



Contemplative Times

The Centering Prayer Newsletter
of Contemplative Outreach

Oakland - East Bay Chapter

Letter from the Co-Coordinator

May 2010
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Contemplative Times
Contemplative Outreach, LTD.
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We started 2010 with many activities. In February, we had our Lenten Day of Prayer at Christ the King Church in Pleasant Hill. The word has been spreading via our wonderful conout-norcal.org. Several new people came who otherwise would not have known about the Prayer Day. Be sure and check it out for all updates in the Chapter and beyond.

Sr. Maria Tasto, a Benedictan sister from Indiana presented a simple yet inspired *Lectio Divina* workshop for approximately 40 people in March. If you were unable to attend I highly recommend that you try and find someone who did and ask them to share their experience. Sr. Maria is currently recuperating from surgery and I ask you to hold her in your prayers for speedy recovery.

April was our Building Community dinner, and Elka, our *chef extraordinaire* presented a delicious vegetarian dinner for over 50 folks. We have been blessed with individuals willing to feed our souls and bodies with their wonderful gifts. Thanks to everyone who made this event possible.

Looking ahead to the coming months we have scheduled a Summer Day of Prayer at Our Lady of Lourdes. It will be on Saturday, July 24, 2010 from 10:00 am- 3:00 pm. The flyer will be on the website as well as in the newsletter. Please join us as we recharge our "Centering" battery for the summer.

And finally, in September, we will have our annual Potluck, on September 23, 2010 at St. Theresa's, Oakland, from 6:00 pm -8:30 pm in Conference Rms 1 & 2 (where we had our Building Community dinner). We are in the process of arranging for a guest speaker. This is another opportunity to pray together and to get to know one another better. I'm looking forward to seeing each of you at these upcoming events.

This first year as Co-Coordinator has been a great experience for me, learning the ropes and getting to know you, has been a blessing. If you have any ideas on how we can grow our Chapter to better serve you please, let John or me know what you're thinking. The power of this prayer is truly the sharing of the practice of "Centering" with each of you and with your friends and family.

Blessings,

Betty

**Centering Prayer Groups
in the East Bay**

**and their contact persons to call for
meeting times, directions, etc.
All without exception are welcome to our
prayer groups.**

- Alameda**, St. Albert Church
Tom Lewellyn: 510-865-8341
- Albany**, St. Alban Church
Judy Ellisen: 510-237-6961
- El Sobrante**, Hope Lutheran Church
Rev. Deborah Butler: 510-222-6394
- Fremont**, Our Lady of Guadalupe Church
Ron Taylor: 510-490-1279
Wendy Schock: 510-796-1063
- Hayward**, All Saints Church
Melanie Smith: 510-537-6563
Francis Tanjuatco: 650-678-7739
- Lafayette**, St. Perpetua Church
Helen McKennon: 925-977-1872
Carol Weyer: 925-932-1845
Joanne Elgaaen: 925-284-5608
- Oakland**, St. Andrew Kim Korean Church,
Maria Ko: 510-553-9434
- Oakland**, St. Theresa Church
(Day group):
Dolores Vasquez: 510-530-4081
(Evening group):
Jeanne Lovi: 510-547-2505
John Neville: 510-655-2796
Betty Wharton: 510-531-6124
- Pleasant Hill**, Christ the King Church
(Day group):
Jodi Runyon: 925-939-0859
(Evening group):
Jeanne Pletz: 925-837-6971
Pat Stevens: 925-945-1623
- Pleasanton**, St. Augustine Church
John Tiefenthaler: 925-560-1094
- Walnut Creek**, St. John Vianney Church
Nancy Jokerst: 925-683-2802
Rosemary Daunenbauer: 925-939-2923

**CONTEMPLATIVE OUTREACH
OAKLAND-EAST BAY**

SUMMER DAY OF PRAYER

SATURDAY, July 24, 2010

10:00 A.M. – 3:00 P.M.

*Doors open at 9:30. Come early for conversation, if you wish.
Program starts at 10:00. First sit about 10:10.*

Library of Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Oakland

We will have periods of Centering Prayer
and also view sections of Fr. Keating's

Heartfulness

interview series.

