



## Dear Centering Prayer Community of Arizona,

Do you ever feel a sudden wave of joy or peace or optimism? It can come from nowhere and leave you feeling calm and grateful. There isn't much to explain it, given the onslaught of suffering and fear in the news every day. It seems to come from our spiritual core that is grounded in God's boundless love for us and for creation.

Over the years, the work of Contemplative Outreach has continued relatively unaffected by the world's turbulence. That is because it too is centered in our spiritual nature. This Fall will mark 40 years since the founding of our national office. In addition, it was the beginning of local chapters, development of curriculum and resources to recover the ancient contemplative path of Christianity, and our own local community of volunteers and practitioners. Currently, members of our local 12-Step Contemplative Outreach are involved in the leadership of a September international conference in Atlanta, GA to commemorate this anniversary.

We just received news from Fr. Philip Chircop SJ that he has received a new mission from his Superior/Provincial in Rome and needs to cancel all his booked retreats until the end of 2025. This is very sad news for all of us who have been looking forward to a warm and enriching day with him on October 12. If you have registered your money will be returned promptly. For Fr. Chircop, a much beloved leader internationally, let us pray for success in his new mission. We will see if we can get back on his schedule when he is available. At this late date, we are not able to procure a replacement speaker, but many wonderful things are available on Contemplative Outreach's You Tube channel, or by searching for Fr. Chircop on the internet.

Please enjoy this newsletter and the many opportunities to be together and deepen our practice that autumn brings.

In silence, service and solitude.

**Your Chapter Service Team**



*Every day is a new unfolding of*

*our Life in Christ ...*

*surprises are always happening*

*Thomas Keating*

## News and events from the Contemplative Life Program at Saint Barnabas on the Desert

### Fall Silent Retreat

November 7-18, 2024.

Registration will open on October 3rd.

The Fall Intensive Retreat is designed for those with a well-established daily practice of Centering Prayer or a similar daily practice of silent meditation. Each day includes three one-hour period of Centering Prayer, walking meditation, and Compline (Night Prayer). Silence is honored throughout each day including mealtime. This gives participants a sacred place to attend to the longings of their heart and welcome God’s healing presence. To register, contact Debbie Moore at [deb.j.moore@gmail.com](mailto:deb.j.moore@gmail.com).

### Introduction to Centering Prayer

October 19, 2024

The Centering Prayer method is taught at Saint Barnabas Church and consists of an all-day Saturday workshop conducted by Debbie Moore. These programs are ecumenical in nature and anyone who is interested in this method of prayer is welcome to register to attend. This Intro workshop is followed by five evening sessions to provide continued training in this method of prayer. In addition, everyone is encouraged to participate in one of the weekly Centering Prayer groups.

### Saint Barnabas Centering Prayer Groups

Monday (in-person) 2:00-3:30pm

Held in the Jim Clark Contemplative Chapel

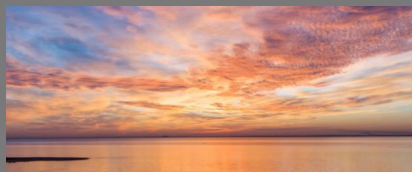
Tuesday (Zoom group) 7:00-8:30p

Contact Debbie Moore at [deb.j.moore@gmail.com](mailto:deb.j.moore@gmail.com)

Tuesday and Friday mornings (Zoom group) 9:00-9:30am

Contemplative prayer  
is the world in which  
God can do anything.  
To move into that  
realm is the  
greatest adventure.  
It is to be open to the  
infinite and hence  
infinite possibilities.

Thomas Keating



## Contemplative Outreach of Phoenix Lending Library

Did you know our local chapter has a lending library with many DVD’s and CD’s by Fr. Thomas Keating and other contemplative teachers?

Also, we are looking to purge our extensive supply of VHS tapes by Fr. Keating & others.

If you’re interested in receiving an email with resources available for borrowing or VHS tapes to keep, please contact Jeannie at [jmlashinske@gmail.com](mailto:jmlashinske@gmail.com)

Finally, Contemplative Outreach Ltd. has hundreds of free resources on YouTube. Simply open the YouTube website and search Contemplative Outreach and then the “playlists” tab.

