

Spirit Journal - March 2022

Preview

Here's a what you'll find in our March issue:

- The first announcement of *Notes of Rest*, an innovative "musical-textual retreat," coming up in May via Zoom
- An invitation to an Introductory Centering Prayer Workshop, April 6-7 via Zoom
- *Belonging*, a reflection on living with calm, compassionate awareness, written by Deborah Marqui
- Invitations to other upcoming events from our good friends at Contemplative Outreach of Southeast Wisconsin, Contemplative Outreach Ltd., and Contemplative Outreach Colorado
- Information about available Centering Prayer groups, in-person and online
- *Insights* from Meister Eckhart, Shunryu Suzuki, Barbara Holmes, and Leonardo Da Vinci

We ask that you share your reactions and reflections with us to help make *Spirit Journal* a two-way 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.

***Notes of Rest: A Musical-Textual Retreat* - Saturday
May 14 via Zoom**



[Registration Available Now](#)

Notes of Rest places meditations from a Bible passage and writings from Black contemplatives on a bed of music, cultivating stillness, introspection, and creativity in communities so that all may find rest.

Chicagoan Julian Davis Reid is a young artist-theologian who uses words and music to invite us into the restful life we were created to experience. He has created and refined *Notes of Rest* as an innovative form of contemplative experience, a kind of "Musica Divina."

Julian's approach uses the beauty and spiritual power of music to help workshop participants find their way to a quiet, reflective interior space where we can be fully receptive to grace, or what Thomas Keating described as "God's presence and action within."

The workshop will begin with a 20-30 minute Centering Prayer practice led by Leslie Geer of Contemplative Outreach Atlanta. This introductory meditation is designed to expand our experience and open our hearts, preparing us for what comes next. Then Julian will lead *Notes of Rest*, in which short sacred texts are read, interpreted musically, and then reflected upon individually and in small groups. Creativity is a key part of the experience, with participants encouraged to journal, write reflections or song lyrics, dance, or otherwise go where the spirit

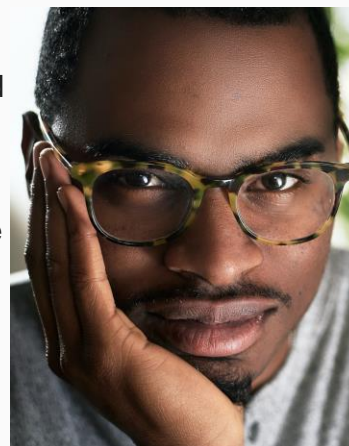
leads them. As the workshop wraps up, all participants join together to share and reflect on their experience together.

Following the *Notes of Rest* workshop, there will be a half-hour break, and then Julian will offer an (*optional*) 45-minute lecture on music and Black contemplative life and their unique contributions to Christian mysticism. The after-event lecture will conclude with an open, 15-minute question and answer period.

We are delighted to introduce you to this unique form of contemplative experience. *Notes of Rest* workshops have been well-received at Yale Divinity School, Duke Divinity School, the Center for Religion and Environment (University of the South), First United Methodist Church of Oak Park, Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church (Atlanta, GA), and other locations.

About Julian Davis Reid

Hailing from the Southwest side of Chicago, Julian grew up playing classical, gospel, and jazz piano. He attended Yale College, where he earned his B.A. in philosophy (2013) and took classes in music theory. He served as keyboardist and musical director of Black Church at Yale for all four years and also led his own working jazz trio. His thesis explored the political lessons learned from being a member of a jazz quartet. After graduating, he served Yale as a campus minister through InterVarsity Christian Fellowship and as a non-denominational pastor for Black Church at Yale. He remained active on the New Haven jazz scene, mentored by bassist Jeff Fuller.



Julian married his college sweetheart, Carmen, and together they moved to Atlanta for graduate school. Julian matriculated into Candler School of Theology at Emory University, where he earned a Master of Divinity with a focus in Scripture, Theology and the Arts (2019). His master's thesis was on the theological implications of wordless improvisation. He has taught and lectured at Candler, Garrett Evangelical-Theological Seminary, Yale Divinity School, Duke Divinity School, Columbia Theological Seminary, Morehouse College, City Seminary of

New York, and the American Academy of Religion.

[*Click here for more information about Julian Davis Reid and Notes of Rest, and to Register*](#)

Introduction to Centering Prayer

April 6 & 7 via Zoom



This workshop will introduce you to (or deepen your experience of) the method of Centering Prayer and let you experience this prayer of silence. Centering Prayer is a form of Christian prayer rooted in the ancient contemplative tradition. Its purpose is to foster a deeper intimacy with Christ through silence and stillness. There will be opportunities for discussion as well as invitations into prayerful presence.

This workshop will be offered in two parts on consecutive evenings. To help promote and deepen your experience of the Centering Prayer practice, we will

offer a six-week follow-up series as well. The workshop leaders are both commissioned Contemplative Outreach presenters: Alan Krema and Sandra Janowski.

[Click here for more information about this workshop and how to register.](#)

From Contemplative Outreach of Colorado
**Cynthia Bourgeault on Thomas Keating's Last
Thirty Years - March 26 via Zoom**



This event is the annual conference/fundraiser presented by Contemplative Outreach of Colorado. It is a hybrid presentation being conducted both in person at The Center for Contemplative Living in Denver and online via Zoom

videoconference. The in-person event is sold out, but registration is open if you would like to participate via Zoom.

The conference is scheduled for March 26, 2022, 10:00am-4:00pm (Central).

The featured guest is Cynthia Bourgeault. Cynthia's talk will be on "Thomas Keating: The Last Thirty Years," in which she will explore his life as he passed through two significant stages of the journey – The Dark Night of the Spirit and the gradual awakening to the Unitive.