*Lunch will be in silence, if in the room.
Conversation outside will be optional.*

Bring a brown bag lunch Snacks and beverages
provided

Reservations are helpful for us, but not required
RSVP Betty Wharton 510-531-6124

Suggested donation \$20.00

No one turned away for lack of funds

Directions to the **Library of Our Lady of Lourdes Church** in
Oakland, on the east side of Lake Merritt, close to the 580 freeway.

If you are coming west on 580, take the Lakeshore exit and turn left. After one block you will see the church on your left. Turn left on Boden Way (the first street after passing the church). As you come around to the back of the church you will see the doorway marked in large, gold letters, "Lourdes Library." If you are coming east on 580 take the Grand Avenue/Lakeshore exit, go straight one block and turn right on Lakeshore. Proceed as above.

You can park either on the street or in the parking lot on your right on Boden. If you have difficulty climbing a short, but rather steep, hill please consider carpooling and have someone drop you off at the top of the hill on Boden Way.

The Library is (so far) *not* wheelchair accessible. There are a few steps to go down.

Sr. Maria Tasto's Workshop on *Lectio Divina*.

How many ways *lectio divina* can be used! A "Lectio Divina Edition" of the Bible was recently published. The four steps are: Read, Reflect, Pray, Act. Nothing wrong there, but it is a far different orientation from *lectio* directed toward contemplation. Different also is *lectio* that focuses on thoughts and reflections. Again, nothing wrong, but a different choice of practice.

Sr. Maria presented a wonderful and many-faceted guide to *lectio divina* as we do it. She based it on the way a relationship may develop between two people: first a rather formal acquaintance, then a more conversational friendliness, next a committed friendship, and later perhaps an intimacy of shared joy, suffering, and self-surrender. We can follow the same sequence with Christ, initially through scripture and moving gradually towards a deeper openness and sharing.

We have all heard about the monastic and scholastic methods of *lectio*. With the scholastic, which developed in the 1100's, one goes through the four steps of reading, meditation, prayer, and contemplation one after the other, like rungs on a ladder. When we do *lectio* in our Centering Prayer groups we generally follow this pattern. After the third reading we may say aloud the word or phrase we chose, and after the fourth reading we may share some thoughts.

Following Fr. Thomas Keating, Sr. Maria suggested that we could change this a little, once we are familiar with the basic method. We could lean more toward an expectant openness and less toward an active process of our own. We could leave "some minutes" of silence after each of the readings (yes, after all four). *After* that we invite a brief faith sharing that expresses what we have experienced with the word of God. Three minutes of silence feels at first like an awful lot, but soon it begins to pay off and feel more like a chance for God to get through our mental chatter with his Word.

With the monastic method one moves more freely about between the four aspects. Sr. Maria said that in the earlier centuries of *lectio* people did not even think in terms of four parts. There was one, flowing process. Here is part of her handout on "The Private Practice of Lectio Divina."

Read the scripture passage. What phrase, sentence, or even one word stands out to you? Begin to repeat that phrase, sentence, or one word over and over, allowing it to settle deeply in your heart. If any insights arise do not expand these insights right now. This can be done at a later time. Simply return to the slow repetition of the phrase, sentence, or one word, savoring it in your heart. Relish these words; let them resound in your heart. Let an attitude of quiet receptiveness permeate the prayer time, an openness to a deeper hearing of the Word of God. A prayer may arise spontaneously in response. Offer that prayer; then return to repeating the word in your heart. When you find that you move beyond the meaning of the phrase, sentence or word to the gift of the divine presence of the Word, rest in God as long as the Presence or attraction remains.

Compared with Centering Prayer, *lectio* is more participatory, active, concentrative; CP more receptive and passive. *Lectio* stresses our relationship with God; CP stresses one's intimacy with God. Each supports the motivation for the practice of the other. There are three obstacles to the journey: over-conceptualization, hyperactivity, and over-dependence on self. CP and *lectio* work together, each in its own distinct way, to further our progress on the path to God.

Some 2010 Centering Prayer Retreats in California

5-day Intensive
 with Fr. Tommy Brennan and
 Eileen Halliburton
 August 11-15, at Mercy
 Center, Burlingame
 Contact Mercy Center at
 650-340-7474
 or see their website mercy-center.org

8-day Post-Intensive
 (requires having previously done an Intensive retreat)
 Holy Spirit Retreat Center, in Encino, CA
 June 27-July 4
 See their website HSRCenter.com
 or contact Sr. Linda Snow at 818-784-4515
 or at HSRCenter@earthlink.net



Or, if you really want to get out of town:



*St. Anthony's
 Retreat Center
 Honolulu, Hawaii*

8-Day
 Centering Prayer Retreat

Intensive/Post-intensive

June 27-July 4, 2010

A 112 acre property in Kalihi Valley with lush outdoor paths with tropical plants and flowers, a hillside Stations of the Cross, and a meditation grotto which provides a contemplative backdrop for Centering Prayer retreats. Accommodations are private airconditioned rooms.

