



Contemplative Times

The Centering Prayer Newsletter
of Contemplative Outreach

Oakland - East Bay Chapter

Letter from the Co-Coordinator

July 2009
Volume 7, Issue 2

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By now most of you have heard the good news that Betty Wharton has agreed to serve as Co-Coordinator replacing me, and will work with John Neville. In fact, as I write this letter, Betty is packing to leave early tomorrow morning for St. Louis where she will attend formation for Coordinators. I know this will be a smooth transition for all concerned and John has graciously agreed to serve for at least a couple more years. It has always been our plan that one of us would rotate while the other stayed on to help the new Co-Coordinator.

I want to thank all of you for the support you have given me for the last six years. It has been a privilege to serve you and, to tell the truth, many times it was lots of fun. I learned so much from you and, just as important, I got to know many more of you than I would have had I not been in this position.

Let me assure you I will not be leaving our Chapter but will continue to work "behind the scene." Many of you know that I have been studying for the last couple of years to learn about Spiritual Direction. I am enrolled in a Sacramento program called Bread of Life and will complete my internship in May 2010. Bread of Life is an inter-faith program and I am hoping to assist directees in many different faiths.

A couple of years ago I attended formation in Snowmass to learn about directing Contemplative Outreach retreats and have been co-directing and directing retreats at Mercy Center in Burlingame and San Damiano in Danville. You will find them listed on our website. I feel I am the luckiest person; I will still be in close contact with you but from a different perspective.

Of course I could never give up the very dear Centering Prayer groups in which I am a member—the Friday morning one at St. Theresa and the monthly Monday evening group also at St. Theresa. I don't know that I could stay focused without the help of these groups.

I hope to see many of you at our August potluck when we will have the official transfer of Co-Coordinator. Read on to the next page for further details regarding date, place and time.

Many blessings to all of you,

Eileen Halliburton

Contemplative Times
Contemplative Outreach, LTD.
Oakland-East Bay Chapter
5409 Thomas Ave.
Oakland, CA 94618
johnnev@sbcglobal.net

**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.**

All Saints Church, Hayward
Melanie Smith: 510-537-6563
Francis Tanjuatco: 650-678-7739

Christ the King Church,
Pleasant Hill
(Day group):
Jodi Runyon: 925-939-0859
(Evening group):
Jeanne Pletz: 925-837-6971
Pat Stevens: 925-945-1623

Corpus Christi Church, Fremont
Kathy Lyons: 510-793-3672
Ron Taylor: 510-490-1279

Hope Lutheran Church, El Sobrante
Rev. Deborah Butler: 510-222-6394

Our Lady of the Rosary Church,
Union City
Gene Aciniaga: 510-471-9496

St. Alban Church, Albany
Judy Ellisen: 510-237-6961

St. Andrew Kim Korean Catholic Church,
Oakland
Maria Ko: 510-553-9434

St. Elizabeth Seton Church,
Pleasanton
Art Crosetti: 925-462-2721

St. John Vianney Church
Walnut Creek
Nancy Jokerst 925-683-2802
Rosemary Daunenbauer: 925-939-2923

St. Perpetua Church, Lafayette
Helen McKennon: 925-977-1872
Carol Weyer: 925-932-1845
Joanne Elgaaen: 925-284-5608

St. Theresa Church, Oakland
(Day group):
Dolores Vasquez
510-530-4081
(Evening group):
Jeanne Lovi: 510-547-2505
John Neville: 510-655-2796
Betty Wharton: 510-531-6124

Fr. Richard Rohr, OFM

Soulwork: Eco-Spirituality

Thursday, August 20, 7:00 pm
St. Paul's Episcopal Church

114 Montecito Avenue (at Bay Place), Oakland
Suggested Donation: \$10-\$20 Sliding Scale No one turned away
for lack of funds

**Richard Rohr (founder of the Center For Action and
Contemplation) has had recent contact with the
teaching of Bill Plotkin (author of *Soulwork: Crossing
Into the Mysteries of Nature and the Psyche*) that has
re-convincing him of his own Franciscan and creation
based spirituality, but from some new and helpful
angles. Could it be true that the deepest patterns of
truth "are there for the mind to see in the things that
God has made?" (Romans 1:20). The Cosmic Christ
and creation itself are giving us very similar messages,
if only we can be taught how to see!**

For more information, email: aug20.soulwork@gmail.com

Co-Sponsored by Northern California Men as Learners and Elders (MALES),
St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Oakland and the Center for Action and
Contemplation



Fr. Terry Ryan, CSP

Workshop on

Juliana of Norwich

October 24, 2009 9:00am-1:00pm
Paulist Bookstore -- Old St. Mary's Church
California St. and Grant Ave., San Francisco
\$25 or freewill offering at the door

**Juliana has little of the dualism of body and soul that is
frequent in the mystics. God is in our "sensuality" as
well as in our "substance", and the body and the soul
render mutual aid. "God is more near to us than our
own soul", and "in falling and rising we are ever
preciously kept in one love."**

Prison Ministry, Centering Prayer, and a Need for Books and Videos.

