

THE LIVING FLAME 2 PROGRAM

A Formation Program

“O living flame of love that tenderly wounds my soul in its deepest center!” – John of the Cross

This extraordinary program includes seven full-day offerings of in-depth spiritual study presented over a four-month period by commissioned presenters from the various C.O. Ltd. Service Teams.

Designed to teach the vital conceptual background needed to support a faithful practice of Centering Prayer, the program also:

- offers encouragement and support in a small community setting
- heightens the awareness of the transformation process
- helps discern when psychological skills can be helpful tools
- provides the opportunity to give and receive spiritual companionship

Attachment 1 ... Dates, Workshop Topics, and Facilitators

Attachment 2 ... Facilitator bio's

DATES	WORKSHOP TOPICS	FACILITATORS
January 9, 2021	Reclaiming Our Roots <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Contemplative Heritage in Christianity • Desert Ammas/Abbas 	Richard Bonacci
January 30, 2021	Lectio Divina 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being a word of God • Prayerful reflection on one's life • Deepening one's walk with Christ in daily life 	Nancy Stimac Lesley O'Connor
February 20, 2021	Contemplative Living <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Divine Indwelling • Theological Virtues • Fruits and Gifts of the Spirit • Transformation of daily life through Centering Prayer 	Susan Rush
March 20, 2021	The Forgiveness Prayer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The process of forgiveness • The Method of the Forgiveness Prayer • Opening to the Divine Indwelling in Relationships • Practical points about Forgiveness 	Nancy Cord-Baran
April 10, 2021	Soul Friending <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spiritual Direction / Soul Friending • History and theology of Soul Friending • Soul Friending and Centering Prayer groups 	Marilyn Webb
April 24, 2021	Psychological Experience of Centering Prayer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychological perspective of the spiritual journey • Deeper look at the unconscious energy centers • Contemplative perspective on human growth and development 	Mary Dwyer
May 8, 2021	Dark Night of Spirit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Radical letting go of remaining obstacles on spiritual journey • Preparation for Transforming Union • Ten Steps of the Ladder of Love • Phases of Unitive Life 	Susan Komis

Living Flame Workshop Facilitators (in alphabetical order)

1. Lesley O'Connor

Lesley lives in County Waterford, Ireland. Centering Prayer found her in 2007 and since then it has played a pivotal part in her life. Her working career was driven by human rights concerns for people marginalised due to intellectual disabilities. A commissioned presenter of Centering Prayer and *Lectio Divina*, Lesley leads retreats. She served on the Advisory Circle of Contemplative Outreach Dublin. Lesley was the first team lead of the Global Team serving English speaking practitioners of Centering Prayer outside the United States. She currently serves on the *Lectio Divina* Service Team. Lesley is trained in Spiritual Accompaniment. She has completed an MA in Applied Spirituality with *Visio Divina* as the focus of her research thesis. She volunteers as a coach in transformational leadership with The Mastery Foundation, an organization co-founded by Fr. Basil Pennington O.C.S.O., empowering those engaged in ministry and In reconciliation.

2. Marilyn Webb

Marilyn Webb has been practicing centering prayer since the early 1990's. She has been active in the Indianapolis chapter since its formation in 2007 and was coordinator from 2008 to 2013. During that time the chapter held Living Flame 1 and 2 programs in 2009-2011. Marilyn is a commissioned presenter of Centering Prayer and currently serves Contemplative Outreach Ltd. as the national team leader for the Living Flame program. Marilyn is a spiritual director, a lay Associate of the Sisters of Providence in St. Mary-of-the-Woods, IN and is active in the Association of Contemplative Women.

3. Mary Dwyer

Mary Dwyer is a long-time student of Fr. Thomas Keating and has been practicing Centering Prayer for over twenty years. In the early 1990's, she lived at Chrysalis House, a contemplative live-in community experiment blessed by Fr. Thomas. Her housemates included Mary Mrozowski, David Frenette and Cathy McCarthy. The community lived according to a rule of life, and became an incubator of practice and programs in the early years of Contemplative Outreach's growth. It was her experience at Chrysalis House – what she refers to as her “inpatient” or “residential treatment time” – that proved to her that a life of prayer, consent and practice is real, stable and deeply rewarding. Mary Mrozowski taught her that a devoted life of prayer was the real work of life; what we did the rest of the time was just how we made a living.

Mary received her undergraduate degree from Georgetown University in economics and spent some time as a banker and college administrator. After a few years at Chrysalis House, she went back to school and became a licensed clinical social worker and practiced this vocation for the next 15 years, all while maintaining her commitment to the contemplative life and to the mission of Contemplative Outreach. In 2008 she met her beloved Juan through the Living Flame program. She moved to Miami, FL in 2009 and they married.

