
CONTEMPLATIVE OUTREACH OF MIDDLE TENNESSEE



Volume 7, Issue 9

Winter & Spring, 2007

ST. MARY'S SEWANEE ADDS CONTEMPLATIVE OUTREACH PROGRAMS

by Tom Ward

In 2008 the following additional Contemplative Outreach programs will be offered at St. Mary's Sewanee.

Mar. 7-9	The Process of Forgiveness	Fr. Carl Arico
Mar. 10-11	Clergy Enrichment	Fr. Carl Arico
Apr. 6-10	Welcoming Prayer	Cathy McCarthy
May 12-18	Formation Retreat	Gail Fitzpatrick-Hopler
Oct. 19-21	Lectio Divina Retreat	Sr. Maria Tasto
Oct. 21-23	Lectio Divina Formation	Sr. Maria Tasto
Dec. 12-14	Advent Retreat	Fr. Justin Langille

This is in addition to the normal pattern of 3, 5, and 8 day Centering Prayer Retreats we have been offering for the past many years—which you will find listed elsewhere in this mailing.

What's going on? Since the mid-1980's I have dreamed of St. Mary's as being a place for silence, solitude, and simplicity of life (as it already was in another way for many years when the Sisters were offering retreats). When I discovered Centering Prayer in the late 1980's, that dream began to take a more tangible form. Thomas Keating and Contemplative Outreach had designed retreats of various lengths early in that decade. When I made my first Centering Prayer Retreat in Snowmass in

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OPEN MY HEART TO YOUR LOVE

by Robbie Stewart

This Advent season has brought to me a gift I never thought I would receive with such force: Pain. Over the past few weeks I have experienced pain in various forms such as grief, hurt, anger, disappointment, etc. Most of us don't look upon pain or suffering as a gift, I know I certainly never have. It has been a time of heart aches and many tears.

My active prayer sentence has been "Open my heart to your love" for a long time. It changed over the past few weeks to "Lord, have mercy." I didn't know why until I realized that I had been running away from the emotional pain that was coming up from the evacuating work of the Divine therapist. Instead of needing to be open to the process I wanted mercy and peace. But the journey is not about feeling good.

Recently I had several things happen to me that have been painful. I had an altercation with someone in the drive-thru line at our local credit union. We had a heated exchange. The difference in this experience from others is that I pulled up beside the man and rolled down my window and apologized to him and asked for forgiveness. Even more shocking was that the man apologized to me. A year ago I wouldn't have bothered apologizing. I would have held onto my anger, making myself even more resentful of the person. I can only attribute this experience to my relationship with God through centering prayer and my centering prayer group lovingly pointing out to me what I had been blind to see.

I also had an experience with someone I love deeply that was very painful and caused a great deal of suffering. It came from arguing about some very silly mole hill and grew into a monster mountain. The result was hurt feelings that I hadn't experienced to that depth before. I felt that the person needed to apologize. The apology came but very slowly. Later I

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From the editor

This month, our 15th Annual United in Prayer Day was held Saturday, March 17, 2006 at St. Ignatius of Antioch Catholic Church, 601 Bell Road, Antioch, TN. The video for the day, *Contemplative Listening* by Father Thomas Keating, was the focal point of the day. This day of Silence and Prayer celebrated the worldwide network of Contemplative Outreach united in a single bond of Centering Prayer around the globe. We had twenty-three participants!

* * *

Our **1st Annual Meeting of Contemplative Outreach of Middle Tennessee** will be held at **St. George's Episcopal Church in Nashville!** Mark your calendars for **Saturday, August 18, 2007 from 10 AM until 3 PM.** At this first annual meeting we will share the prayer and our experiences in the practice, listen deeply to each other and to God, learn about resources available to us, discover how we can help one another to grow in our practices, and determine how CO of Middle TN can best assist us, individually and as support groups. Please plan to join us and to tell others who might be interested! All are welcome!

A Revised Essentials Formation Training workshop will be held at St. Mary's Sewanee on Friday, November 30- Sunday, December 2 for those Presenters needing to be trained in the New Essentials. The presenter will be Gail Fitzpatrick-Hopler, Contemplative Outreach Ltd. Executive Director.

