

The Christian Contemplative Experience

AT HOLY FAMILY PASSIONIST RETREAT CENTER



Psalms 46:10 - "Be still and know that I am God"

We are a Christian Contemplative Prayer group focused on the practices of Welcoming Prayer, Lectio Divina and Centering Prayer.

Guests and Beginners are very welcome to join us! Please join us on the First and Third Thursdays in the Holy Family Retreat Center **Anam Cara Room at 7:00 PM** to share in these beautiful forms of Christian Contemplative prayer. A Welcoming Prayer guided meditation starts the evening followed by a short contemplative video teaching with group dialogue. We conclude with a 20 minute period of Centering Prayer followed by Lectio Divina. Please contact Mike Smoolca by email at msmoolca@hotmail.com or by calling 860-798-8992 for more information and to be added to our email list. For beginners, an orientation starting at 6:30 on the nights we meet can be arranged with Mike Smoolca in advance.

Welcoming Prayer - is consenting to God's presence and action in our physical and emotional reactions to events and situations in daily life. This prayer helps dismantle the emotional programs of the false-self system to heal the wounds of a lifetime by addressing where they are stored – in the body. It continues the process of transformation in Christ initiated in Centering Prayer.

Centering Prayer - seeks to still the activity of the mind in order to experience a loving awareness of God's presence. Centering Prayer is a contemporary form of an ancient method of Christian Contemplative Prayer that goes back to the Desert Mothers and Fathers. It was inspired by the 14th Century book *The Cloud of the Unknowing* and formalized in the 1970's at St. Joseph's Abbey in Spencer, Massachusetts. Centering Prayer adds depth of meaning to all prayer and facilitates the movement from more active modes of prayer into receptive prayer; simply resting in God. This method emphasizes prayer as a personal relationship with God and as a movement beyond conversation with Christ to communion with Him.

Lectio Divina - means "divine reading." It's the ancient practice of praying the Scriptures. During Lectio Divina, the practitioner listens to the text of the Bible with the "ear of the heart," as if in conversation with God, and God is suggesting the topics for discussion. Lectio Divina includes moments of reading (lectio), reflecting on (meditatio), responding to (oratio) and resting in (contemplatio) the Word of God with the aim of nourishing and deepening one's relationship with the Divine. Like Centering Prayer, Lectio Divina dates to the time of the Desert Mothers and Fathers and was made a regular Monastic practice in the 6th Century by St Benedict.