

## Quiet Day 11 May 2024

### Listening to the God Who Speaks – Learning to Hear the Heartbeat of God

9:30 - 9:40 Introduction

9:40 - 10:55 First Conference

9:40 - 10:15 First session of reflections on the theme of the day

10:15 - 10:35 First session for thoughtful, conversational prayer: Restrooms, refreshments, stroll the grounds, reflect in the church. The entire campus is open to us. Please maintain quiet. Please keep talking to a minimum and please talk quietly. Thank you!

10:35 - 10:55 First session of Silent Prayer in the Sanctuary. (Or thoughtful meditation in the Music Center.)  
[Enter silently from 10:33 to 10:35 At 10:35 we will intone the bell and begin silent prayer.]

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10:55 - 11:40 Second Conference

10:55 - 11:10 Second session of reflections on the theme of the day

11:10 - 11:30 Second session for thoughtful, conversational prayer: Restrooms, refreshments, stroll the grounds, reflect in the church. The entire campus is open to us. Please maintain quiet. Please keep talking to a minimum and please talk quietly. Thank you!

11:30 - 11:50 Second session of Silent Prayer in the Sanctuary. (Or thoughtful meditation in the Music Center.)  
[Enter silently from 11:18 to 11:20. At 11:20 we will intone the bell and begin praying.]

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11:50 - 12:30 Third Conference

11:40 - 11:50 Third session of reflections on the theme of the day

11:50 - 12:20 Third session for thoughtful, conversational prayer: Restrooms, refreshments, stroll the grounds, reflect in the church. The entire campus is open to us. Please maintain quiet. Please keep talking to a minimum and please talk quietly. Thank you!

12:20 - 12:40 Third session of Silent Prayer in the Sanctuary. (Or thoughtful meditation in the Music Center.)  
[Enter silently from 12:18 to 12:20. At 12:20 we will intone the bell and begin praying.]

12:40 - 1:00 Eucharist. All are welcome.

### Listening to the God Who Speaks

The gospel of John tells us that at the Last Supper, the Beloved Disciple leaned against Jesus' breast and in so doing "heard the heartbeat of God." That heartbeat can still be heard in all that God has made, as we become still and aware. Wisdom teachers throughout the centuries have been teaching that God's revelation, God's heartbeat is continuing to be known to us through the Three Great Books: The Book of Creation; the Book of Sacred Scriptures; and The Book of our Heart's Journey. Using the prayers of Celtic Christians throughout the ages, today we will ponder together the revelation of God through the Book of Creation to experience more deeply Divine Presence – the heartbeat of God in all that is.

## Listening to the God Who Speaks . . . . Learning to Hear the Heartbeat of God in All That Is

### *First Conference Readings*

Lord, you have searched me out and known me;  
You know my sitting down and my rising up  
You discern my thoughts from afar  
You trace my journeys and my resting places  
and are acquainted with all my ways

Where can I go from your Spirit?  
Where can I flee from your presence?  
If I climb up to heaven, you are there;  
If I make the grave my bed, you are there also  
If I take the wings of the morning  
and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea  
even there your hand will lead me  
and your right hand hold me fast

If I say "surely the darkness will cover me and the  
light around me turn to night!"  
Darkness is not dark to you;  
the night is as bright as the day.

For you yourself created my inmost parts;  
You knit me together in my mother's womb.  
I will thank you because I am marvelously made.

My body was not hidden from you,  
while I was being made in secret  
Your eyes beheld my limbs,  
yet unfinished in the womb  
All of them were written in your book;  
They were fashioned day by day  
When as yet there was none of them.  
Psalm 139 [excerpts]

### Prayer for the Dying

Thou goest home this night to thy home of winter;  
To thy home of autumn, spring and of summer;  
Thou goest home this night to thy perpetual home,  
To thine eternal bed, to thine eternal slumber.

Sleep, O sleep in the calm of all calm,  
Sleep, O sleep in the guidance of guidance,  
Sleep, O sleep in the love of all loves . . .  
Sleep, O beloved, in the God of life.

