
CONTEMPLATIVE OUTREACH OF MIDDLE TENNESSEE



December 2008

Appetite for God

by Tom Ward

In my last day job the word “appetite” was a cliché of choice. A person or group was said to have a certain appetite for a given project or idea. When I heard that word I knew to take notice, for our organization was likely to move in the direction of its key constituencies’ appetites.

Those of us on the spiritual journey have an appetite for God. We hear this in the scriptures of our tradition and in its classic texts: “*As the deer longs for the water brooks,* So longs my soul for you, O God...*” “*You have made us for yourself, O Lord,*” writes Augustine in the opening of the Confessions, “*and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in you.*” In the Cloud of Unknowing by an anonymous 14th century monk, we read

The access to heaven is by desire. He who longs to be there is really there in spirit. The path to heaven is measured by desire and not by miles...love and desire constitute the life of the spirit...We need not strain our spirit in all directions to reach heaven, for we dwell there already through love and desire.

Our desire for God is a response to God’s prior desire for us. As we read in I John, it is not that we (first) loved God, but God loved us. So we begin by receiving. But when we first begin to pray it does not

Continued on page 2

Welcome, Welcome, Welcome

by Carolyn Goddard

A friend of mine once warned, “Carolyn, be careful about praying for patience. What you might get are opportunities to exercise your capacity for patience.” Perhaps a similar caution should come with workshops on the Welcoming Prayer.

In April, I attended the Welcoming Prayer Immersion. Over the past twenty years, I have attended a number of Contemplative Outreach retreats and have consistently returned home renewed and committed to a deeper life of prayer. So I felt deep contentment as I pulled into the gravelly parking lot at St. Mary’s Sewanee and was delighted to find that the other participants came from all over the country. It was going to be a good retreat.

And indeed it was – even though the spiritual movement that grounds the Welcoming Prayer daunted me. The prayer calls for a sinking into the reality of the moment – the bodily sensations, feelings, thoughts. Then the prayer asks that I let go of my desire for security, affection and control – that I let go of my desire to change the situation. Instead, I am to welcome God’s presence in that moment without imposing my wants onto the matter.

The notion of letting go profoundly shocked my intellect. Yet, despite the best efforts of my ego to assure me that this prayer was insane, I was willing to give the prayer a try. I had walked a similar path once before when I first started attending Al-Anon. At that time, the phrase “Let go and let God” struck me as an invitation to inaction and irresponsibility. I learned over time that the movement behind letting go and letting God was about allowing my action to be guided by a Power greater than my false self-system. Trying to let go and let God meant I was asked to act in new ways, to be responsible in the sense of being able to respond rather than react.

So I put aside my intellectual misgivings and began to practice the Welcoming Prayer each morning and eve-

Continued on page 2

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

1. APPETITE FOR GOD
1. WELCOME, WELCOME, WELCOME
2. FROM THE EDITOR
2. WELCOME, WELCOME, WELCOME *continued*
2. APPETITE FOR GOD *continued*
3. MIDDLE TENNESSEE SUPPORT GROUPS
3. NATIONAL LEADERS RETURN TO SEWANEE
4. UPCOMING EVENTS AND REGISTRATION FORM

From the editor

May the light of Christmas grow in each of us as the Advent Season progresses.

* * *

We are celebrating many new offerings and hope that you will find them helpful on your journey. We began offering retreats directed by **National Contemplative Outreach Faculty Members** in 2008 and will continue to do so in 2009. Our first offering of **Centering Prayer as an 11th Step Practice** this past November was received with great enthusiasm and will be repeated in 2009! Visit our web site for more information

* * *

If *your church or group* would like to host a **Centering Prayer Introductory Workshop**, please contact our new Workshop Coordinator, Janis Lovecchio: Janis.lovecchio@holyfamilycc.com or 615-373-4351. **Another first...** if *your church or group* would like to host a **Lectio Divina Workshop**, please contact Carolyn Goddard at carolyngoddard@gmail.com or 615-438-3216.

* * *

The **17th Annual United in Prayer Day** will be held Saturday, March 21, 2009 at **Second Presbyterian Church**, 3511 Belmont Boulevard, Nashville. The day will include silence, prayer, lunch, and a new DVD by Fr. Keating. You may register in advance by contacting me by phone or email.

