



THE CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE PROGRAM

40 day practice

CONTEMPLATIVE SERVICE

 SILENCE
SOLITUDE
SERVICE
CONTEMPLATIVE
OUTREACH

CONTEMPLATIVE SERVICE

Prayer in Action



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	8
Guide to using the booklet	10
Part I - Formed for Service	12
Days 1 – 25	
Part II - Divine Love in Action	60
Days 26 – 32	
Part III - Service as Presence	80
Days 33 – 40	
Further study	96

We acknowledge that any good accomplished by
Contemplative Outreach is the work of the Holy Spirit.

Contemplative Outreach Theological Principle 13



Written by Gail Fitzpatrick-Hopler

Contributors:

Carl Arico, Mary Anne Best, Pamela Gursoy,

Thomas Keating, Timothy Kooek

Designed by John Korinko Design

©2006 Contemplative Outreach, LTD

INTRODUCTION

God in us serving God in others

Contemplative service is the way one consents and responds to the movement of the Indwelling Trinity in the interactions of everyday life, according to one's gifts and calling within our family, work, community and our global society.

Contemplation is both prayer and action. Likewise, contemplative service, grounded in our daily discipline of Centering Prayer, Lectio Divina, the Welcoming Prayer and other contemplative practices, is both prayer and action.

Contemplative service is a manifestation of an interior call – a prompting from the Spirit to activate our gifts and talents for the benefit of family, community, organizations or humanity.

In this context, service is more than volunteering. It is a specific form of volunteering with the intention of being transformed in and through the experience.

Service is more than helping or doing a task. It is a way of being – a disposition of the heart, with no beginning and no end. Service is a deep form of stewardship for God's people and God's creation, arising out of an experience of Oneness. It is a call from God to serve God in others and as such, is both motivated and inspired by Divine Love.

The intention here is to reflect upon the spirituality of service from this contemplative level of understanding, revealed throughout the three sections of this praxis.

The first section, 'Formed for Service,' emphasizes the need for daily practice, wherein the Divine Therapist purifies our intentions and motivations for service, allowing the Spirit to inspire and guide our actions.

The second section, 'Divine Love in Action,' focuses on personal experiences of Centering Prayer practitioners who, through their relationship with God, have been called into service of others. These are samplings of countless experiences; perhaps you have your own to share.

The third section, 'Service as Presence,' reveals service as a transmission of Divine Love. We are invited to dedicate ourselves to serve as transmitters of faith, hope and love, ever-renewed and guided by the Indwelling Presence.



*Love cannot remain by itself,
it has no meaning.*

*Love has to be put into action,
and that action is service.*

Mother Teresa of Calcutta





*A mission of love can come
only from union with God.*

*From that union,
love for the family,
love for one's neighbour,
love for the poor,
is the natural fruit.*

Mother Teresa of Calcutta

It is called 'contemplative service' because we are willing to put ourselves in the role of the lesser – one of servant, one who serves another and, ultimately, one who lives in service to God's will. We no longer need to be seen, to be first, to be recognized, to be useful or to be in control.

Through our daily contemplative practices, the influence of our energy centers are made passive, so we are free from the programs of security, affection and control. Instead, our desire to serve is our active, motivating energy.

PRACTICE

*Write down all the areas in your life that you
currently consider part of your service.*

Reflect on the list you have created.

What do you see?





Photo courtesy of Larry Leibrack

*My soul also you knew full well; nor was my frame unknown
to you when I was made in secret, when I was fashioned
in the depths of the earth.*

Psalm 139

FORMED IN SECRET

God made us; we are the beloved manifestation of God's life-giving nature. Made in the image of God, we are therefore, inherently good.

We are capable of giving because God gives – first in giving us personhood in God through Christ, and second in giving all and everything to us in each moment.

We in turn are called to give ourselves to others as a way of following Christ.

The seeds of service are sown in our hearts at conception and are an integral part of our basic core of goodness. The silence experienced during Centering Prayer creates a space within for the seeds of service to be cultivated over time.

Slowly and simply we begin to see God in others, our environment and ourselves.

