

In Loving Memory



The background of the image is a close-up, artistic photograph of ocean waves. The water is a deep, vibrant blue, and the waves are captured in a way that shows their texture and movement, with white foam visible in the crests. The lighting is soft, creating a serene and romantic atmosphere. The text "Ocean of Love" is overlaid on the bottom left of the image in a white, serif font.

Ocean of Love

In Loving Memory

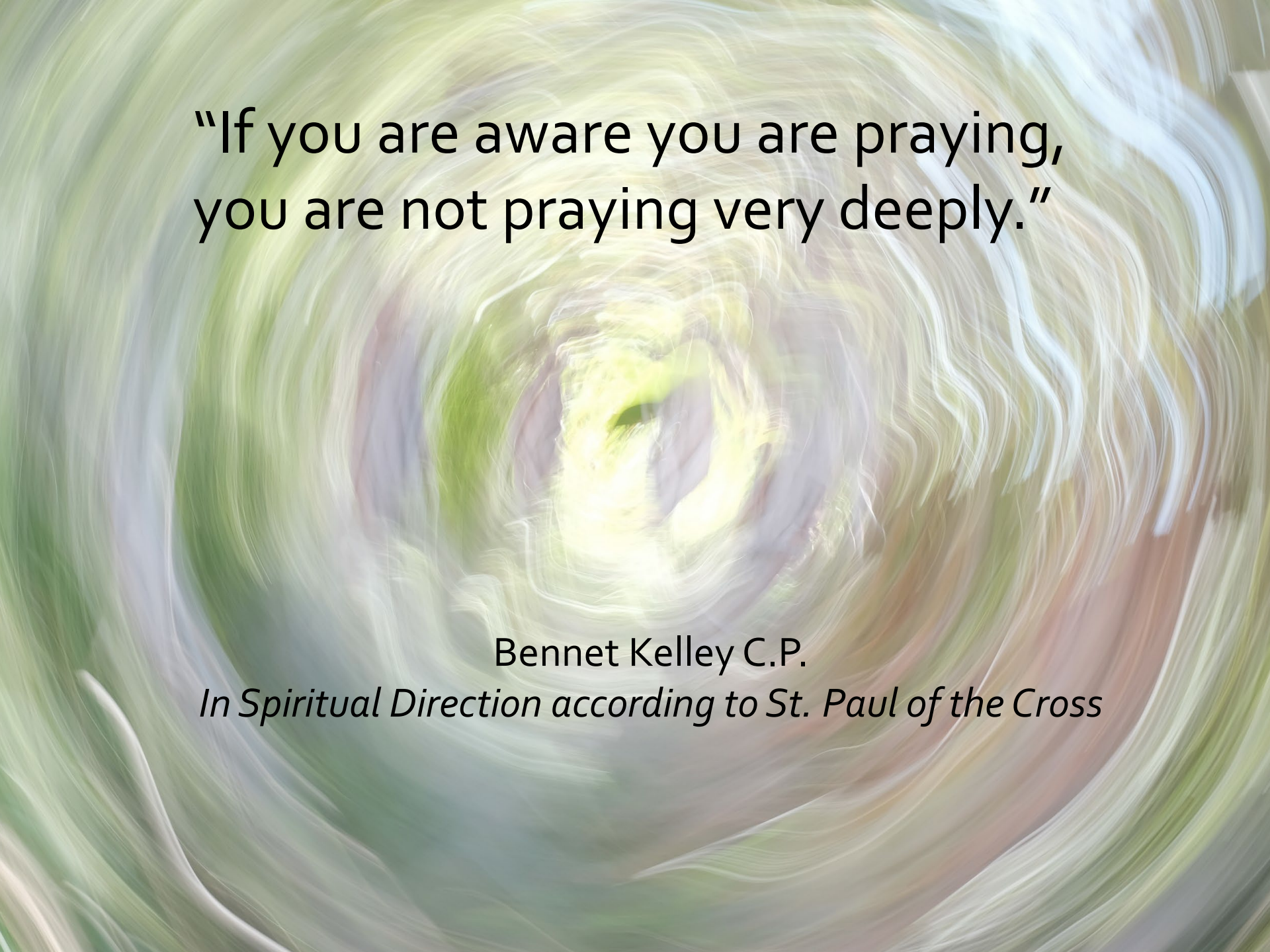




Lent 2023 with the Los Angeles Retreat Center Community



Introduction to Centering Prayer for LARCC Community



“If you are aware you are praying,
you are not praying very deeply.”

