

# Quiet Day 8 June 2024

## Three Movements of Prayer: Awareness, Engagement and Surrender

9:30 - 9:40	<u>Introduction</u>
9:40 - 10:40	<u>First Conference</u>
9:40 - 10:00	First session of reflections on the theme of the day
10:00 - 10:20	First session for thoughtful, conversational prayer: Restrooms, refreshments, stroll the grounds, reflect in the church grounds. The entire campus is open to us. Please maintain quiet. Please keep talking to a minimum and please talk quietly. Thank you!
10:20 - 10:40	First session of Silent Prayer in the Sanctuary. (Or thoughtful meditation in the Music Center.) [Enter silently from 10:18 to 10:20. At 10:20 we will intone the bell and begin silent prayer.]
<hr/>	
10:40 - 11:40	<u>Second Conference</u>
10:40 - 10:55	Second session of reflections on the theme of the day
10:55 - 11:18	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!
11:20 - 11:40	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.]
<hr/>	
11:40 - 12:00	<u>Third Conference</u>
11:40 - 11:55	Third session of reflections on the theme of the day
11:55 - 12:18	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	<u>Eucharist. All are welcome.</u>

### The Three Movements of Prayer

Prayer is intentional communion with God that can take place through many means. *Kataphatic* prayer involves using words, images, sounds, imagination, visual art and engagement of landscape (just to name a few ways) to experience and engage that communion. *Apophatic* prayer is the surrender of all but intention to be silent and still in the Presence of God without the mediation of words and symbols. This ebb and flow of prayer asks of us both intention and attention. Today we will explore the movement from awareness to engagement to surrender in the hope of bringing our fullness self to the Presence of the Divine.

## Three Movements of Prayer: Awareness, Engagement and Surrender

### *First Conference Reading for Reflection – a Prayer of Awareness*

*Awake, O my soul,  
And know the sacred dignity of your being.  
Awake to it in every living soul this day.  
Honor it, defend it.  
In heart and mind, in word and deed.  
Awake O my soul,  
And know the sacred dignity of your being.*

*John Philip Newell, Sacred Earth, Sacred Soul, p. 257*

### *Second Conference Reading for Reflection – a Prayer of Engagement*

*You have searched me and know me, O God.  
You know when I sit down and when I rise up.*

*Psalm 139:1-2*

*As I utter these prayers from my mouth O God  
In my soul may I feel your presence.  
The knee that is stiff, O healer, make pliant  
The heart that is hard, make warm beneath your wing.  
The wound that is giving me pain, O best of healers, make whole.  
And may my hopes and my fears find a listening place with you.*

*Celtic Prayers from Iona*

### *Third Conference Readings for Reflection – a Prayer of Surrender*

*Be still, and know that I am God.*

*Psalm 46:10*

*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.

---