



CONTEMPLATIVE OUTREACH *of Atlanta*

Winter-Spring 2011 Volume 11, Issue 1

"It is a precious gift to come close to interior silence. Its beauty is so incomparable that it changes ones perception of what beauty is" - Thomas Keating

Silence, Solitude, Service

CONTEMPLATIVE OUTREACH OF ATLANTA LOOKING TO THE FUTURE ...

APRIL 30, 2011

Come and take part in a **"Visioning Day,"** hosted by Contemplative Outreach of Atlanta on April 30, at Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic Church, 1350 Hearst Drive Northeast, Atlanta, GA 30319 from 9:30-2:30. It has been almost five years since our last Visioning Day in August of 2006, so it is time for us to come together in prayer and discernment to prayerfully consider the future of Contemplative Outreach of Atlanta. As many of you know, Cathy Hightower and Roberta Oster are passing on the "baton" as co-coordinators. This very special and important event will consist of centering prayer periods along with a visioning process. This process provides the opportunity for Chapter members to gather together as a contemplative community to celebrate our accomplishments, identify our needs as a community and to envision and prioritize for future growth and direction.

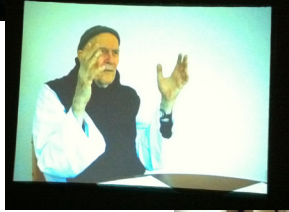
The day will include a group process that supports volunteerism, team building and prayerful discernment for servant leadership and other service opportunities. John Kelsey, the Southern Region Coordinator for Contemplative Outreach, Ltd., will serve as our facilitator for the day.

Along with Silence, Solitude, and Simplicity, the Contemplative Value of Service gradually emerges as one of the gifts of practicing Centering Prayer. "Contemplative Service" is described as "God in me serving God in you." We ask that you pray and respond to God's "nudge" to be of service to Contemplative Outreach of Atlanta. Please let Cathy Hightower know if you plan to attend by contacting her at 770-973-6243 or email chightower@aol.com.

*Gifts of Service – Give as gift what you have
received as gift.*

*MATTHEW 10:8 We are called to be humble in asking God to show
us the gifts of service and how to use them in loving service.*

THE 2010 NATIONAL CONFERENCE IN ATLANTA



Photos by Ronald Barnett



Some of you that missed the Atlanta Conference that was held in September wondered how it went and what you missed. The hotel and staff were amiable, the surroundings beautiful and the workshops were excellent and well worth the time. Roberta Oster, Co-coordinator CO-Atlanta, served as the MC of the three day affair, and always made us laugh at her jokes and southern charm . . . even though she's an Indiana girl. Luther Lewis, Treasurer of CO-Atlanta, did a spectacular job in coordinating all the help needed for the events and everything went flawlessly. Cathy Hightower, Co-coordinator CO-Atlanta, used her creative talents to visually enhance the general meeting room and the Centering Prayer altar in the prayer room. Many of our Atlanta members helped with the registration packets that were distributed at the beginning of the weekend event. Trudi and Ray Barrera, plus Barbara Mosley and Kim Kolesnik, along with many others of the Atlanta group, worked in the gift and bookstore area that contributed much to the overall interest and success of the Conference. Yoga with Dayna Gelinas was an added benefit for all the early risers.

An area meeting with John Kelsey, our Southeastern Regional Director, allowed us time to share the things that worked well for our groups as well as some of the trouble spots we were having. It was so beautiful to see the entire group sharing their ideas about ways to strengthen one another's

prayer groups and improve their chapters.

We began with a large unified meeting and a very inspirational talk by Father Carl Arico. A second large group meeting was held another day with speaker David Frenette, who also spoke at the 2009 Conference in Chicago, and continued to give us deeper grounding in our Centering Prayer practice.

At both of these gatherings a new DVD by Father Thomas Keating was introduced, adding more wisdom and light. This time was highlighted by his own personal message since he couldn't be there. We all discovered that the new DVD was for sale in the bookstore and it ended up being the best seller of the Conference. If you have not seen it yet, ask for the DVD "**Invitation From God**".