* * *

Our **new web site** is up and running! We would welcome comments, suggestions and news from your area. www.centeringprayermidtn.com

If **your church or group** would like to host a **Centering Prayer Workshop**, please contact me or one of the Contacts on our web site.

Carnie Harmon, 615-834-1259
E-mail: AssocMercy@aol.com
52 Benzing Road, Antioch, TN 37013 ☺

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1991, not only did I find what I had been looking for for most of my life, I knew in a deep way that we needed to offer those retreats at St. Mary's. We held our first such retreat in 1997 and have hosted over 50 such events in the past 10 years.

Then this past October when the University of the South gave Thomas Keating an honorary doctorate and Thomas gave us a few extra days, representatives of St. Mary's and Contemplative Outreach met to discern what we might do together that could be mutually beneficial and be consistent with the mission of each organization. The result was the schedule you see above.

This is an experiment. It is predicated on folks like you and me attending these retreats and making them our own. We have selected these offerings and presenters because they bring to the mountain the best programs and presenters that Contemplative Outreach has. While I have heard glowing reports about each of these retreats, I have never attended any of them. Selfishly, I want to attend as many as I can. I hope you will do the same. If this experiment works, we might expect even further cooperation. ☺

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couldn't help but think, "I freely apologized and asked forgiveness from a stranger but had to beg for an apology from the one I love." But this is the way God works sometimes to express grace and mercy. I should mention that two weeks later this same loved one told me, "I pray and thank God for you every night. I don't know how to tell you how much I love you." I was able to tell her, "You just did."

In his book, *Intimacy with God*, Fr Keating said,

"Whenever a certain amount of emotional pain is evacuated, interior space opens up within us. We are closer to the spiritual level of our being, closer to our true self, and closer to the Source of our being, which lies in our inmost center but is buried under the emotional debris of a lifetime. We are closer to God because through the process of unloading we have evacuated some material that was hiding the divine presence." (p.81)

This unloading can cause great joy but also great pain. I find solace in knowing that the more space that is evacuated, the more God will fill us. Even

MIDDLE TENNESSEE PRAYER SUPPORT GROUPS

Nashville	Christ Church	Stephen Miller	615-298-3381	Sun 10:00 am
Nashville	Christ Church	Rev. Geoffrey Butcher	615-255-7729	Tue 5:30 pm
Nashville	Christ Church	Marion Arnold	615-352-7660	Thurs 12:15 pm
Nashville	St. George	Dr. Carroll Young	615-385-2150	Mon 4:45 to 6:15 pm
Nashville	South Minister Presbyterian	Helen Blakely	615-331-3652	Wed 11:30 am
Nashville	Christ the King	Carolyn Goddard	615-665-1197	Fri 8:00 am
Nashville	Home Residence	Sister Eileen Pistor, RSM	615-385-7686	Thurs 6:00 pm
Nashville	West End United Methodist	Leigh Pandaleon	615-279-3708	Mon 12:00 Noon
Antioch	St. Ignatius	Carnnie Harmon	615-834-1259	Fri 9:00 am
Antioch	St. Mark	Gretchen Miller	615-794-6720	Sat 8:00 am
Brentwood	Holy Family Catholic Church	Irene Neilan	615-371-1015	Mon 7:45 pm-8:15 pm
Clarksville	Immaculate Conception	Dr. Ron Oakland	931-358-9471	Wed 5:00 pm
Gallatin	Our Saviour Episcopal Church	Church Office	615-452-7146	Sun 4:00 pm
Johnson City	St. John's Episcopal Church	Frances Jackson	423-434-0506	Tue 6:00 to 7:00 pm
Murfreesboro	St. Rose	Kay Curtis	615-848-3081	Mon 7:30 pm
		& Patricia Darrell	615-896-2742	Mon 7:30 pm
Sewanee	Otey Parish	Jennifer Michael	931-598-5094	Mon 7:00 pm
Sewanee	St. Mary's Retreat Center	Rev. Tom Ward	931-598-5342	Tue 4:00 pm
Chattanooga	Grace Church	Kathy Russell	423-517-0645	Thur 5:00 pm-6:30 pm
Chattanooga	Good Shepherd	Rev. Margaret C. Marshall	423-821-1583	Sun 9 am/Wed 4:30 pm
Knoxville	St. John's Cathedral	Rev. Canon Tom Rasnik	865-525-7374	Tue 5:30 pm-6:15 pm
Knoxville	John XXIII Student Center	Beverly Froning	865-426-4411	Mon 7:00 pm
Knoxville	Lakeview Center	Barbara Haning	865-671-0766	Thur 6:30 pm-7:45 pm
Kodak	Home Residence	Ed Coleman	865-932-4431	Wed 6:00 pm
Saturday "Morning of Silence"				
Antioch	1st Saturday at St. Mark's	Gretchen Miller	615-794-6720	Sat 9:30 -12:00 Noon

