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# CONTEMPLATIVE OUTREACH OF MIDDLE TENNESSEE

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Volume 1, Issue 1

Summer 2000

## Journey with Thomas Keating

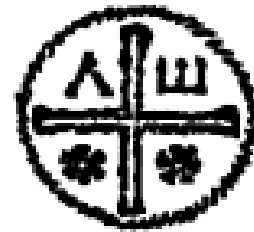
*Dioceses Co-Sponsor Teacher of Contemplative Prayer*

By Carol Wray

Over 1600 hundred people took advantage of the opportunity to hear Father Thomas Keating in February at events jointly sponsored by The Episcopal Diocese of Tennessee and Catholic Diocese of Nashville. Hosts for the events were Christ Church Cathedral, Nashville, the Cathedral of the Incarnation, Nashville, the University of the South, Sewanee, St. Paul's, Chattanooga, and Church of the Good Shepherd, Chattanooga. Father Keating also conducted a quiet day for the School of Theology at St. Mary's Retreat Center in Sewanee.

Keating, a Cisterian monk from Snowmass, CO, has been at the heart of the resurgence of contemplative prayer particularly among persons outside the

*continued on page 2*



### What is Contemplative Outreach?

Contemplative Outreach is a spiritual network of individuals and small faith communities committed to living the contemplative dimension of the Gospel in everyday life through the practice of Centering Prayer. The contemplative dimension of the Gospel manifests itself in an ever-deepening union with the living Christ and the practical caring for others that flow from that relationship.

Our purpose is to share the method of Centering Prayer and its immediate conceptual background. We also encourage the practice of Lectio Divina, particularly its movement into Contemplative Prayer, which a regular and established practice of Centering Prayer facilitates.

We identify with the Christian Contemplative Heritage. While we are formed by our respective denominations, we are united in our common search for God and the experience of the living Christ through Centering Prayer. We affirm our solidarity with the contemplative dimension of other religions and sacred traditions, with the needs and rights of the whole human family, and with all creation. ♣

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 JOURNEY WITH THOMAS KEATING
- 1 WHAT IS CONTEMPLATIVE OUTREACH?
- 2 JOURNEY WITH THOMAS KEATING CONTINUED
- 2 FROM THE EDITOR
- 3 PRAYER & STRUCTURE
- 3 COMING EVENTS
- 4 CONTEMPLATIVE OUTREACH SUPPORT GROUPS
- 5 POEM BY STEPHEN M. MILLER
- 5 THEOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES
- 6 KEATING QUOTES

# ***From the editor***

Welcome to the first edition of *Contemplative Outreach of Middle Tennessee*. My name is Carnnie Harmon and I am the new volunteer coordinator for the Middle Tennessee Chapter. This newsletter is our means of communication to keep you informed about the upcoming events sponsored by Contemplative Outreach. It is also an opportunity for group leaders and members to write articles to be submitted on the happenings and news in your local support group. This will include information on changes in support groups, updates, poems and suggested reading materials such as book reviews.

At the present time, there are fourteen support groups meeting in churches throughout Middle Tennessee and you will find them listed on page four. Contemplative Outreach Ltd. has commissioned the following trained presenters to facilitate workshops and follow up sessions on Centering Prayer. These are: Corena Harris LCSW, Carnnie Harmon, Dr. Carroll Young, Rev. Tom Ward, Carol Wray, Hadley Morris & Rev. Thomas Morris, and Rev. Margaret Mullen.

An advisory board met on April 30<sup>th</sup>, to formally establish the chapter for Middle Tennessee of Contemplative Outreach Ltd., which is the national nonprofit organization for contemplative prayer. Our newly formed chapter reflects the growth and interest in our area for Centering Prayer and shows that the Holy Spirit is moving across this land and binding us together.

Please feel free to contact me and submit any articles that you feel will contribute to making this newsletter informative and newsworthy. If you would like to schedule an Introductory Workshop in your parish or church, please contact me.

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**JOURNEY**, continued from page 1  
monasteries in the past three decades. He is quick to point out that it is not he that is at the heart of the movement but the Holy Spirit! Yet to be in his presence, one participant remarked, is to know he is led by the Spirit of the one, holy, and indivisible Lord. He said, "The most important thing about each of us is God's presence in us, not you or me...but the manifestation of God's goodness in our particular uniqueness." Over his journey of four days, he focused on the process of transformation culminating in this manifestation through the lens of contemplative prayer.

