

Contemplative Outreach Symbol



Job's Redeemer – Patient Waiting

- Alpha and Omega – the Symbol of God – the beginning and the end
- The cross – the symbol of our salvation
- Flowers – symbol of the abundance of life – the resurrection
- Circle – sign of ongoing progress

The heart and soul of Centering Prayer is consenting to God's presence and action in our lives. The Alpha and Omega acknowledges that our God is at the centre of our consent and being. The cross is a symbol of our dying to our thoughts and commentaries. In the letting go our false self gives way to the flowering of the new self. This is an ongoing process bringing us deeper into Divine Intimacy.

Like Job, our patient waiting and consenting will be our gift of gratitude.

The Weekly Centering Prayer Support Group

Excerpt from Open Mind, Open Heart by Thomas Keating

While centering prayer is done privately most of the time, a weekly or bi-weekly sharing of the experience in a small group (up to fifteen) has proven to be very supportive, as well as a means of continuing education. The weekly meeting also serves as a means of accountability. Just knowing that one's support group is meeting together each week is an enormous encouragement to keep going, or an invitation to return to the practice of centering prayer if circumstances such as illness, business, family problems, or urgent duties have prevented one from carrying out one's commitment to daily practice for a time.

By sharing the experience of centering prayer with others, one's own discernment of the ups and downs of the practice is sharpened. The group serves as a source of encouragement and can normally solve problems that might arise regarding the method. The collective discernment of the group tends to be well balanced.

The purpose of the meeting is spiritual refreshment and mutual encouragement in the practice. *Open Mind, Open Heart, Twentieth Anniversary Edition*, p. 173-174.