

Centering Prayer

Fr Thomas Keating & Rev Cynthia Bourgeault

You are invited to create community online as we gather to share and grow faith.

How to Prepare and Run a Session:

Read *Saturday Sessions 'How To' Guide* for information how to host a Saturday Session.

Presentation:

This week we are invited to watch two videos, which serve as an introduction to Centering Prayer.

Fr Thomas Keating: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5FWvxwfN_CE&vl=en (approx. 30 mins)

Rev. Cynthia Bourgeault <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1aQmQu4lufo> (approx. 30 mins)

About the Presenters:

Centering Prayer is a receptive method of Christian silent prayer that prepares us to receive the gift of contemplative prayer, prayer in which we experience God's presence within us, closer than breathing, closer than thinking, closer than consciousness itself.

Our time at Saturday Sessions this week will include time for breakout groups for discussion and an opportunity to experience centering prayer as 'one collective body online' in the last 15 minutes together.

Thomas Keating, O.C.S.O. (March 7, 1923 – October 25, 2018) was an American Catholic monk and priest of the Order of Cistercians of the Strict Observance (also known as Trappists). Keating was known as one of the principal developers of Centering Prayer, a contemporary method of contemplative prayer that emerged from St. Joseph's Abbey, Spencer, Massachusetts.¹

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Keating

Cynthia Bourgeault is a modern-day mystic, Episcopal priest, writer, and internationally known retreat leader. She divides her time between solitude at her seaside hermitage in Maine and a demanding schedule traveling globally to teach and spread the recovery of the Christian contemplative and Wisdom paths. Cynthia is a core faculty member at the Center for Action and Contemplation alongside fellow teachers and colleagues James Finley, Richard Rohr, Barbara Holmes, and Brian McLaren.²

Questions to Ponder:

1. What were your thoughts or feelings about centering prayer as you were listening to the speakers?
2. How do you sit with silence? Is it easy? Difficult?
3. What is your response to - As we pray in one space, “we form one collective body of yearning and resonance and it is that, that changes the planet”?
4. What other experiences or thoughts do you have around contemplative prayer? How is our relationship with God strengthened through contemplative prayer?
5. Do you see such a method as contemplative prayer beneficial to groups – particularly leadership groups in our parishes and communities?

The last fifteen minutes of your time together can be a time of centering prayer using Rev. Cynthia's video beginning at 15:56.

Further Support:

If you would like further support to bring to life a Saturday Session, or Wednesday Wisdom or Tuesday Thinktank (the name can be changed), please contact Lisa at the Pastoral Planning Office at lisa.bright@parracatholic.org

For information about Zoom please contact the Pastoral Planning Office or you can watch a Zoom tutorial at <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362033-Getting-Started-on-Windows-and-Mac>

The Pastoral Planning Office thanks you for your enduring faith, hope, love and commitment as we venture into the deep. We pray that you experience the peace and grace that our God offers and can be an ambassador of Christ's hope and peace to those you encounter and accompany.

Please contact the Pastoral Planning Office for support in all areas of pastoral ministry.

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² <https://cynthiabourgeault.org/>