In California, nearly 50 Contemplative Outreach volunteers visit prisons and other correctional facilities every week, bringing the quiet of Centering Prayer instruction and meditation to the constantly noisy lives of inmates. These facilities include the Alameda County facility at Santa Rita, the Women’s Correctional Facility in Chowchilla, California’s San Quentin Prison, and others. This well regarded ministry has been nurtured by Centering Prayer volunteers for many years, and has been blessed with visits by Thomas Keating to the prisons where Centering Prayer groups of inmates meet.

Although volunteers are able to hold Centering Prayer instruction and prayerful practice with inmates, there remains an identified need throughout the system for Centering Prayer books that can be checked out and studied by inmates. There are half a dozen titles in both Spanish and English that are appropriate to this population and ministry, as well as enrichment Centering Prayer DVDs and Videos as relevant and practical resources for the prison groups. The cost of these items range from \$15 to \$25 per item.

It is the intent of Contemplative Outreach of San Francisco to purchase and establish a small contemplative prayer library in thirteen of these prison facilities this summer, but we need your financial help.

Any amount you contribute to purchase books and DVDs will be deeply appreciated by Contemplative Outreach and the volunteers who visit and pray with organized groups of countless prison inmates.

The Centering Prayer books for prisons will be purchased by August 7. Are you willing to donate \$15 to \$25 to purchase one Centering Prayer book for inmates to check out and read in their cells, or a Centering Prayer training DVD for volunteers to use with inmates in chapel meetings? If so, please act now.....

If you feel called to help, please make a check out to Contemplative Outreach of San Francisco, with a notation "prison books" and mail check to Mary Wyman, Coordinator, Contemplative Outreach, 202 Roosevelt Way, San Francisco, CA 94114.

Please note that donations are needed by August 7, 2009.



Retreat Center at Our Lady of Guadalupe, Lafayette, Oregon.

This is on the grounds of a quiet Trappist monastery.

Contemplative Outreach of Oregon does an 8-day intensive/post-intensive twice a year, with 8 retreatants and 2 leaders. There are long hiking trails in the hills, a lake, and a lovely prayer room.
www.cochapters.com/oregon

Local Centering Prayer Retreats Remaining in 2009

4-day Centering Prayer Summer Retreat at Mercy Center in Burlingame.
August 6-9. To register, call 650-340-7474.

Prison Retreat at Mercy Center in Burlingame.
August 7-9. For information email Mary Wyman at mary.wyman@yahoo.com.

Korean Community Centering Prayer Retreat at San Damiano in Danville.
August 7-9. Email myounghwankim@hotmail.com.

Centering Prayer as the 11th Step (of a 12 Step Program) at Mercy Center in Burlingame.
October 30-November 1. To register, call 650-340-7474.

4-day Centering Prayer Winter Retreat at San Damiano in Danville.
December 10-13. To register, call 925-837-9141.

At a recent retreat there were optional periods for group lectio divina, using the guidelines given below. This might be useful for lectio in a prayer group. The principles also apply to that smallest of all prayer groups—a single person and God.

Practice-----To Enter into the Contemplative Dimension of Lectio Divina

A Monastic Method of Lectio Divina for Community Prayer

Preliminary Comments: The monastic way is unstructured, in a sense methodless. One reads or listens to the word of God in a particular passage chosen for the occasion, and then the only process is to follow the attraction of the Spirit.

Read the passage slowly (with appropriate pauses). After a minute or two of silence, read it again. It may be read three or four times, depending on the situation. Take time.

