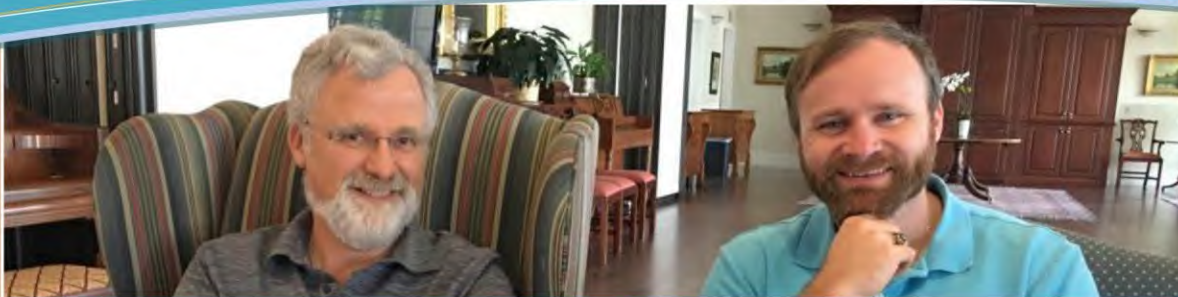




# COCFL News



## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Saturday October  
29, 2022**

9 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
Canterbury Retreat  
Center  
1601 Alafaya Trail  
Oviedo, FL 32765

Join us in person at  
Canterbury's beautiful  
settings:  
\$50 for the day  
(includes lunch)

or attend remotely  
via Zoom: \$25.00

**FOR MORE  
INFORMATION AND  
A VIDEO TRAILER  
AS WELL AS  
REGISTRATION  
FOR THE ABOVE  
EVENT  
PLEASE VISIT:**

**COCFL.ORG**

## Contemplative Outreach of Central Florida

### October 2022

COCFL website: [www.cocfl.org](http://www.cocfl.org)

### A Word from Dan Wagner

When you go on retreat you plan. First you read about coming to a particular retreat, coordinate with your family to see if that is a good date, register, make travel plans and pack if need be.

Another step that is recommended is to prepare prayerfully for the retreat. Go to reconciliation, fast, step up your daily prayer. You may be looking to deepen your relationship with God, find relief from the stress of daily life, or anticipate learning about the retreat topic. Keep your attention on the gift of the present moment as that is where you will find the true good gifts that Yahweh knows you need from a retreat.

The intention of the retreat is to refresh our spirit and deepen our commitment to a regular practice of Centering Prayer as we prayerfully consider the example of the desert mothers described by Rickey Cotton and Anna in their upcoming retreat presentations.

The servant leader team begins preparation for retreats and events a year before the actual event. Mulling over potential speakers, determining a topic, a budget, creating a flyer

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### A Word from Jesse Fox

**Previously published November 2018**

**“Union with God is not something we can or need to acquire. . .It is we who, with complicated and cluttered minds, remain unaware that this foundational Light is flowering perpetually in the fertile and Unfathomable right now.” Martin Laird**

God seems so gracious that he doesn't seem to require any payment, prerequisites, no prior education, no training, no background check, no qualifications of any kind, to be in his company. Fr. Laird reminded me of this reality during our retreat. It reminds me of the first time I saw Fr. Keating teach about prayer. I remember feeling that this man truly knows God, and the grace with which he spoke about God's love and grace, warmed my heart and made me feel like I had found home. I was never able to meet him in person, but I cherish his writing, his teaching, and most especially his grace filled presence. Pope Francis recently said that the name of God is Mercy. You couldn't help but know that truth each time Fr. Keating spoke or wrote about anything. It was very special to be present with the Central Florida

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**The following is an edited article by Richard Rohr on his recent visit with Pope Francis.**

ALBUQUERQUE, July 1, 2022: I am full of joy – ecstatic even – reflecting on my meeting with Pope Francis. Our conversation focused on how the rediscovery of the contemplative mind can serve the renewal of Christianity and healing of our world.

