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# CONTEMPLATIVE OUTREACH OF MIDDLE TENNESSEE

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Summer 2011

## Contemplative Outreach and St. Mary's Sewanee

by Thomas Morris

Since 1997 Centering Prayer retreats have been a significant aspect of the mission at St. Mary's Sewanee. Through our partnership with Contemplative Outreach of Middle Tennessee St. Mary's Sewanee has offered eighty retreats and served nearly nine hundred participants, many who return year after year. These retreats and those who lead them and attend them have shaped the character of St. Mary's Sewanee in a profound way. The Center's commitment to foster contemplative practice, simplicity of life and service as a path to spiritual growth began with those first Centering Prayer retreats fourteen years ago. Today with eleven Centering Prayer Retreats each year and the diversity of other programs and retreats we offer that nurture contemplative living and practice St. Mary's Sewanee serves the world as a rich resource for the spiritual development of all people.

Our ties to Contemplative Outreach are stronger than ever. We just concluded another national retreat in conjunction with Contemplative Outreach International. Gail Fitzpatrick-Hoppler and David Frenette led a six-day retreat entitled The Sacred Breath of God. Forty-One participants from all across the United States, Canada and the Caribbean island of Trinidad explored how to bring contemplative attitudes to all of life. In late May the Lectio Divina Service Team of Contemplative Outreach will offer its first Lectio Divina Immersion Retreat.

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## "The True Self"

by Carolyn Goddard

### When I am Among the Trees

When I am among the trees,  
especially the willows and the honey locust,  
equally the beech, the oaks and the pines,  
they give off such hints of gladness.  
I would almost say that they save me, and daily.

I am so distant from the hope of myself,  
in which I have goodness, and discernment,  
and never hurry through the world  
but walk slowly, and bow often.

Around me the trees stir in their leaves  
and call out, "Stay awhile."  
The light flows from their branches.

And they call again, "It's simple," they say,  
"and you too have come  
into the world to do this, to go easy, to be filled  
with light, and to shine."

*(Poem by Mary Oliver)*

I don't know whether Mary Oliver centers or not,  
but she certainly offers some great images of the spiritual  
journey.

In her poem, When I am Among the Trees, she writes about "hints of gladness." When I first started centering, I felt such hints. Moments of consolations encouraged me to continue this prayer practice despite my family's and my own incredulity.

In the second stanza, Mary Oliver shifts from feeling "hints of gladness" to feeling "distant from the hope of myself." As I continued to practice, I also experienced a falling off, a disillusionment. Centering often resulted in self awareness that was not consoling. I realized I was not the person I wanted to be, "the hope of myself." To borrow Mary Oliver's terms, I became increasingly aware that I was not full of goodness or discernment.

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# Contemplative Opportunities

Our 5th Annual Gathering of Contemplative Outreach of Middle Tennessee will be held at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Nashville on Saturday, August 13. The theme is "Praying Beyond the Lines" with a talk by Rev. Geoffrey Butcher. Mini-sessions on Centering Prayer and Lectio Divina will be offered to support our practice of contemplative living. Reservation information will be distributed electronically in July. If you are not on our e-mail distribution list or if you do not have an e-mail address, contact Jean Hastings: jeanhastings@comcast.net or 615-356-0030 for more information.

The 2011 Contemplative Outreach International Conference will be held at the Marriott San Francisco Hotel, Burlingame, California on September 29 to October 2. Theme: Re-awakening to the Contemplative Dimension of Life. Marie Howard, Conference Coordinator MRHfamlife@aol.com.

If your church or group wishes to host a *Centering Prayer* or a *Lectio Divina Workshop*, contact our Workshop Coordinator, Janis Lovecchio: Janis.lovecchio@holyfamilycc.com or 615-373-4351 (ext. 235).

Since 2008 we have been hosting National Contemplative Outreach programs at St. Mary's Sewanee. In 2012 Gail Fitzpatrick-Hopler and David Frenette will return to Sewanee in the Spring to offer *The Sacred Breath of God* retreat. This past April we were unable to accommodate the waiting list. As a result of the growth of Contemplative Outreach Retreats, St. Mary's Sewanee will assume retreat registration duties for all 2012 retreats. We are grateful for this partnership with St. Mary's Sewanee. It is an ideal venue for Contemplative Retreats.

