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# CONTEMPLATIVE OUTREACH OF MIDDLE TENNESSEE

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Volume 2, Issue 2

Fall 2001

## CONTEMPLATION IN CRISES

by Tom Ward

I write this on September 22nd, some eleven days after the events that have changed all of our lives and the third anniversary of my mother's death. By the time you read this, you will see those corporate events through a different lens than you do now, but the essential perspective will be the same. We are still looking for a place to stand so that we might make sense out of what has happened, so that we might, in turn, respond as seems right to us.

It will come as no surprise to you that I recommend centering prayer as that place. Centering prayer gives us a way to come before God twenty minutes twice a day. It is a way to offer our grief and anxiety so that we might live in the present moment, discern the particular work we are called to, and do that work in a clear, intentional way.

In the face of such overwhelming violence, we are tempted to act violently ourselves. As we see the grief of others and imagine the depth of human need, we want to reach out and do something, anything. Perhaps our first act should be prayer, the kind of prayer that centers us in the depths of ourselves where God lives in us. As we emerge from these depths, we will know what we are to do. God will be acting in us and through us, and we will be free from inordinate worry about the consequences of our actions. We will know through faith that God is with us.

Elsewhere in these pages you will find opportunities to deepen and support your practice of centering prayer. One response to the events of September 11th might be to take another step on your journey in Christ: resolve to be more faithful in your daily practice, join a support group, attend a retreat, offer yourself to be equipped to teach centering prayer.

Since I first read Thomas Keating's Open Mind, Open Heart, I have been struck by his teachings; no insight has seemed more profound than this: "In addition to being present in the sacraments, Christ is present in a special manner in every crisis and important event in our lives." (p.128) May we know Christ's presence in this corporate crisis as well as in the personal crises we all undergo. ⊕

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 CONTEMPLATION IN CRISES
- 2 FROM THE EDITOR
- 2 THE EXPERIENCE OF A RETREAT
- 3 THE EXPERIENCE OF A RETREAT  
*continued*
- 3 REVIEW OF TAPE  
*THE CLOUD OF UNKNOWING*
- 4 UPCOMING EVENTS
- 5 CONTEMPLATIVE OUTREACH  
SUPPORT GROUPS OF MIDDLE TN
- 6 FACILITATOR TRAINING SCHEDULE
- 6 UPCOMING EVENTS
- 7 KEATING QUOTES
- 7 REGISTRATION FORM
- 8 HIGHLIGHTS OF UPCOMING EVENTS

# From the editor

Greetings to our Middle Tennessee Contemplatives. As we continue our practice of centering prayer and being a contemplative presence in our world, let us pray for each other. Pray to be strengthened in steadfastness and bonds of love drawn by the Holy Spirit. We extend a special welcome to our most recent support group, St. James in Dickson.

Since our last newsletter, I am pleased to announce our Middle Tennessee chapter is connected to Contemplative Outreach, Ltd.'s web site. A primary purpose of Contemplative Outreach is to support chapters like ours. Visit the web site at <http://www.contemplativeoutreach.org> for:

- Weekly articles by Fr. Thomas Keating
- Information about local events
- Location for support groups

Our chapter makes a yearly donation to Contemplative Outreach, Ltd. If you would like to make a donation to either the local chapter or the national organization, you may send it to: *Contemplative Outreach of Middle Tennessee*, % Carol Wray, 1103 Tyne Blvd, Nashville, TN 37220.

The Middle Tennessee Chapter of Contemplative Outreach will participate in a Global Day of Prayer on March 16, 2002. Each centering prayer group facilitator will be sent information closer to the event.⊕

Carnnie Harmon Ph. (615) - 834-1259  
52 Benzing Road  
Antioch, TN 37013  
E-Mail: [AssocMercy@aol.com](mailto:AssocMercy@aol.com)

## THE EXPERIENCE OF A RETREAT

by Gretchen Miller  
St. Mark's Support Group

It has been two months now since I attended a Ten-Day Intensive Prayer Retreat at Sacred Heart Monastery in Cullman, Alabama. I was very excited to be going. I had always been a little afraid of a silent retreat for too many days because I can be rather talkative when I get going. I wasn't sure I was ready to be alone with myself for too long. I was also a little anxious about what kind of "spiritual refuse" would surface from extended periods of prayer. Practicing centering prayer at home and weekly with a support group for nearly two years, in addition to the retreats that I had already attended, had given me time to become comfortable with myself and others in silence. I found I felt ready to give a longer period a try.

