



Volume 2, No. 1
November 2009

Contemplative Outreach Vision Statement

Contemplative Outreach is a spiritual network of individuals and small faith communities committed to living the contemplative dimension of the Gospel in everyday life through the practice of Centering Prayer. The contemplative dimension of the Gospel in everyday life manifests itself in an ever-deepening union with the living Christ and the practical caring for others that flows from that relationship.

Our purpose is to share the method of Centering Prayer and its immediate conceptual background. We also encourage the practice of Lectio Divina, particularly its movement into Contemplative Prayer, which a regular and established practice of Centering Prayer facilitates.

We identify with the Christian Contemplative heritage. While we are formed by our respective denominations, we are united in our common search for God and Christ through Centering Prayer. We affirm our solidarity with the contemplative dimension of other religions and sacred traditions, with the needs and rights of the whole human family and with all creation.

"There seems to be a divine way of doing everything: a divine way to be a lawyer, doctor, grandmother, teacher, convict, homeless person, or just to be sick. Since the Kingdom of God is present in ordinary circumstances, sensitivity to the movements of the Spirit within us tends to increase. On such occasions, everyday life can become a kind of dance... Recall Paul's words, "Love is kind, love bears no grudges, love has endless forbearance, love has no end; there is no limit to its trust (1 Corinthians 13).

You can intuit from this text how the Divine Partner is leading you. Every action seems to be perfectly choreographed. Others may not notice the dance at all because it is so ordinary. It is so congruent with the way things are supposed to be, that it can completely escape notice, unless there is someone there with the eyes of faith to perceive what is going on."

Thanks to Sister Catherine for the above quote from Thomas Keating's book, "*Manifesting God*"

"The nature of the contemplative mind is to love one's enemies.

Those are the people who will change the world.

(Richard Rohr)

CENTERING PRAY-ERS

- An Afternoon of Enrichment-

Saturday, January 16th, 2010; 1:00 to 4:00 pm

St. Benedict's Conference Centre

Please join us for restful, peaceful afternoon of enrichment.

The tentative schedule for the afternoon is:

1. 20 minute period of Centering Prayer
2. Viewing of Segment One, "*The Pursuit of Happiness*", from a new 9-Segment DVD Series on the Spiritual Journey by Thomas Keating with Betty Sue Flowers.
3. Reflection / Sharing on "*The Pursuit of Happiness*".
4. Refreshment Break
5. Open Meeting:
 - a. Sharing of stories/experiences, giving personal and small group updates, asking questions re: personal and small group needs, etc.
 - b. Do you want more Afternoons of Enrichment?
 - c. Other
6. Closing

COST: Free-will donation to Contemplative Outreach Manitoba.

RSVP: As soon as possible, please, but no later than January 8, 2010

Judith: jkloverkamp@rainyday.ca

Jack: fish3@rainyday.ca

Phone (204) 866-3692

SOME IMPORTANT DATES

January 16th Saturday at St. Ben's
1:00 to 4:00 Afternoon of Enrichment

February 6 Centering Prayer Introductory Program 10:00 – 4:00 at Seeds of Life Mennonite Church, Altona. Continuing Sessions will follow on a weekly basis. Contact Klaverkamps (204) 866-3692

February 13 Centering Prayer Introductory Program 9:30 – 3:30 at Light of the Prairies, Lorette Mb. Continuing sessions the following Thursday evenings, Feb. 18, 25, Mar. 4, 11, 18, 25. Contact Klaverkamps (204) 866-3692

February 19 – 21 Centering Prayer Follow-Up Weekend at St. Ben's

March 19 – 21 Deepening Retreat in Centering Prayer at St. Ben's

March 27th 9:30 - 3:30 Contemplative Outreach United in Prayer Day \$15. Bring a bag lunch at St. Ben's

July 2 – 9 Intensive, Post-Intensive, & Advanced Centering Prayer Retreats at St. Ben's

HELP PLEASE Sr. Catherine has been asked if, in the future, St. Ben's could offer Weekend Centering Prayer retreats. She would like you to let her know if you are interested, and when might be the best time for most people? What topics, or content would you like to be included? Would you be interested in having no new content, but periods of group Centering Prayer and silence? Please submit your preferences to: catherineosb@yahoo.com

JUST FOR YOUR INFORMATION/INTEREST

Re: Father Keating

This summer, Father Keating ended up in the hospital, where the doctors found blood clots forming in his lungs. They

found something to deal with this problem, and sent him home to the monastery to rest. He had to cancel prior commitments because the doctors would not allow him to travel.

A 25th Anniversary of Contemplative Outreach International was scheduled to be celebrated in Chicago at the end of August. Father Keating was not able to be present, but Jack and Judy Klaverkamp attended and found the celebration and the story-telling awesome!

October 2-4 Father Keating was scheduled to give a retreat at Providence Renewal Centre, Edmonton. Two hundred persons registered. But Father Raymond Sevigny and a committee decided to have a retreat anyway. Forty some participated, including Sr. Catherine, OSB. It included three segments of a new series of Keating's DVDs, periods of Centering Prayer, Eucharist and silence throughout.

Let us continue to pray for Father Keating, in gratitude for all that God has done through him, to introduce Centering Prayer to us and to thousands of persons throughout the world.

May we continue to be united in the Heart of God for the Heart of the World!

After watching the video of Keating and Bede Griffiths, Clara Toews had this observation:

It is important to understand the origins and teaching of centering prayer. True understanding helps us to be charitable, as evidenced by the conversation between Griffiths and Keating. However, technique is not the key. Centering prayer is a place of freedom where we come to know God and to be known by Him. We can't be failures here. There is no test to pass; but even if there was one, we know that the One who marks the test does so with grace.

PRAYER PLACES AND PEOPLE

If you would like to be part of a group of a group of pray-ers, here are some numbers.

University of Winnipeg, Susan 786-9390

786-9320 firedance@mts.net

St. Matthew Cathy at 774-1846

stmatwpg@mts.net

St. Timothy Wendy at 949-3760

wmclean424@hotmail.com

St. Margaret Elaine 663-6109

elainemarpin@mts.net

129 Monck Ave. Therese at 235-1057

1092 Mulvey St. 474-2681

St. Ben's Sr. Catherine at 338-4601

43 Parkville Dr. Laure at 254-7958

billaure@shaw.ca

C.O.MB LEADERSHIP TEAM

Jack Klaverkamp fish3@rainyday.ca

Sr. Catherine catherineosb@yahoo.com

Marilyn Van Wallegghem marilynv@mts.net

Judith Klaverkamp

jklaverkamp@rainyday.ca

Sue Morris sulainemorris@aol.com

John Wiebe wiebejj@mts.net

The LEADERSHIP TEAM **congratulates**

Therese Jasmin for completing viewing the entire set of the Spiritual Journey videos!!!

Therese has given up for the use of Contemplative Outreach Manitoba. Contact Jack Klaverkamp if you are interested in borrowing them for your group.

You will be pleased to know **Therese Jasmin** reports there are two on-going groups meeting at 129 Monck Ave., **every second and last Tuesday of the month**

1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. French and

7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. English

The French group, (of 6 – 7 people) are studying, "L'évangile de Thomas" written in Hasidic Coptic, and translated and commented on by Jean-Yves Leloup, a scholar in these matters. "This gospel contains no apocalyptic proclamations, and no prophecies. Instead, it

reveals what we have always carried within ourselves: an Infinite Space, which is the same within us and without us. All that is needed is to break the man-made jar that hides it from us." It is a treasure for transformation as we follow the lectio divina format. We do the usual Centering Prayer period at every gathering.

As for the **English group**, the **second Tuesday**, we use the Gospel of Thomas, the Gnostic Wisdom of Jesus by Jean-Yves Leloup, with the same approach as the French group. However, on the **last Tuesday of the month**, we are expanding Contemplative Outreach using "**Canticle to the Cosmos**", a twelve part audio series, based on the Twelve Principles of Thomas Berry. Brian Swimme, Ph.D. is a specialist in the mathematical cosmology – the study of the laws of space and time that govern our Universe. Dr. Swimme examines humanity's role in the emerging Universe. These tapes make us enter the Sacred Mystery of our Universe. They develop the "wonder of awareness" that Contemplative Outreach speaks of – openness to all of Creation. For us, it is time to move into the big picture of Cosmology – The Universe, its connection and influence on Science, Spirituality and Mysticism. "Canticle To The Cosmos" is alive, intense, and escorts us across the threshold of science and into the realm of the Sacred.

ANYONE MAY JOIN THIS GROUP IF THE HEART OF THE WORLD CALLS HER/HIM FORTH !!

Call: Therese, at 235-1057

Jeanne de Caussade writes: You are seeking God and he is everywhere. Everything proclaims him to you. He is by your side, over you, around and in you. Here is his dwelling, and yet you still seek him. Ah! You are searching for God, the idea of God in his essential being. You seek perfection and it lies in everything that happens to you your suffering, your actions, your impulses are the mysteries under which God reveals himself to you. (Abandonment to Divine Providence)

From St. Matthew's, Cathy Campbell reports: We are still meeting **every Wednesday at 5:00 p.m.** We sing some Taize-like chants, read a portion of a reading for the coming Sunday in a quiet meditative way. Then we have a 25 minute period of silent prayer. We have found that singing a little brings us fully rounded (body, mind and spirit). The scripture reading helps to keep the Word as the background for our prayer life. We include a circle with a brief time of intercessory prayer as people have need. We keep an open circle. People drop in, and some come regularly. Usually, on the **third Wednesday** of the month, we take time together for a simple supper and conversation about prayer. We have just finished the Father Keating introductory videos, and we will go on to read his "The Fruits and Gifts of the Spirit" together.

Thoughts from Health Sciences Centre.

At the hospital where I volunteer, several of us gather each Thursday at noon for Centering Prayer. Our group can consist of staff, patients and families or visitors. Occasionally we will have seven participants, and at other times only two. I facilitate Centering Prayer through the Spiritual Care Department at Health Centre, in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Before each session, I will plan a short introductory reading. I frequently draw from the Psalms or from short selections from the *Contemplative Life Program Series*.

For the staff, rushing in for these few minutes in their lunch break, I sense that the silence in this small darkened room is what each seeks most.

Quiet us O Silent Speaker, that out of still spaces we may hear your Word. Psalm 106; Nan Merrill

On occasion, a patient will come who requires oxygen, and for that person,

the simplicity of breath is a daily struggle. That is when breathing becomes our sacred word. We breathe in, we then breathe out and we know that we are breathing in God's love, and breathing out God's compassion.

On one occasion, a woman came to our Centering Prayer Group whose husband was in the emergency room, experiencing chest pain. I had previously drawn a reading from the book on *Contemplative Service* about surrender. Although I could only imagine her distress, I read that rather than struggle against the undertows of life, we should wait, and in waiting, surrender to the unknown, and that,

"What God arranges for us to experience at that moment is the best and holiest thing that can happen".

It is then at the words of the Welcoming Prayer have special meaning.

Welcome, welcome, welcome. I welcome everything that comes to me at this moment.

In centering prayer, we surrender to the presence and action of God within, we welcome those who come to pray beside us, those with different languages and beliefs. At times, we have shared our prayer time and space with Muslims who come to recite Salah, the Daily Prayer. This is the unique gift of radical hospitality that is offered by this hospital. In it, we are given a space that is open to all religions and beliefs. In the dimly lit room, our little group circles the flickering candle and our sacred words intermingle with their prayer...God, God, God...

"Thee alone we worship and Thee alone we turn for help. Guide us in the straight path...Peace be on you...Guide us in the straight path, the path of those whom You favored and who did not deserve Thy anger".

Submitted by Sue Morris

Thank You, Sue.

As you may know, there was a visioning event held at St. Benedict's Conference and Retreat Center on August 12 - 14th. John Wiebe attended, and offers some information from that event.

OBJECTIVES FOR VISIONING PROCESS

Prayerfully we...

Celebrate the history and service of Contemplative Outreach in local area.

Assess need to establish a Leadership Team with working Service Team.

Assess current needs of Chapter, outlying, areas and people involved.

Explore challenges before us – implementing realistic future growth/programs .

Prioritize challenges and tasks we want to embrace for next 1 – 3 years. (create a road map)

Envision highest potential of chapter for future growth of Contemplative Outreach local Chapter.

Acknowledge and encourage ecumenical dimensions and Spirit.

Each person involved with C.O. local chapter has a opportunity to give input and be a part of future planning.

Extend invitation to participants to servant-leadership

(Presented by Susan Komis at the Visioning Event)

OUR VISIONING RESULTS

Did you know after all of the discussion led by Susan Komis, and all of the thoughts on what is most important, we agreed on the following priorities?

1. Upgrade and maintain our web site and provide formation support for our regions.
2. Fill the position of Newsletter Editor and obtain a current "needs assessment".
3. Address "Distance and Dollars: giving opportunities, including financial means, for members from all regions to participate in our programs and events.
4. Obtain resource information on Outreach Programs.

There may be twists and turns on the road, but it is amazing to see how, by the Spirit's direction, all the pieces of the puzzle come together.

Thanks for the summary, John

Remember, you are most welcome to send your thoughts, inspirations, announcements, insights, invitations... maybe something you've noticed, or you think might interest or pique our curiosity, or cause us to ponder.

The "Good News" is being lived right now in the lives of the 'believers' of today. Maybe you could be the author of that Good News.

billaure@shaw.ca 254-7958

VISIONING EVENT

From August 12th to August 14th, 23 individuals met at St. Benedict's Conference and Retreat Center to listen to God's voice. The enriching and stimulating teaching sessions of Susan Komis started our Visioning Event with a challenge for each one of us. Susan called on us as servant leaders, to allow the Spirit to see our false selves fully. Our befriending of the false self allows us to become an observer of our own false selves, not in the sense of embracing the values of the false self, but in the sense of letting our false self becoming our greatest teacher.

Susan also presented a lively session on The Five Greatest Obstacles to Centering Prayer. These obstacles are the reasons that people do not continue in the practice of Centering Prayer.

The first obstacle is that some do not have a grasp of the principle that God dwells in us. Certain traditions advance the idea that God cannot dwell in us because we are so sinful. These traditions say that we have to become perfect first and then God can do something in us or something with us. New Testament theology has as central teaching that "Christ is in us." This idea of the divine indwelling is found in Colossians 1:26-27. The knowledge and personal ownership of the radical concept that God is in within each one of us, unleashed God's love and power in our attitudes, thoughts and actions. It completely transforms our very being.

The second obstacle that may cause us to stop the Practice is that we may think that we are unloved by God. This may be due to our attitudes towards God, due to our cultural conditioning, due to the belief that God doesn't love us unless we are perfect, or due to our lingering guilt some event, thoughts or past actions. We may have a

conscious or unconscious fear, even an emotional terror of God.

The third obstacle to continuing in centering prayer is that I feel that I have lost control of my prayer. I feel I should do something, or use my energy in prayer. The following questions may arise: "Shouldn't I express praise if I'm in God's presence?" "Where am I going in this prayer and where will it lead me?" "What are the results that I should expect?" "Am I getting anywhere?" With centering prayer we exercise faith and trust to the activity of the Spirit within us. The fruit of centering prayer is not in the prayer, but in our lives outside of the prayer period. Contemplation itself is a pure gift.

Susan's fourth obstacle to continuing our practice of centering prayer is the fear of the unknown. There are cultural fears and suspicions regarding quiet and silence. There are religious fears, in that many churches are not familiar with contemplation or the practice of centering prayer. Some even think the devil or evil will infiltrate into us when we are practicing prayer. Some fear the cost of transformation or change. This may be the cost attached to taking the narrow road, or acquiring the "pearl of great price".

The fifth obstacle to a commitment to centering prayer are sayings like, "I don't have enough time." Or, "I have children." Or, "I have a demanding job." Or, "I have a spouse that needs me." The greatest gift we can give to anyone, or to any responsibility, is a faithful practice of prayer. Saying "Yes" to God in our prayer practice will result in authentic living in our particular life situation.

Our many thanks to John Wiebe for offering his insightful report.

Jack would like to offer the

TWELVE PRINCIPLES OF SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP

Gleaned at the Visioning Workshop, from Susan Komis.

"I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things because I am going to the Father" John 14:12-13

Discipline:

- Faithfulness to prayer
- Capacity to follow
- Commitment to Loving Service
- Perseverance

Vision:

- Keeper of vision
- Faith imparts Vision/Purpose
- Foresight as well as insight
- Remains above chaos
- Transmits Vision

Listening:

- Listens with "ear of the heart"
- Seeks to understand
- Listens often, talks less
- Prayer enables one to cultivate transformational listening

Courage:

- Encounters difficulty without fear of discouragement
- Ability to face opposition
- Maintains positive outlook
- Redirects negative energy

Discernment:

- Makes prayerful decisions
- Collaborated with Spirit
- Does not project blame
- Takes responsibility for decisions

Humility:

- Attitude of servant leadership
- Allow others to become "greater"
- Gladly assists
- Admits to frailty, vulnerability
- No expectations of others

Integrity:

- Transparency
- Sincere in commitment
- Patient with self and others
- Loyal in service
- Honest

Humor:

- Humor relaxes tension
- Keeps things in perspective
- Humor combined with Grace
- Sarcasm is not humor

Inspiration:

- Servant-leader= Light for others
- Inspires/motivates others
- Spirit infuses energy as power
- Translates Vision into activity
- Shares leadership

Wisdom:

- Holy Spirit inspires understanding of concepts
- Seeks balance and good of all
- Fruit of Centering Prayer
- Manifests "gnosis" born of deep relationship with God
- Becoming a Wisdom People

Collaboration:

- In partnership with Holy Spirit
- Empowers others to service
- Invites others to leadership
- Strives for consensus
- Puts aside personal agenda

Trust:

- Absolute Trust in God and the Power of the Holy Spirit to work in your life every day of your life
- 1%= your effort 99%= God's Grace

Caroline Richards writes:

we have to believe that a creative being lives within ourselves whether we like it or not, and that we must get out of its way, for it will give us no peace until we do.

Source: "Centering in Pottery,"

PRESENTERS IN TRAINING WORKSHOP
AN OVERVIEW

By Jack Klaverkamp

A Presenters Workshop was held at St. Benedict's August 5 – 11, 2009. The Workshop leader/facilitator was Bonnie Shimizu, a longtime practitioner of Centering Prayer and a faculty member of the "Circle of Service" (formally the "Board of Directors") with Contemplative Outreach International. Bonnie was assisted by two "staff" members: Sr. Anne Veronica McNeil, from Halifax, and me, Jack. Frances Evers, from B.C. was also to be included as a staff member, but at the last minute was unable to come to Winnipeg because of a very important family matter. (The birth of a new grandchild)

Earlier in the year, the National Leadership Team of C.O. Canada arranged, and coordinated this workshop. One of their intentions was to invite St. Anne Veronica, (Eastern Canada) Frances, (Western) and me, (Central) to serve as staff in order to work with Bonnie. The three of us were to receive training and experience, and thereby form a core team to assume responsibilities for training and forming the future Commissioned Presenters of the Introductory Workshop for Centering Prayer in Canada.

Twenty Canadian Centering Prayers participated in the workshop; eight of whom are from our region, which includes Manitoba (six), N.W. Ontario (one) and the Arctic (one). The six from Winnipeg come from Anglican, Catholic, Mennonite and United Church denomination. As a result, it is very exciting to see that our region has the potential, over the next several years, to present the 7-part Introductory Workshop to many more congregations, prayer groups, institutions, etc. Over the course of this upcoming year, the Presenters in Training will be working with currently Commissioned Presenters in presenting the 4 "conferences" of the "first

part" of the Introductory Workshop. As a reminder for you: this "first part" is followed by the six parts referred to as the Continuing Sessions, formally called the Follow-Up Sessions. Sooo, the first part has 4 "Conferences" and the remaining six are the "Continuing Sessions" (I know, I know, it can be confusing, but hopefully it will help you to understand the next paragraph).

Bonnie brought two very important recommendations from the Circle of Service for significant changes to Conferences One and Four. For Conference One, (Prayer as Relationship) feedback from Commissioned Presenters indicates that, while well intentioned, far too much information was being presented to "beginners". For example, when presented at a reasonable pace, 40-45 minutes are required to present the recommended material as described in the "Essentials" as approved in May of 2007. The Circle of Service now recommends that the time for presenting the material for Conference One be reduced to 20-30 minutes. They also provided their requirements for material in Conference One that is still to be regarded as being "Essential". One of the overall objectives of this significant reduction in time spent talking (by the Presenter) is to give more time to the beginners to ask their questions. The use of 40-45 minutes is more of a lecture and it overwhelms most beginners. They need more time to interiorize the material and ask questions.

In Conference Four, (Deepening Our Relationship With God) Presenters are asked to simplify and to place emphasis on **1)** The Gifts of Centering Prayer are experienced more in daily life than during the times of Centering Prayer itself; **2)** We will begin to notice a growth in appreciation of one or more of the Contemplative Values of Silence, Solitude, Simplicity and Service; **3)** We are to simplify the "Practical Ways of Deepening

our Relationship with God” to only a) two 20 minute periods per day, b) attend the 6 Continuing Sessions, and c) read Open Mind, Open Heart; and 4) Closing and invite questions.

Bonnie and the two staff members each gave a plenary presentation on one or two of the Conferences. Each of us used material given in the “Essentials”, but gave the presentation using our own style of delivery and our own examples. Each of these presentations was followed by a lot of discussion, questions, and, especially from Bonnie, the sharing of a wealth of experience.

The 20 participants were divided into 3 sub-groups; went to their rooms and used the “Essentials: to develop their own practice presentations; and then met with the other members of their group to give their practice presentations. Immediately after a practice presentation, each participant first critiqued their own presentation, followed by listening to the critiques (read: “encouragement and support”) from their fellow group members, followed by a critique from a staff member.

It was really amazing to see how each participant faithfully followed the Essentials material while using their own very unique styles and examples. It was an awesome illustration of how the Indwelling Presence flows through our unique personalities and talents. Overall, it was a challenging and great experience to witness the Presence and Action of the Holy Spirit in a small community of Centering Pray-ers.

REFLECTIONS OF PRESENTER TRAINING

By John Weibe

When I said yes to participate in the Presenters Workshop, I expected to “roll up my sleeves” and work hard at preparing teaching sessions. However, there was so much more. Periods of Centering Prayer

lifted me up. The Retreat Day in the middle of the training session gave rest and strength. Instead of feeling exhausted at the end of our training sessions, I felt refreshed and rested. The periods of Centering Prayer gave us deep roots to face new challenges. I was put in a group of 5 people, and each of us presented modules or conferences on Centering Prayer. My group was a great support and encouragement. I heard my small group members share their wisdom concerning my strengths and areas of where I could do things differently. This was a great blessing. The uniqueness of each person’s experiences, personalities and teaching styles enhanced the learning experience for me.

A highlight was participating in the process of revising the content to be presented in the Introductory Workshop. It was a gift to think deeply about how to communicate the method and practice to others. I felt that both the instructors and the participants formed a special community. I felt sad when our workshop was over due to depth of sharing of ourselves, yet I also felt great joy for the many gifts I received at this event.

Thanks, John.

Nothing is more beautiful than the
uniqueness that God has created.
You don’t have to create the beauty – You’ve
got it.
You don’t have to create the freedom –
You’ve got it.
You don’t have to create the image of God in
you –
You have it.
You don’t have to win over God’s love –
You have more
than you know what to do with.

From: Heartfulness: Transformation in Christ.
By Thomas Keating