PRACTICE

During Centering Prayer we are being formed in secret. Deepen your consent today. You may do this through prayer, by lengthening your Centering Prayer time, or by adding another period of Centering Prayer.





*Have a deep compassion for people.
To be able to have a heart full of compassion,
we need to pray.*

Mother Teresa of Calcutta

INTEND COMPASSION

One simple but effective way to develop compassion is to intend it each day – to think of it and reflect on its nature as part of you, part of all of us. Our compassion is a fruit of our spiritual lives; it actually arises spontaneously when formed by intention in our spiritual practice. Love and compassion are always the goods of the spiritual journey, and they are guided by Divine Wisdom, which then shapes compassion in the concrete situations of our existence...

Compassion, or what the Christian tradition has called *charity*, a translation of *agape*, the selfless, Divine Love of the Gospel – what Jesus exemplified and taught – is the avenue to understanding...

Wayne Teasdale, *A Monk in the World: Cultivating a Spiritual Life*

PRACTICE

*Today, intend to develop compassion.
Pray unceasingly for help ...*

*Create in me, Oh God,
an understanding heart.
I desire above all things
an understanding, compassionate heart.*



HOW HELPING DIFFERS FROM SERVICE

HELPING

is centered on oneself and is individualistic
is caught up in a role
is motivated by self-centered interests
exposes an air of superiority
sees life as weak and needing to be fixed
sees others as separate individuals
perceives oneself as the “doer” doing the work
draws attention to oneself
is preoccupied with doing
is effortful
is exhausting & enervating
is focused on “my” needs & expectations
sees suffering as something to be avoided
fragments action and makes it task-oriented
is scheduled by personal convenience
success is the motivation and goal
waits to be asked
is concerned with conserving one’s energy
seeks a feeling of satisfaction
is preoccupied with one’s own feelings & needs

SERVICE

is Christ-centered & active within a community
enjoys being a loving presence
has the intention of self-emptying love
exemplifies genuine humility and compassion
see life as whole and filled with grace
perceives the unity of all people & creation
allows God to accomplish the work through “me”
gives attention to the needs of others
is aware of and attentive to being
is effortless
is energizing & vitalizing
is focused on other people’s needs
sees another’s suffering as “my suffering”
integrates action into the vision of the community
is scheduled on the basis of the community’s needs
fidelity is the primary intention and goal
takes the initiative to serve
empties oneself despite the cost
enjoys the fruit of gratitude
flows from a daily contemplative prayer practice

PRACTICE

*Spend the next two days reflecting on this wisdom.
Consider your motivations and actions in light of the differences
between helping and serving.*



The fruit of Silence is

PRAYER.

The fruit of Prayer is

FAITH.

The fruit of Faith is

LOVE.

The fruit of Love is

SERVICE.

The fruit of Service is

PEACE.

Mother Teresa of Calcutta



CONSENT IS YES

‘...The more I am able to affirm others, to say ‘yes’ to them in myself, by discovering them in myself and myself in them, the more real I am. I am fully real if my own heart says yes to everyone.

Thomas Merton, *Thomas Merton: Essential Writings*,
selected with an Introduction by Christine M. Bochen



The gift of Centering Prayer is not experienced in the prayer time itself, but in the activity of daily life where we notice the grace of the relationship. As we grow in confidence in our relationship with God, we are more inclined to offer ourselves to God without conditions.

If God calls, we are listening and ready to respond with a YES. This can be compared to receiving a call from a loved one. We may be busy doing something but we drop it in favor of a loving response.

We consent to the desire of the other.

Centering Prayer is a prayer of consent. This consent forms a continuous flow of consent and gradually moves us into surrender to the will of God. We are led by a movement of the Spirit from within which influences and in-forms daily life.

PRACTICE

Are there places in your life where you are being called to consent, or to further deepen your consent?

Just say ‘yes.’



