

Contemplative Outreach

Dear contemplative friend,

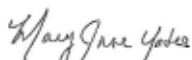
We recently discovered an error in our printing process that likely means you did not receive either of the two enclosed newsletters. Both Contemplative Outreach and the printer deeply regret this and are working hard to make sure it doesn't happen again. In the meantime, I am pleased to send you these letters, along with the reassurance that your interest in Centering Prayer and contemplative life is of utmost importance to us. Since joining Contemplative Outreach as administrator in February of 2020, I have been amazed at the deep dedication and commitment of our many volunteers who work inside prison walls and who I know are missing you deeply because of Covid restrictions. This letter is sent on their behalf as well, since I know that each and every one of them is committed to supporting you in whatever way they can.

You may already be well established in a daily practice of Centering Prayer, or you may have requested the newsletter because you're interested but not yet convinced of the value of the practice. In either case, I hope you'll find support for your journey in these pages, and I'd like to encourage you to renew your commitment to twice daily periods of gently sitting in silence and consenting to God's presence and action. Since beginning my own practice in 2007, I have experienced firsthand and heard from people in all walks of life how this simple practice, over time, opens a path to deeper intimacy with God -- not the harsh, judging God so many of us learned to fear as children, but "the God of your understanding," as said in the recovery community ... the Love that is the Source of all that is. When we simply consent to the presence and action of the Holy Spirit, as the "methodless method" left us by Fr. Keating suggests, we open our hearts, that they might be gradually transformed. We show up; God does the rest -- not overnight, not magically ... but God is faithful and Love draws us in. We come to know first hand our own basic goodness and that of others.

Contemplative Outreach is a network or "living organism" made up of individuals and groups from all over the world who commit to a daily Centering Prayer practice. We come from all walks of life, have different religious/denominational affiliations (or none at all) and live in many different circumstances -- inside and outside of prison walls, we all seek the true freedom that comes from the gradual dismantling of our "false self." If you do not already count yourself a part of the organism of Contemplative Outreach, we hope you'll consider joining us; all it takes is practicing the prayer.

Contemplative Outreach also just re-established the volunteer position of **Prison Outreach Liaison**, currently being filled by **Chandra Hanson**. Thanks to Chandra's commitment, we are in the process of sending out a survey to prison chaplains and volunteers all over the U.S., in hopes of increasing coordination among those who aim to serve contemplatives practicing inside correctional facilities. For any family or friends outside the walls, or for those of you who may be transitioning in the near future, more information can be found at our website, contemplativeoutreach.org (searching "prison" will bring up the Prison Contacts page, where we have begun gathering relevant links and resources). Remember, also that newsletter content often comes from readers, so you are welcome to write us with any input you have for future issues! You can also write to Ray Leonardini at Prison Contemplative Fellowship (P.O. Box 1086, Folsom, CA 95763-1086) to request a copy of his very helpful book, *Finding God Within: Contemplative Prayer for Prisoners*. He is able to provide materials to prisoners without charge.

Again, my sincere apologies for the oversight in not getting these newsletters to you sooner, and may you know deep peace and every grace as you continue in the contemplative path.



Mary Jane Yates, Administrator, Contemplative Outreach, Ltd.