

CONTEMPLATIVE OUTREACH OF CHICAGO

Quarterly Newsletter

June 1, 2009



Intensive Post Intensive Retreat

July 7-14, 2009

Portiuncula Retreat Center, Frankfort, IL. Staff: Bob Gordon and Margie Tomlinson

If at least 10 are registered (number required by Retreat Center) by June 25, this event will not be cancelled.

To register contact Mary Maraist, mkmaraist2@aol.com

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## **Contemplative Outreach Annual Conference**

*September 24-27, 2009*

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

Register for the event at [www.contemplativeoutreach.org](http://www.contemplativeoutreach.org)

**beginning June 1, 2009**

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On-going Formation Series

This series that began with three years of Living Flame and has continued for the last two years with the Christian Heritage Series and the Extended Centering Prayer series. This series has been suspended for 2009-2010. It appears that coming together as a Chapter at a distance is no longer of interest. Centering Prayer groups and individuals are encouraged to request of the leadership team particular Formation Events that they would like to attend and recommend venues. We have reserved Our Lady of the Resurrection Medical Center for the United in Prayer Day for March 2010.

Day of Prayer and Preparation for Volunteers for Annual Conference 2009

By Penny Jaworski and Bob Gordon

On Saturday, May 9, Marie Howard, coordinator of the 2009 Contemplative Outreach Annual Conference "*Consenting to Divine Love: 25 years of Contemplative Outreach,*" came to Chicago to meet with 28 volunteers to prepare for this year's conference at the Wyndham O'Hare Hotel in Rosemont, IL. It was an opportunity for volunteers to meet each other, to learn details of the upcoming conference and to orientate themselves to the hotel and the rooms the conference attendees will occupy. We have a great space to work with that includes a large conference room, prayer room and nearby breakout rooms for Friday workshops and the Saturday Spiritual Enrichment presentations.

It takes many people to host this event and we are just beginning to gather the numerous people who will extend Midwest hospitality to the hundreds of people who will gather September 24-27 to celebrate 25 years of Contemplative Outreach Ltd., a living organism, a network of people whose primary connection is the twice daily practice of centering prayer. Each day will include opportunities for Centering Prayer, workshops, meals, and times to connect with people new to Centering Prayer as well as those who are long time practitioners.

More volunteers are still needed to be (1) greeters (hospitality), (2) to lead the centering prayer periods, (3) to assist in registering conference attendees and those coming only to the Day of Enrichment on Saturday September 26. People are needed to (4) set/take down and staff the bookstore and (5) to host information tables about the many programs, retreats, and prayer groups in the Chicagoland area, (6) to assist in creating environment for both the prayer periods and conference ballroom area and (7) to locally promote the conference in the area among individual practitioners and local prayer groups. Contemplative Outreach South East Wisconsin (COSEW) chapter and the Chicago Chapter (COC) are co-hosting this conference and providing volunteers. Members of the Midwest Iowa Chapter have also volunteered their services.

Registration for this Conference opens on June 1. Register as soon as possible at www.contemplativeoutreach.org so you may take advantage of the lower conference and hotel rates. Conference rates increase after August 2nd. The hotel has a limited number of rooms at the discounted rate of \$109 daily with up to four people per room. If you are unable to attend the entire conference, consider registering for the Enrichment Day on Saturday and the banquet which follows. The banquet will be a celebration of 25 years of Consenting to Divine Love.

If you have not volunteered to help yet, please contact Penny Jaworski at 847.375.9291 (or email penny@centeringprayerchicago.org) or Margie Tomlinson at margie@centeringprayerchicago.org .

The leadership team and the persons who attended the May 9th event are all very excited about hosting this conference and hope to see you at the Wyndham O'Hare in September.



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 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. To volunteer for the 2009 Annual Conference Sept 24-27 contact Robert@centeringprayerchicago.org.

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 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, books, tapes, ordering and sales peg@centeringprayerchicago.org

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

Leadership Team Meeting

The next leadership team meeting is August 2, 2009. If you have questions or concerns for our agenda, please send to Bob Gordon, robert@centeringprayerchicago.org

The union established during centering prayer has to be integrated with the rest of reality. The presence of God should become a kind of fourth dimension to all of life. Our three dimensional world is not the real world because the most important dimension is missing; namely that from which everything that exists is emerging and returning in each nanosecond of time.