When I drove through the gate at the monastery I immediately felt a sense of familiarity. The main building and its surroundings reminded me of another women's religious campus I had visited recently in Indiana. I felt this was going to be a wonderful experience already. How fortunate I felt; beyond a wrap-around, flower-bordered stone porch was the lake, encircled by flowers and trees and space. *Wow!*

I settled in rather easily and decided then and there I would do some art journaling. When you go to an intensive retreat you are asked to bring only a Bible as reading material. You are also encouraged to bring a journal. I had been to a retreat where we were shown how to keep an art journal, and that is why I had the watercolor paints and spiral art notebook to use now. I sat at my window and tried to capture some of what I saw out of my window. I was entranced by the profusion of color in the gardens and the tranquility of the lake and its surroundings. Soon it was time to meet for supper. All the meals were absolutely delicious and reminded me of the other bonus of the retreats I had been to--I was being cared for by someone else.

Continued on page 3

# The Cloud of Unknowing

## EXPERIENCE.....Continued from page 2

I had nothing to do but immerse myself in the quiet and supportive atmosphere of the retreat. The prayer room was a place of silence at all times. In it I thought I could feel the collective energy of all who had ever spent time there.

On the Desert Day we could attend Lauds, Mass, and Vespers with the sisters of the monastery in their chapel. It was great to hear the monastery bells calling the sisters to the Daily Office and to be able to take part in it myself. Besides turning fifty on that day, I also spent most of the day in different kinds of prayer. It was a fulfilling experience.

Then we had a grand celebration (I'll let it be a surprise for when you go) in the main dining hall; it was a celebration and re-entry time all at once.

Our final day seemed to come suddenly. I wanted to continue for "just a little longer" with fellow spiritual journey-ers. For some people this had truly been a time of coming to terms with themselves and their lives.

For me, personally, it was a dream come true. I was fine being with myself; in fact, I relished this time that I had. And, true to form, God did not allow anything to come up that I could not handle. As I had expected to have to maintain the silence the entire time, I did find it hard to have some talking interspersed with the silence.

I encourage anyone who is wondering if they could handle the "long, silent" retreats to try one out. There is no greater re-creative activity than being able to be by yourself with God and with others of like mind in an atmosphere of physical and spiritual nurture.⊕

by Corena Harris  
Dickson Support Group

For all those who know just enough about the The Cloud of the Unknowing to believe that it is too deep for them, aid has arrived. Contemplative Outreach has produced a video of Father William Menninger lecturing on The Cloud using the William Johnston translation by Imago Books.

The six-part set, with each segment lasting thirty minutes, is easily adapted to use by a support group. Segment topics include "The Centrality of Love," "Who is called to Contemplative Prayer?" and "How to Handle Distractions and Thoughts."

For me the last segment is the most enlightening. Menninger explains how the will can embrace what the intellect cannot understand. This is a perfect follow-up to the Keating audio tape "Who is God?" I suggest the video "Lectio Divina Practice" with Father Carl Arico as a preface for The Cloud of the Unknowing set. Menninger refers often to contemplative prayer as it relates to that Lectio Divina. An interesting footnote during his lecture is the explanation he offers of the gift of tongues.

This video is available from Contemplative Outreach Ltd. ⊕

*The Spirit intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words.*  
*Romans 8:26*

**The Annual Contemplative Outreach National Conference will be held at the Marriott Hotel, Nashville, TN  
October 9 - 13, 2002  
The Saturday, October 13th Session will be open to all!**

# UPCOMING

## Introductory Workshops

Immaculate Conception Church  
Clarksville, TN  
October 20, 2001  
Contact: Dr. Ron Oakland  
Phone: 931-645-6275  
ronoakland@prodigy.net

St. Mary's Retreat Center  
Sewanee, TN  
January 5, 2002  
Contact: Carol Wray  
(615) -373-0613  
carolwray@aol.com

## Introductory Workshops

Sacred Heart Monastery  
Cullman, Alabama  
January 25 - 27, 2002  
Contact: Sr. Eleanor Harrison  
(256) - 734-8302

St. Mary's Retreat Center  
Sewanee, TN  
June 8, 2002  
Contact: Carol Wray  
(615) - 373-0613  
carolwray@aol.com

## Intensive Retreats

St. Mary's Retreat Center  
Sewanee, TN  
November 11 - 13, 2001  
Contact: Carol Wray  
(615) 373-0613  
carolwray@aol.com

Sacred Heart Monastery  
Cullman, Alabama  
November 30 - December 2, 2001  
Contact: Sr. Eleanor Harrison  
(256) - 734-8302

