

Quiet Day 13 September 2025

Life as Pilgrimage

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.]

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.]

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.

Life as Pilgrimage

For centuries the church understood herself to be on a journey towards a home that could never be fully known and experienced on this earthly plane. While hints of our destination – our full “oneing” with God – could be experienced, especially through great love and great suffering, all of life was to be understood as a time of *readying* for that full union. Together as we meet for Quiet Day, we will view life as a journey FROM our true home TO our true home, with God as our companion and guide, and explore how all of life – the good, the bad, the ugly – can reveal opportunities of wisdom and transformation as we anchor our souls in love through centering prayer and contemplation.

Life as Pilgrimage

First Conference Readings

I live a borrowed life on loan from the Spirit.

*One day my words will be forgotten.
My voice an echo drifting on an ocean breeze.
Images of me will be dust.
My most precious possessions powder.
Even those tied to me by the double helix
Will not recall my name.*

*But I do not despair of my short span
Or wish my memory immortal.*

*The One who loaned me this life will not forget.
The Spirit will come to claim it, calling me by name –
 A borrowed life returned
 Redeemed by endless love.
 Bishop Steven Charleston
 Spirit Wheel*

*You created my inmost being; you knit me together in my
mother's womb*

*I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
Your works are wonderful, I know that full well*

*My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in
secret; when I was woven together in the depths of the earth*

*Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for
me were written in your book before one of them came to be.
 Psalm 139:13-16*

Second Conference Readings

*Unseeable
we have seen you this day
in the lights of the skies,
in the greening of the earth,
in flowing water.*

*Untouchable
we have felt you this day
in the warmth of the sun,
in the wildness of the wind,
in the touch of another.
in and beyond our senses,
in taste and touch and sound
Your mystery has been made known.*

*At the ending of the day,
in the darkness of the night,
in and beyond our senses . . .*

*let us know your presence, O God,
let us know your everlasting presence.
 JP Newell, A Celtic Psalter*

*We are all "in Christ" – participating in organic unity
with the Oneness of God. "It is no longer I who live, but
Christ who lives in me." Gal. 2:20*

Third Conference Reading

For Equilibrium on the Journey
*Like the joy of the sea coming home to shore,
May the relief of laughter rinse through your soul.
As the wind loves to call things to dance,
May your gravity be lightened by grace.
Like the dignity of moonlight restoring the earth,*

*May your thoughts incline with reverence and respect.
As water takes whatever shape it is in,
So free may you be about who you become.
As time remains free of all that it frames,
May your mind stay clear of all its names.
May your prayer of listening deepen enough
To hear in the depths the laughter of God.
 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.
