
CONTEMPLATIVE OUTREACH OF MIDDLE TENNESSEE



Spring 2014

The Pattern of Prayer

by Rev. Geoffrey Butcher

It goes without saying that prayer is at the heart of our spiritual life. In the traditional sense it is just talking with God. It can be words spoken aloud or with quiet thoughts. The talking may be recitation of a formal prayer, such as The Lord's Prayer, or spontaneous thoughts expressed in thanksgiving, frustration, or as an appeal for help. Sometimes we may even think or say thoughts in anger, even at God.

Ordinarily, when we think of praying we assume that prayers need words. Music and art can also express our inner desires when we can't find the right words. Fortunately, God understands our thoughts and emotions even when we are unable to express them in any form. God may even prefer for us to simply have the intention to be present for God without words, thoughts, or emotions – or even music or art. Words, sounds, and signs may lock us into our thoughts and leave little room for God to speak to our hearts.

Gandhi once said, "Prayer is not asking. It is a longing of the soul. It is the daily admission of one's weakness...And so, it is better in prayer to have a heart without words than words without a heart."

In our experience it appears that God wants the deepest treasure of our lives – a loving heart filled with gratitude for the gift of life. And while our longing for God remains, especially in our weakness, God's

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Experiencing Sabbath

by Carolyn Goddard

"They are not the Ten Suggestions, you know." Sue's Irish eyes were indeed twinkling as she expounded her theory of the Ten Commandments. "They are the owner's manual, given to us by our Maker. You don't have to follow the instructions, but you are not going to function humanely for long if you don't follow the manual."

I enjoyed Sue's animated explanation and sat back in my chair to take a quick inventory of how well I was following the manual. Smugly, I ruminated - I haven't worshipped any idols or murdered anyone recently. I am relatively honest and only coveted a few of my neighbors' possessions. So blinding was my self-delusion that I even skipped right over "Keep holy the Sabbath" without wincing. If I remember correctly, my rationalization was I go to church on Sunday.

Being older now, some of the illusions about my self and holiness have fallen away, thanks be to God. I am not quite so smug - and I no longer believe I do an adequate job of keeping Sabbath. Odd, for I would think my attraction to contemplative practices would engender in me a love of Sabbath time, time set aside for quietude, loving-kindness, soul-deep refreshment.

Yet I cannot say that the twenty-four hour period from sunset on Saturday to sunset on Sunday is significantly different for me than the other six days of my week. As a former teacher, I am willing to give myself partial credit. I do go to Eucharistic services and generally have more time with family and friends during the Christian Sabbath. But I also find myself throwing in loads of laundry, checking my checking account, running an errand or two, or four or five. My awareness is often far, far away from that Presence I seek to love with all my mind, heart, soul, and strength.

I believe awareness can be a step toward conversion. Given hope by this understanding, I pray:

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Contemplative Opportunities

8th Annual Meeting ~ August 9, 2014 "Living Contemplatively"

Our 8th Annual Gathering of Contemplative Outreach of Middle Tennessee will be held at Holy Family Catholic Church, 9100 Crockett Road, Brentwood, TN 37027 on Saturday, August 9. Registration begins at 9:00 a.m. Pre-registration is available online at www.centeringprayermidtn.com.

The day will include an introductory workshop for people new to the practice, various break-out sessions, a panel discussion on how to live contemplatively, time for faith sharing with others, and lunch.

Reservation information will be sent to you in an email from our Constant Contact system. To add your name to the email distribution list, please contact Jean Jackson: jeanjackson2013@comcast.net or call 615-585-4287 for more information.

National Contemplative Outreach Retreat at St. Mary's Sewanee

October 10, 2014 – October 16, 2014

Embodying the Presence of God:

A Centering Prayer Retreat for Women

Mary is the model of consent to the presence and action of the Indwelling Spirit - exactly what Centering Prayer offers each of us. Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of the womb Jesus, Amen.

