



# Contemplative Outreach

United in Prayer Day

March 16, 2019

Saint John the Evangelist Catholic Community

**Celebrating the gifts of the Spiritual Journey:  
The gift of Thomas Keating and the gifts of Centering Prayer**

## Schedule and Format for a Group Retreat Day

9:00 Gathering/introduction/orientation

9:30 20-minute period of Centering Prayer

10:00 View or listen to the chosen video segment or choose another one appropriate for your group

10:30 Time for silent reflection and break

10:45 Small group sharing (see list of Keating quotes)

Reflection: What word or phrase speaks to you at this time in your journey? What arises from your inmost being? What gifts have you received in your spiritual journey?

12:00 Lunch (silence optional)

12:30 20-minute period of Centering Prayer

1:00 Lectio Divina in community with a Scripture passage

1:30 Summary of the day; closing prayer; departure

### **Wisdom quotes for pondering**

all excerpted from *Thomas Keating: A Life Surrendered to Love* video

I have known Jesus from fairly early in childhood. I've failed him very often and been forgiven over and over again. I have no credentials at all, except the one that means most to me anyway, which is that God has chosen you. And as Paul says, he chooses the weakest things, and the worst things, sometimes to accomplish his major things just so we realize it's not we who are doing anything great, but that the manifestation of God is taking place in us.

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What is home? It's to live in God's house all the days of our lives and that house is the participation in the divine life. Hope is in the infinite power and mercy of God; a combination that is sure fire, you might say, because it's not relying on one's self for one's good deeds or some slug of merit from a part of life.

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If we really trust God then we don't have a care in the world.

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Effortlessness become more and more the main practice of your contemplative life, which doesn't mean that you do nothing, but you don't think up things to do for yourself, you sort of let it happen. So the best means of doing God's will is an interior habit and disposition that takes a long time to develop, of effortlessness. Another word for it is emptying. Another word might be detachment or a phrase that intrigues me is becoming nothing.

So if you want to save your life you will bring yourself to ruin. But anyone who bring himself or herself to nothing will find out who they are.

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Annihilating or letting go of the self ... Nobody thinks of you any more, you are forgotten, unwanted, un-consulted, defeated [with] failures, humiliations, rejections -- all these things are treasures planned by God, with great love, as stepping stones in this transformative process to deepen our surrender.

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People could say, well, if you let God do it nothing will happen. On the contrary, I think that if you let God do it everything will happen. ...

I meditate at least four hours a day and perhaps 5 and then I try to be in the presence of the Presence all the rest of the time.

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I am at a point where I don't want to do anything except it's God will and that may be nothing. Nothing is one of the greatest activities that there is. It takes a surprising amount of time! And so that's the direction that I'm interested in in what time is left. Each day is an opportunity, I hope, for God to take over my life more completely on every level and in every detail.

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This is an extraordinary life, a marvelous universe, and the fact that it is plagued with evil manifests how humble God is that he lets his creation get into such messes from time to time to allow anything to happen but with always the same purpose – finally getting us to allow him to love us.

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I think that Centering Prayer really includes any effort at interior silence in the presence of God that evokes more and more of our total surrender to that Presence.

As consent becomes more complete, more surrendered – you could call it surrendering to love, if you prefer.

As this prayer develops, the less you do the more God does.

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So I guess that's what long life is about, to detach you from everything so that you can finally agree to let God take over more and more.

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He has invited us to become his most intimate companions and sharers of the diving nature and does everything possible to get us there. So there is no question of God's intention. The issue is whether we will consent.

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The spiritual life is all about what we all have to do anyway – death. Doing it sooner enables our actions to be much more effective.

The fullness of redemption is the capacity to be completely transformed, to consent to the taking over of our entire being by the Divine Goodness.

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If people continue doing Centering Prayer, they continue to grow. It's God's will to give us this grace.

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What I am leaving to my followers [is] I would hope that they would find more and more means of finding opportunities for spiritual growth, more and more sharing of wisdom teachers, more and more partnerships with other traditions.

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From God's perspective, I have great confidence in the future that God's love will triumph over every obstacle. But it seems that God wants to try out every obstacle, or let it happen, so that nobody in the end will consider that it came from any place else.

That's all we have to do – accept God's love. It's receiving the compassion of divine mercy and letting it flow onto others and doing this uninterruptedly. That is the transformation that is really substantial.

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"And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God."

- Philippians 1:9

Let us enjoy the presence of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit and allow ourselves to be loved unconditionally and so be inspired to meet the real needs of everyone in the human family past, present and to come.