* * *

Our 3rd Annual Gathering of Contemplative Outreach of Middle Tennessee will be held at **Christ Church Cathedral** on August 15, 2009.

* * *

If you enjoy writing about your experience with Centering Prayer and would like to share it, please submit your article to me.

* * *

Keep up with upcoming events by visiting our web site: www.centeringprayermidtn.com.

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

WELCOME, WELCOME, WELCOME.....Cont. from page 1

ning – and at times when I particularly noted my emotions. Rather than following my usual habit of running away from strong feelings, I sank into them and tried to welcome that reality.

Apparently I attended that Welcoming Prayer Immersion at the right time. Shortly after pulling out of that gravelly driveway at St. Mary's, a family situation stirred up anxiety and fear in me. I would like to report that the Welcoming Prayer enabled me to respond to the change in our family life in a saintly manner. That would be lying.

Yet I will report that practicing this prayer allowed me to sit still a few minutes longer than usual, to “hang in there” with my feelings. This openness helped me identify the sources of my concern and to recognize the commentaries that were feeding my feelings of un-ease. Awareness diminished the power of the feelings and I remembered that I am not alone, that I can turn to God for guidance and strength to face these changes. I am still dealing with the changes. Each day I am able to say with greater authenticity and confidence, “Welcome. Welcome. Welcome.”

APPETITE FOR GOD.....Cont. from page 1

feel that way. It feels as if it's a one way conversation; we feel as if we are doing all the work. As Thomas Keating always reminds us, God's first language is silence. Finally we shut up and listen. And so it is two silent presences meeting. Two desires. Two appetites.

One final observation: Unlike other desire our desire for God increases as we receive more from God. In the beginning we find it difficult to practice the prescribed basic minimum: twenty minutes twice a day. Over time we cannot not do this prayer. We find we desire even more.

Yes, we have an appetite for God.

For further information please visit these sites
www.centeringprayermidtn.com
www.StMarysSewanee.org
www.contemplativeoutreach.org

MIDDLE TENNESSEE SUPPORT GROUPS

| | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Nashville | Cathedral of the Incarnation | James Lotochinski | 615-403-1918 | Sat 9:00 am |
| 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 | Christ the King | Carolyn Goddard | 615-438-3216 | Fri 8:00 am |
| Nashville | Christ the King-Lectio Divina | Carolyn Goddard | 615-438-3216 | Mon 8:00 am |
| Nashville | South Minister Presbyterian | Helen Blakely | 615-331-3652 | Wed 11:30 am |
| Nashville | St. George's | Bets Ramsey | 615-385-2150 | Mon 4:45 pm |
| Nashville | West End United Methodist | Leigh Pandaleon | 615-279-3708 | Mon 12:00 Noon |
| Antioch | St. Henry's | Sr. Eileen Pistor | 615-385-7686 | Wed 1:00 pm |
| Antioch | St. Ignatius | Carnnie Harmon | 615-834-1259 | Fri 9:00 am |
| Antioch | St. Mark's | Gretchen Miller | 615-794-6720 | Sat 8:00 am |
| Brentwood | Holy Family Catholic Church | Irene Neilan | 615-371-1015 | Mon 7:45 pm |
| Chattanooga | Grace Church | Kathy Russell | 423-517-0645 | Thur 5:00 pm |
| Chattanooga | St. Paul's Episcopal Church | Barbara Ray | 423-490-0735 | Wed 12:30 pm |
| Chattanooga | St. Peter's Episcopal Church | Joani Koch | 423-877-3140 | Wed 5:00 pm |
| Clarksville | Immaculate Conception | Dr. Ron Oakland & Judy Whelan | 931-217-1292 931-216-3863 | Wed 5:00 pm 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 pm |
| Knoxville | St. John's Cathedral | Rev. Canon Tom Rasnik | 865-525-7374 | Tue 5:30 pm |
| Knoxville | John XXIII Student Center | Beverly Froning | 865-426-4411 | Mon 7:00 pm |
| Knoxville | Lakeview Center | Barbara Haning | 865-671-0766 | Thur 4:00 pm |
| Kodak | Home Residence | Ed Coleman | 865-932-4431 | Wed 6:00 pm |
| Murfreesboro | St. Rose | Kay Curtis & Patricia Darrell | 615-848-3081 615-896-2742 | Mon 7:30 pm Mon 7:30 pm |
| Oak Ridge | Home Residence | Janice Watkins | 865-481-3326 | Mon 7:15 pm |
| Sewanee | Otey Parish | Beth Chamberlain | 931-598-9110 | Mon 7:00 pm |
| Sewanee | St. Mary's Retreat Center | Rev. Tom Ward | 931-598-5342 | Tue 4:00 pm |
| Saturday "Morning of Silence" | | | | |
| Antioch | 1st Saturday at St. Mark's | Gretchen Miller | 615-794-6720 | Sat 9:30 -12:00 |