In keeping with the electronic age and to better utilize our resources, future newsletters will appear on our website rather than in your mailbox. An email will alert you when a new newsletter has been posted.

"THE TRUE SELF".....Cont. from page 1

Mary Oliver wants to "never hurry through the world, but walk slowly, and bow often." My wishes were more grandiose. I wanted to walk a few inches above the ground - hovering in holiness, exuding serenity and wisdom. I wanted to be a saint - or more specifically, I wanted you to find me saintly.

Centering prayer disabused me of this image. Centering exposed my unruly hunger for the esteem of others and identify its source in my false sense of self. It was through centering that I learned I would not find happiness in a life governed by my false self's will.

Trees call Mary Oliver beyond her false self by inviting her to "stay awhile" in their presence. Some Mystery that spoke silence invites me to stay in my chair, "sitting comfortably and with eyes closed." Whether I am feeling consolation or desolation, I too am asked to stay awhile, to consent to a Presence that I can not name or understand.

According to the trees that talk to Mary Oliver, "It's simple." The method of centering prayer is also simple. And, like Mary Oliver's trees, the practice seeks to remind me that I "too have come/into the world to do this, to go easy, to be filled/with light and to shine."

I could almost say that centering is saving me, the True Self that dwells deep within me, and daily.

+ + +

## Echoes

by Jean Hastings

The sound of silence was  
so loud,  
you could almost hear it  
so thick,  
you could almost feel it  
so sweet,  
you could almost taste it.

And in the absence of human voices  
you could almost hear  
the echoes of  
years and years and years  
of  
prayers and laughter and tears.

## MIDDLE TENNESSEE PRAYER GROUPS

<b>Antioch</b>	St. Ignatius	Carnie Harmon	615-834-1259	Fri 9:00 am
<b>Brentwood</b>	Holy Family Catholic Church	Janis Lovecchio	615-373-4351	Mon 10:00 am Thur 7:00 pm
<b>Brentwood</b>	Holy Family Catholic Church	Janis Lovecchio	615-373-4351	Quarterly
<b>Chattanooga</b>	Church of the Good Shepherd	Rev. Margaret Marshall	423-757-9580	Wed 4:30 pm
<b>Chattanooga</b>	Grace Church	Kathy Russell	423-517-0645	Fri 1:00 pm
<b>Chattanooga</b>	St. Paul's Episcopal Church	Barbara Ray	423-490-0735	Wed 12:30 pm
<b>Chattanooga</b>	St. Peter's Episcopal Church	Joani Koch	423-877-3140	Wed 5:15 pm
<b>Clarksville</b>	Immaculate Conception	Dr. Ron Oakland	931-217-1292	Wed 5:00 pm
<b>Gallatin</b>	Home Meeting	Tammy Hawks	615-230-7364	
<b>Johnson City</b>	St. John's Episcopal Church	Frances Jackson	423-434-0560	Tue 6:00 pm
<b>Knoxville</b>	Church of the Ascension	Fr. Rob Travis	865-588-0589	Wed 7:30 am Thur 4:30 p
<b>Knoxville</b>	Lakeview Center	Barbara Haning	865-671-0766	Fri 11:00 am
<b>Knoxville</b>	St. John's Cathedral	Rev. Canon Tom Rasnik	865-525-7347	Tue 5:30 pm
<b>Knoxville</b>	John XXIII Student Center	Beverly Froning	865-426-4411	Mon 7:00 pm
<b>Murfreesboro</b>	St. Paul's	Ronald Clemmons	615-867-6318	Tue 6:00 pm
<b>Nashville</b>	Cathedral of the Incarnation	Diane Gregory	615-414-6254	Sat 9:30 am
<b>Nashville</b>	Christ Church	Jean Hastings	615-356-0030	Sun 9:45 am
<b>Nashville</b>	Christ Church	Mimi Shimmin	615-298-2483	Tue 5:30 pm
<b>Nashville</b>	Christ Church	Laura Copeland	615-500-4683	Thurs 12:15 pm
<b>Nashville</b>	Christ the King	Carolyn Goddard	615-438-3216	Fri 8:00 am
<b>Nashville</b>	Christ the King-Lectio Divina	Carolyn Goddard	615-438-3216	Mon 8:30 am
<b>Nashville</b>	South Minister Presbyterian	Helen Blakely	615-331-3652	Wed 11:30 am
<b>Nashville</b>	St. George's	Bets Ramsey	615-463-2583	Mon 4:00 pm
<b>Nashville</b>	The Cloisters	Martha Likins	615-352-0025	Wed 1:00 pm
<b>Nashville</b>	VU Center/Integrative Health	Jean Hastings	615-356-0030	Mon 7:00 am
<b>Nashville</b>	Westminster Presbyterian	Rev. Guy Griffith	615-292-5526	Thur 11:30 am
<b>Oak Ridge</b>	Home Residence	Janice Watkins	865-335-9921	Tue 7:15 pm
<b>Sewanee</b>	Otey Parish	Beth Chamberlain	931-598-9110	Mon 7:00 pm
<b>Sewanee</b>	St. Mary's Sewanee	Rev. Tom Ward	931-598-5342	Tue 4:00 pm