Bennet Kelley C.P.

In Spiritual Direction according to St. Paul of the Cross

“The notion
that God is
absent is the
fundamental
illusion of
the human
condition.”

Fr. Thomas Keating





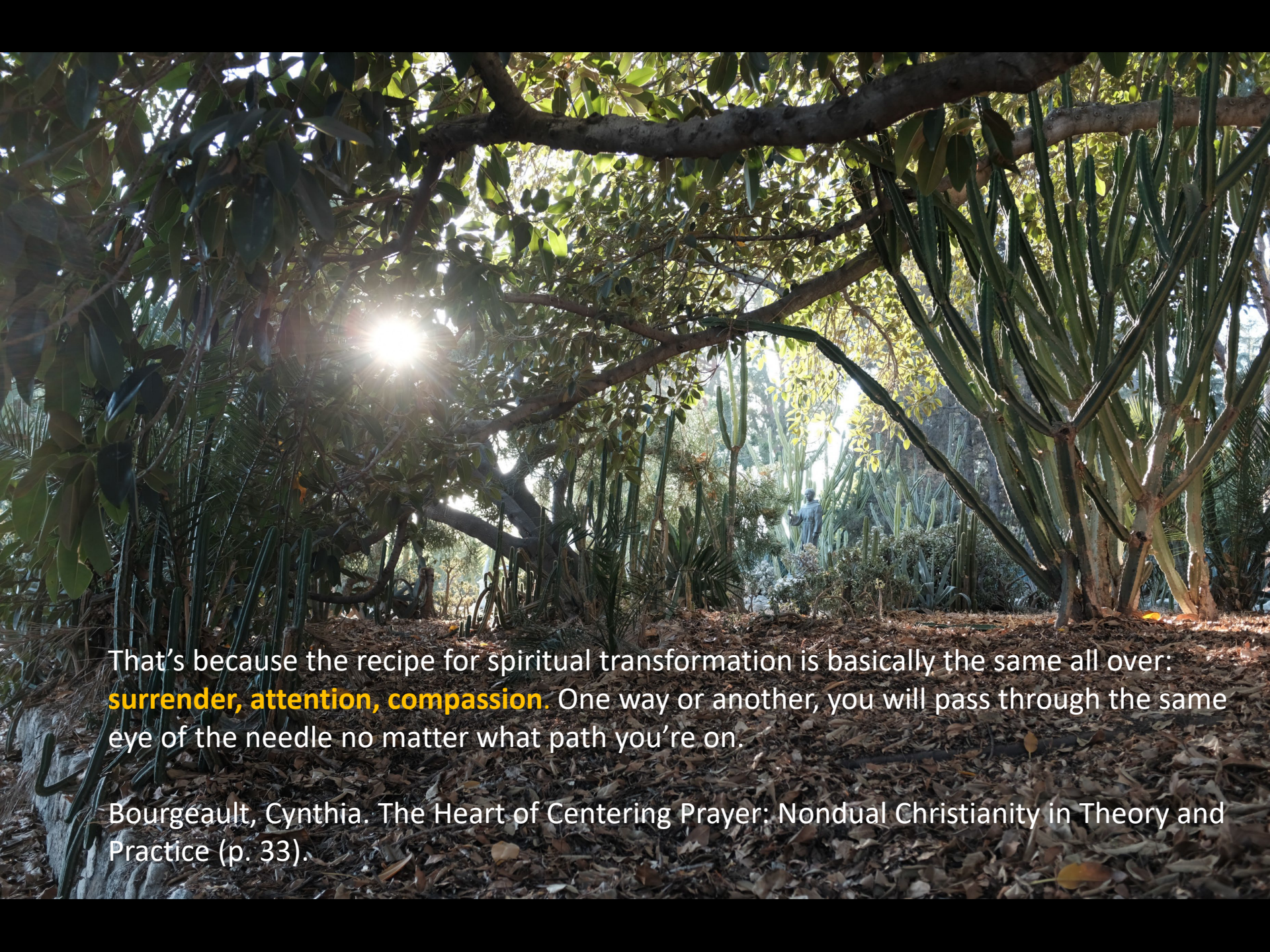
“NOT MY WILL, BUT YOURS, BE DONE”

Mark 14:36 and Luke 22:42

“For if such a soul should desire to make any effort of its own with its interior faculties, this means that it will hinder and lose the blessings which, by means of that peace and ease of the soul, God is instilling into it and impressing upon it.”