National Contemplative Outreach Leaders Return to St. Mary's Sewanee in 2009



Fr. Carl Arico

Fr. Carl Arico, Vice-President of Contemplative Outreach, Ltd., returns in 2009 to lead a Lenten Retreat: **The Process of Forgiveness** on Friday, **March 27-29**. We will learn forgiveness is not so much about feelings as it is about freedom.



Gail Fitzpatrick-Hopler

Gail Fitzpatrick-Hopler, President and CEO of Contemplative Outreach, Ltd., will offer an in-depth introduction, review, and immersion into the **Welcoming Prayer** practice on **April 26-30**. There will be ample opportunity to practice and internalize the Welcoming Prayer.



Roberta Oster



Becky Hannah

On **October 18-20**, **Roberta Oster**, Co-coordinator of Contemplative Outreach of Atlanta, and **Becky Hannah**, Coordinator of Contemplative Outreach in Western North Carolina, return to lead **Centering Prayer as an 11th Step Practice**. Two tracks will be offered, one for those who have attended an 11th Step Retreat and one for those who are attending one for the first time.

2009 CENTERING PRAYER EVENTS AT ST. MARY'S SEWANEE

www.centeringprayermidtn.com or www.StMarysSewanee.org

| DATE | RETREATS | COST/DEPOSIT | PRESENTER(S) |
|--------------|------------------------------------|--------------|----------------------------|
| Jan 3 | Introductory Workshop | \$35 | Rev. Tom Ward |
| Jan 4-11 | 8 Day Intensive Retreat | \$595/\$50 | Rev. Tom Ward & Staff |
| Jan 4-11 | 8 Day Post-Intensive Retreat | \$595/\$50 | Rev. Tom Ward & Staff |
| Feb 22-24 | 3 Day Retreat | \$250/\$50 | Rev. Margaret Marshall |
| Mar 27-29 | Lenten: the Process of Forgiveness | \$275/\$50 | Fr. Carl Arico |
| Apr 26-30 | Welcoming Prayer Immersion | \$450/\$50 | Gail Fitzpatrick-Hopler |
| May 30 | Introductory Workshop | \$35 | Rev. Tom Ward |
| May 31-Jun 9 | 10 Day Intensive Retreat | \$750/\$50 | Rev. Tom Ward & Staff |
| May 31-Jun 9 | 10 Day Post-Intensive Retreat | \$750/\$50 | Rev. Tom Ward & Staff |
| Sept 27-29 | 3 Day Retreat | \$250/\$50 | Rev. Geoffrey Butcher |
| Oct 18-20 | Centering As An 11th Step Practice | \$250/\$50 | Roberta Oster/Becky Hannah |
| Dec 11-13 | Advent Retreat | \$250/\$50 | Rev. Tom Ward |

To Register, please Circle Desired Retreat(s) and please Print Carefully

Name: _____ Phone(s): _____

Address: _____ City/State/Zip: _____

Email: _____ Special Needs: _____

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

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

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

St. Mary's Sewanee (931) 598-5342 or email: StMarysSewanee@bellsouth.net

For information about retreats in Alabama, Georgia and Kentucky: www.contemplativeoutreach.org

Non-Profit
US Postage
Paid
Manchester, TN
Permit No. 150



Contemplative Outreach of Middle Tennessee
St. Mary's Sewanee
P.O. Box 188
Sewanee, TN 37375

- Fr. Thomas Keating

"global community."

to the

Divine Love

the experience of

aims to transmit

Outreach

"Contemplative