# CONTEMPLATIVE OUTREACH SUPPORT

## Nashville

Christ Church Cathedral  
Sunday: 10:00 a.m.  
Tuesday: 5:30 p.m.  
Thursday: 12:00 noon  
Contact: Rev. Geoffrey Butcher  
Phone: 615-255-7729  
gbutcher@ChristCathedral.org  
Contact: Stewart McCloy  
Phone: 615-661-4590  
stuartmccloy@home.com

St. George's Episcopal Church  
Monday: 5:00 p.m.  
Contact: Dr. Carroll Young  
Phone: 615-385-2150  
CarrollYoung@mindspring.com

St. Edward's Catholic Church  
Wednesday: 11:30 a.m.  
Contact: Patricia Flandell  
Phone: 615-832-0873  
patflan@worldnet.att.net

## Nashville

Christ The King Catholic Church  
Christ The King  
Community Room  
Friday: 8:00 a.m.  
Contact: Carolyn Goddard  
Phone: 615-386-3412  
carolyn.goddard@ctk.org

## Antioch

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

St. Mark's Episcopal Church  
Wednesday: 6:30 p.m.  
Saturday: 8:00 a.m.  
Contact: Gretchen Miller  
Phone: 615-794-6720  
Gret8ch@aol.com

## Clarksville

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

## Dickson

St. Christopher Catholic Church  
Monday: 5:00 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.  
Contact: Corena Harris LCSW  
Phone: 615-446-2134  
heartech@bellsouth.net

Dickson Contemplative Circle  
Contact: Corena Harris LCSW  
Phone: 615-446-2134  
heartech@bellsouth.net

St. James Episcopal Church  
Thursday: 7:00 p.m.  
Contact: Bobbie Williams  
Phone: 615-446-5484  
RWilli7183@aol.com

# EVENTS

St. Mary's Retreat Center  
Sewanee, TN  
March 10 -12, 2002  
Contact: Carol Wray  
(615) 373-0613  
carolwray@aol.com

St. Mary's Retreat Center  
Sewanee, TN  
November 10 -12, 2002  
Contact: Carol Wray  
(615) 373-0613  
carolwray@aol.com

## 8-Day Intensive/Post-Intensive Centering Prayer Retreats

St. Mary's Retreat Center  
Sewanee, TN  
January 6 - 13, 2002  
Contact: Carol Wray  
(615) 373-0613  
carolwray@aol.com

St. Mary's Retreat Center  
Sewanee, TN  
June 9 - 16, 2002  
Contact: Carol Wray  
(615) 373-0613  
carolwray@aol.com

Sacred Heart Monastery  
Cullman, AL  
June 24 - July 1, 2002  
Contact: Sr. Eleanor Harrison  
(256) 734-8302

Scholarships may be available.

# PORT GROUPS OF MIDDLE TENNESSEE

## Donelson

One 2 Yoga Studio  
Donelson Pike  
Tuesday: 6:30 -7:00 p.m.  
Contact: Leighanne Buchanan  
Phone: 615-443-2202  
YogaWithLee@Juno.com

Donelson YMCA  
Lebanon Road  
Thursday: 10:30 - 11:00 a.m.  
Contact: Leighanne Buchanan  
Phone: 615-443-2202  
YogaWithLee@Juno.com

## Murfreesboro

St. Rose of Lima  
Tuesday: 7:30 p.m.  
Chapel  
Contact: Patricia Darrell  
Phone: 615-896-2742  
pdarrell@mail.state.tn.us  
Contact: Kay Curtis  
Phone: 615-848-3081  
LKayCurtis@aol.com

## Sewanee

Otey Parish  
Monday: 7:00 p.m.  
Group leaders:  
Jennifer Michael  
Beth Shrader  
Contact: Rev. Tom Macfie  
Phone: 931-598-5926  
tmacfie@sewanee.edu

St. Augustine Chapel  
Thursday 2:30 p.m.  
Contact: Rev. Tom Ward  
Phone: 931-598-1274  
TWard@sewanee.edu

## Chattanooga

St. Peter's Episcopal Church  
Tuesday 5:30 p.m.  
Sunday: 10:00 a.m.  
Contemplative Outreach  
Chattanooga Contact:  
Rev. Margaret C. Mullen  
Phone: 423-877-2428  
revmcm@aol.com

## Chattanooga

Christ Church  
Tuesday: 5:00 p.m.  
Contact: Kathy Russell  
Work: 423-209-5929  
Home: 423-517-0645  
krussell2@prodigy.net

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

## Lookout Mountain

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

## Knoxville

St. John XXIII  
Monday: 6:45 p.m.  
Contact: Rev. Terry Ryan  
Phone: 865-523-7931  
terryjog@aol.com

