

## Silence

St. John of the Cross (16<sup>th</sup> century), says, “God’s first language is silence.” Thomas Keating, a trappist monk refers to this in his book, Invitation to Love. He says, “God’s first language is silence; everything else is a poor translation.”

Keating goes on to say, “In order to understand this language, we must learn to be silent and to rest in God.”

Silence is not easy. We live in a world that is filled with noise and distraction. From the moment we get up in the morning, to the time we go to bed at night, we are bombarded with a variety of stimuli. More than ever, our souls need the practice of silence.

Silence is simple but it is not easy as has been said. We actually need to train ourselves to grow quiet on a regular basis and simply be at peace in the silence of God’s love. We are giving space to rediscover the abiding presence of God. It is only in silence that we discover that God alone can satisfy the longings of the human heart.

There are different ways to practice silence. We enter silence within other practices such as Lectio Divina and Imagination Gospel Contemplation, The Safe Place or in other exercises that call for some silent reflection. This is more what we will experience in our Still Services.

The more singular way of practicing silence is something called “Centering Prayer.” For twenty to 30 minutes a day, you enter silence. The way to do this is as follows:

### CENTERING PRAYER

1. Choose a sacred word as the symbol of your intention to consent to God’s presence and action within you.
2. Sitting comfortably and with eyes closed, settle briefly and silently introduce the sacred word as the symbol of your consent to God’s presence and action within.
3. When the many thoughts come piling in (and they do!) don’t try to get rid of or fight them. Notice them and let them gently go and come back to your sacred word.
4. You will probably not notice any great “gain” during this time but as you continue in this practice, you will notice changes in your daily life – changes in your attitudes, reactions, and quick actions. You will grow in accessing the peace God wants to give you. You will sense that a transformation is happening that is out of being in the presence of God. I could go on but I don’t want to describe it too much because it is better for you to have your own experience and journey in it.
5. Set a timer so you don’t keep checking the clock. And I would put it across the room so you aren’t tempted to sneak a peak. Haha

Helpful Resource: <https://www.contemplativeoutreach.org/about-us/>

You can join groups where you receive daily teaching/reflection on centering prayer. This is very helpful to build your understanding and help you along the way. You can also join groups that practice 20 minutes of silence.

Still will be hosting 3 morning times of silence in community beginning on August 30<sup>th</sup>. Simply email me for the information/zoom link. It is free of cost.