

# *Spirit Journal - January 2022*

## **Preview**

Here's a what you'll find in our first issue of 2022:

- A reminder to register now for *Releasing an Enslaved Spirit*, a three-hour Saturday morning Zoom workshop with Michael Battle - **Registration ends this Friday**
- Information about another Zoom workshop coming up next month on the practice of *BioSpiritual Focusing*
- Invitations to other upcoming events from the Beatitudes Center, Contemplative Outreach of Wisconsin, and the International Thomas Merton Society
- Information about available Centering Prayer groups, in-person and online
- *Insights* from Martin Luther King, Jr. and Michael Curry

In 2022, please be sure to share your reactions and reflections with us to help make *Spirit Journal* a vibrant conversation! If you would like to submit something you've written or just explore an idea, please contact the newsletter editor at [news@centeringprayerchicago.org](mailto:news@centeringprayerchicago.org).

## ***Releasing an Enslaved Spirit***

[Register Now](#) - Registration Ends Friday at 6:00pm



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## ***A Workshop on Communal Contemplative Spirituality with Michael Battle - Saturday Morning, January 22 via Zoom***

**Co-sponsored by Contemplative Outreach Chicago  
and Contemplative Outreach Atlanta**

This workshop will bring together people from diverse backgrounds who share an interest in contemplation. Together we will pray through, think about and practice how to be more Communally diverse in Contemplative Spirituality — how to release the natural unity the Holy Spirit constantly offers the world.

[NOTE: A video recording of the event will be made available to all who register, in case you cannot attend on the 22nd or wish to review the workshop at a later date.]

Providing an indication of where this workshop will take us, Rev. Battle quotes St. John of the Cross:

*The soul that is attached to anything however much good there may be in it,  
will not arrive at the liberty of divine union.*

*For whether it be a strong wire rope or a slender and delicate thread that holds the bird,  
it matters not, if it really holds it fast,*

*For, until the cord be broken the bird cannot fly.*

(Ascent of Mt. Carmel, Book One, 11)

The workshop will begin with a 20-30 minute contemplative experience led by Contemplative Outreach. This will include Centering Prayer as well as a brief guided meditation to expand our experience and open our hearts.

Then, building on St. John's powerful insight, Rev. Battle will lead an interactive and deeply spiritual workshop incorporating presentations, art, music, and pauses for reflection. The intention is to uncover, describe and practice approaches that can help us begin to "break the cord," removing constraints and divisions within our own individual hearts and across the wider contemplative movement. There will be pauses for silence, small group sharing,

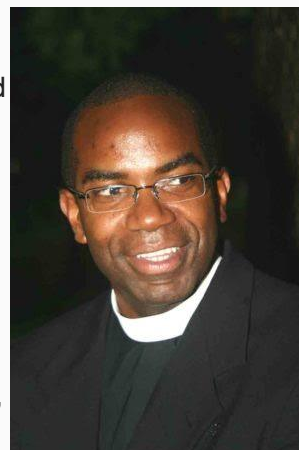
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and discernment about what God may be inviting our community into with regard to spiritual/racial union.

### **About Michael Battle**

A featured keynote speaker and leader of many clergy and lay retreats, the Very Rev. Michael Battle, Ph.D. is currently appointed as Herbert Thompson Professor of Church and Society and Director of the Desmond Tutu Center at General Theological Seminary in New York,

In his PeaceBattle Institute he works on subjects of diversity, spirituality, prayer, race and reconciliation. He has also served as chaplain to Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Congressman John Lewis, the House of Bishops and, in 2008, was chaplain to the Lambeth Conference of Anglican Bishops.