*JP Newell, Sacred Earth, Sacred Soul*

### *Second Conference Readings*

*Wandering*

*Walking*

*Wondering*

*Watching*

*Waiting*

*Weeping*

Out of the silence at the beginning of time  
You spoke the Word of life.  
Out of the world's primeval darkness  
You flooded the universe with light.  
In the quiet of this place  
In the dark of the night  
I wait and watch.  
In the stillness of my soul  
and from its fathomless depths  
the senses of my heart are awake to you.  
For fresh soundings of life  
for new showings of light  
I search in the silence of my spirit, O God.

*JP Newell, Celtic Benediction*

### ***Third Conference Reading***

*Christ above us, Christ beneath us, Christ beside us, Christ within us.*

*Invisible we see you, Christ above us.*

*With earthly eyes we see above us clouds or sunshine, grey or bright.*

*But with the eyes of faith, we know you . . .*

*instinct in the sun ray,*

*speaking in the storm,*

*warming and moving all creation, Christ above us.*

*Invisible we see you, Christ beneath us.*

*With earthly eyes we see beneath us stones and dust and dross . . .*

*But with the eye of faith, we know you uphold.*

*In you all things consist and hang together:*

*the very atom is light energy,*

*the grass is vibrant,*

*the rocks pulsate.*

*All is in flux; turn but a stone and an angel moves.*

*Underneath are the everlasting arms.*

*Unknowable we know you, Christ beneath us.*

*Inapprehensible we know you, Christ beside us.*

*With earthly eyes we see men and women, exuberant or dull, tall or small.*

*But with the eye of faith, we know you dwell in each.*

*You are imprisoned in . . . the dope fiend and the drunk,*

*dark in the dungeon, you are there.*

*You are released, resplendent, in the loving mother, the passionate bride,*

*and in every sacrificial soul.*

*Inapprehensible we know you, Christ beside us.*

*Intangible, we touch you, Christ within us.*

*With earthly eyes we see ourselves, dust of the dust, earth of the earth.*

*But with the eye of faith, we know ourselves all girt about of eternal stuff,*

*our minds capable of divinity, our bodies groaning,*

*waiting for the revealing,*

*our souls redeemed, renewed.*

*Intangible we touch you, Christ within us.*

*Christ above us, beneath us, beside us, within us . . . .*

*what need have we for temples made with hands?*

*George McLeod as quoted in Sacred Earth, Sacred Soul*

*Nothing could be more down to earth or more humbling than this Boundless Presence, which just is. It doesn't have to prove itself. It doesn't have to acquire anything. It just is . . . . .*

The essence of Centering Prayer is consenting to God's presence and action within. The seven stages of Centering Prayer outlined below dispose us towards ever-deepening self-surrender. These seven stages might be called the process of Centering Prayer. I summarize them as follows:

1. **Silence** is consenting to God's presence – what Jesus calls the Kingdom of God – within and among us. External silence supports this movement.
2. **Solitude** flows from interior silence. Disregarding our interior dialogue leads to “resting in God” (St Gregory the Great) and to consciousness without particular content.
3. **Solidarity** is the awareness of increasing oneness with God, with the whole human family, and with all of creation.
4. **Service** is following the ever-present inspirations of the Spirit not only during the time of formal prayer, but in the details of everyday life. It is a spontaneous expression of solidarity: God in us serving God in others.
5. **Stillness** is what Jesus called “prayer in secret” (Matt. 6:6). This is the experience of God's presence beyond rational concepts, beyond preoccupation with one's personal thoughts and desires.
6. **Simplicity** is the integration of contemplation and action, a growing capacity to live in the midst of duality – the ups and downs of daily life – without losing the non-dual perspective. Contemplation is not the same as action. They are distinct but they are not separate.
7. **Surrender** is the total gift of self to God, a movement from union to unity. It marks the beginning of what Jesus calls “eternal life” as an abiding state.

As we are moved through the stages of grace, our perspective changes in regard to Centering Prayer, the contemplative life, and God. In between the steps there may be delightful plateaus as well as dark nights, all of which have physical, mental, and spiritual consequences. The most transforming dark nights seem to be primarily psychological states, and the darkest of all is the purely spiritual suffering that arises from just being a creature, apparently unequipped for the hazards and trials of this life, but going through them with invincible confidence in God's love.

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