

Why We Practice

by Thich Nhat Hanh / Originally published in Spirit Journal October 2015

The regular practice of Centering Prayer is often said to be “transformational,” but what is the essence of this change?

In 1998, the well-known Buddhist monk and teacher Thich Nhat Hanh said: “Jesus Christ is not an entity that you have to look for outside yourself; Jesus Christ is within you. He is the eyes that we need not to be blind anymore. Our practice is always to get out of our blindness, to have the kind of eyes that can see things as they are.”



Photo: Shawn McGrath

During the same lecture, he translated this song from the Vietnamese:

This Is the Pure Land*

This is the pure land;

The pure land is right here.

This mindful smile helps me

To establish myself in the present moment.

Look, I see the Buddha as a red leaf,

And the dharma as a cloud.

My Sangha is everywhere,

And my true homeland is just right here.

Breathing in, I see the chrysanthemum blooming;

Breathing out, I see the bamboo bending.

My mind is totally free,

And I enjoy it day after day.

*According to Thich Nhat Hanh, “the pure land” in Buddhism has the same meaning as “the Kingdom of God” in Christianity.