Open Mind, Open Heart by Thomas Keating

Peace from the Newsletter Publisher,



An Introduction to Centering Prayer

Saturday, August 29, 2009, St Anka Episcopal Church, Rockford, IL. For a brochure or to ask questions contact Molly Lovelock at lovelock3@aol.com or Sr. Nadine Meyer at nmssnd@hotmail.com. Continuing sessions will follow the session

Save the Dates

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

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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

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The fundamental purpose of prayer, including the prayer of petition, is not to get something from God or to change God, but to change ourselves. We pray in order to give ourselves to God.

The Heart of the World By Thomas Keating

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Right now there are about two billion Christians on the planet. If a significant portion of them were to embrace the contemplative dimension of the Gospel, the emerging global society would experience a powerful surge toward enduring peace.

**Manifesting God** By Thomas Keating

## **Opportunities for 2009-2010**

Because the only Chapter-wide enrichment event will be the United in Prayer Day in March, 2010, we are inviting Centering Prayer Groups and/or groups of Centering Prayer groups to arrange to have days of enrichment for their group(s). There are local resources in the Chapter. Listed 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](mailto:allen@centeringprayerchicago.org)

**Lectio Divina for Youth** presented by Bob Gordon. Contact Bob at [bob@centeringprayerchicago.org](mailto:bob@centeringprayerchicago.org)

**Forgiveness Prayer** presented by Margie Tomlinson Contact Margie at [margie@centeringprayerchicago.org](mailto:margie@centeringprayerchicago.org)

**Attention/Intention** presented by Ed Tummillo. Contact Ed at [ed@centeringprayerchicago.org](mailto:ed@centeringprayerchicago.org)

**Welcoming Prayer** presented by Allen Harper. Contact Allen at [allen@centeringprayerchicago.org](mailto:allen@centeringprayerchicago.org)

**Women in the Contemplative Heritage** presented by Penny Jaworski. Contact Penny at 847.375.9291 or [penny@centeringprayerchicago.org](mailto:penny@centeringprayerchicago.org)

# 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](mailto: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](http://www.thedome.org)

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

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](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://www.thedome.org)

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

## REPORTS

### ***Extending the Practice of Centering Prayer 2009***

#### **United in Prayer Day March 21, 2009 Oneness: Unity in Contemplation**

By Cathy Jarrett



Our theme this year, Oneness: Unity in Contemplation seemed to be rooted in and grow directly out of the contemplative dimension of the Gospel and New Testament.

John 17:20, 22-23

"...so that they may all be one, as you Father, are in me and I in you, that they may also be in us...so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may be brought to perfection as one..." and

Galatians 2:20

"...yet I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me ..."

It seems so many years ago, John and Paul were seeking to reveal to us this same message: that there can live a oneness, a unity so complete in Christ

that we could be One. An authentic way of being acknowledging that not only is there a loving Abba, and that we could be imitators of Christ, but that the unity could be so complete in Christ that we may be brought to perfection as one...becoming the Other so that there is no other.

On this day, where we were united with those around the globe in prayer, presence and practice, we pondered this message.

Listening to a dream poem attributed to Fr. Bede Griffith, thoughts from John Cassian and reflections from Fr. Thomas Keating and Fr. Laurence Freeman, we examined the challenges of being and living this awareness of oneness, while at the same time, at least most of us, still conscious of the separateness.

Commitment to a contemplative practice, whichever method, surprisingly to many, bore the same challenges and the same fruits - once again reminding us of our unity in our humanity, prayer, and practice.

We walked away this day with much about which to ponder and pray. The video is still available both at [www.contemplativeoutreach.org](http://www.contemplativeoutreach.org) (bookstore). At least three chapter member have copies. Check with the leadership team if you wish to borrow the DVD for your centering prayer group.

## Women in the Contemplative Heritage, April 25, 2009

By Penny Jaworski



The final presentation in our Formation series this year was a day spent walking through the centuries since the time of Jesus. What has been the influence and impact of women in the Christian church?