Sitting across from each other, I shared with him about what God has done in my life – from my beginning as a charismatic learning the healing power of heart-based devotional prayer, to confronting the social justice issues of our time through my travels around the world, to founding an organization for the teaching of action and contemplation. I consider putting those two back together to be the historic and singular opportunity we have in this moment.

Pope Francis listened to what I shared and seemed genuinely eager to encourage our work. I brought him a copy of [The Universal Christ](#), my end-of-life book, but he said he had already read it!

He shared three times very directly, “I want you to keep doing what you’re doing, keep teaching what you’re teaching.” For this Catholic boy from Kansas, that is a wonderful, hard-to-believe affirmation coming from the Pope himself, for the whole Christian contemplative movement.

Yet I remain utterly convinced of the message that . . . the rediscovery of the contemplative roots of Christianity is the key to the future of our faith.

The teaching of the contemplative mind gets to the heart of the matter because it changes consciousness, and thus transforms how we relate to ourselves, each other, and God. I believe it is the key to experiencing what Jesus calls “metanoia” and St. Paul refers to as the “new mind.” Jesus modeled it, and the desert mothers and fathers in Egypt, Syria, Palestine, and Cappadocia understood and cultivated it. It was taught systematically in monasteries for centuries. It is a treasure of our Christian tradition.



**Below is an edited article by Fr. Carl Arico, reprinted from *Contemplative Outreach Newsletter*, June 19, 2020**

## **Why Attend Multi-Day Retreats?**

**Q:** Throughout the year we have opportunities to attend days of prayer. What do extended retreats add to the spiritual journey that reading books, attending Centering Prayer groups and workshops don't?

**A:** Picture a piccolo player faithfully practicing his craft each day and then joining the symphony orchestra for its yearly concert. While the time spent practicing alone is an important time of preparation, it is in playing with others that the music is enhanced and that together the musicians celebrate something greater than themselves, each sharing their unique gift with one another. Afterwards, they return to their daily routine and individual practices with a renewed enthusiasm and a deepened understanding for the music.

This is the gift of a Centering Prayer multi-day retreat; when one joins others over an extended period of time after having practiced the prayer on their own, there is something very powerful that takes place when you enter into the embrace of a prayerful community. You get into a rhythm that moves you out of your external distractions into an inner space of awareness. When you do not have to worry about being in charge and all your needs are being taken care of, you find yourself surrendering to an inner grace that makes you aware of the subtle movements of the body and the spirit. It is like a gentle spiritual massage, naturally relaxing into a dance when the music carries you along. This is all supported by the rhythm of the retreat, the Scripture readings, the Centering Prayer sessions, soul friending, and the silent meals. You are ever-so-gently being formed by the silence.

## A WORD FROM OUR CO-COORDINATORS

### A Word from Dan Wagner (Continued from Page 1)

and an online video, setting up registration, getting handouts and agenda printed, fulfilling the presentation equipment requirements of the speaker, planning out the speakers lodging, meals, and travel, and determining the books to have on hand for sale.

Finally, keep in mind what Pope Francis said at the Wednesday, May 5, 2021, General Audience, when he focused his catechesis on Contemplative Prayer, and says contemplation helps guide us in following Jesus along the path of love.

Please prayerfully prepare for the upcoming retreat and pray for guidance on our mutual path of love.

See you there.



Photo by Sylvia Robbins

**“Only in silence you can hear God speak to you.”  
Only in silence can a real prayer,  
A heart prayer be born.  
Next time you start chattering,  
Stop and feel into the silence,  
Feel its shape, its texture,  
And then slowly and silently say only  
what really has to be said.”**

**Fr. Thomas Keating**

### A Word from Jesse Fox (Continued from Page 1)

chapter of Contemplative Outreach during Fr. Keating’s funeral mass at St. Joseph’s. Something felt so right about being together with so many people he had personally guided along the way to deepening the intimacy that God offers to all. Accept that you are already accepted. Fr. Keating helped me to realize that in my own life, and he continues to do so each day I wake up and say “yes.”