Battle has published eleven books, including his latest: *Desmond Tutu: A Spiritual Biography of South Africa's Confessor*. He has an undergraduate degree from Duke University, received his master's of Divinity from Princeton Theological Seminary, a master's of Sacred Theology from Yale University and a PhD in theology and ethics, also from Duke University. He was ordained a priest by Archbishop Tutu in 1993. [Click here to read more on Michael Battle's website.](#)

**We invite all to join us on this sacred journey toward Communal Contemplative Spirituality. [Click Here to Register](#)**

***Coming Up Next Month:***

## **Body Presence and Contemplative Awareness**

***An Introduction to BioSpiritual Focusing Presented by Mike Smoolca - Saturday, February 12th, 2022 via Zoom***

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**Co-Sponsored by Contemplative Outreach Chicago  
and Contemplative Outreach of Connecticut**



BioSpiritual Focusing allows you to directly access the Wisdom of your Body and the healing experience of God's grace that comes with attending to the body feelings you carry within. At its most profound level it gives you access to your membership as the collective Body of Christ.

In this experiential workshop you will be introduced to the overall method of BioSpiritual Focusing and be given some tools and awareness you can apply to enhance your own sense of Body Presence and Contemplative Awareness.

**About Mike Smoolca**

Mike Smoolca is an experienced contemplative group and workshop facilitator and a dedicated teacher and student of contemplation and contemplative practices. He is a commissioned Contemplative Outreach presenter of Centering Prayer, Lectio Divine and Welcoming Prayer. Mike is coordinator for the Christian Contemplative Experience at Holy Family Passionist Retreat Center, Contemplative Outreach of Connecticut and the Northern Connecticut Chapter of the International Thomas Merton Society. Mike is a practicing spiritual director and supervisor, as well as a BioSpiritual Focusing companion and instructor.



We hope you will want to take part in this important workshop. [Click Here for more information and to Register](#)

## ***Other Events of Interest***

Here are some other events and workshops you might like to attend.

**From the Beatitudes Center**

### ***Subverting Violence: Shane Claiborne on Following the Nonviolent Jesus, January 29 via Zoom***

Workshop leader Shane Claiborne writes: "In a world filled with so much violence and death, Jesus points us towards the narrow way that leads to life. The cross offers us an alternative to the sword, the gun, and the bomb. Let's talk about the way of Jesus, the way of the cross, the way of nonviolence and how we can live it in the world today."

**Shane Claiborne** is one of the founding members of The Simple Way, a Catholic Worker-type community in the inner city of Philadelphia. He is the author of the best-selling books, *The Irresistible Revolution: Living as an Ordinary Radical*; *Beating Guns*; *Hope for People Who Are Weary of Violence*; *Executing Grace: How the Death Penalty Kill Jesus and Why It's Killing Us*; and *Jesus For President*. While living and working in inner city Philly, he travels the nation and the world speaking out for justice and an end to poverty, war and killing.

For more information and to register, visit the [Beatitudes Center website](#). [NOTE: Registration closes January 25.]

**From Contemplative Outreach of Wisconsin**

### ***The Welcoming Prayer: An Introductory Workshop, Starts February 5 via Zoom***

The Welcoming Prayer is an embodied practice for consenting to God's presence and action in our physical and emotional reactions to events and situations in daily life. It welcomes the Holy Spirit into the particular pain we experience, whether physical,

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emotional or mental.

The Welcoming Prayer, like Centering Prayer, is designed to help us allow the Divine Therapist to remove the obstacles that keep God's all-powerful grace from flowing in and through us and out into a world in desperate need. It provides a means for moving deeper into trust and intimacy with the living God that Jesus experienced.

This online workshop consists of two, two-hour introductory sessions and an optional one-hour follow-up session; two scheduling options are offered for each session. For more information, please visit the [Contemplative Outreach of Wisconsin website](#).

### **From ITMS**

### ***Our Crisis of Authority and Thomas Merton, with Steven P. Millies, February 8 via Zoom***

The polarizing conflicts that divide the Catholic Church and social life are widely recognized but poorly understood. Thomas Merton understood what we face as a crisis of authority that has far-flung implications and whose fullest dimensions have come into view only in decades since he died. This workshop will explore the crisis of authority as we now experience it in 2022, and will look to Merton for wisdom about how we can resolve the crisis.

**Steven P. Millies** is professor of public theology and director of The Bernardin Center at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago. His most recent book is *Good Intentions: A History of Catholic Voters' Road from Roe to Trump* (Liturgical Press, 2018).