We can't think our way to God. We can only encounter God.



That's because the recipe for spiritual transformation is basically the same all over: **surrender, attention, compassion**. One way or another, you will pass through the same eye of the needle no matter what path you're on.

Bourgeault, Cynthia. *The Heart of Centering Prayer: Nondual Christianity in Theory and Practice* (p. 33).

“Pray as you can, not as you cannot!”



John Chapman, O.S.B.

Silent Prayer

Imaginative Prayer

Visio Divina

Centering Prayer



Eucharistic Adoration

Lectio Divina

A Contemplative Supermarket of Prayer

Whenever we want to ask something from powerful people, we do not presume to do so without humility and respect. How much more ought we to pray to the Lord God of all things with profound humility and pure devotion! And we must realise we shall not be heard for our many words, but for our purity of heart and tears of compunction.

Rule 20, Rule of St. Benedict

What the Catechism says

- **2712** Contemplative prayer is the prayer of the child of God, of the forgiven sinner who agrees to welcome the love by which he is loved and who wants to respond to it by loving even more.⁸ But he knows that the love he is returning is poured out by the Spirit in his heart, for everything is grace from God.

Contemplative prayer is the poor and humble surrender to the loving will of the Father in ever deeper union with his beloved Son.

History of Centering Prayer

- John Cassian
- 6th Century
- The Cloud of Unknowing
- Post-Vatican II activities
- Keating, Menninger, Pennington

