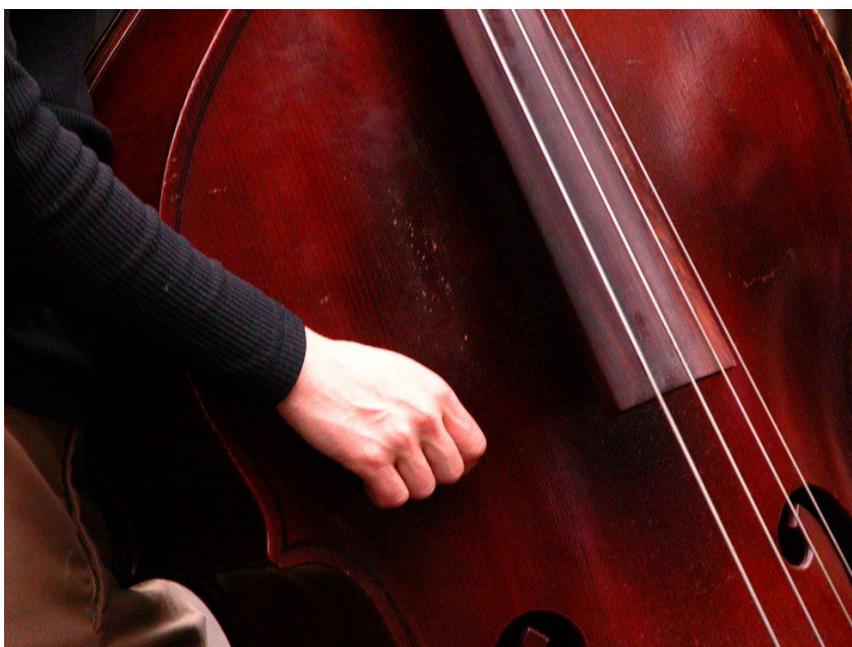




# THE SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

Formation in the Christian Contemplative Life

## 96: Pause



Elpopphoto

*Beloved:*

*This is how we know that we remain in God  
and he in us, that he has given us of his Spirit...*

*We have come to know and to believe  
in the love God has for us.*

*God is love...*

*In this is love brought to perfection  
among us, that we have confidence...*

*- 1 John 4:13, 16-17*

In the back of *Open Mind, Open Heart*, Fr. Thomas lists "42 Guidelines for Christian Life, Growth and Transformation." Herein he states that "they are designed to provide a conceptual background for the practice of Centering Prayer" and urges that they should be read according to the method of Lectio Divina. Seven of them have been selected for our reflection as a way to pause and receive in a very deep way the teachings and implications of divine love.

They are listed using their original numbers within the 42 Guidelines:

1. The fundamental goodness of human nature, like the mystery of the Trinity, Grace, and the Incarnation, is an essential element of Christian faith. This basic core of goodness is capable of unlimited development; indeed, of becoming transformed into Christ and deified.
2. Our basic core of goodness is our true Self. Its center of gravity is God. The acceptance of our basic goodness is a quantum leap in the spiritual journey.
3. God and our true Self are not separate. Though we are not God, God and our true Self are the same thing.
15. God is not some remote, inaccessible, and implacable Being who demands instant perfection from his creatures and of whose love we must make ourselves worthy. God is not a tyrant to be obeyed out of terror, nor a policeman who is ever on the watch, not a harsh judge ever ready to apply the verdict of guilty. We should relate to God less and less in terms of reward and punishment and more and more on the basis of the gratuity – or the *play* – of divine love.
16. Divine love is compassionate, tender, luminous, totally self-giving, seeking no reward, unifying everything.
17. The experience of being loved by God enables us to accept our false self as it is, and then to let go of it and journey to our true Self. The inward journey to our true Self is the way to divine love.
40. Human effort depends on grace even as it invites it. Whatever degree of divine union we may reach bears no proportion to our effort. It is the sheer gift of divine love.

### **To Practice**

- A powerful way of embodying a truth is by affirmation. In this way, what is outward and external, perhaps interesting and worthy as an idea, becomes real and living, connected with the inner spirit and conveying living meaning. After reflection, deep listening and pondering these offerings, you might choose a phrase as an affirmation and carry it forth with you into the coming weeks.

### **Notes and Reflections:**