CONTEMPLATIVE OUTREACH.....*Cont. from page 1*

This retreat provides the opportunity for participants to establish and deepen a practice of sacred reading.

St. Mary's Sewanee desires to be and is indeed becoming a regional and national resource for Contemplative Outreach and its mission to cultivate contemplative life in our world through silence, solitude and service. The Ayres Center for Spiritual Development exists as one place where, like Jesus before us, we respond to the invitation by God to "withdraw to a quiet place to pray" (Luke 5:16). Through silence and simplicity, hospitality and spiritual companionship, St. Mary's Sewanee seeks to awaken and develop the innate human capacity for relationship with God.

The great gift of St. Mary's Sewanee, and its place in the world, is to provide spiritual hospitality so that one's commitment to God may deepen and service to God and God's world will grow. Like the twice a day twenty minute period of Centering Prayer the occasional withdrawal from the ordinary demands of life empow-

ers us to address the suffering of the world with fresh eyes. "Interior silence," writes Father Thomas Keating "is geared to action. It is designed to soften up our self-centered dispositions...and open us up completely to God and to the genuine service of others."

We look forward to seeing so many of you as you come to the mountain for your retreat. If you have not yet had the opportunity to attend one of our Centering Prayer Retreats please consider it. We have offerings at every level of experience; One-Day Introductory Workshops, 3-Day, 5-Day, 8-Day and 10-Day Retreat experiences. St. Mary's Sewanee is grateful to share this exciting journey of faith with the Contemplative Outreach Community. We know we are ever richer as a result and pray that our ministry of spiritual hospitality bears fruit in the lives of many.

**For further information:**  
[www.centeringprayermidtn.com](http://www.centeringprayermidtn.com)  
[www.StMarysSewanee.org](http://www.StMarysSewanee.org)  
[www.contemplativeoutreach.org](http://www.contemplativeoutreach.org)

**2011 CENTERING PRAYER RETREATS AT ST. MARY'S SEWANEE**

**www.centeringprayermidtn.com or www.StMarysSewanee.org**

DATE	RETREATS	COST/DEPOSIT	PRESENTER(S)
Sept 25-27	3 Day Retreat	\$275/\$50	Rev Geoffrey Butcher/Rev Margaret Marshall
Oct 16-18	Centering as an 11th Step Practice	\$275/\$50	Roberta Oster/Becky Hannah
Dec 9-11	Advent Retreat	\$275/\$50	Rev. Tom Ward

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

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***

**Register for All 2012 Retreats through St. Mary's Sewanee: [www.stmaryssewanee.org](http://www.stmaryssewanee.org)**

Jan 7/June 2	Introductory Workshops	Sept 23-25	3 Day Retreat
Jan 8-15/June 2-10	Intensive/Post-Intensive Retreats	Oct 14-16	11th Step Retreat
Mar 4-8	Intensive/Post-Intensive Retreat	Dec 9-11	Advent Retreat
May	National Retreat		

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

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

For information about retreats in Alabama, Georgia and Kentucky: [www.contemplativeoutreach.org](http://www.contemplativeoutreach.org)

- Fr. Thomas Keating

"global community."

to the

Divine Love

the experience of

aims to transmit

Outreach

"Contemplative



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P.O. Box 188

St. Mary's Sewanee

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