

## ***Spirit Journal - October 2024***

### ***Preview***

Welcome to our October issue - in it you'll find:

- Links to video invitations to the 2024 Annual Fall One-Day Workshop - coming up soon on Saturday November 2
- Detailed information and registration links for this first ever "hybrid" Fall Workshop - you may participate online or add an optional in-person session
- Information about an online workshop with Cynthia Bourgeault, this Saturday from Contemplative Outreach of Colorado
- An invitation to a BIPOC speaker series being offered by Awakenings, a growing contemplative community based in Houston
- Information about an online Advent offering from ITMS's long-running *Tuesdays with Merton* series
- An opportunity to learn about a weekly online gathering of young contemplatives
- A link to the 2024 Contemplative Events Calendar, which lists online and in-person events through July 2025
- A listing of in-person and online prayer groups you may wish to join
- October *Insights* from Josephine Garnem, Alan Krema, Carl McColman and Barbara Holmes

Please join in with Contemplative Outreach Chicago to help make *Spirit Journal* a lively interactive forum. If you would like to send us something you've written or just explore an idea, please contact the newsletter editor at [news@centeringprayerchicago.org](mailto:news@centeringprayerchicago.org).

### ***Please Join Us on November 2 - In-person or Online!***

The Annual Fall One-Day Workshop is a Contemplative Outreach Chicago tradition that goes back to 2012, but this year - based on our membership survey - we're trying a new format. The member survey told us that many of you like to attend events in-person, but even more prefer to attend online. So, we're offering a "hybrid" Fall Workshop. Please choose the option that works best for you!

Detailed information about the plan for the Fall Workshop is provided below. But first, you might like to view these video invitations from:

[Carl McColman](#), who tells us about what to expect in the Zoom workshop.



[Alan Krema](#), who explains the optional in-person workshop, which includes a viewing of the Zoom workshop in community.

Here are the details and registration links:



**2024 Annual One-Day Fall Workshop!**

**Saturday November 2, 2024**

## **Online Workshop with Carl McColman**

### **Optional In-Person Gathering with Alan Krema at St. Leonard's Ministries**

#### **The Online Event:**

#### **Interfaith Healing Practices: Tools to Inspire Hope Amid Chaos**

**Presented in Collaboration with  
the Theosophical Society in America**

**1:00-3:00 PM Central / Saturday November 2**

We live in a time of deep social, political, and spiritual division, and it's easy to feel hopeless with the constant news and social media. But there is hope! Mystics throughout the ages have provided inspirational teachings and practical tools to heal our hearts and society from within.

In this interspiritual and interactive workshop, just three days before a contentious election, we will explore the Christian mystical practice of Centering Prayer to find inner peace and healing. We'll also practice Buddhist techniques like Loving Kindness and Tonglen meditation to grow our capacity for love and compassion. These powerful practices can transform both ourselves and the world.

Mystics from all traditions teach that we hold God's compassion and power within us, allowing us to embody the light and love that can change the world. Join us for a transformative workshop that explores timeless practices and insights from history's greatest spiritual guides.

Registrants will receive on-demand access to recording(s) that can be viewed for two weeks following the conclusion of the program.

**Carl McColman** is a spiritual writer, contemplative teacher, and renowned workshop leader based in Atlanta. His books include *The New Big Book of Christian Mysticism*, *Eternal Heart: the Mystical Path to a Joyful Life*, and *An Invitation to Celtic Wisdom*. His forthcoming book, *Read the Bible Like a Mystic*, will be published in 2025.

[More information and registration for the online event.](#)

**Note that the in-person option (below) includes the online workshop; do not register**

**for both or you will overpay.**

### **The Optional In-Person Event:**

**Consent to the Communal Presence  
and Action of God Within**

**Live Workshop in the Morning, Tour of St. Leonard's Ministries,  
Lunch, and Communal Viewing of the Online Workshop**

**9:00 AM-3:00 PM Central / Saturday November 2**

For those who would prefer to gather in person, we offer this option. The morning session will be an in person contemplative prayer experience with our local members at the St. Andrew Chapel on the campus of St Leonard's Ministries in Chicago.

Led by Alan Krema, it will consist of three movements: Welcoming Prayer, Centering Prayer, and Communal Holding of our Societal Wounding. We will end our morning prayer with a ritual of Wisdom Sharing.

After our morning session, we will tour St Leonard's facility, one of the most successful programs in our country to support and embrace the return of the formerly incarcerated to sacred citizenship. [You can read about St. Leonard's here.](#) Lunch will be served.

Then, in the afternoon, we will return to the chapel to view the online presentation by Carl McColman on a large screen, in community.

***Note: If you would like to join us at St. Leonard's, please act quickly – capacity for the in-person gathering is limited to 30 people.***

**Alan Krema** is a long time student of Thomas Keating and Cynthia Bourgeault. Alan has attended Wisdom Schools since 2010. He facilitates Wisdom practice groups focused on Centering Prayer, Welcoming Prayer, the Wisdom Way of Knowing, the Gospel of Thomas, and the Gospel of Mary Magdalene.