THE REQUIREMENTS OF A **WORK** TO BE DONE CAN
 BE UNDERSTOOD AS THE WILL OF **GOD**.
 IF I AM SUPPOSED TO HOE A GARDEN OR MAKE A TABLE,
 THEN I WILL BE **OBEYING** GOD
 IF I AM TRUE TO THE TASK I AM PERFORMING.
 TO DO THE WORK CAREFULLY AND WELL,
 WITH **LOVE** AND **RESPECT**
 FOR THE NATURE OF MY TASK
 AND WITH DUE ATTENTION TO ITS PURPOSE,
 IS TO **UNITE** MYSELF TO GOD'S WILL IN MY WORK.
 IN THIS WAY I BECOME HIS INSTRUMENT.
 HE WORKS THROUGH **ME**.
 Thomas Merton, *New Seeds of Contemplation*



UNITING PRAYER WITH WORK

Contemplative service is how we carry our prayer into our work. It is living and sharing our relationship with God. Our service is a means of transforming hearts and building human relationships. We call it service in the sense that we, like Jesus, are servants of one another in loving kindness and care. It is truly falling in love for love's sake. It is giving and receiving without attachment to either giving or receiving. It is utmost charity. It is the experience and exchange of Divine Love.
 This is uniting work with prayer.



We must join our prayer with work.

Work cannot substitute for prayer.

*Nevertheless we can learn to make
 work a prayer.*

How can we do this?

By doing our work with Jesus for Jesus.

Mother Teresa of Calcutta

PRACTICE

Today, intend to unite your prayer with work – taking out the garbage, folding clothes, answering the telephone. Feel the abiding Presence in all that you think and do. To help you remember, you may choose to use your active prayer sentence.



SUGGESTED FURTHER STUDY

During the course of this 40-day period, you may also feel inclined to further reading and study:

- ⊙ *Awakenings*, Thomas Keating, Crossroad Classic 1990
- ⊙ *Manifesting God*, Thomas Keating, Lantern Books 2005
- ⊙ *Open Mind, Open Heart*, Thomas Keating, Continuum, 1994 reissue
- ⊙ *A Monk in the World, Cultivating a Spiritual Life*, Wayne Teasdale, New World Library 2002
- ⊙ *New Seeds of Contemplation*, Thomas Merton, Shambhala Library 1961
- ⊙ *Wisdom Way of Knowing: \Reclaiming an Ancient Tradition to Awaken the Heart*, Cynthia Bourgeault, John Wiley & Sons 2003
- ⊙ Spiritual Journey videotapes, numbers 12, 23, 28 – usually available from your local chapter or they may be purchased on the CO online bookstore.
- ⊙ ‘Golden Nuggets of Contemplative Service,’ a summary paper of service teachings, Susan Komis. Available on the CLP web page at <http://www.coutreach.org/clp.htm>.
- ⊙ *Humility Matters: The Practice of the Spiritual Life*, with forward by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Mary Margaret Funk, Continuum 2005
- ⊙ ‘The Spiritual Network of Contemplative Outreach, Ltd.,’ an article on the history and purpose of Contemplative Outreach, Gail Fitzpatrick-Hopler. Available on the CLP webpage at <http://www.contemplativeoutreach.org/clp.htm>.

- ⊙ Nine Month Course: The Practice of Contemplative Living – an ongoing formation enabling participants to create their own personal contemplative lifestyle in the contemporary world. The commitment is for one weekend a month for the nine months of September through May, and includes a review of the previous month’s practice, Centering Prayer, soul-friending, conferences, sharing and rest.

For information and/or brochure, contact:

Walden, NY - Cathy McCarthy - 845 778-2102; email cathymc@frontiernet.net

Denver, CO - Rose Meyler - 303 863-0932; email rcmeyler@att.net

- ⊙ You may also wish to browse the archives and articles on the Contemplative Outreach website www.contemplativeoutreach.org

For a complete listing of books, audiotapes, videotapes and more, search the Contemplative Outreach online bookstore

www.contemplativeoutreach.org

or contact:

Contemplative Outreach Media Center

375 Stewart Road, PO Box 1211

Wilkes-Barre, PA 18773-1211

1-800-608-0096;

international +1-570-822-8899

For all other questions, call +1-973-838-3384