## ***Centering Prayer Groups In-Person and Online***

Participants who attend a Centering Prayer introductory workshop often decide to join an existing prayer group or form one of their own. The groups generally meet weekly or every other week to share their experience of Centering Prayer and growing relationship with God.

Many groups decide to view videos or read and discuss books by Fr. Thomas and others

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to deepen their individual understanding of their spiritual practices. Formats usually include a session of Centering Prayer and discussion and sharing. These small faith communities build trust and unity while encouraging and supporting members on their spiritual journey.

More than 40 Chicago-area prayer groups are listed on our [website](#). If you would like help finding a prayer group, please contact the facilitators' team leader at: [groups@centeringprayerchicago.org](mailto:groups@centeringprayerchicago.org).

While more and more prayer groups are returning to meeting in-person, here are four invitations to gather with Chicago-area Centering Prayer groups via Zoom. Listed below are the groups, times, and contact information.

- Centering Prayer Group every Saturday 9:30-10:30am. Contact Bill Epperly at [bill@integralawakenings.com](mailto:bill@integralawakenings.com)
- St. Katharine Drexel Church every Tuesday 8:30-9:30am. Contact Lori Dressel at [lorijdressel@gmail.com](mailto:lorijdressel@gmail.com)
- The Healing Gardens - Centering Prayer with Lectio Divina, last Friday of each month, 10:30am-11:30pm. Contact Deb Marqui at [deb@dmarqui.com](mailto:deb@dmarqui.com) or text/call 630-740-259.
- Permanent Zoom group (not associated with an in-person group) Tuesday 6:00 - 7:00pm. Contact Rose Magiera for link and phone number – [rmmagiera@gmail.com](mailto:rmmagiera@gmail.com)

### ***Offerings in the Contemplative Outreach Meditation Chapel***

The national website of our parent organization features an Online Meditation Chapel that is very easy to use and provides the opportunity to see, hear and join in silent prayer with others from all over the world. You must first register to attend the meetings in the Chapel. You can do that by using the [calendar](#) link. Once you know what chapel your desired meeting is in, use the [chapel](#) link.

**Meditation Groups** – Groups meet via Zoom at all hours of the day and night and are open to anyone. *There is no cost/fee to attend, charging is prohibited.* A friend writes: "I have been attending meditation in the virtual Keating Chapel and had a lovely experience. The facilitator was very good!" For further information, visit the [calendar](#) or [chapel listing](#).

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**Healing Together: A Gathering of Consciousness** – In silence we focus on an intention for peace and healing in 2020. The format is an opening prayer, a short reading, two 25-minute sessions of silent prayer with a short break in-between and closing prayer. These sessions are scheduled every Thursday from 11:00am to 12:00pm Central Time (US & Canada) in the Thomas Keating Chapel with Mary Lapham. You can contact Mary at [marylapham2@gmail.com](mailto:marylapham2@gmail.com).

**Please let us know about any additional events and resources you're aware of. Write to:** [news@centeringprayerchicago.org](mailto:news@centeringprayerchicago.org)

## ***Insights***

*I have decided to stick with love. Hate is too great a burden to bear.*

- Martin Luther King, Jr.

*We often ask ourselves how the life and legacy of people like the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. remain relevant in our current moment, and it would be difficult to overstate how much we need King's prophetic witness right now. From his tireless advocacy for the right of all Americans to vote, to his model of faith animating nonviolent work for justice, King calls us to continue his work — and to truly labor for the realization of God's Beloved Community.*

- Michael Curry

## ***Your Turn***

Please write in to contribute your ideas or to comment on any aspect of *Spirit Journal*. For example, you are invited to submit something you've written on a spiritual topic, or to let us know about an upcoming event, or send an inspirational quote you'd like to share, or information about a book, website, podcast, or video you recommend. You can contribute by emailing the newsletter editor at [news@centeringprayerchicago.org](mailto:news@centeringprayerchicago.org).

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## Contemplative Outreach

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