[Click here for full information and registration.](#)

Belonging

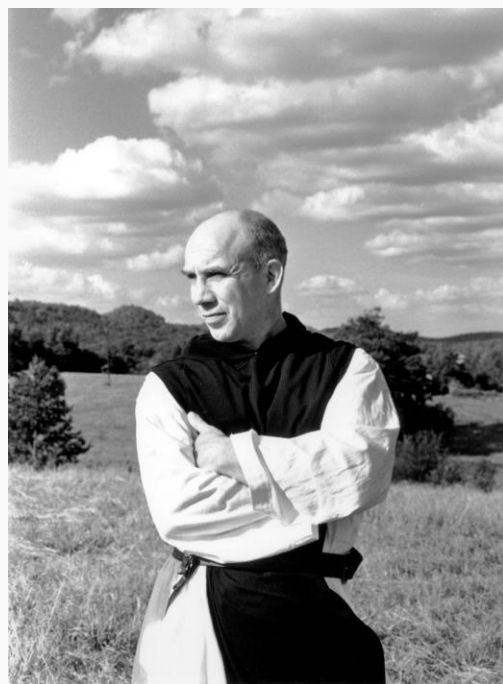
by Deborah Marqui
Healing Gardens

"The way we would begin in prayer is that we belong to God ...all prayer starts and unfolds out of that knowing..."

Wise words from Thomas Merton to his novice monks. We would do well to listen for this inner certainty changes everything. But I can't seem to hold on to this precious knowing. How do I swim in this golden river of love for longer than ten seconds, this fierce, ineffable, bottomless love of the Creator for creation?

The truth is little by little. By myself, I can't hold on to anything. But I am faithful to my Centering Prayer practice, as Jim Finley would say, "my daily rendezvous with God."

Often, I find myself sighing deeply over my



failings, sometimes laughing and other times tearful at my thoughts and actions. Thankfully, with less hateful judgment and criticism. I am living more and more of my life from a calm inner, compassionate awareness and acceptance of my own preciousness in the face of my imperfections.

Perhaps I am swimming in the golden river of love and belonging more than I realize, especially when I look at myself with the eyes of God. This is good news.

Other Events of Interest

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

From Contemplative Outreach of Southeast Wisconsin.

A Taste of the Spirituality of Hildegard of Bingen - March 31 via Zoom

As a Benedictine Abbess, preacher, author, healer, composer, counselor to kings, popes, and now Saint and Doctor of the Church, Hildegard offers us a deep spirituality that has stood the test of the ages. From her 11th century abbey in Bingen, Germany, flowed a kaleidoscope of wisdom. We will explore some of its themes in this presentation. [Click here for information and registration.](#)



From Contemplative Outreach, Ltd.

Grounding the Prayer of the Cloud with the Prayer of the Heart - Online Course with David Frenette May 2-22

Our national parent organization offers this e-introduction to Heart Intention for Centering Prayer practitioners. The world is rapidly changing. Heart Intention is a contemplative practice that, with Centering Prayer, helps us respond to the new challenges we are facing. In Centering Prayer and Heart Intention, two great streams of Christian contemplation – the Prayer of the Cloud and the Prayer of the

Heart – meet, in service of an integrative approach to meditation. [Click here for information and registration.](#)

From Contemplative Outreach of Colorado

Thomas Merton: Guide Through the Dark Night of Earth - Online May 7, with Kathleen Noone Deignan, CND, PhD

Among the great luminaries of the Christian spiritual tradition, the modern master, Thomas Merton, shines a penetrating light upon our challenging lives and times. More than half a century after his death, Merton grows in stature and relevance as a pattern of integral ecological consciousness becomes evident throughout his written corpus as its complexity and unity become more transparent with time.

As the contemporary ecological crisis deepens, we urgently require more than instrumental remedies to stem the life-loss of our ecosphere suffered at human hands. We need a penetrating understanding of the more troubling and mysterious pathology underlying it: why, indeed, have we plundered our planetary paradise?

This was the difficult “koan” Merton carried to fruition as he explored the congenital disorientation of spirit that exiles us from our common home in the community of creation. Having suffered such exile, he recovered from it, and taught a holistic therapy of contemplative living that can restore **our ecological consciousness, conscience, and practice**. This program will explore Merton’s wisdom for the Dark Night of Earth.

[Click here for information and registration.](#)

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 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.

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:

- North Park Covenant Church, Monday 7:15pm. Contact Sarah Hillabrant, (773) 509-1095, yoopergirl37@gmail.com
- Centering Prayer Group every Saturday 9:30-10:30am. Contact Bill Epperly at bill@integralawakenings.com
- St. Katharine Drexel Church every Tuesday 8:30-9:30am. Contact Lori Dressel at 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 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

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](#).

Healing Together: A Gathering of Consciousness – In silence we focus on an intention for peace and healing in 2022. 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.

Please let us know about any additional events and resources you're aware of. Write to: news@centeringprayerchicago.org

Insights

And suddenly you know: It's time to start something new and trust the magic of beginnings.

– Meister Eckhart

If your mind is empty, it is always ready for anything, it is open to everything. In the beginner's mind there are many possibilities, but in the expert's mind there are few.

– Shunryu Suzuki

In the beginning there is darkness. It is the womb out of which we are born. Darkness may be the blessed dimming of ego-driven striving, a destination and condition of safety and repose. In this state of trusting refuge, the light of divine revelation, which pierces but does not castigate the darkness, may finally be seen. This is a mothering darkness that nurses its offspring.

– Barbara A. Holmes

Everything proceeds from everything else and everything becomes everything, and everything can be turned into everything else.

– Leonardo Da Vinci

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.

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SOLIDARITY • SERVICE

Contemplative Outreach