We learned of the presence of women in Scripture and their importance in the life of the church. Beginning with the women who met Jesus personally, those who knew him intimately as family, friend and teacher and those women who demanded his acknowledgement and healing, we discovered their roles.

Were it not for the women of the early church who hosted and presided at house church gatherings, the early Christians might not have continued to meet and reflect on the action of God in their lives. Despite persecution, they persevered and ministered as deaconesses to the women of early Christianity. It was only in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century when Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire and the church became more public, moved to Church buildings then the church became more male dominated.

The desert mothers, as did the desert fathers, fled from the busy cities to the desert seeking silence and solitude. They went to desert caves and monasteries to lead simple lives of intense prayer, voluntary poverty, and be in silence and solitude. Some women shaved their heads and pose as men to live in the desert monasteries. People sought out their counsel and direction as they sought to deepen their spiritual lives.

The mystics have always been a mystery to us. They conjure up visions of eccentrics, people who exhibit the stigmata and lead lives of extreme solitude. The women we met in the afternoon gave us a taste of various religious experiences. They taught us more about our world/universe, opened us up to a feminine view of God, and gave us direction to our journey towards union with God. Especially these women taught it is in simplicity that we align ourselves to the action of God in our lives. Through music, records of dialogue with God, expressing visions, these women mystics shared their spiritual experiences. We too are inspired and renewed to keep faithful to our own spiritual journey.

We concluded the afternoon with a sharing of the women who continue to nurture us, challenge and inspire. Those who have struggled to take their place in a church and society that has not always been open and welcoming to them. Some of them are familiar names to us and some are not. Some founded religious orders and movements that have impacted who we are and what freedoms we experience today. Theirs is an important story to remember and celebrate. Women continue to make their voices heard, their journey validated and their lives appreciated for the gifts we all share. The challenge is to continue to stand on the shoulders of these women.

A good resource to grasp the lives and impact of women throughout the

centuries is Blessed Among All Women by Robert Ellsberg. The role of mystics is summed up in this prayer attributed to St Teresa of Avila:

“Christ has no body now but yours  
No hands but yours  
No feet but yours  
Yours are the eyes through  
Which Christ’s compassion  
Must look out on the world.

Yours are the feet with  
Which Christ is to go  
About doing good

Yours are the hands with  
Which Christ is to bless us now.”

May God continue to bless us with women  
and men of faith.

## 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](http://www.centeringprayerchicago.org)

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

### Themes for Contemplative Outreach Annual Conferences

- 2009 Chicago – *Consenting to Divine Love: 25 years of Contemplative Outreach*
- 2008 Pittsburgh - *Oneness: Unity in Contemplation*  
Weekend of Enrichment (*CO Community: Vision and Service* with Fr. Laurence Freeman, OSB and Fr. Thomas Keating)
- 2007 Houston – *Contemplative Vision: Awakening to Beauty, Truth and Goodness*  
Day of Enrichment with Fr Richard Rohr, OFM and Fr. Thomas Keating. OCSO
- 2006 St. Louis – *A Year of Listening,*  
Enrichment Day: *Whose Voice Are We Listening Too?*  
with Abbot Joseph Boyle, OCSO and Fr. Thomas Keating, OCSO
- 2005 Austin Texas – *A Year of Practice* – Conference and Retreat Elements
- 2004 Toronto – *Living Ordinary Life with Extraordinary Love* (Celebration of 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary)  
Day of Enrichment with Sr. Mary Margaret Funk, OSB and Fr. Thomas Keating OCSO
- 2003 San Diego – *Finding Peace at the Center: A Contemplative Response*  
*"Back to the Basics: Presenting the Introductory Program in Centering Prayer"*  
Day of Enrichment with Wayne Teasdale, Gail Fitzpatrick-Hopler, and Fr. Carl Arico
- 2002 Nashville, TN – *Ecumenism: United in our Common Search for God*
- 2001 Porta Plata, Dominican Republic – *Contemplative Outreach: Toward a Global Transformation* Enrichment: *"The Spirituality of the Coordinator"* and *"Organic Model of Chapter Growth and Development"*
- 2000 Chicago – *Contemplative Prayer in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*
- 1999 San Francisco – *The Spirituality of Service.....*