

## Listening & Holy Silence

### Listening Defined

Senge: Set aside your thoughts and opinions. You can pick them up anytime you choose

Shenk: The absence of thought

Keating: Come to nothing

### Holy Silence

Thomas Keating:

At some point in the spiritual journey, there is a shift where you realize that the best knowledge you can have of God is *no* knowledge.

If we truly surrender everything we possess, we will know the right thing to do spontaneously, and action inspired by the Spirit is where Centering Prayer [the practice of silence] is taking us. (From "The Process of Awakening" in Contemplative Outreach Newsletter, June 2021)

Martin Laird:

Contemplation is the way out of the great self-centered psychodrama. When interior silence is discovered, compassion flows. If we deepen our inner silence, our compassion for others is deepened. We cannot pass through the doorways of silence without becoming part of God's embrace of all humanity in its suffering and joy.

Silence is living, dynamic, and liberating. The practice of silence nourishes our vigilance, self-knowledge, letting go, and the compassionate embrace of all whom we would otherwise be quick to condemn. Gradually we realize that whatever it is in us that sees the mind games we play is itself free of all such mind games and is utterly silent, pure, vast, and free. When we realize we are the *awareness* and not the drama unfolding in our awareness our lives are freer, simpler, more compassionate. Fear remains frightening but *we* are not afraid of fear. Pain still hurts, but *we* are not hurt by pain (*Into the Silent Land*, p. 115-116).

**Practicing Silence:** From Scripture to the early Fathers and Mothers to the Monastic tradition & Benedict, the source of our BCP, into the pre-enlightenment days to its modern resurgence. Now many "disciplines" extol its value.

Contemplative Prayer (Christian meditation), Praying the Scriptures, Rosary, working with hands, art, hiking, exercise, yoga, fishing, music, morning coffee, and *Listening*