Father Keating began his journey saying there is no such thing as private prayer. "When you sit down with the explicit intention of opening to the mystery of God, you take all of humanity with you. You can't leave all humanity behind because God is completely present with all people 24 hours a day. The problem is we are not present to God for even half an hour a day sometimes...or at least not the kind of availability that Jesus talks about in this wisdom teaching:...*when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret.*"  
Mathew 6:6

Though we sometimes think of prayer only as words, Father Keating encouraged us to think of prayer as *relationship with God*. Prayer isn't just external words. He emphasized "There are more ways to relate to a person than words. What does it mean when we say a person touched us? There is a communication that takes place beyond words. Centering Prayer is a movement from conversation to communion. In our human relationships we move through stages in our relationships, from little knowledge of one another, to friendliness with some people, to an actual committed friendship with some, and finally to a deep intimacy with a few people. And so it is with our relationship with God. It is this deep level of relationship, this intimacy that all the rituals, sacraments, active works of ministry point."

Such intimacy requires learning to listen. He said, "the spiritual journey is for everyone. Just by being born you are called to divine union." Who can do this without a profound inner development? Yet God commands us to do this. ⊕

## ***LEARNING TO PRAY***

**STILL YOUR MIND**  
BEFORE YOU SEARCH  
FOR THE OBJECT OF YOUR HEART.

PURSUe THE NEED  
OF YOUR SOUL  
AND IN SILENCE TREAD  
THE NARROW PATH.

PIERCE THE WILDERNESS  
THAT HAS OVERGROWN  
AND NOW OBSCURES  
THE MANY-SIDED HOLLOW  
WHERE YOUR TEMPLE IS HIDDEN.

ASCEND THE SANDCASTLE THRONE  
YOU HAVE SO CRUDELY  
FASHIONED  
ON THE SHORELINE OF YOUR  
CONSCIOUSNESS.

SIT THERE IN SILENCE  
UNTIL THE SPIRIT HAS PASSED  
OVER WATER AND YOUR SHRINE  
HAS FALLEN, ERODED AWAY BY  
THE TIDEWATER OF GRACE.

LISTEN TO THE BEATING OF YOUR  
HEART, AND HEAR ROLLING WAVE,  
CRUSHING SURF; PRODUCE A  
SOUNDLESS CRESCENDO  
SUMMONING AN OCEAN'S POWER  
FROM UNFATHOMABLE DEPTHS.

FLOAT, FULL FACE INTO THE FURY,  
LIKE AN UNFLAPPING GULL  
SUSPENDED IN FLIGHT  
BY A RELENTLESS WIND.

AWAKEN TO THE ONE WHO  
DWELLS WITHIN YOU WHO LIFTS  
YOUR BELLY AND INVITES THE AIR  
INTO YOUR LUNGS.

CONSENT TO THE COMPASSION  
OF YOUR CREATOR,  
FOREVER AS INTIMATE  
AS AN ANXIOUS PARENT,  
ATTENDING THE EVERY BREATH  
OF A SLEEPING CHILD.

ARISE FROM YOUR SLUMBER  
AND LEAVE THE DARKNESS  
BEHIND;  
THE TRUE LIGHT OF DAWN  
IS THE LIGHT IN YOUR EYE.