Phone: 808-536-6090

email: cohi@lava.net

www.cochapters.com/hawaii.html

Indian Summer Potluck

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2010

6:00 TO 9:00 P.M.

CENTERING PROMPTLY AT 6:15

Library of St. Theresa Church 30 Mandalay Rd., Oakland, CA **

RSVP to John Neville at 510-655-2796, or email him at JohnNev@sbcglobal.net.

(The potluck is later this year due to repaving of the parking lot at St. Theresa's.)

*Arrangements for a speaker are still pending,
but save the date, and come for the company.*

Potluck Guidelines

A-H bring a main dish or casserole Bring only enough for 4-6 people.
I-M bring a beverage
N-R bring bread or dessert
S-Z bring a vegetable or fruit salad

**Donations to help with expenses and other local
Centering Prayer activities are appreciated.**

****Directions** – Use the entrance on Clarewood. Take Highway 13 to the Broadway Terrace exit. On Broadway Terrace, go toward the Bay. (If you are coming from the Hayward direction, this will be a left turn under the freeway. If you are coming from the Berkeley direction, it will be a right turn.) Go to the second stop sign, at the bottom of the hill. Turn left on Clarewood. Partway up the hill on the left is the entrance to the parking lot of St. Theresa's. We will be inside the fence on the right, at the upper end of the parking lot, in the long, older building. (This is the former convent, now the parish center.)

PATIENCE FED BY HOPE *with Fr. Terry Ryan, CSP*

We need patience when our prayer life has the feel of being empty, barren, and dark. Teresa of Avila says, "Patience obtains everything." Faith is more than a decision. It requires patience and perseverance in the face of God's hiddenness. Our hope is that God is seeking us in a world that seems so uncertain. We may have nostalgia for the past, but God is a God of creation, surprise and wonder. We are ever moving into transformation.

Saturday, October 30, 2010 9 AM to Noon

Old St. Mary's Church Paulist Center California & Grant Avenue, San Francisco

Sponsored by Contemplative Outreach and the Paulist Center. Free will offering is welcome.
Coffee at 9 AM and the workshop talks begin at 9:30 AM. Paulist Center 414-288-3844

The Snowmass Interreligious Conference

In 1984 Fr. Thomas Keating invited a group of spiritual teachers from a variety of the world religions to gather at St. Benedict’s Monastery in Snowmass, Colorado to meditate together in silence and to share their personal spiritual journeys.

They formulated several “points of agreement”:

- 1. The world religions bear witness to the experience of Ultimate Reality, to which they give various names.
- 2. Ultimate Reality cannot be limited by any name or concept.
- 3. Ultimate Reality is the ground of infinite potentiality and actualization.
- 4. Faith is opening, accepting, and responding to Ultimate Reality.
- 5. The potential for human wholeness—or, in other frames of reference, enlightenment, salvation, transcendence, transformation, blessedness—is present in every human being.
- 6. Ultimate Reality may be experienced not only through religious practices, but also through nature, art, human relationships, and service to others.

7. As long as the human condition is experienced as separate from Ultimate Reality, it is subject to ignorance and illusion, weakness and suffering.

8. Disciplined practice is essential to the spiritual life; yet spiritual attainment is not the result of one’s own efforts, but the result of the experience of oneness with Ultimate Reality.

They later added other points of agreement of a practical nature:

- 1. Ten examples of disciplined practice, common to all of their traditions, and five others common to some.
- 2. It is essential to extend our formal practice of awareness into all the aspects of our life.
- 3. Humility, gratitude, and a sense of humor are indispensable in the spiritual life.
- 4. Prayer is communion with Ultimate Reality, whether it is regarded as personal, impersonal, or beyond them both.

You can read more about the first seventeen meetings of this group—their agreements, disagreements, and bonding—in [The Common Heart](#), *An Experience of Interreligious Dialogue*, Netanel Miles-Yeppez, Editor.

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED