

CONTEMPLATIVE OUTREACH CANADA

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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 the experience of the living 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.

"Transformation for Everyday Life" A 40-Day Live-In Experience

On October 9, 2003 a group of fifteen participants from across the United States and Canada gathered at St. Andrew's Retreat House, Walden, New York to begin an extraordinary experience. Three Canadians were privileged to attend: Father Raymond Sevigny, (Edmonton) Sister Catherine Labinowich (Winnipeg) and Sister Anne Veronica (Halifax). From all walks of life and backgrounds, the group soon found itself sharing similar hopes and expectations as we expressed to one another what we hoped to receive from this unique experience. In this "first" 40-day Live-In Contemplative Retreat we were invited to enter the days with open hearts and a willing spirit.

The goal of this experience was centered on providing "a unique training period for living the depth, breadth and length of the contemplative journey in everyday life." There were periods of structured silence and solitude, but the approach was more centered on the practice of living one's life in a truly contemplative way. This meant there was rhythm established between periods of formal Centering Prayer and informal prayer carried on in the midst of ordinary, everyday chores and commitments. Emphasis was on "Work as Prayer."

During the course of the 40 days, the capable facilitators, Cathy Mc Carthy and

David Frenette led the group in various exercises designed to help each one enter more deeply into the transforming power of the contemplative experience: The "Welcoming Prayer", The Prayer of Forgiveness, A Contemplative Discernment Process, Attention/Intention Practice and Lectio Divina. Each of these practices was lived in an experiential way as we were invited to move more and more deeply into the transforming process.

Through the various weeks, there was a basic schedule consisting of three formal periods of prayer each day, group sharing, formal "talks" and presentations, and a weekly Community Process using art therapy. Videos by Father Thomas Keating were offered in the evenings.

The whole experience was a deeply enriching and "formative" one as each of us entered into relationship with the Trinity in this beautiful retreat center. The lasting effects of the 40-day experience will be seen in the months ahead as we commit ourselves to continue to practice all the important lessons we learned. Just as God's special language is silence, so it will be in the silence of each one's heart that the true "fruits" of this magnificent experience will be recognized and daily lived.

Sr. Anne Veronica McNeil SC

AREA REPORTS:

ONTARIO

Toronto

So much has been happening, and we all need to be on the same page before the **International Contemplative Outreach Conference (Sept. 28 to Oct. 3, 2004)** happens in Toronto. Committees for that are working very effectively at this point,

but as the conference gets closer you may find yourself lending a hand if you are not already involved.

We now have about 10 known (and several "unknown") Centering Prayer groups in Ontario, and the numbers of men and women who share this vision continues to increase. Our questions: How is the Spirit nudging us to rise to the challenge of new people wanting to join this network, of finding accessible places for them to meet besides 40 Pleasant Blvd. - which, by the way, will continue to be available on Monday evenings? But how will we continue this work of educating ourselves and others for contemplative presence in a Gospel context? How do we establish an open space for women and men from Ontario to explore more meditative options? And when and where do we expand such service as an overflow of our prayer?

Looking towards the future, we feel the need for involving ourselves in more than conference planning committees. Already some of us have been trained as group facilitators. Others are completing presenter's training in Winnipeg. A few have opened their homes to small Centering Prayer groups. We have even, as of June 1, 2004, after much discussion and many meetings, decided to rent (temporarily, open to monthly cancellation) a bright, air-conditioned office with attached meeting room at #60 Pleasant Blvd. in order to experiment with increased independent space availability at least until after the Contemplative Outreach conference in September.

Challenges face us, of course: How do we use wisely this new found freedom we now have (24/7) for gathering, centralizing, etc.? How do we raise rent money? When can we apply for a charitable donation number? Who will take responsibility for

keeping order in our just acquired quarters? What are the best ways to make the tapes and books available to all our groups? And when will we offer the next introductory days? Sometimes it seems as if we have taken on more than we can handle at the moment.

Many of us would prefer to quietly go on as we have been since 1994 - and that is entirely understandable. But others feel drawn to move on, to risk, to "go forth and bring forth fruit that will last" (Jn:15). That is our mandate. That's why we took on the office, to be creatively used by all of us. So please think of how you can benefit from this cheerful, small office and meeting room in the centre of Toronto, and may the Spirit bless our efforts as we move forward into another year.

As our custom, we break for the summer months beginning July 1. Here is your invitation to our **annual Pot-Luck at Carolyn's, 40 Pleasant Blvd.**

**Monday, August 9, 2004
from 5:30 - 9:00 p.m.**

Please let her know what you might bring (not cookies!). Regular Monday meetings for prayer, etc. will begin **September 13, 2004.**

Remember to tell your friends and family about the **Day of Enrichment with Fr. Keating and Meg Funk on October 2, 2004.** (For further information phone 416-691-5660). See you there! Till then, go well - have a blessed summer and let us continue prayers for peace.

Love from,
Carolyn Gratton

MANITOBA

Sr. Mary Magdalene Parish, Winnipeg

A Centering Prayer support group continues to meet every Tuesday evening from 7:30 - 9:30 p.m. in the Church. A time of prayer is followed by a period of Lectio Divina using one of Fr. Keating's books - [Awakening](#) or sometimes [Re-Awakening](#).

On the last Tuesday of each month, this group meets at 129 Monck Avenue from 7:00 - 9:30 p.m. using the same format. For Lectio Divina here, we use [The Kingdom of God Is Like](#), by Fr. Keating. Other Centering Prayers are welcome to join us at either location.

The Francophone group meets every alternate Tuesday from 1:00 - 2:30 p.m. at 129 Monck Avenue. After a time of prayer, the group listens to an audio tape of Fr. Keating, and follow-up with discussion and sharing.

In the Fall of 2004 - 2005, we plan to hold "The Human Condition" series for these support groups. Anyone who has completed the Centering Prayer Introductory and Follow-up is also welcome to join us for these sessions.

Registration is requested, as the "Spiritual Journey" booklet we plan to use must be ordered soon.

For further details please call:
Therese @ 235-1057 or Bea @ 255-3942.

University of Winnipeg

The University of Winnipeg Centering Prayer Team meets monthly during the academic year, September to April. We use a contemplative meeting model that has proved a nourishing spiritual practice and an effective decision making tool.

This team will begin its fifth year in September 2004. We have a strong commitment to our own spiritual practice, to serving the community, and to reaching out to the surrounding downtown locality.

This discernment team facilitates Centering Prayer Monday - Thursday at 12:15, with Lectio Divina at 11:30 on Fridays during the academic year. We provide Centering Prayer retreats from 9:00 - Noon on the first Saturday of every month, October - April. The retreats average about 12 people. The retreat schedule for 2004 - 2005 is as follows:

Centering Prayer Monthly Retreats

Saturdays
October 2004 - March 2005
Faculty of Theology 9:00 - Noon

2 October 2004	5 November 2004
4 December 2004	8 January 2005
5 February 2005	5 March 2005
2 April 2005	

Please feel free to join us!
Call 786-9857 for information.

St. Benedict's Retreat & Conference Centre

June 2 - 9, St. Benedict's Retreat and Conference Centre, Winnipeg, Manitoba hosted the 2nd Formation for Presenters' Retreat / Workshop held in Canada. Seventeen men and women gathered here, from Alaska, Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, Minnesota, British Columbia, Ontario, Nova Scotia and Manitoba, to learn how to teach the essentials of Centering Prayer to persons seeking a deeper relationship with God.

Bonnie Shimizu, administrative assistant of Fr. Keating, was our teacher. Bonnie is an experienced facilitator and conducts workshops in North America and abroad for Contemplative Outreach. Her expertise and warm, gentle manner contributed to the success of the program. Frances Evers and Sr. Catherine Labinowich served as staff.

In an atmosphere of prayer and community, this event was designed to provide practice in interiorizing and communicating the essential elements of and Introductory Workshop.

BOOK REVIEW

[Fruits and Gifts of the Spirit](#)

Lantern Books Publishing
paper ISBN: 1-930051-21-2

The author, Fr. Thomas Keating, writes in his typical style where each sentence - each word - is full of meaning and experience. Within only 116 pages, he wants the reader to understand more deeply how the Triune God indwells, inhabits and transforms our daily lives as we travel the contemplative journey.

Fr. Keating begins outlining his thesis in the first chapter, [The Divine Indwelling](#). He discusses how through the Gospel and the spiritual journey we discover daily that God is present every moment of our lives and this presence is our true source of happiness. He goes on to talk about how God relates to us most intimately through the Divine Indwelling where the ". . . Trinity is present within us as the source of our being on every level." (p.3) Of course, this is a process and we are invited to consent, surrender and be transformed.

Keating states that the evidence of the Fruits of the Spirit is a sign that the Holy Spirit is indeed at work transforming our lives. The Spirit invites us to into gradual

purification: The letting go of our self-centered projects and allowing the Spirit to be the source of our actions. (p. 14) the Fruits of the Spirit are listed and Keating goes on to describe each Fruit and how it brings beauty and love into our lives and into the world around us. "The Fruits of the Spirit prove that Christ is living in us and transforming us into witnesses of his continuing presence in the world." (p. 23)

Having laid this foundation, Keating continues by focusing on the Gifts of the Spirit, which are the means through which the Spirit purifies our lives. Keating describes these gifts with poignant and moving examples from movies, stories of people who have influenced his life and with personal anecdotes.

I often found myself taking time to stop and reflect while reading this book in order to grasp the meaning of these teachings in my life. This is an exciting book because of the call to unity with the Triune God. However, this is also a disconcerting book because of how thorough the divine action is in helping us to let go of our emotional programs for happiness. Keating keeps a helpful balance by enticing the reader to a life of greater meaning (delightful, intimate relationship with God) while not promising this journey to be a easy one (daily Letting Go, Night of Self and Night of Sense).

This book is for anyone who is committed to the contemplative journey, especially by practicing the method of Centering Prayer. It could be used in a group setting or by an individual person as a study tool. There is a timeless quality to it, for at any time on *The Way* our hearts may echo this prayer:

*"When all striving ceases
I awaken to behold
Ever-present Awareness
keeping silent watch." (p. 116)*

Respectfully submitted by,
Jacquie Reimer

BRITISH COLUMBIA

We in BC are moving towards establishing a local chapter of Contemplative Outreach. We see a need for some basic building blocks to support those who have been introduced to Centering Prayer. Contemplative Outreach has a marvelously full program for just this kind of support.

We have currently five trained presenters and about a dozen groups that meet weekly to watch Thomas Keating tapes, or to do lectio, and meditate. We now have a contact person. We are active in the Contemplative Outreach cluster that comprises Washington, Oregon, Alaska and Hawaii. Our contact with other Canadian groups has unfortunately been minimal, but we hope that an upcoming meeting in Winnipeg and the National Convention in Toronto will change that.

In the meantime, we are preparing for a visioning retreat weekend, facilitated by Madeline Soo and Susan Komis from Contemplative Outreach, to clarify our leadership team and objectives. We ask your prayers for the process.

Anita Boyd, Contact for Contemplative Outreach in BC, <mailto:avboyd@shaw.ca>

Centering Prayer Groups in British Columbia
October 2003
 Compiled by Anita Boyd, 604-590-8080, avboyd@shaw.ca

CITY	DAY	TIME	LOCATION	CONTACT
Delta (Ladner)	Thursday	1:30 - 3:00 PM	All Saints Anglican Church 4755 Arthur Drive	Anita Boyd 604-590-8080
Kamloops	Monday 2nd & 4th of the month	7:15 PM	Holy Family Parish Sunset Street Kamloops	Brian Mitchell Day: 250-828-5142 Evg: 250-573-3806
Sechelt	Wednesday	9:30 AM	St. John's United Church 5085 Davis Bay Road Sechelt V0N 3A2	Bronwen Boddington 604-885-1995
Surrey	Sunday	8:30 AM	Northwood United Church 8855 156th Street	Rev. Cindy Terry 604-581-8454
Surrey	Wednesday	1:30 PM	Northwood United Church 8855 156th Street	Rev. Cindy Terry 604-581-8454
Vancouver	Tuesday	10:30 - 12:00 PM	Cenacle 5989 MacKenzie Street Vancouver	604-266-1611
Vancouver	Wednesday	7:15 - 8:45 PM	Cenacle 5989 MacKenzie Street Vancouver	604-266-1611
Vancouver	Wednesday	7:00 - 8:30	St. Mark's Anglican 1805 Larch Street Vancouver	604-736-2838
Victoria (Oakbay)	Wednesday	10:00 AM	St. Philip's Anglican Church 2928 Eastdowne Road	250-592-6823 stphilips@shaw.bc.ca
Victoria	Monday	4:30 PM	St. George's Anglican 3909 St. George's Lane	Ann McCalman 250-472-2090 stgeorge@pacificcoast.net
Victoria (Broadmead, Royal Oak, Cordova Bay)	Wednesday	7:30 PM	4950 Thunderbird Pl.	Mary Carder 250-658-8035 carders@telus.net
Victoria	Monthly 2nd Saturday	4:00 PM	St. Barnabas Anglican 1633 Belmont Ave.	Linda Gokey 250-361-2033 Linda_is@shaw.ca st_barnabas@acts.bc.ca
Winfield	Thursday	10:00 AM	Emmanuella House of Prayer 15550 Commonage Road	Flo Massen 250-766-5333

CONTEMPLATIVE WISDOM

by Father Thomas Keating

Our pain is God's pain. Much of our suffering is needless, the natural consequences of self-centered activity. There is useful suffering. That is the pain of suffering that we take into ourselves out of love for God and the healing of the individual and societal wounds of the human family. In this way God's pain becomes our pain. (Peacemaking, Contemplative Outreach Newsletter, Fall 2003 - Winter 2004)

*****ANNOUNCEMENTS*****

CONFERENCE

Remember that the 20th Contemplative Outreach Annual Conference is being held in Toronto, September 29 - October 3, 2004. It is a first for Canada and is expected to draw Centering pray-ers from all around the world. Plan to attend and support the work of Contemplative Outreach in uniting us in the heart of God for the heart of the world.

CBC RADIO

Fr. Keating has been interviewed for the Tapestry Program on CBC The airing date has not been determined, although it likely will be around the conference date. Keep listening on Sundays in September.

EDITOR'S NOTES:

We are excited and joy filled about the upcoming Contemplative Outreach Annual Conference in Toronto. Hopefully, many of you will be able to attend. What an opportunity to meet others who practice Centering Prayer and to learn more about this spiritual practice.

Canadian participants at the Formation for Presenters at St. Benedict's met with presenters from the Summer 2000 program. We were delighted to discover that there are Centering Prayer groups in Ottawa and Windsor, Ontario as well as those we knew about in Toronto. In addition we learned about groups in Antigonish, Halifax, and Lower Sackville, in Nova Scotia, and in Sydney Mines, Cape Breton. One group meets in St. John, New Brunswick. There has been considerable activity in presenting Introductory and follow-up sessions in these areas. We can now state that Centering Prayer is practiced from coast to coast in Canada. Contemplative Outreach Canada looks forward to closer connections between groups through communication on our website and newsletter. May we remind you that the deadline for submissions to the Fall newsletter is October 1, 2004.

This newsletter published twice yearly has been sent to you courtesy of donations made to Contemplative Outreach Canada. Regrettably our publication costs are not being met, so if the newsletter is to continue, we need your help now! A \$5.00 donation will cover the cost of the newsletter for two years while a \$10.00 donation will meet that cost, help towards our other operating expenses.

If you would like a tax-deductible receipt, please make your donation to St. Benedict's Foundation specifying, Contemplative Outreach Canada and mail to:

Contemplative Outreach Newsletter
c/o St. Benedict's Retreat & Conference
Centre
225 Masters Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba R4A 2A1

May this newsletter connect us as
Canadian Centering Pray-ers so that we
may continue to be One in the Heart of
God for the Heart of the World.

www.contemplativeoutreachcanada.org

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Thanks to all who sent in their reports. We
look forward to your comments, news, and
suggestions from your region for our next
publication. You can contact us at:

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