## Facilitator Training Scheduled for April 2002

This past March the Southeastern Cluster (TN, AL, MS, GA) of Contemplative Outreach met in Cullman, Alabama. Each state presented a report and discussed wishes/needs in the area. We quickly recognized a primary goal of each area was to provide additional nurture and support for *centering prayer support group leaders*. Out of this gathering came the plans to offer facilitator training to all our *centering prayer support group leaders*. Bonnie Shimizu, who works closely with Father Thomas Keating in Snowmass, Colorado, has agreed to lead this workshop. We are so fortunate to get her! The schedule for next spring now includes the following:

- Friday, April 5 – 7, 2002  
Workshop for those who will train small group facilitators in Cullman, Alabama
- Saturday, April 13 – Facilitator Workshop in Nashville
- Sunday, April 14 – Facilitator Workshop in Chattanooga

The April 5 - 7 workshop is for people who will be training small group facilitators. The one-day workshops will be for all interested in small group formation or those interested in being small group facilitators. Please put these dates on your calendar and plan to attend. This is a great opportunity for leadership training. More information on these training sessions will follow as the plans unfold. ⊕

## Descriptions

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### Introductory Workshop

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These workshops are designed to assist persons in developing a more intimate relationship with God. Instruction in the method and an experience of centering prayer will be offered. The workshop serves as an introduction as well as a refresher course.

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### 3-Day Centering Prayer Retreat

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This retreat is designed for those who would like a more prolonged experience of this form of prayer but are unable to attend an Intensive Retreat. The retreat is intended to help persons develop and sustain a regular practice and to discover or build local support groups. Retreatants will participate in centering prayer, worship, an optional review of the centering prayer method, light exercise, solitude, and reflection. To facilitate an ever-deepening level of interior silence and attentiveness to the presence of God, there will be extended periods of silence.

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### 8-Day Intensive Retreat

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This retreat is designed for those who desire a more intense experience of this form of prayer. While silence in community is observed a good portion of each day, there are opportunities for questions and comments. Retreatants will participate in worship, centering prayer, and instructional sessions. Retreatants will have opportunities for solitude, reflection, light exercise and private interviews, if desired, to facilitate an ever-deepening level of interior silence and attentiveness to the presence of God. Video tapes of Father Thomas Keating's Spiritual Journey series are viewed. Recommended for persons who have completed the Introductory Workshop and persons who have a regular practice of centering prayer.

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### 8-Day Post-Intensive Retreat

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This retreat is designed for those who wish to take the next step into a more profound stillness and silence to facilitate a more intimate union with God. A grand silence in community is observed for a good portion of the retreat. An Intensive Retreat experience is a prerequisite of the Post-Intensive retreat. ⊕

## Keating Quotes

The way of pure faith is to persevere in contemplative practice without worrying about where we are on the journey, and without comparing ourselves with others or judging others' gifts as better than ours...In pure faith, the results are often hidden even from those who are growing the most.

Invitation to Love p. 118

The divine light of faith is totally available in the degree that we consent and surrender ourselves to its presence and action within us. It heals the wounds of a lifetime and brings us to transforming union, *empowering us to enter Christ's redemptive program, first by the healing of our own deep wounds*, and then by sharing in the healing of others.

Invitation to Love p. 119

Once we are thoroughly established in interior silence, it accompanies or pursues us through our daily routine. While conversations with God on other levels will still arise spontaneously, interior silence is the essential conversation.

Heart of the World p. 58

### REGISTRATION FOR EVENTS AT ST. MARY'S RETREAT CENTER

| EVENT                            | DATE                   | FEE/DEPOSIT     |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| • 3-Day Centering Prayer Retreat | November 11 - 13, 2001 | \$175.00        |
| • Introductory Workshop          | January 5, 2002        | \$35.00         |
| • 8-Day Intensive Retreat**      | January 6 - 13, 2002   | \$450*/\$100    |
| • 3-Day Centering Prayer Retreat | March 10 - 12, 2002    | \$175.00        |
| • Introductory Workshop          | June 8, 2002           | \$35.00         |
| • 8-Day Intensive Retreat        | June 9 - 16, 2002      | \$450.00*/\$100 |

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

(\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

(\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

(\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone

WorkPhone

Fax

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail checks payable to:** Contemplative Outreach of Middle Tennessee

**Mail to:** Contemplative Outreach, 1103 Tyne Blvd., Nashville, TN 37220

\*1/2 of retreat fee is due one month prior to the retreat.

\*\*Full but Wait List registrations accepted.

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