Saturday evening we enjoyed a delicious dinner with great companions. A talented magician and entertainer worked the crowd and amazed us all, but the highlight of the evening's entertainment was Trudi Barrera's writing and dramatic interpretation of "The Woman at the Well".

What a gifted co-worker we are blessed to have in our midst!

Next year's Conference is hosted by the Centering Prayer groups in the San Francisco, California area . . . hope to see you there!



2011 ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF
CONTEMPLATIVE OUTREACH

**"RE-AWAKENING TO
THE CONTEMPLATIVE
DIMENSION OF LIFE"**

Marriott San Francisco Airport Hotel,
San Francisco, CA

September 29 - October 2, 2011

Registrations open May 2011.

For more information, visit the website
www.contemplativeoutreach.org.

CENTERING PRAYER AT WORK – A TESTIMONY

A year ago my Autistic adult son had some severe behaviors related to a long-term circumstance that we were not able to resolve in spite of much concerted effort.

We removed him from the situation and I started doing Centering Prayer with him every morning for a few months. He did the afternoon practice by himself.

At first the agitation or sleepiness made it quite hard to get him to settle in the Presence. However, with time the CP became a part of his daily routine.

He had worked with a Ph.D. psychologist at Emory Autism Center on a breathing program for anxiety and its related effects, so I used that as a reference in presenting Centering Prayer. I kept it as simple as possible telling him that God is always present but we forget sometimes. I told him to accept God's presence and to allow His action within. I told him about the sacred word and that he could use his breath as a symbol of putting himself in God's presence.

I told him that sometimes we go to sleep and Fr. Keating said that's okay; just return ever so gently to

God's presence and action within. I told him any other thought, feeling or sensation should be treated the same way.

We also worked with the Emory Autism Center to help him with the situation he was trying to overcome. We were afraid that we would have to put him on high powered meds to help him. In about 3 months he was not as brittle in his reactions and it was determined to see how things went without meds. He was able to resume his life on a limited scale and slowly progressed back into his life as it was before with a few changes.

He still does CP daily and we sit together on the weekends. We tell him to look at his CP as medicine that he takes twice daily but the side effects are only good—not laden with the problems of high-powered meds.

Recently, I have talked with him about using an action statement/prayer telling him its a good way to put himself back into God's presence.

We are grateful he accepted Centering Prayer and has made it part of his day.

CONTEMPLATIVE SERVICE

Father Mychal Judge was a New York City fire chaplain killed at the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, while ministering to a fireman dying on the ground. This prayer was found among materials laid out on a table in the firehouse. It was printed on a small piece of paper and laminate, perfect for keeping in a wallet ... an example of the thought and detail that goes into what every fireman does for each other and for us. It is a perfect prayer that expresses the attitude of contemplative service.

*Lord, Take me where You want me to go,
Let me meet who You want me to meet,
Tell me what You want me to say,
And keep me out of Your way.*

—From The Contemplative Life Program,
Contemplative Service Praxi, p. 45

CONTEMPLATIVE OUTREACH- ATLANTA VIDEO LENDING LIBRARY

This is a reminder that Contemplative Outreach-Atlanta has a lending library of videos. The Spiritual Journey Series and other video series are great resources for our Centering Prayer Groups. For more information, contact Kim Kolesnik at gonnabk@aol.com. Another valuable resource is the Spiritual Journey transcripts, which can be ordered through the online bookstore at www.contemplativeoutreach.org.

CENTERING PRAYER WORKSHOPS AND OTHER EVENTS

Please let Roberta Oster know if your prayer group would be interested in hosting either a Lectio Divina or Centering Prayer Introductory Workshop. Your group may also be interested in hosting a "Saturday Morning of Silence" offering a program of extended times of Centering Prayer, Lectio Divina, and reflection. For more information, contact Roberta at 404-217-8216 or robertaoster@bellsouth.net