STEPHEN M. MILLER  
NASHVILLE, TN

## **Theological Principles**

1. Contemplative Outreach is a spiritual network of individuals and small faith communities committed to living the contemplative dimension of the Gospel in every-day life through the practice of Centering Prayer.
2. The contemplative dimension of the Gospel manifests itself in an ever-deepening union with the living Christ and the practical caring for others that flows from that relationship.
3. Centering Prayer consists of responding to the call of the Holy Spirit to consent to God's presence and action within. It furthers the development of Contemplative Prayer by preparing our faculties to cooperate with this Gift.
4. The source of Centering Prayer, as in all methods leading to Christian Contemplative Prayer, is the indwelling Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Its focus is the deepening of our relationship with the living Christ. Its fruits are ecclesial: it builds communities of faith and bonds the members together in charity.
5. A commitment to the regular practice of centering prayer is the primary expression of belonging to the spiritual network.
6. We encourage the practice of Lectio Divina, particularly its movement into Contemplative Prayer which a regular and established practice of Centering Prayer facilitates.
7. We recognize as mature fruits of Centering Prayer a deepening commitment to the needs and rights of each member of the human family and an ever-increasing respect for the integrity and interdependence of all creation.
8. We identify with the Christian Contemplative Heritage in which Centering Prayer is rooted and we recognize the lived experience of that heritage as a common ground for Christian unity.
9. While we are formed by our respective denominations, we are united in our common search for God and the experience of the living Christ through Centering Prayer.
10. We affirm our solidarity with the contemplative dimension of other religious and sacred traditions.
11. Following the teachings of Jesus, we exercise leadership as service, especially by being alert and responsive to the growth and needs of the spiritual network of Contemplative Outreach.
12. We cultivate and foster a spirit of unity and the utmost charity throughout the spiritual network.
13. We acknowledge that any good accomplished by Contemplative Outreach is the work of the Holy Spirit.

WORLD OF  
MINDS

*Contemplative prayer is the world in which God can do anything. To move into that realm is the greatest adventure. It is to be open to the Infinite and hence to infinite possibilities. Our private, self-made worlds come to an end; a new world appears within and around us and the impossible becomes an everyday experience. Yet the world that prayer reveals is barely noticeable in the ordinary course of events.*

Thomas Keating  
OPEN MIND OPEN HEART

St. Mary's Retreat Center  
P.O. Box 188  
Sewanee, TN 37375

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## PRAYER AND STRUCTURE

The Rev. Thomas R. Ward, Jr.

“I started practicing centering prayer because I believed God wanted me to simplify my life. And now I find myself as a part of another organization that asks for more of my time.” Some of you who are receiving this first edition of our newsletter may be like the woman who gave voice to these words. You came to hear Thomas Keating in February. You have tried centering prayer and are now struggling to work it into your daily life. You wonder why you cannot make time in your already overcrowded life for God twenty minutes twice a day. And now here comes a newsletter holding before you an organization that has its own vocabulary, structure, and implicit request for participation and support.

“Contemplative Outreach”, “Introductory Workshop”, “Centering Prayer Support Group”—I remember when all of these terms were just words to me, and I could not see what they might have to do with the mysterious attraction this practice had for me. That was twelve years ago. And now I find myself on the board of an organization whose mission is to offer this prayer to others as the Spirit

leads and to support us as we attempt to be faithful to the God who inspires us.

Behind these words and this structure lie much effort to be responsive to persons like the woman who gave voice to the words above and to me. Most of us have become aware of just how difficult it is to work this prayer into our lives. We have felt the need to be with others who are on the same journey—hence the support group. We have sought clear teaching about how to do this prayer—hence the introductory workshop. And we have benefited from Thomas Keating’s books and tapes—hence the organization Contemplative Outreach.

I encourage you to hang in there with the practice. It is primary. And hang in there with the other aspects of this organization which are designed to support you and others like you as you grow in the knowledge and love of God. This prayer will indeed enable you to simplify your life. And you will find that this organization and this new vocabulary become a help to you on your journey. Travel well. ⊕

### COMING EVENTS

#### **Introductory Workshops**

First Christian Church  
Chattanooga, TN  
Saturday, August 5<sup>th</sup> 2000  
Contact: Ginny Thomas  
(423) 267-4506  
firstchr@bellsouth.net

Sacred Heart Monastery  
Cullman, AL  
September 1-3, 2000  
Contact: Sister Mary McGehee  
(205)734-4622  
shmon@hiwaay.net

St. Mary’s Retreat Center  
Sewanee, TN  
January 6, 2001  
Contact: Carol Wray  
(615) 373-0613  
carolwray@aol.com

#### **Introductory Workshops cont.**

Sacred Heart Monastery  
Cullman, AL  
January 26 – 28, 2001  
Contact: Sister Mary McGehee  
(205)734-4622  
shmon@hiwaay.net

