

Hinsley Zoom 15 August 2020

Opening Prayer

May my mind come alive today
To the invisible geography
That invites me to new frontiers,
To break the dead shell of yesterdays,
To risk being disturbed and changed.

May I have the courage today
To live the life that I would love,
To postpone my dream no longer,
But do at last what I came here for
And waste my heart on fear no more.

John O'Donohue

Final Reading

It may be hard to convince yourself of the value of interior silence. But if you are going to practice centering prayer, the only way to do it is to ignore every thought. Let it be a time of interior silence and nothing else. If God wants to speak to you in successive words, let Him do so during the other twenty-three hours of the day. He will be more pleased that you preferred to listen to His silence. In this prayer God is speaking not to your ears, to your emotions, to your head, or even to your heart, but to your spirit, to your inmost being. There is no human apparatus to understand that language or hear it. A kind of anointing takes place. (*Open Mind Open Heart* Thomas Keating)

Prayer for Unity

"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."

United in Prayer 2020
Contemplative Outreach

TALK 3: THE USE OF THE SACRED WORD

Whenever you become aware you are engaged with thoughts, return ever so gently to the sacred word.

The sacred word expresses our intention to be in God's presence and to yield to the divine action within. It is sacred not because of its inherent meaning but because of the meaning we give it as the expression of our intention.

When we talk about thoughts this is an umbrella term meaning: any perception at all. Remember: thoughts are inevitable, integral and a normal part of Centering Prayer.

DIFFERENT KINDS OF THOUGHTS

- ⇒ Ordinary wanderings of the imagination or memory
- ⇒ Attracting thoughts
- ⇒ Insights
- ⇒ Self-reflections
- ⇒ Thoughts arising from the unconscious

THE FOUR 'R'S

- ⇒ Resist no thought
- ⇒ Retain no thought
 - ⇒ React emotionally to no thought
- ⇒ Return ever so gently to the sacred word

THE PRACTICE

- The intention to consent to God's presence is the heart and soul of the Centering Prayer method.
- When you become aware you are engaged with thoughts, return ever so gently to the Sacred Word. By "returning ever-so-gently to the sacred word" a minimum of effort is indicated. This is the only activity we initiate during the time of Centering Prayer.
- Once you grasp the fact that thoughts are not only inevitable but an integral part of the process of healing and growth initiated by God, you will be able to take a friendlier attitude toward them.
- Progress in Centering Prayer does not eliminate thoughts, but leads to detachment from all thoughts.
- Thoughts do not interrupt this prayer unless you deliberately engage them or get up and walk out.

On the Sacred Word

"The sacred word is a way of letting go of all thoughts. This makes it possible for our spiritual faculties, which are attracted to interior silence, to move spontaneously in that direction. Such a movement does not require effort. It only requires the willingness to let go of our ordinary preoccupations". Open Mind, Open Heart by Thomas Keating, (2006)pg 33