we will need to charge a minimum of \$10 per person for continental breakfast and beverage service. Bring your own lunch or eat in the cafeteria. Any money raised beyond the costs of the day will go for scholarships for Chicago retreats. To register contact Penny Jaworski at 847.375.9291 or Margie Tomlinson at margie@centeringprayerchicago.org

Lectio Divina and the Human Condition Intensive Retreat

8-day Intensive Retreat,

July 19-26, 2010

Lead by Sr. Maria Tasto, OSB and Bob Gordon

Portiuncula Retreat Center, Frankfort, IL.

For details and to register contact Mary Maraist mkmaraist2@aol.com



From the Coordinator – Bob Gordon

Lectio divina is an ancient Christian practice. Its Christian beginnings may be traced back to Origen (third century) who affirmed that one may profit from the scriptures if one engages them with diligent “reading of the sacred scripture,”¹ a rigorous seeking of the “meaning of the holy scripture” and “prayer” for without the latter “knowledge of the things of God” is impossible.

We who practice Centering Prayer and *Lectio Divina* know the integral part prayer plays in deepening one’s relationship with God. It is rooted in love. This love inspires us to pray more often, to teach prayer and to encourage others to follow a similar path of Christian formation.

This summer we will be offering an Intensive retreat that unites the two, Centering Prayer and *Lectio Divina*. Benedictine Sister Maria Tasto has adapted this popular retreat by including periods of *lectio divina* with scriptures that highlight the human condition. This new retreat will be offered as an eight day retreat, July 19th through the 26th, at the Portiuncula Center for Prayer, Frankfort (a southwest suburb of Chicago), *Lectio Divina and the Human Condition*.

I am very much looking forward to it and all those who will be joining us. Please remember our Chapter also offers the introductory program to *Lectio Divina* and would be grateful to bring the program to your prayer group or area.

¹ Origen, “Letter to Gregory,” *The Early Church Fathers: Ante-Nicene Fathers Volume 4*, Electronic Edition STEP Files Copyright © 1998, Parsons Technology, Inc.

This and That around the Chapter

Celebrating the Completed Life of Nan Merrill

This is the message we received from Ann Strader:

This is the email that I knew would be the most difficult to send...Nan (Merrill) slipped through the veil at 11:15 last night (January 23, 2010). Her son Mark says that her passage was peaceful and quiet, for which we can be thankful. Now begins the hard work of grieving for ourselves, even as we celebrate Nan's new life in the Spirit. We will each do that in our own way, of course, but I would say to each of you, be gentle with yourself. Allow the time it takes and do your grief-work in your own way, at your own pace. All of us who were close to Nan will feel her presence with us, for she does live in our memories of her.

Those memories, and Nan, will always be part of us.

Love to all of you, Anne

Many of you have found Nan Merrill's "Psalms for Praying" to be of great value as a vestibule for centering prayer as an individual or in groups. Nan has written other books of which her latest and last is "Walking with Wisdom" which is a series of Meditations.

Is God Calling You to Get More Involved in Contemplative Outreach Chicago?

Talk to any of us about what you envision for the future beyond the local centering prayer groups.

Bob Gordon, coordinator, robert@centeringprayerchicago.org

Margie Tomlinson, newsletter / treasurer, margie@centeringprayerchicago.org

Allen Harper, Centering Prayer / Lectio presenters coordination, and books

allen@centeringprayerchicago.org

Penny Jaworski, formation events liaison, [847.395.9291](tel:847.395.9291)

Nancy Kremer, hospitality, nancy@centeringprayerchicago.org

Ed Tummillo, Facilitator Training and Formation, ed@centeringprayerchicago.org

Leadership Team Meeting

The next leadership team meeting is May 2 from 2-5 pm. If you have questions or concerns for our agenda, please send an email to Bob Gordon

Peace from the Newsletter Publisher,



Opportunities to Gather with Centering Prayer Practitioners beyond Chicago

Contemplative Outreach 2010 Conference,
“Awakening to the Contemplative Dimension of Life”
September 23-26, 2010 in Atlanta, GA at a hotel near the airport

Midwest Region Regional Meeting November 17-21, 2010 at the Marianist Center in Eureka MO (St Louis suburb). Do you have ideas for this meeting? Contact Sr. Katherine Ann Kobelinski at kkoblinski@ssnd-milw.org, a member of the planning committee.

Weekend Retreats

Centering Prayer Silent Retreat

January 28-30, 2011
Cabrini Retreat Center
Des Plaines, IL
More details will follow.