### AZ Contacts

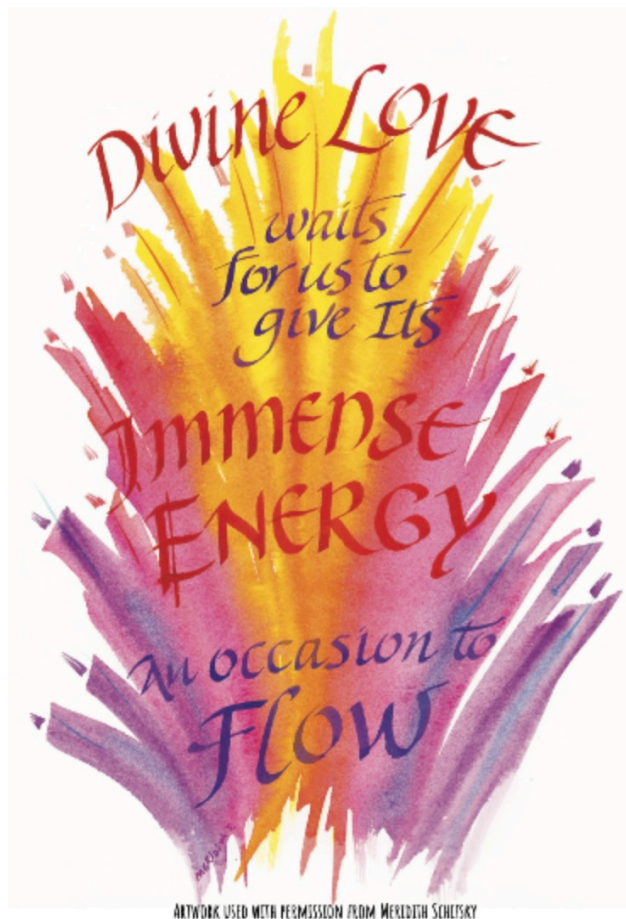
- Rick & Kathy Kramer-Howe... Phoenix [kramerhowe@gmail.com](mailto:kramerhowe@gmail.com)
- Robert Johnson.....Prescott [Robt\\_Johnson@msn.com](mailto:Robt_Johnson@msn.com)
- Margaret (Rusty) Swavely.....Sedona [mbswavely@gmail.com](mailto:mbswavely@gmail.com)



## 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Contemplative Outreach Conference

It has been 40 years since the 12 participants in Fr. Thomas Keating's first extended retreat were inspired by the Spirit to form a national organization, Contemplative Outreach Ltd. An international conference to commemorate this huge contribution to the world will be held September 26 -29, 2025 at the Emory Conference Center Hotel, Atlanta, Georgia. This location was chosen because it is where the lifetime works of Thomas Keating's writings have been deposited for curation and research.

The 12-Step Outreach Service Team has been honored to be co-organizers of the event including several members of our local Arizona team. They have been planning the details of speakers, Centering Prayer periods, meals, gatherings for service teams, and to provide scholarships. We have a line-up of gifted teachers and speakers for the event. Professors from Emory University will provide an update on access for research of Fr. Thomas' material. There will be a panel discussion with people who were with Fr. Thomas from the beginning to share their intimate remembrances of his message. International speakers will provide insights into the movement of Centering Prayer in their respective countries.



ARTWORK USED WITH PERMISSION FROM MEREDITH SCHEFSKY

The first part of the conference is sold out but the morning portions on Saturday and Sunday will be live streamed and recorded.

To register for the live streaming use the link below.

<https://www.contemplativeoutreach.org/40th-anniversary-conference-atlanta-day-event/>

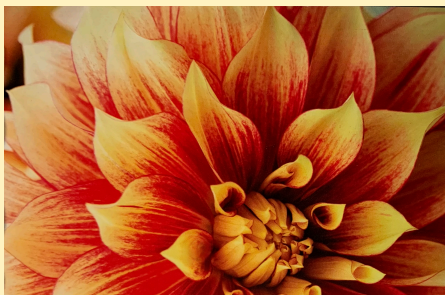
## 12-Step Outreach Introduction to Centering Prayer Presenter Training

The 12-Step Outreach has been busy over the last year forming and commissioning new presenters of “Introduction to Centering Prayer as an 11<sup>th</sup> Step Practice.” Both this 12-Step based version, and the standard Contemplative Outreach Centering Prayer Introduction, consist of four conferences presented around a Power Point slide deck. All conferences convey the same themes with core conferences two and three being nearly identical, while “bookend conferences” one and four are tailored to the language of 12-Step recovery. As with the standard version, Fr. Thomas Keating participated in the development and approval of the 12-Step Introduction presentation content.