Retreat includes:

How to live contemplative dispositions in all of life

Three hours of Centering Prayer in common

Silence

Free time in solitude

Body Prayer

Opportunity to meet individually with retreat leaders

Gail Fitzpatrick-Hopler is a founding member and the current president of Contemplative Outreach, Ltd. Led by her desire to make transformation through Centering Prayer available to others, Gail leads

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THE PATTERN OF PRAYER..... *Continued from page 1*

longing for us is so dear that God has planted God's self within us. Discovering our true selves is a matter of relating to the God within, through prayer offered in traditional forms of prayer and beyond.

When I was at Chichester Cathedral in England last summer, I came across a beautiful hanging of stitchery art entitled the Pattern of Prayer. All of the words of this description of prayer were stitched by hand on a simple background of cloth. The words express a beautiful way of thinking about prayer beyond the reach of formal prayers and worship. I share it with you.

"No choirs of angels, no round of applause, no hip-hip-hallelujahs, no song and dance

Be still...in secret

Draw with words and silence the shape of your heart
this is prayer

within this framework lay down the fragile pieces of
of your life's tapestry

some beautifully made

some tattered...torn...frayed

some precious beyond measure

some worthless rags

the intricate designs, the random scraps

they are the patchwork of who you are,

every piece sewn together

by the unbreakable golden thread

of forgiveness...mercy...grace

woven from the love of God

put aside the shadows of the future

unseen, uncertain, unknown and unknowable

live in the shining light of eternity

be still...in secret

draw with words and silence

the shape of your heart

touch the power and the glory

for ever and ever...now

this is prayer.

Prayer is reflection on the story of your life put together as a tapestry or a patchwork quilt. It has beautiful pieces and fragile pieces...intricate designs and random scraps. And it is a place where you can be still...in secret...without needing to sew another stitch. Just be. Draw with words and silence the shape of your heart. You will find that you are living a precious moment, feeling the warm shining light of eternity. Forgiveness...mercy...grace are woven into your tapestry by the love of God. This is prayer.

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MIDDLE TENNESSEE PRAYER GROUPS

Antioch	St. Ignatius	Carnie Harmon	615-471-1077	Fri 9:00 am
Brentwood	Holy Family Catholic Church	Janis Lovecchio	615-373-4351	Mon 9:40 am
		Janis Lovecchio	615-373-4351	Thur 7:00 pm
Chattanooga	Church of the Good Shepherd	Rev. Margaret Marshall	423-290-1640	Wed 4:30 pm
Chattanooga	Church of the Good Shepherd	Beth Chamberlain	423-821-2755	Tue 11:15 am
Chattanooga	Grace Church	Rebecca Williams	423-843-0657	Fri 1:00 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	Mon 5:15 pm
Franklin	St. Paul's Episcopal Church	Scott Faulkner	615-595-1072	Mon 6:30 pm
Hendersonville	St. Timothy Lutheran	Monica Weber	615-824-6244	Sun 6:30 pm
Johnson City	St. John's Episcopal Church	Frances Jackson	423-434-0560	Tue 6:00 pm
Knoxville	Church of the Ascension	Fr. Rob Travis	865-588-0589	Thur 4:30 pm
Knoxville	St. John's Cathedral	Rev. Canon Tom Rasnick	865-525-7347	Wed/Fri 8:30 am
		Rev. Canon Tom Rasnick	865-525-7347	Thur 5:30 pm
Knoxville	John XXIII Student Center	Beverly Froning	865-607-3627	Fri 11:00 am
Murfreesboro	St. Paul's Episcopal Church	Sandra Clemmons	615-867-6318	Tue 6:00 pm
Nashville	Cathedral of the Incarnation	Church Office	615-327-2330	Sat 9:30 am
Nashville	Christ Church	Arlene Wilson	615-336-1766	Sun 9:45 am
		Mimi Shimmin	615-298-2483	Tue 5:30 pm
		Laura Copeland	615-500-4683	Thurs 12:15 pm
Nashville	Christ the King	Martha O'Brien	615-484-0934	Fri 8:00 am
Nashville	Christ the King-Lectio Divina	Carolyn Goddard	615-438-3216	Mon 8:30 am
Nashville	South Minster Presbyterian	Helen Blakely	615-819-0515	Wed 11:30 am
Nashville	St. George's	Bets Ramsey	615-463-2583	Mon 4:00 pm
Nashville	The Cloisters	Martha Likins	615-352-0025	Wed 1:15 pm
Nashville	VU Center/Integrative Health	Jean Jackson	615-585-4287	Mon 7:00 am
Nashville	West End United Methodist	Martha Likins	615-352-0025	Sun 9:45 am
Nashville	Westminster Presbyterian	Rev. Guy Griffith	615-292-5526	Thur 11:30 am
Oak Ridge	Home Residence	Janice Watkins	865-335-9921	Tue 7:30 pm
Sewanee	Otey Parish	Jennifer Michael	931-598-5094	Mon 7:00 pm
Sewanee	St. Mary's Sewanee	Janet Graham	931-598-0822	Tue 3:30 pm
Winchester	Trinity Episcopal	Marsha Carnahan	931-626-7565	Tue 11:30 am

