

CENTERING PRAYER

CENTERING PRAYER is a method of prayer, which prepares us to receive the gift of God's inner presence, also known traditionally as contemplative prayer. It consists in responding to the Spirit of God by consenting to God's presence and action within. It furthers the development of contemplative prayer by quieting our faculties to cooperate with the gift of God's presence.

Centering Prayer facilitates the movement from more active modes of prayer – verbal, mental, or affective prayer – into a receptive prayer of resting in God. It emphasizes prayer as a personal relationship with God. At the same time, it is a discipline to foster and serve this relationship by a regular, daily practice of prayer. It is Trinitarian in source, Christ-centered in its focus, and ecclesial in its effects; that is, it builds communities of faith.

Centering Prayer is drawn from ancient prayer practices of the Christian contemplative heritage, notable the Desert Fathers and Mothers, Lectio Divina, and writings of St John of the Cross and St Theresa of Avila. The modern "Centering Prayer" movement has been largely ignited by the writings of three Trappist monks from St Joseph's Abbey in Spencer, Massachusetts in the 1970's.

GUIDELINES FOR CENTERING PRAYER:

1. Choose a sacred word as the symbol of your intention to consent to God's presence and action within.
2. Sitting comfortably and with eyes closed, settle briefly and silently say the sacred word as the symbol of your consent to God's presence and action.
3. When you become aware of thoughts, return ever-so-gently to the sacred word.
4. At the end of the prayer period, remain in silence with eyes closed for a couple of minutes.