Mary is a former Chairperson of the Contemplative Outreach Faculty. She is the most recent past Coordinator for the Living Flame program and a member of the Welcoming Prayer Service Team. Mary devotes her time to giving retreats and workshops on behalf of Contemplative Outreach throughout the US and internationally.

Living Flame Workshop Facilitators (continued)

3. **Mary Dwyer (continued)**

Mary is passionate about nature, animals, children, honesty, recovery, and present-moment awareness. She is devoted to her beloved Juancito, family & friends, Contemplative Outreach and sharing the good news and incredible teachings she has been given.

4. **Nancy Cord-Baran**

Nancy has been practicing Centering Prayer since 1998. She is a Commissioned Presenter for Centering Prayer, the Forgiveness Prayer and 12 Step Outreach. Nancy has served with the Formation Training of Centering Prayer Introductory Workshop Presenters for the past three years. She received her undergraduate degree from Penn State University and after working for twenty-five years as a Recreation Therapist she felt a call to study with Oasis Ministries. She is a graduate of their Spiritual Direction for Spiritual Guides and Deepening Year of Direction Ministries Programs and has offered Spiritual Direction since 2007. She has led retreats at Bethany Retreat Center since 2004. Currently, she serves as Co-Coordinator of Contemplative Outreach of Central Pa. She is passionate about the Forgiveness Prayer and awed daily by its inner workings in her life.

Nancy lives in the woods of State College, Pa. with her husband, daughter and dog, Bodhi.

5. **Nancy Stimac**

Nancy Stimac, a longtime contemplative prayer practitioner, serves on the Contemplative Outreach Ltd. Lectio Divina Service Team and is a commissioned presenter of Centering Prayer and Lectio Divina. While winding down careers in education and advertising, after completing six years of study, she received certification in the Archdiocese of Hartford's Catholic Bible School and Lay Ministry programs. In 2019 she was certified to teach "Making Sense of the Bible" for the Catholic Biblical School. She uses her gifts serving the Catholic community of Windsor Locks, facilitating prayer groups and Bible studies, lecturing, and working on RCIA and evangelization team programs. She and her optometrist husband George reside in Windsor, CT with eight animal companions. They have a grown son who lives in Dracut, MA.

6. **Richard J. Bonacci**

Richard's interest in the Desert Ammas and Abbas has roots in both his academic career as well as his training in spiritual direction. He earned his certificate in spiritual direction from the Center for Christian Spirituality at the University of San Diego in 2009. It was during that training that he began his Centering Prayer practice. Subsequently Richard has completed the two-year "Living Flame course," offered by the national organization of Contemplative Outreach. He has expanded his understanding of contemplative traditions other than Christianity through the study of Buddhism and Jewish mysticism and spirituality.

In addition to his involvement in the San Diego chapter of Contemplative Outreach, Richard is active at both the local and national level of *Illuman* (previously *MALEs*), the men's spiritual movement founded by Franciscan Richard Rohr.

Living Flame Workshop Facilitators (continued)

6. **Richard J. Bonacci (continued)**

Richard holds a BA and MA from Georgetown University, where he grounded himself in church history and Ignatian Spirituality. His advanced studies at the University of Toronto and in Europe expanded his interest and knowledge of Desert, Carmelite and Eastern Orthodox spirituality.

Richard presented a half-day workshop on the spirituality of the desert at the 2016 Spiritual Directors International (*SDI*) conference held in San Diego. He has also presented workshops, forums, and Lenten retreats on the Desert Mothers and Fathers to local churches and the San Diego Spiritual Directors Association.

7. **Susan Komis**

Susan Komis is a former Director of Chapter Programs & Services for the Contemplative Outreach, Ltd. organization. She began as a volunteer for the St. Louis, MO Chapter and was appointed as Coordinator for the St. Louis, Missouri region in 1994 through 1999. Susan was then employed by Contemplative Outreach and served the spiritual network for 20 years as a faculty member, member of the Board of Directors and commissioned presenter. Susan's primary role was supporting the leadership of Contemplative Outreach chapters by developing and offering formations, retreats, spiritual enrichment and organizational support until she retired at the end of 2016.

Susan continues to offer programs on contemplative spirituality and leads Intensive, Post-Intensive and themed Centering Prayer retreats. She is a certified Pastoral Minister and has served in Adult Faith Development, spiritual direction and interspiritual dialogue.

Previous employment history includes working in Human Resources for two corporations and as Administrator of an early childhood center. Susan is married and mother of four daughters. She currently resides in a suburb of St. Louis, Missouri.

8. **Susan Rush**

Susan has been involved with Contemplative Outreach for almost three decades. She resides in New Mexico where she served as the founding coordinator of Contemplative Outreach of New Mexico for many years. She is a presenter, she facilitates a weekly prayer group and facilitates retreats. After serving on the governing body of CO Ltd. for 10 years, she delights in serving on the Living Flame and Retreats service team.