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though while going through this process we may not feel closer to our true self or to God, our faith in God's divine therapy can see us through.

During this time of pain I have experienced many tears, and continue to do so. I have found myself driving home and feeling such an intense visceral grief that my tears turned to weeping. I can only trust that God is cleaning out some junk from my subconscious.

Once again, Father Thomas says,

"...grief seems to be one of the first emotions to be released, and that can bring a flood of tears.....Tears are something that the early Desert Fathers prayed for because they had insight to realize, without knowing the psychology of it, that tears open the heart, soften harsh feelings, and wash away bitterness. They are a precious gift."
Intimacy with God. (p. 82)

Tears are a great gift. They help cleanse the heart and the soul. I am so glad that I have been

OPEN MY HEART concluded

graced with this gift. Before I sat down for my morning sit of centering prayer, I looked up and saw the crucifix I have hanging on the wall in my prayer space. The Lord spoke to my heart and told me, "Open your heart to your pain as I have opened my arms and heart to the pain of the world." As I did my sit I felt tears come down my cheek, cleansing tears. Come, Lord Jesus, come. Though there is pain in the cross, so there is resurrection. This is what the journey is all about, pain and joy, hurt and forgiveness, loss and love. To open our hearts to God's love is to be open to all the pain and suffering and love and joy that the divine therapist thinks we can handle as our emotional debris is cleared. May we all open our hearts, where there is light and darkness, to God's love. ⊕

Thank you, thank you, **Katherine Fleming**, for designing and implementing our new web site!!!

www.centeringprayermidtn.com

CENTERING PRAYER REGISTRATION FORM

St. MARY'S SEWANEE, SEWANEE, TN

PLEASE SPECIFY DATE	RETREATS	COST/DEPOSIT
_____	Centering Prayer Introductory Workshop	\$35
_____	3 Day Centering Prayer or 3 Day Introductory Retreat	\$200/\$50
_____	5 Day Centering Prayer Retreat	\$375/\$50
_____	8 Day Intensive/Post-Intensive Retreat	\$525/\$50

Please print carefully

Name: _____ Phone(s): _____
 Address: _____ City/State/Zip: _____
 Email: _____ Special Needs: _____

Included is Deposit \$ _____ Total Payment \$ _____ Donation \$ _____

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

Additional information: www.centeringprayermidtn.com or Carol Wray (615) 373-0613 or email carolwray@aol.com

CENTERING PRAYER EVENTS AT ST. MARY'S SEWANEE

See: www.centeringprayermidtn.com for retreat descriptions

See also: www.contemplativeoutreach.org for information on other retreats in Alabama, Georgia & Kentucky

2007 EVENTS

- Apr 15-17 3 Day Centering Prayer Retreat (Sun-Tues)
- June 2 Centering Prayer Introductory Workshop
- June 3-10 8 Day Intensive Retreat
- June 3-10 8 Day Post-Intensive Retreat
- Sept. 23-25 3 Day Centering Prayer Retreat (Sun-Tues)
- Nov 4 - 8 5 Day Centering Retreat (Sun-Thur)

2008 EVENTS

- Jan 5 Centering Prayer Introductory Workshop
- Jan 6-13 8 Day Intensive Retreat
- Jan 6-13 8 Day Post-Intensive Retreat
- Feb 15-17 3 Day Introductory Retreat (Fri-Sun)
- Other 2008 Events to be publicized in late 2007

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