Over the past year, ten people in various 12-Step programs were commissioned as presenters from across the USA and even one in Poland. Currently, we have six who are in the final Presenter-in-Training phase

where they present all four conferences to at-large audiences. Additionally, we have another 13 candidates in the Formation Phase receiving intense training on the presentation material.

From May to September of this year, 12-Step Outreach hosted monthly Introduction Workshops on zoom. This was one of the venues where presenters-in-training were paired with commissioned presenters to obtain presenting experience. Other in-person, local workshops were also held, including presentations hosted by the 12-Step Contemplative Outreach Service Team in Arizona. Developing and hosting zoom introductions has been very effective, providing flexibility in forming and commissioning 12-Step practitioners of Centering Prayer who in turn can build and strengthen 11<sup>th</sup> step-based Centering Prayer groups in their communities.



*The fruit  
of the touch  
of Jesus is  
to see him  
in  
everything  
that happens*

*Thomas Keating*



# Silent Retreats In 2025



Contemplative Outreach of Phoenix offers silent intensive retreats to those who are interested in renewing and deepening their relationship with God through Centering Prayer in a community setting and wrapped in an atmosphere of profound silence. The retreats take place in Sonoita, AZ at the Santa Rita Abbey Retreat Center ([santaritaabbey.org](http://santaritaabbey.org)), about an hour south of Tucson. This is a natural setting on high desert terrain. There are seven private rooms; one queen bed room can accommodate two retreatants. Each room has its own bath. The retreat menu is vegetarian.

We have had to raise retreat fees this year to accommodate Santa Rita Abbey's cost increase for use of the retreat house facilities. We have done our best to keep these fees competitive with similar retreats around the country. Scholarship help is available.

Please note: The sisters are requiring that all visitors to the retreat facilities have had the most recent vaccination against COVID-19.

**Intensive Retreat:** Friday evening, January 17 through Saturday noon, January 25, 2025.

(Optional dual track Post Intensive Retreat)

The retreat is open to all who have a 6 month Centering Prayer practice. There are about six 30 minute Centering Prayer periods daily. The prayer is supported by the viewing of Fr. Thomas Keating's Spiritual Journey DVDs. Plus, we will share in Lectio Divina and soul-friending with staff. Also available is the opportunity to participate daily in Lauds, Communion Service and Vespers with the Trappistine Sisters in their nearby chapel. There will be talking at the evening meal.

**Retreat fee:** \$600 per person.

The Contemplative Outreach Divine Economy Fund has provided a one-time grant to lower the fee by \$200 for each retreatant. This is done in recognition of the high cost of living. The fund is dedicated to making Fr. Thomas Keating's teachings accessible to Centering Prayer practitioners.

**Post-Intensive Retreat:** Friday evening January 31 through Saturday noon February 8, 2025.

Pre-requisite: Must have attended an intensive retreat. This retreat consists of eight 30 minute Centering Prayer periods daily. There is time for individual quiet time: writing, sketching, walking, etc. We are invited also to share in the sisters' prayers of: Lauds, Liturgy, Vespers and Compline. This is a totally silent retreat. Soul-friending with staff can be scheduled.

**Retreat fee:** \$800 per person.

**Registration**

Registration opens September 1, 2024. Please mail a non-refundable \$100 registration fee and evidence of recent vaccination against Covid-19 to  
 Jeannie Lashinske  
 5728 East Orange Blossom Lane  
 Phoenix, AZ 85018.

We expect the remaining balance will be paid in full by January 3, 2025. Please make out checks to Contemplative Outreach of Phoenix. Questions? Ask Jeannie by calling (480) 423-1645 or emailing her at [jmlashinske@gmail.com](mailto:jmlashinske@gmail.com).

