



Of Seeds and Flowers



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JOURNEY TO THE CENTER - PASSPORT TO THE SOUL

GOODNESS AND HOLINESS, BELIEF AND TRUTH ARE LOUD SHOUTS IN A WORLD GOING DEAF!!

CENTERING PRAYER- We have done a four-part podcast on Centering/Contemplative prayer on our Mary's Field podcasts. Truly, I believe, the most important of the 250 podcasts we have done.

Centering Prayer/ Contemplation is NOT A NEW FAD. For 16 centuries, bishops, priests, nuns, monks, popes, lay-people, ALL were called to be contemplatives.

Contemplation is a step in the NORMAL GROWTH of a person's prayers life. Pope Gregory the Great, 6th century, in summarizing the Christian contemplative prayer tradition described it as "RESTING IN GOD". This was the classical meaning of contemplative prayer in the Christian tradition for the first sixteen centuries.

Recently I stumbled across a wonderful testimony about the power of Centering Prayer from Cardinal Bernardin, the former Cardinal Archbishop of Chicago. Imagine, an American Catholic bishop, Cardinal no less, being openly candid about his poor prayer life and how it has seriously affected his ministry as the bishop of Chicago. Too bad this didn't catch on with many other bishops.

The Cardinal writes: *"About seven years ago I came to understand that the pace of my life and the direction of my activity were unfocused, uncentered in a significant way. (Sounds like a lot of you and me). This created a genuine unrest in my life. I came to realize that I needed to make some changes in my life, and CHIEF AMONG THESE WAS A RENEWAL OF PERSONAL PRAYER. The mention of prayer may evoke and image of "saying" prayers, of reciting prayer formulas. I mean something quite different.*

When we speak of the renewal of prayer in our lives, we are speaking of reconnecting ourselves with the larger mystery of life and of our common existence, with God. This implies becoming DISCIPLINED in the use of our time, in the use of CENTERING PRAYER, and in the development of a CONTEMPLATIVE STANCE TOWARD LIFE. When this happens, we begin to EXPERIENCE HEALING, INTEGRATION, WHOLENESS, PEACEFULNESS. (Very little changes in our lives unless we have an impressive EXPERIENCE) We begin to hear more clearly the echoes of the Scriptures in our own lives, in our own hearts. And as the Word takes root in the depths of our being, it begins to GROW and to TRANSFORM THE WAY WE LIVE. It affects our RELATIONSHIP with the people around us and above all OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. From this rootedness flows our ministry, our ways of loving. From this core of love, WE CAN PROCLAIM THE LORD JESUS and his Gospel NOT ONLY WITH FAITH AND CONVICTION BUT ALSO WITH LOVE AND COMPASSION." (All capitals mine for emphasis)

Can you imagine!! A Cardinal having to fix up his prayer life. Can you imagine how many bishops and priests and ministers need to do the same? *"Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain who build it."* *"Apart from me you can do nothing."* Jesus

If the pastor is a saint, the people will be very holy. If the pastor is very holy the people will be very good. If the pastor is very good the people will be good. If the pastor is good the people will be weak. If the pastor is weak the people will be bad. If the pastor is bad the people will be devils. And so it is with parents, teachers, politicians, etc...

Cardinal Bernardin sums up well the process, practice and the fruits of Centering prayer. MILLIONS OF LAY PEOPLE ARE ENJOYING THE BENEFITS OF CENTERING PRAYER EACH DAY. Contemplative Outreach (www.contemplativeoutreach.org) had over 300,000 hits on their web site last year from all parts of the world. Check YouTube Thomas Keating or Cynthia Brougault or the Mary's Field podcasts.

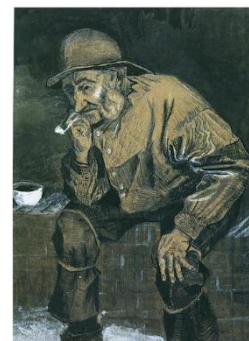
**IF YOU'RE TOO BUSY
TO PRAY... YOU'RE
TOO BUSY**

MOTHER TERESA



TRUE STORY: Father Bill MacNamara, is a Carmelite priest who founded two monastic communities devoted to grow the spiritual life. One day, just before a Vatican Council he was walking down Broadway in New York City when he met a famous Rabbi friend. The Rabbi was very excited about the upcoming Vatican Council and said, "I can't imagine all of the wonderful things that are going to happen when 2200 contemplative bishops gather in Rome. This is such a great a time for your church." Father MacNamara paused, and in a heavy, sad voice, said, "With regret, I have to tell you there are few real contemplatives among the bishops. Then the rabbi grew sad and then, I grew sad and we parted."

I often wish I were a part of interviewing candidates to become a bishop. The first question I would ask is: HOW DO YOU PRAY? If, at this point in the candidate's spiritual life, the candidate doesn't respond, "I pray in a contemplative manner" the person should be immediately dropped as a fitting candidate to be a bishop. We, all churches don't need any more bishops who are just administrators. Administrators are a dime a dozen. The church is renewed by saints not administrators.



REPORTER TO ST. MOTHER TERESA: "What do you say when you pray to God?"

Response: "I don't say anything. He just listens."

"Does God Say anything back to you?"

"No, He is silent and if you don't understand this, I can't explain it to you."

A true Contemplative!! Centering Prayer. SILENCE is God's FIRST LANGUAGE!!! Can't do much better than Mother Teresa!!

"SOMETIMES AH SITS AND THINKS... AND SOMETIMES AH JUST SITS!!" - Pennsylvania Dutch saying

Be still and know
that I am

God

Psalms 46:10

DEPENDING ON WHICH WORD IS EMPHASIZED IN THIS PSALM, THE FRUIT OF YOUR MEDITATION CHANGES AND DEEPENS.

"Be still and know that I am **GOD... GOD... GOD... GOD.**"

"Be still and know that **I AM... I AM... I AM... I AM.**"

"Before Abraham was, **I AM.**" - Jesus. (Jn 8:58)

"Be still and **KNOW... KNOW... KNOW... KNOW.**"

"Be **STILL... STILL... STILL... STILL.**"

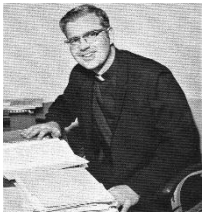
"**BE... BE... BE... BE.**" Gee... "BEING". That is CENTERING PRAYER, ISN' IT? JOURNEY TO THE CENTER- PASSPORT TO THE SOUL! My pure being/spirit in touch with God's pure being/spirit. —no thoughts, no imagination, no sense feelings, memories, commentaries, plans etc.. Just consent to God's presence and action within, and watch the transformation begin to take place in your spiritual life and all your daily activities. "BEING" ALWAYS COMES BEFORE DOING! God's first language is silence. All others are a bad translation.

A young girl came from outside of India to join Mother Teresa's community of nuns, the Missionaries of Charity. Mother Teresa had a rule that new arrivals had to go, the very next day, to the Home for the Dying. So the next day Mother Teresa told the young girl: "You saw the priest during Holy Mass, with what love and care he touched Jesus in the Host. Do the same when you go to the Home of the Dying, because it is the same Jesus you will find there in the broken bodies of our poor." And the girl went. After three hours the newcomer came back and said with a big smile to mother Teresa, "Mother, I have been touching the Body of Christ for three hours." And Mother Teresa said to her, "How? What did you do?" The girl replied: "When I arrived there, they brought in a man who had fallen into a drain and been there for some time. He was covered with wounds and dirt and maggots, and I cleaned him and I knew I was touching the body of Jesus." KNOW WHAT?? This is also true of your husband, wife, children, co-workers, neighbors... And they don't have maggots!



This young nun is an ACTIVE missionary and a CONTEMPLATIVE PRAY-ER. -like YOU and ME- BOTH ACTIVE and CONTEMPLATIVE. Action/ministry and contemplation work together or they don't work at all. -even for monks!! "Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain who build it." Action without prayer is at best a waste of time; at worst, it is positively harmful. Prayer without some sharing of that life can be pure "naval gazing". For us to be happy, nobody has to change but ourselves. Too often, "Busyness and laziness are the enemy", says M. Scott Peck.

In the 1st reading for the 6th Sunday of Easter, St. Peter, when the Greek converts were complaining about being neglected, they made a decision. *"It is not right for us to neglect the word of God to serve at table...we shall devote ourselves to **PRAYER AND TO THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD.**" **PRAYER, PRAYER, PRAYER, FIRST, FIRST, FIRST!! If you have time to worry you have time to pray. If you are too busy to pray you are too busy!***



On May 11th I celebrated the 59th anniversary of my ordination to the priesthood. I have been married for 46 years and have 6 beautiful children, actually a 7th, Elizabeth, a miscarriage, who is praying for us in heaven. I am a priest, a husband, a father and any one of these vocations makes me better at the other two. There about 25,000 thousand married Catholic priests in the U. S. and about 125,00 around the world. Are they all wrong? Could they be saying something in truth to the institution? Could the Spirit have made 125,000 mistakes, or is the Holy Spirit doing a new thing? How do we explain the 125 MARRIED WITH CHILDREN Episcopal priests who have become Catholic priests here in the U.S.? Is this hypocrisy, deliberately inflicted pain, ignorance, denial of the action of the Holy Spirit? Is celibacy really more important than the Eucharist? -closing beloved churches? I celebrate the Eucharist for my family each Sunday and Cindy and I go to communion each day.

True Story: In the late 1960's, in a convent with about 15 younger nuns and 10 older nuns, the younger nuns were full of the enthusiasm of the times. "War is not healthy for children and other living things." "Be of love more careful than of everything." Etc. Etc. The young nuns were hanging many posters in the hallway but were not always very kind, loving, patient with the older nuns. So, one day, one of the older nuns took poster board and wrote on it, "DO IT DAMN IT" and hung it in the hallway. Maybe there is a message in there for us with regard to Centering Prayer.

I SHALL BE TELLING THIS WITH A SIGH
SOMEWHERE AGES AND AGES HENCE:
TWO ROADS DIVERGED IN A WOOD, AND I -
I TOOK THE ONE LESS TRAVELED BY,
AND THAT HAS MADE ALL THE DIFFERENCE.
- ROBERT FROST -

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The Litany of Humility

O Jesus, meek and humble of heart, Hear me. From the desire of being esteemed – **Response:** "Deliver me, O Jesus."

From the desire of being jealous and envious of other's success, Deliver me, O Jesus.

From the desire to correct others, and be in control - **Response:** "Deliver me, O Jesus."

From the desire to be superior and have an opinion on every matter- **Response:** "Deliver me, O Jesus"

From the desire to be consulted - **Response:** "Deliver me, O Jesus"

From the desire of being approved - **Response:** "Deliver me, O Jesus."

From the fear of being rejected, humiliated or ridiculed - **Response:** "Deliver me, O Jesus."

From the fear of being falsely accused and judged unfairly - **Response:** "Deliver me, O Jesus."

From the fear of being forgotten or ignored - **Response:**

"Deliver me, O Jesus."

From the fear of being a failure or thinking I am a failure - **Response:** "Deliver me, O Jesus."

That others may be loved more than I – **Response:** "Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it."

That others may be praised and esteemed more than I – **Response:** "Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it."

That, in the opinion of the world, others may increase and I may decrease – **Response:** "Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it."

That others may be chosen and praised and I go unnoticed – **Response:** "Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it."

That others may be chosen and preferred to me – **Response:** "Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it."

That others may become holier than I, provided that I may become as holy as I should – **Response:** "Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it."

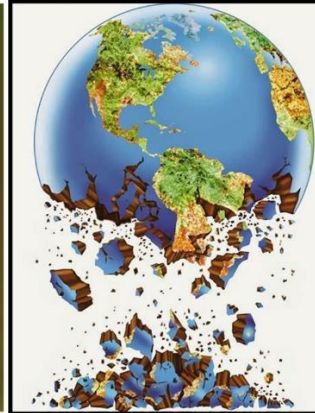


Mary's Field is now on YouTube. Everyday a short video will be uploaded to help nourish your heart and strengthen your spirit during these difficult times. Type "YouTube Mary's Field" into the Bing.com search engine or

"Mary's Field" into the Youtube.com search to find our channel.

Below are just two of the many videos you may like from the channel.

**Introduction/Guidelines
for Centering Prayer
Part 1**



*Where do we look
when the world is
crumbling all
around?*

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