Alan emphasizes the engagement of current issues with the embodied Wisdom of contemplative practice. He is actively engaged with Wisdom Waypoints and Contemplative Outreach and has introduced a variety of teachings from the Wisdom Way of Knowing lineage into the practice and prayer gatherings of Contemplative Outreach.

Alan is an alum of the CAC Living School and the program for facilitating Contemplative

Retreats from the Shalem Institute. He lives in the Chicago area.

[More information and registration for the in-person option.](#)

**Note that the in-person option includes the online workshop; do not register for both or you will overpay.**

*From Contemplative Outreach of Colorado*

***God 'n Me: Thomas Keating's Lifelong Love Affair with God - Online This Saturday***

On Saturday October 19, in her first teaching from her soon-to-be published book, “Thomas Keating: The Making of a Modern Christian Mystic,” Cynthia Bourgeault will guide participants through Thomas’s evolving concept of God, illuminating Keating’s remarkable spiritual development in the final stages of his spiritual journey. Cynthia will be sharing from her perspective as a disciple of Keating's teachings as well as her personal experiences and close study of his late works.



[More information and registration](#)

*From Awakenings*

***The BIPOC Speaker Series***

*Online - Next Session: October 27*

We are pleased to call your attention to a growing contemplative community based in Houston that we've recently gotten to know: [Awakenings](#).

One of Awakenings' offerings, the BIPOC Speaker Series, is a transformative initiative dedicated to providing a platform for BIPOC Contemplative teachers and thought leaders. (BIPOC = Black, Indigenous, People of Color) The series aims to amplify diverse voices within the contemplative community and create a space for sharing wisdom, stories, and practices that enrich our collective spiritual journey.



Open to everyone, the BIPOC Speaker Series is a virtual event that features a variety of

BIPOC contemplatives who have been profoundly shaped by their spiritual practices. Each session offers participants the opportunity to:

- Hear personal stories and insights from BIPOC teachers and thought leaders
- Understand the unique impact of contemplative spirituality on their lives
- Learn a short practice that can be easily incorporated into daily life

The next session in the ongoing series is scheduled for October 27 and will feature Felicia Murrell.

[More information and registration](#)

*From the International Thomas Merton Society*

***Merton's Advent Tidings of Great Joy***

*Online - December 10*

This special Advent presentation is part of ITMS's ongoing and very worthwhile online series, *Tuesdays with Merton*. Iconographer Fr. Bill McNichols and theologian Christopher Pramuk will reflect on the power of sacred art to quicken the hope of Advent in our hearts, and to bring the creativity and courage of love into “this demented inn,” where Christ “has come uninvited.” Their book together, *All My Eyes See: The Artistic Vocation of Fr. William Hart McNichols*, has been described as “incandescent,” an “intimate conversation between two soul friends,” which “contributes to the awakening of the world.”

[More information and registration](#)



# The Spiritual Journey Series



*Join us!*

**Saturdays | 10:30am/EDT | begins July 13**

a weekly online gathering  
for young contemplatives (under 50)

For more information use the QR code above or [click here](#).

***The 2024 Contemplative Events Calendar***

To learn about more upcoming workshops and retreats, download and use this recently

updated [annual calendar](#). It provides a comprehensive listing of in-person and online programs we're currently aware of - now through July 2025.

#### *Book Review*

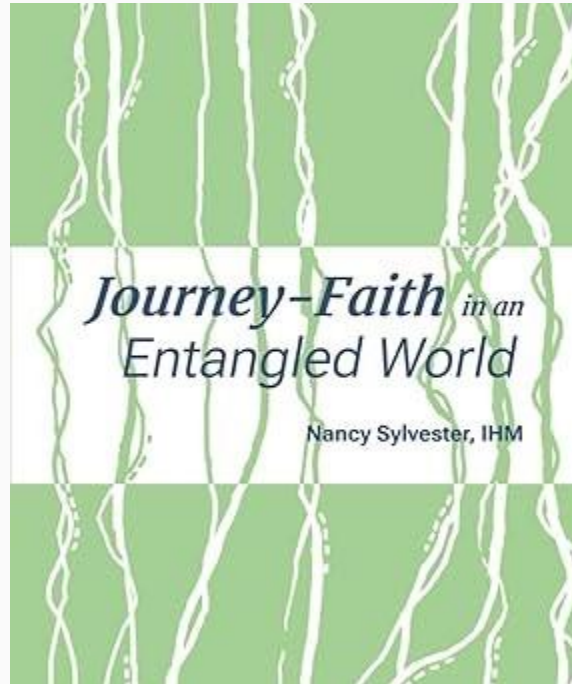
#### ***Journey – Faith in an Entangled World***

by Alan Crema

I have just read the book, *Journey – Faith in an Entangled World* by Nancy Sylvester, IHM.