- As you listen (or read) you may be aware of a phrase, sentence, insight, or even a word in the sense of “message” that catches your attention. (Lectio, or Reading)
- Sit with that phrase, sentence, insight, or word, repeating it gently over and over in your heart, not thinking *about* it, but just being with it. (Meditatio, or Pondering)
- Be aware of any prayer that rises up within you that expresses what you are experiencing. This comes from God, not from your effort. (Oratio, or Responding)
- Or just rest in the phrase, sentence, insight, or even one word, resting in God beyond your thoughts, reflections, and particular prayer. Resting in God in the simple attraction of interior silence. (Contemplatio, or Resting)

Further comment. This is done in a group, with a designated reader. Other than the reading aloud, it is in silence. Notice that there is no vocal response--this removes the pressure to perform by finding something to say. The four phases are not steps in sequence, but rather strands that interweave in whatever order, as the Spirit directs.

Summer Potluck

FRIDAY, AUGUST 21, 2009

6:00 TO 9:00 P.M.

CENTERING PROMPTLY AT 6:15

Library of St. Theresa Church

30 Mandalay Rd., Oakland, CA **

(Note: this is NOT the library at another church where we have held other events.)

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

The speaker this year will be Rev. Jeff Mitchell from Valley Springs, California. Jeff is the Pastor of a church and an experienced practitioner and teacher of Centering Prayer. He will be talking about

Actoplation—the Balance of Being and Doing

Potluck Guidelines

A-G bring vegetable or salad
H-Mc bring bread, beverage, or dessert
Me-Z bring a main dish

Bring only enough for 4-6 people.

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 is the entrance on the left to the parking lot of St. Theresa’s. We will be at the upper end of the parking lot, on the right.

A Summary of the Finances of COOEB (Contemplative Outreach of Oakland and the East Bay) for 2008:

| | | | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|
| Income: | Sale of books, videos, etc. | \$ 401 | Bank balance on 12/31/08 | \$ 1,612 |
| | Contributions | 1,591 | | |
| | Retreats | 3,000 | | |
| | Workshops | 400 | | |
| | Total income | 5,392 | | |
| Expenses: | Purchase of books, DVDs. etc. | 226 | | |
| | Newsletter (3 issues) | 998 | | |
| | Support for conferences | 500 | | |
| | Presenters for retreats | 2,689 | | |
| | Speaker for summer potluck | 456 | | |
| | Supplies & miscellany | 316 | | |
| | Total expenses | 5,185 | | |
| Net for the year 2007 | | 207 | | |

Comments:

- 1) The two retreats we sponsored last year covered their expenses, and cleared about \$150 each.
- 2) We anticipate that newsletter expenses will be less in 2009 (because of the website), and support for conferences greater (as the change of co-coordinator means more training is needed).
- 3) Other than the retreats, the costs of our activities are supported mainly by our contributions at days of prayer, the potluck, etc. *Thank you!*
- 4) We continue to benefit from a great deal of volunteered effort. In fact, most of COOEB is Centering Prayer people helping Centering Prayer people. *Thank you all very much!*

It began for me, as perhaps for you, when I read *Open Mind, Open Heart*. I just now looked in my copy and found a Happy Birthday Father Keating, March 7, 2003 bookmark. It has this quote from him:

“The modern world lies under a pervasive sense of anguish, of being abandoned, or at least experiencing God as absent. Yet events that seem to turn our lives upside down and inside out are part of God’s redemptive plan, not only for us, but for the world in which we live. God may be preparing a great awakening for the world, if God can find enough people to cooperate in this mysterious plan.”

It then says, “Fr. Thomas asks that your prayers for World Peace be offered as a symbol of your cooperation with God’s mysterious plan during his birthday month of March 2003.”

So much, and so little, has changed in six years. At times I find it hard to keep on hoping, or trying to cooperate, or even doing my daily sits. I see the

blue underlining, and the black underlining in that book from back then, and I wonder if there is a way to see the book anew, with new eyes.

All of which is a lead-in to saying that I started reading the 20th Anniversary Edition of *Open Mind, Open Heart* during a recent retreat. It is the same book, and it is also subtly a new book. Besides some rearranging, there are little changes in phrasing and choice of words. I haven’t made a careful comparison (and won’t), but I feel something more sensitive, more aware perhaps of what it is like for ordinary people to be doing this extraordinary type of praying. Reading the book I found passages that spoke to me as I now am. So this edition also has underlining, in new places—for example, “When you catch yourself trying hard, relax and let go.” After six years of Centering Prayer I have finally realized I don’t know how to let go. That’s new, and gives a reason to keep trying to cooperate with God’s mysterious (sure is!) plan, and to hope. Peace.

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