

Opening Prayer

All glory be yours, O Loving Presence,
Yes, your blessings are forever;
You delight me with the joy of your Presence.
Forever I will put my trust in You;
And as I abandon myself to you in love,
I am assured of peace.

From: Psalm 21, *Psalms for Praying*; Nan C. Merrill

Final reading

Once we make up our minds to seek God, He is already seeking us much more eagerly, and He is not going to let anything happen to prevent His purpose. He will bring people and events into our lives, and whatever we may think about them, they are designed for the evolution of His life in us

From: *The Heart of the World*

By Thomas Keating

Unity Prayer

"May God heal all divisions -- those within my own mind, heart, soul and body, and those between all people and groups -- that we may be one Body in Christ, unified in every way and on every level, and thus manifest the Living Christ by our very lives. Amen."

Contemplative Outreach United in Prayer Day 2020

A Very Receptive Form of Prayer

The last time we emphasized the relationship with God that is taking place in this private room, learning to pray in secret. Now we look at Centering Prayer as a discipline, not an end in itself; it's in the service of deepening the relationship, moving it from an active to a receptive form of prayer.

Here I Am

Firstly once in our private room, having closed the door and bolted it, we are just being there with giving our complete presence to God, we're offering ourselves completely to God. We're not doing anything except maintaining our original intention to consent to God's presence and action.

Not A Research Project

In this prayer any analysis of what's going on or your feelings is totally inappropriate, so no analysis of what's going on in the prayer; such as, No analysis of any kind.

Our Expectations Get In The Way

There should be no expectations of anything. The greatest thing is already happening; namely, the Divine Holy Trinity, the Divine indwelling, is present within us, totally available to us, giving us His complete presence.

Consent Refers To The Present Moment

Expectations belong to the future; consent refers to the present moment, and the present moment with God's full presence is what is.

What More Do You Want ?

It's like being in the arms of God, like a kiss. It's not the time to talk about the weather. No expectations, no goals, aims or purposes. Love doesn't have purposes. Love is its own reward.

It's Not So Much The Word

Other goals, such as repeating the sacred symbol or word we've chosen. It's not the word, or its content that's important; but its capacity simply to express your intention to spend time and be in communion with God, to be totally open and available and present to God.

It Doesn't Have To Be Repeated Non-Stop

We recommend discretion in how you use the sacred word, not used non-stop. Use it when needed, when other thoughts come down the stream of consciousness. In the context of Centering Prayer, thoughts mean any memories, plans, sensations, sensations, sensible, mental or spiritual.

We Resist No Thought

Some thoughts we're indifferent to. They're just the inevitable passage of our imagination. We resist no thought; we hang onto no thought; we react emotionally to no thought, and we return to the sacred word when you notice you're getting interested in any particular thought or perception.

We Offer It To You To Try

There is a method called mantric prayer in which you repeat the same word which is a distinct practice from Centering Prayer. We don't claim that Centering Prayer is the only one, but we suggest that it's a suitable one for the end of the millennium. This is one method of engaging with the Divine.

A Reaffirmation Of The Original Intention

Centering Prayer does not require constant repetition of the sacred word. We mentioned the sacred gaze and sacred breath, simply noticing your breath when a thought attracts your attention. But at first, you have to return to the sacred word; which is a reaffirmation of your original intention when you started and sat down in your inner room, having closed the door, supposedly, from thoughts.

They Don't Respect Doors

Thoughts don't respect doors! So when a thought comes, you return to the sacred word. At first you may have to almost repeat the sacred word constantly, but very gently. Thoughts are inevitable. It's our attitude to them, that is the sign of progress. The proper attitude is just to let them all go by.

It's Going To Take Time

It will take time to establish the habit, to get this new capacity to be detached inwardly as we wait with the Lord with the intention of consenting to His presence and action within us.

The Naive Hope Of Having No Thoughts

A second goal to avoid is the naive hope of having no thoughts. There is a time in Centering Prayer where there may not be thoughts, but it's very brief, and rather rare. St. Teresa thinks it only lasts maybe half an hour at most. It is not something to be desired but can happen.

Our Fidelity To The Regular Practice

It is not our experience of Centering Prayer but our fidelity to regular practice which is a preparation for action or for daily life, where the battle for transformation and union with God takes place.

We Mustn't Have A Negative Idea Of Thinking

It is naive to think of having no thoughts. One of the signs of life is the capacity to think. So thinking is not bad.: to have the universe become conscious of itself through the reflection of human beings. But it's a hindrance when trying to relate to God at a deeper, spiritual level.

Paying No Attention To Them

The Divine presence is the source from which our being arises at every level: physical, mental and spiritual -- at every micro-second. So we welcome the thoughts, but not with attachment. We welcome them in the sense of paying no attention to them.

The Mind Is Not Meant To Be A Blank

A third point, which would be a mistake, is by means of the sacred word or symbol to make the mind a blank. The mind is not meant to be a blank. The purpose is always to be detached from the thoughts and being able to maintain our intent to consent to God's presence throughout the prayer.