Someone's

by Rev. Bill Combs

Someone has come
as we slept
and filled the valley with whipped cream,
all dollopy whimsy.

Oh, to be someone
in that bowl below,
waking to the great probability
of breathing meringued manna,
of someone suddenly becoming
Someone's.

Note: This poem was written during a retreat at St. Mary's Sewanee on one of those wonderful mornings when the valley is just filled with fog, but not quite, to the top of the bluff.

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CONTEMPLATIVE OPPORTUNITIES.....*Continued from page 2*

retreats and teaches all over the world.

Hadley Morris is a certified Yoga instructor and has been involved with Centering Prayer and integrating body prayer into everyday life since 1998.

To register: www.contemplativeoutreach.org/stmarys2014Presence or 973.838.3384

When: Friday 6pm – Thursday 11 am

Fee: St. Mary's Hall: \$780 [single]

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Upcoming Retreats at St. Mary's Sewanee

May 24	Introductory Workshop
May 25-June 1	8 Day Centering Prayer Retreat
July 26	Introductory Workshop
July 27-Aug 3	8 Day Centering Prayer Retreat
Oct 10-16	Embodying the Presence of God: Centering Prayer Retreat for Women
Dec 13-15	3 Day Centering Prayer Retreat

My Prayer

Sung to the tune of "I come to the Garden Alone"

by Marsha Carnahan

I come to my practice of prayer
Where my chair doth faithfully await me.
And it bids me come
And I finally sit
And present my sacred word to Him.

My God comforts me and He sees my heart
And He knows my every care.
And He Loves me there and He takes me where
My Soul doth long to be.

My thoughts they do come and they go
And I long for one unified moment.
Then I know He's Near
And I feel this clear...
And All I do is Surrender.

My God comforts me and He sees my heart
And He knows my every care.
And He Loves me there and He takes me where
My Soul doth long to be.

+ + +

"May Grace lead me
to a deeper experience of Sabbath
that I may rest in Your presence
more consciously, more consistently
and thus keep holy the Sabbath - and
live according to the owner's manual."

+ + +

Hosting a Workshop

If your church or group wishes to host an Introductory Centering Prayer Workshop or a Lectio Divina Workshop, please contact our Workshop Coordinator, Janis Lovecchio at Janis.lovecchio@holyfamilycc.com/615-373-4351 ext. 235.

For further information on retreats:

www.centeringprayermidtn.com
www.StMarysSewanee.org
www.contemplativeoutreach.org
St. Mary's Sewanee: 931 598-5342

- Fr. Thomas Keating

global community."

to the

Divine Love

the experience of

aims to transmit

Outreach

"Contemplative



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St. Mary's Sewanee

Contemplative Outreach of Middle Tennessee

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