# Wise Choices, A Spiritual Guide to Making Life's Decisions

## By Margaret Silf

Book Review by Sister Rachel Torrez, RSM

Many of us have been faced with having to make life changing decisions at one time or another. It is not always easy, nor is it always clear that the choices we make are the right ones. It may be helpful to use this book, Wise Choices, by Margaret Silf, to help us. This is a book of suggestions, not rules. The solutions that work in life are the ones we discover for ourselves, not the ones we find in books. The book provides practical approaches you may want to use in the "discernment" process.

The following are a few excerpts from the book which suggest some thoughts for making the wisest choice.

- You can only make choices when you begin from a place where you feel you are being true to yourself and true to how you really are.
- Take a look at any choices you are dealing with right now: Are they long term, or even life-changing? Or are they "instants"? Just to name them to yourself is a good way of beginning to prepare the ground work.
- To seek guidance and advice from each other is simply a part of what it means to be human, and part of an interrelated interdependent web of life. The only kind of guidance or advice that is truly objective is that which is offered in genuine freedom of heart.
- Favorable opportunities are not always simply good news. Sometimes they are merely the least harmful of several options, and we have to choose "the lesser of two evils." To choose well is to choose the best we can.
- Ask yourself how you would advise someone you love, if they were facing the choice that lies before you. What might you want to say to this person, and why?
- If doubts are causing you to hold back and waver on the threshold of decisive action, remember that you have already been through a process of serious discernment on the matter. You have weighed the pros and cons, and listened to the voice of your own intuition and the voices of wise guides and mentors.



# The Snowmass Agreements

In 1984, Thomas Keating invited contemplatives from eight different religious traditions – Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Islamic, Native American, Orthodox, Protestants, and Roman Catholic – to come together at St. Benedict’s Monastery in Snowmass, Colorado, to engage in what he called “a big experiment.” What would happen when meditators from different traditions meditated together and share their spiritual insights? Within a few days it became clear to attendees that, while their religious vocabularies were different, their experiences were not.

During the first few years of the Snowmass Conference, a series of agreements arose among the attendees. Fr. Thomas compiled the first eight:

1. The world religions bear witness to the experience of Ultimate Reality, to which they give various names.
2. Ultimate Reality cannot be limited by any name or concept.
3. Ultimate Reality is the ground of infinite potentiality and actualization.
4. Faith is opening, accepting and responding to Ultimate Reality. Faith in this sense precedes every belief system.
5. The potential for human wholeness – or, in other frames of reference, enlightenment, salvation, transcendence, transformation, blessedness – is present in every human being.
6. Ultimate Reality may be experienced not only through religious practices, but also through nature, art, human relationships, and service to others.
7. As long as the human condition is experienced as separate from Ultimate Reality, it is subject to ignorance and illusion, weakness and suffering.
8. Disciplined practice is essential to spiritual life; yet spiritual attainment is not the result of one’s own efforts, but the result of the experience of oneness with Ultimate Reality.

“Those who seek Ultimate Reality perceive themselves as citizens of the Earth. Their first loyalty is to the entire human family. They transcend the particularities of race, nationality and religion without reacting against them or trying to destroy them. They recognize the profound human values that the world religions enshrine. They work to preserve and enhance these values, but not at the cost of dividing the fundamental unity of the human family. They belong to an emerging global community.”

Thomas Keating (from *The Common Heart: An Experience of Interreligious Dialogue*)

This first appeared in *Contemplative Outreach News* Vol 40 Number 2 June 2023



**SILENCE  
SOLITUDE  
SOLIDARITY  
SERVICE**

*Marie Howard in the VOICE, August 5, 2024 stated  
the **first theological principle**  
of the Vision of Contemplative Outreach  
is a critical reminder of who we are and  
what we're about.*

**Contemplative Outreach is a network of communities and individuals seeking the inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit and to contribute to the renewal of the Christian contemplative tradition through the practice of Centering Prayer.**

*The fundamental purpose of Centering Prayer and of Contemplative Outreach is to further the knowledge and experience of God's love in the consciousness of the human family. Contemplative Outreach provides basic instruction in Centering Prayer and additional programs to sustain the development in contemplation and the process of transformation.*



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