



THE SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

Formation in the Christian Contemplative Life

“A Blessing”
Excerpted from
God is Love: The Heart of All Creation

Fr. Thomas Keating and Fr. Carl Arico

*For this reason, I kneel before the Father,
... that he may grant you in accord
with the riches of his glory to be strengthened
with power through his Spirit in the inner self,
and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, rooted and grounded in love,
may have strength to comprehend with all
the holy ones what is the breadth and length
and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the
fullness of God.*

Ephesians 3: 14, 16-19

Fr. Carl: Fr. Thomas, would you offer a blessing to us and let us celebrate this marvelous experience of what has brought so many thousands of people together?

Fr. Thomas: A blessing really means affirmation of something or especially someone and all of us as humans here really need and are blessed by that kind of affirmation. We see how important blessing is in the Torah were the patriarchs had the special blessings for their sons and that gave their sons, a sense of identity, continuity, loyalty and commitment to the values that Israel and its God had communicated to it. I'm no patriarch. I'm just one of many seekers who is stumbling along and I'm more aware of my failures, than of any success. If there is any success it belongs entirely to God and the mercy of God.

It's worth affirming the good that God has enabled us to do and of a movement of the whole human family into transformation, which is also collaboration with God's evolutionary, spiritual evolutionary plan.

From God's perspective, I have great confidence in the future that God's love will triumph over every obstacle, but it seems like he wants to try out every obstacle or let it happen, so that nobody in the end will ever consider that it came from anyplace else. He's invited us to become his most intimate companions and sharers of the divine nature and does everything possible to get us there.

There's no question of God's intention. The issue is whether we'll consent. That's all we have to do, ultimately, accept his love and I think if we put other projects in front of that or even beside it, we're missing some of the great realities of life and also, its immense possibility for transformation. Every human is called to make a contribution towards the transformation of people, of individuals, which alone can enable societies to be transformed.

In my affirmation or blessing, I want to thank everyone who has undertaken the transformative process and Centering Prayer, in particular. Whatever method you are using, makes us partners and friends and admirers, and we can learn from each other. No one has asked us to judge anybody, including ourselves. It's receiving the compassion of divine mercy and letting it flow on to others and doing this uninterruptedly, that is the transformation that is really substantial and certainly the one that makes sense in the Christian religion, but I see it pretty much offered in all the others. May the next years, if God gives them to us, see the increase of Centering Prayer and the creative addition of other wisdom aspects that might enhance what we're doing or at least help us to do what we have learned out of our tradition with complete commitment. Let us enjoy the presence of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit and allow ourselves to be loved unconditionally and so be inspired to meet the real needs of everyone in the human family, past, present and to come.

*I give thanks to my God at every remembrance of you,
praying always with joy in my every prayer for all of you ...
I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work in you will continue to complete it until the day of Christ
Jesus.*

*It is right that I should think this way about all of you,
Because I hold you in my heart,
you who are all partners with me in grace ...
And this is my prayer:
that your love may increase ever more and more
in knowledge and every kind of perception,
to discern what is of value,
so that you may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ,
filled with the fruit of righteousness
that comes through Jesus
Christ for the glory and praise of God.
Philippians 1: 3-4, 7, 9-11*