Opportunities for 2010

The only Chapter-wide enrichment event will be the United in Prayer Day in March, 2010. A Centering Prayer Group and/or Centering Prayer groups can arrange to have days of enrichment for their group(s). There are local resources in the Chapter. Below are topics and persons with whom groups can arrange for Days of Enrichment:

To schedule ***An Introduction to Centering Prayer*** or ***An Introduction to Lectio Divina***

contact Allen Harper at
allen@centeringprayerchicago.org

Lectio Divina for Youth presented by Bob Gordon. Contact Bob at
bob@centeringprayerchicago.org

Forgiveness Prayer presented by Margie Tomlinson Contact Margie at
Margie@centeringprayerchicago.org

Attention/Intention presented by Ed Tummillo. Contact Ed at
ed@centeringprayerchicago.org

Welcoming Prayer presented by Allen Harper. Contact Allen at
allen@centeringprayerchicago.org

Women in the Contemplative Heritage presented by Penny Jaworski. Contact Penny at 847.375.9291 or
penny@centeringprayerchicago.org

RETREATS

Intensive Retreats

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 Mary Maraist mkmaraist2@aol.com

8-day retreat June 4-11, 2010, Kordes Center, Ferdinand, IN, Staff: Kathy Bilskie, OSB and Maria Tasto, OSB. To register www.thedome.org

8-day retreat July 9-16, 2010, Melbourne, KY. Staff: Fr. Bill Sheehan, OMI. Contact Micki Martin violamickimartin@hotmail.com

8-day Intensive/Post Intensive June 25 – July 2, 2010 Benet Lake Retreat Center, WI Staff: Contact: Sr. Kathryn Ann Koblinski, SSND

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 retreat June 4-11, 2010, Kordes Center, Ferdinand, IN, Staff: Kathy Bilskie, OSB and Maria Tasto, OSB. To register www.thedome.org

8-day retreat July 9-16, 2010, Melbourne, KY. Staff: Fr. Bill Sheehan, OMI. Contact Micki Martin violamickimartin@hotmail.com

8-day Advanced Intensive June 25 – July 2, 2010 Benet Lake Retreat Center, WI Staff: SEWI CO Contact: Sr. Kathryn Ann Koblinski, SSND

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 guide.

Note: Rubrics for the “Lectio Divina and the Human Condition Intensive Retreat”

The National Faculty approved “The Lectio Divina and the Human Condition Intensive Retreat” at their July 2009 meeting. Elements of this retreat include: a) silence maintained as in other intensive retreats, b) no talking or reading at the meals except the first and last evening and the final morning, c) after each conference there will be an opportunity for clarifications and questions. The retreatants will be given reflection questions and then there will be a time for faith sharing in the lectio manner. d) at the beginning of the retreat there will be a review of the lectio divina practice using the scholastic method, e) throughout the retreat the lectio divina monastic method will be used.

REPORT

Weekend Retreat January 2010

Thirty practitioners of Centering Prayer gathered January 15-17 at the Cabrini Retreat Center in Des Plaines to explore together the theme “Continuing on in Centering Prayer.” There were three types of retreatants – lodgers, commuters and Saturday-only participants. On Saturday the common elements including two hours of centering prayer together and meals in silence. The participants choose from three enrichment options: Centering Prayer and Healing lead by Dr. Bet Brophy, an Introduction or reintroduction to Centering Prayer lead by Fr. Joe Ruiz, and opportunities for additional centering prayer periods lead by Rev. Ted Curtis. Thanks to Rev. Ted Curtis, Fr. Joe Ruiz, Dr. Bet Brophy who guided this retreat. Thanks to Ingrid Forsberg who was the registrar and to Nancy Golan our contact with the Cabrini Center.

January 28-30, 2011 are the dates for next year’s retreat. Rev. Ted Curtis will organize and guide the weekend.

The revised evaluation form gave the participants an opportunity to evaluate their growth and commitment to centering Prayer and to articulate what they will take with them to support their centering prayer practice. These comments give us some insight into the power and transforming quality of the Week-end Centering Prayer Retreat. A sample of responses include:

I am taking away from this weekend:

- Confidence in knowing that I can do centering prayer on a daily basis;
- Profound recognition about how God leads in all my actions if I quiet myself;
- A better understanding of centering prayer
- I have learned a new way to of opening my life and my heart to God and have received encouragement
- Identifying the process I am on
- Detached from thoughts solitude is nourishing
- A renewed commitment and deeper understand of centering prayer
- Experience of spending more time in silence and prayer - silence matters.
- A sense of community

- Warmth and peace of centering prayer

What do you think your next step will be?

- To find a prayer group
- Increase my prayer time to twice a day
- Lately I felt I am going through the motions of prayer, distracted. Now, to be more mindful and change prayer places/times to be more focused
- brought me to a new level of union with God...
- I want to do an 8 day intensive retreat.
- To attend a centering prayer group and practice 2 times daily
- Continue reading

What impact did the silence have on you?

- Gave protection and permission to cry in group prayer
- Shut of my "monkey mind".
- I had difficulty being silent outside of the prayer times - too much down time
- Made me more attentive to the comments of others
- Brought up emotions I have been shoving aside
- To be in the now
- Profound calm and peace.
- Discomfort at silent meal times
- Every weekend retreat (this is my 4th) is a different experience –all good
- The silence brings me to a halt
- Gave me ability to recognize my next step
- Listen well and rest well
- I find the silence difficult but I am convinced that it is the way towards healing and transformation.
- It was hard to keep a retreat-like frame of mind as a commuter
- Helped me focus on my internal world

Nine persons asked to be on the email communications through the website.

An Introduction to Centering Prayer

The Introduction to Centering Prayer at Rockford was postponed. Watch for an announcement for the future date.

Days of Prayer

We are not aware of any Days of Prayer held in the Chicago Chapter during the last three months.

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