

Quiet Day 14 December 2024

“Listening to the God Who Speaks: Intimacy, Intercession and Blessing”

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.]
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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.]
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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>

God speaks to the hearts of those who keep silence in order to listen . . .

Contemplative (apophatic) prayer is balanced by discursive (kataphatic) prayer in which we pray our known selves in words, images, feelings and imagination. Sharing in authenticity and vulnerability with God deepens our intimacy and ability to hear God’s voice in our innermost being; praying for our needs and the needs of others is the way we recognize that the “kingdom, the power and the glory” belong to God; and our acts of blessing extend God’s healing into the world. Today we open our hearts in intimacy, we listen for God’s voice, and pray God’s love into the world.

Listening to the God Who Speaks: Intimacy, Intercession and Blessing

First Conference - Deepening Intimacy – praying what’s in us (not what we think should be in us!)

Praying our Lament

*Have mercy on me, my God, have mercy on me, for in you I take refuge.
I will take refuge in the shadow of your wings until the disaster has passed.
I cry out to God Most High, to God, who vindicates me.
God sends from heaven and saves me, rebuking those who hotly pursue me
 God sends forth his love and his faithfulness.
I am in the midst of lions; I am forced to dwell among ravenous beasts –
 men whose teeth are spears and arrows
 whose tongues are sharp swords
They spread a net for my feet – I am bowed down in distress
 Psalm 57*

Second Conference – Seeing what God is doing, and praying it into being

Sitting quietly in Sacred Presence, rather than praying for all the things and people that are known needs, choose to still your heart and mind as best you can. Ask God to direct the gaze of your heart to what He is doing and is inviting you to co-create with Him. It may be situations or people – or even the cosmos unknown to you . . . trust that the wideness of God’s gaze and the power of God’s love are always “making all things new.” Allow yourself to be a partner with God in this and knowing that all of the concerns of your heart (even when unnamed) are also held in God’s Healing Love.

Third Conference – To Bless the Space Between Us

*May the Angels in their beauty bless you,
 may they turn towards you streams of blessing.
May the Angel of Awakening stir your heart to come alive to the eternal within you,
 to all the invitations that quietly surround you.
May the Angel of Healing turn your wounds into sources of refreshment.
May the Angel of Imagination enable you to stand on the true thresholds;
 at ease with your ambivalence and drawn in new directions
 through the glow of your contradictions.
May the Angel of Compassion open your eyes to the unseen suffering around you.
May the Angel of Wildness disturb the places where your life is domesticated ad safe,
 take you to the territories of true otherness
 where all that is awkward in you can fall into its own rhythm.
May the Angel of Eros introduce you to the beauty of your senses
 to celebrate your inheritance as a temple of the Holy Spirit.
May the Angel of Justice disturb you to take the side of the poor and the wrong.
May the Angel of Encouragement confirm you in worth and self-respect,
 that you may live with the dignity that presides in your soul.
May the Angel of Death arrive only when your life is complete
 and you have brought every given gift to the threshold where its infinity can shine.
May all the Angels be your sheltering and joyful guardians.
 Benedictus by John O’Donohue*

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.