### In Memory of Nestor de Armas

*The following is a reflection written by Nestor de Armas, former co-ordinator of Contemplative Outreach of Central Florida and a very cherished and missed friend. This devotional reflection was written for Thursday, January 31, 2019.*

**Mark 6:30-46**

*He said to them, “Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while.”*

**Mark 6:31**

I wake up to stars hanging like diamonds on black velvet. I have come to this sacred valley to cultivate stillness: an unreflective awareness of presence. For decades, pilgrims have come to this retreat in the Colorado mountains to listen to the music of silence reverberating off majestic mountains. I shiver as I slip on my clothes and step into the darkness. My headlamp’s bright yellow light dances down the trail. I relax into the soft rhythm of my boots crunching on the gravel. I reach the chapel and slip into my chair. I set my timer. My breathing becomes smooth. . . intentional. I softly and ever-so-gently consent to God’s presence and action within. Thoughts come. Again, ever-so-gently, I consent to God’s presence and action within. Eventually, thoughts become irrelevant. Stillness abounds. My timer’s gentle gong invites me back to ordinary consciousness. I sit for a few minutes savoring the transition. I experience all that is, is in God; and all that is in God is One.

Isaiah 49:13-23; Psalm 50; Galatians 3:1-14

## NEWSLETTER MISSION:

Our mission is to increase communication between COCFL Centering Prayer Groups through news, direction to resources, Q&A, personal sharing, in an informal way, creating in the process a stronger connection between all our members. It is the prayer of the Servant Leadership Group that this endeavor will serve as support for better understanding, and an increase in spiritual desire and importance of the Centering prayer goals.

Breathe:

This ancient Sanskrit symbol is a beautiful reminder to do what comes naturally. It's the first thing we do when we come into this world and the last thing we do when we leave it.



Poetry & Every emotion

**“All people have access to their True Self from their very first inhalation and exhalation, which is the very sound of the sacred. It is the literally unspeakable Jewish name for God, *YHWH*. It cannot be spoken but only breathed: inhaling and exhaling with open lips. It is the first and last “word” you will ever utter—most likely without knowing it.”**

**Richard Rohr**

## Rickey Cotton to Speak at COCFL Fall Retreat

By Susan McBride



On October 29, 2022, Contemplative Outreach of Central Florida will be honored and blessed to welcome Rickey Cotton for a day retreat at Canterbury Retreat Center in Oviedo. The topic for the day will be:

### **Key Contemplative Women Ancestors** *Reclaiming our Christian mystical roots*

Rickey is a known face around COCFL and has shared his knowledge and expertise with us on other occasions. Rickey Cotton, Ed.D., is a spiritual director and presenter of Centering Prayer and Lectio Divina and on faculty for the Living Flame program of Contemplative Outreach, Ltd. As a leader of workshops and retreats, he presents around the country on such topics as John of the Cross, The Desert Mothers and Fathers, Divine Therapy, and Meister Eckhart. Now Professor Emeritus for over 30 years, Rickey taught English and Religion at Southeastern University in Lakeland, Florida

From Mary, the mother of Jesus, the desert mothers of the early church Amma Sarah, Amma Syncletica and Amma Theodora, the 13<sup>th</sup> century Beguines Hadewijch, Mechthild and Porete to more contemporary contemplatives, Rickey will explore the inspiring lives and teachings of these heroic women, helping us reclaim our Christian mystical roots and become aware of this rich contemplative heritage which is a vital resource for today’s contemplative life.

As the presentation concludes, we will be invited to a dramatic presentation of contemporary mystic Evelyn Underhill.

The retreat will include several periods of Centering Prayer, silent reflection and rest between conferences to resource and enjoy the peaceful settings of Canterbury Retreat Center.

The cost for the day is \$50 which includes lunch. For those desiring more time away at the retreat center, Canterbury is offering overnight accommodations on Friday and breakfast on Saturday morning for an additional \$116.00. There is no dinner offered on Friday evening, however, Canterbury is conveniently located across the street from several dining options. If you wish to attend remotely via Zoom, that is being offered for \$25. Go to [COCFL.org](http://COCFL.org) to download flyer & registration form.

We invite and encourage you to join us for this event that promises to be a day well spent for all of us on our Contemplative journey.