#### **Presenters Formation Workshop**

St. Mary’s Retreat Center  
Sewanee, TN  
February 4-10, 2001  
Contact: Carol Wray  
(615) 373-0613  
carolwray@aol.com

#### **Intensive Retreats**

Sacred Heart Monastery  
Cullman, AL  
October 6 – 8, 2000  
Contact: Sister Mary McGehee  
(205)734-4622  
shmon@hiwaay.net

St. Mary’s Retreat Center  
Sewanee, TN  
November 12-14, 2000  
Contact: Carol Wray  
(615) 373-0613  
carolwray@aol.com

St. Mary’s Retreat Center  
Sewanee, TN  
January 7-14, 2001  
Contact: Carol Wray  
(615) 373-0613  
carolwray@aol.com

## CONTEMPLATIVE OUTREACH SUPPORT GROUPS OF MIDDLE TENNESSEE

Cathedral of the Incarnation Catholic Church  
Nashville  
Friday: 6:30 p.m.  
Contact: Sister Eileen Pistor  
Phone: 615-446-2134

Christ Church Cathedral  
Nashville  
Sunday: 10:00 a.m.  
Tuesday: 5:30 p.m.  
Thursday: 12:00 noon  
Contact: Rev. Geoffrey Butcher  
Phone: 615-255-7729  
Contact: Stewart McCloy  
Phone: 615-661-4590

St. George's Episcopal Church  
Nashville  
Wednesday: 5:00 p.m.  
Contact: Dr. Carroll Young  
Phone: 615-385-2150

St. Edward's Catholic Church  
Nashville  
Wednesday: 12:00 noon  
Contact: Patricia Flandell  
Phone: 615-832-0873

Christ The King Catholic Church  
Nashville  
Friday: 8:00 a.m.  
Contact: Carolyn Goddard  
Phone: 615-386-3412  
Starting in Mid-September  
Monday: 2:15 p.m.

St. Ignatius of Antioch Catholic Church  
Antioch  
Friday: 9:00 a.m.  
Contact: Carnnie Harmon  
Phone: 615-834-1259

St. Mark's Episcopal Church  
Antioch  
Wednesday: 6:30 p.m.  
Contact: Rev. Scott Lee  
Phone: 615-361-4100

Immaculate Conception Catholic Church  
Clarksville  
St. Joseph's Center  
Saturday: 9:00 a.m.  
Contact: Dr. Ron Oakland  
Phone: 931-358-9471

Dickson Support Group  
Dickson  
Monday: 7:00 p.m.  
Contact: Corena Harris LCSW  
Phone: 615-446-2134

St. Philip's Episcopal Church  
Donelson  
Thursday: 7:15 p.m.  
Contact: Leighanne Buchanan  
Phone: 615-443-2202

St. Paul's Episcopal Church  
Franklin  
Monday: 6:30 p.m.  
Contact: Rev. Ann Vandervoort  
Phone: 615-790-0527

Otey Parish  
Sewanee  
Monday 7:00 p.m.  
Contact: Rev. Tom Macfie  
Phone: 931-931-5926

St. Augustine Chapel  
Sewanee  
Tuesday: 2:30 p.m.  
Contact: Rev. Tom Ward  
Phone: 931-598-1274

Christ Church  
Chattanooga  
Tuesday 5:00 p.m.  
Contact: Kathy Russell  
Phone: 423-209-5929  
Home: 423-517-0645

St. Paul's Episcopal Church  
Chattanooga  
Wednesday: 5:15 p.m.  
Contact: Elaine Giardino  
Phone: 423-266-8195

St. Peter's Episcopal Church  
Chattanooga  
Tuesday 5:30 p.m.  
Sunday: 10:00 a.m.  
Contact: Rev. Margaret Mullen  
Phone: 432-877-2428

Church of the Good Shepherd  
Lookout Mountain  
Wednesday: 4:30 p.m.  
Sunday: 9:00 a.m.  
Contact: Rev. John Talbird  
Phone: 423-821-1583

Contemplative Outreach Chattanooga Contact  
Rev. Margaret C. Mullen  
St. Peter's Episcopal Church  
848 Ashland Terrace  
Chattanooga, TN 37415  
Phone: 423-877-2428