This excellent book provides us with support by example of how we can be touched in the deep river of contemplation. Touched in a way that we fling our arms open wide in compassionate empathy for the world we find ourselves entangled with.

When we embrace our inner reality, we slowly build the capacity to choose how we are called to be. This is transformation into our Divine nature which is our inheritance given by infinite mercy.



Nancy was our winter retreat leader in 2020 when Contemplative Outreach Chicago hosted the Enter the Chaos retreat. We were given tools and examples then to support us in our consent to the Action of God within us. This book broadens the scope of how our contemplative lives can go ever deeper in unitive awareness which inescapably moves us to embrace our brothers and sisters.

This book can be used as an individual guide and as a group guide. There are contemplative connections to the liturgical seasons as well as Nature's seasons. There is a calling to many ways to engage our entangled world. *Journey – Faith* is a call to become whole.

#### ***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](mailto:groups@centeringprayerchicago.org).

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

- *New* - Centering Prayer and Lectio Divina every Thursday, 9:30-10:15am. Contact Bob Gorman at [rbrtgorman@protonmail.com](mailto:rbrtgorman@protonmail.com)
- 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)
- St. Mary of Emig Centering Prayer Group Tuesday 6:30 – 7:30pm. Contact Rose Magiera for link and phone number – [rmmagiera@gmail.com](mailto:rmmagiera@gmail.com)
- North Park Covenant Church, Monday 7:15pm. Contact Sarah Hillabrant, (773) 509-1095, [yoopergirl37@gmail.com](mailto:yoopergirl37@gmail.com)
- Contemplative Worship, every Wednesday, 5:00pm. Contact Jenny Russel at – [jir8546@yahoo.com](mailto:jir8546@yahoo.com)
- St. Michael's Catholic Church, Schererville, Indiana, Monday, 6:00 PM. Contact Peggy Kolarik, [peggy.kolarik@att.net](mailto:peggy.kolarik@att.net), 219-322-1886
- Northern Illinois Zoom Centering Prayer Group, every Saturday 9:30 – 10:15am. Contact Anne Smith 815-245-4088 or Kathy Putnam 815-568-7641, [Katiairel@aol.com](mailto:Katiairel@aol.com)

- Contemplative Outreach of NYC & Beyond - Brief prayers, 20 minutes of silent meditation, followed by lectio divina. The full program lasts about 45 minutes. Contact: Jane Coakley at coakley53@gmail.com
- Metanoia Journey (Austin, Texas) - Sunday morning "Centering Prayer/Lectio Divina" online service. Sundays, 8:30-9:30am Central. [Register here](#).

### ***Offerings in the Meditation Chapel***

Meditation Chapel is an independent, nonprofit global platform with which Contemplative Outreach Ltd. partners to encourage groups and individuals in a life of contemplative practice. Therefore, the global website of our parent organization features this Online Meditation Chapel, which is very easy to use and provides the opportunity to see, hear and join in silent prayer with others from all over the world.

**Registering for Meditation Chapel** – You must first register to attend the meetings in the Chapel. You can do so at this link: <https://meditationchapel.org/getting-started/>. Once registered, you will receive the chapel links and can then check the [calendar](#) to pick one or more groups convenient for your schedule..

**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*. A friend writes: “I have been attending meditation in the virtual Keating Chapel and had a lovely experience. The facilitator was very good!”

**Centering Down: Meditations with Howard Thurman for the BIPOC Community** – Join Colleen Thomas and Leslie Geer in the virtual Meditation Chapel for a contemplative meeting place for those identifying as BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color). We will reflect on the various writings and teachings of Howard Thurman. Our time together will include a 20-minute Centering Prayer sit, Lectio Divina, and faith-sharing. Every Monday, 9:30am Central: <https://meditationchapel.org/mary-of-magdala-chapel/>

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

*(Centering Prayer's) openness reflects a broader truth: that contemplative practice invites everyone into community, into communion with the sacred, no matter what name we give it.*

— Josephine Garnem

*In Centering Prayer, we experience a process of emptying, and we're invited to consent to the presence and action of the divine nature that is in each of us. This consent is a paying attention to the embodied energy field of the divine . . . a compassionate and empathetic embrace of our entire human family.*

- Alan Krema

*Centering Prayer is a form of meditation that particularly comes out of the Christian tradition, although it is universal - it's really for all spiritual seekers. It's a practice that seeks to access and consent to the presence of the spirit within through being present to the silence that is in between every heartbeat and every thought.*

- Carl McColman

*Physicist Neil de Grasse Tyson reminds us that our solidarity is not a choice, it's a reality. He says we're all connected to each other biologically, to the earth chemically, and to the rest of the universe atomically. Our solidarity is a scientific fact, as well as the salvific act of a loving Savior and a wise and guiding Holy Spirit.*

- Barbara Holmes

### **Your Turn**

Please write in to contribute your ideas or to comment on any aspect of *Spirit Journal*. For example, you are most welcome 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