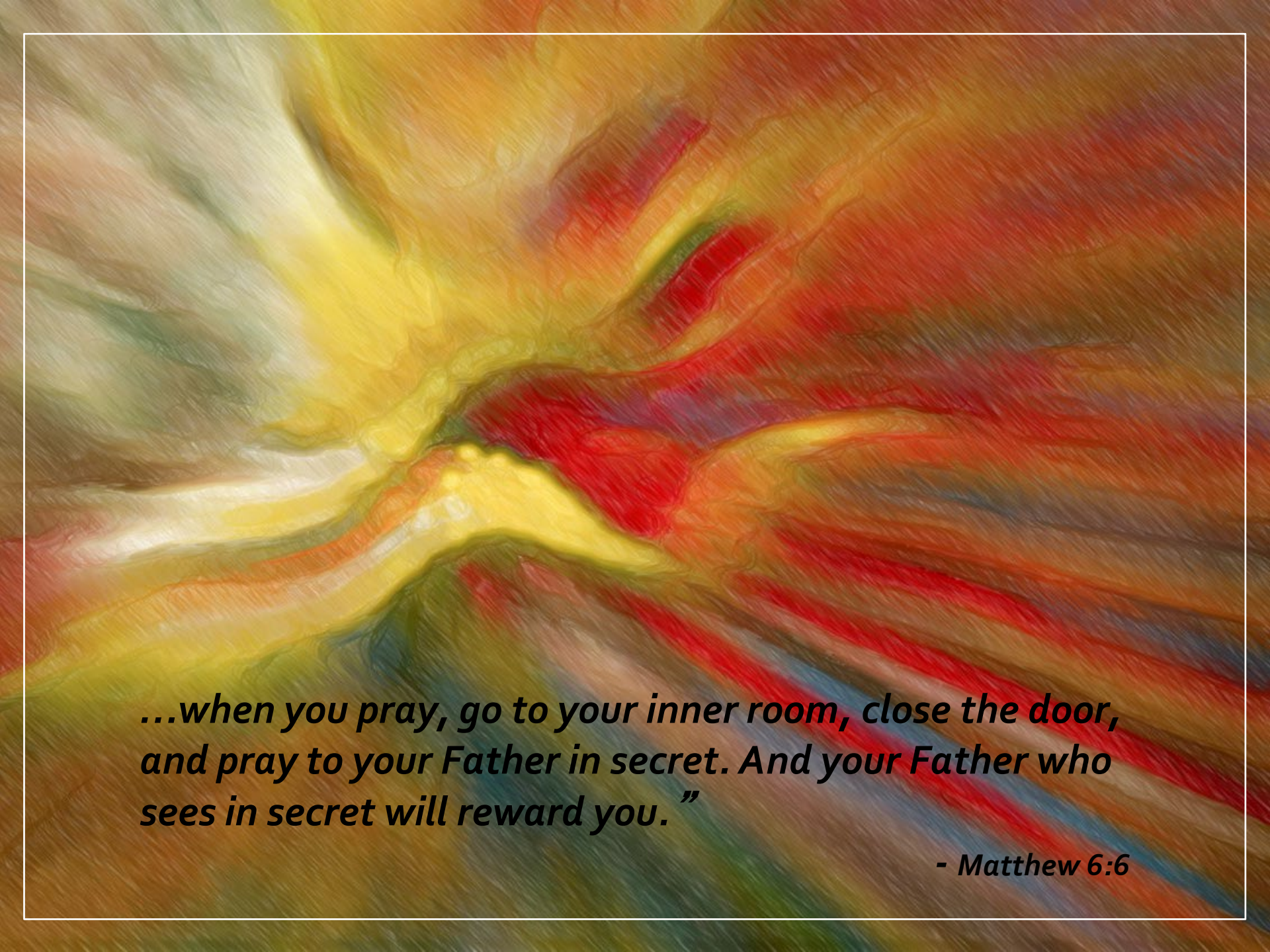
*“Be still and know that I am
God”*

- Psalm 46:10



Prayer as Relationship



An abstract, painterly background with warm, vibrant colors. A bright, glowing yellow and white light source emanates from the upper left, casting rays of light across the scene. The colors transition from pale yellows and whites to deep reds, oranges, and hints of blue and green. The texture is soft and blended, with visible brushstrokes or pastel-like strokes creating a sense of movement and depth.

***...when you pray, go to your inner room, close the door,
and pray to your Father in secret. And your Father who
sees in secret will reward you. ”***

- Matthew 6:6



Contemplative Prayer



“When that day comes you will know that I am in my Father and you are
in me and I in you.”

God's Presence and Action

What is God's presence and action?

- God's presence is the divine life within us, which affirms our basic core of goodness
- God's action is the grace of the transformation process

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- 6th Century
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Deepening of Faith

In the same way, the Spirit too comes to the aid of our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit itself intercedes with sighs too deep for words”

— Romans 8:26

- Our experience in Centering Prayer is not limited to the “**felt presence**” of God but rather it is a **deepening of faith** in God’s abiding presence
- We do not judge our periods of Centering Prayer as “good” or “bad” (by the psychological experience)

Places to practice Centering Prayer

- Mater Dolorosa (Sunday on zoom 6:30pm to 7:30pm)
- Holy Spirit Encino
- Mary Joseph Center
- Special Events LARCC Calendar
- Contemplative Outreach
- Centering Prayer app
- MDPRC App

LECTIO DIVINA

Fr. Charlie Smeich

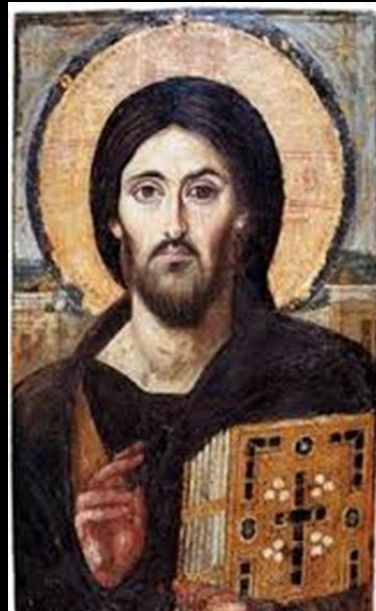


VISIO DIVINA

“Divine Seeing”

OVERVIEW

- The Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches have a long tradition of the use of icons.
- Gazing at an icon of Christ, Mary, the Trinity, or one of the saints puts us in contact with the One who gazes back to us.



images

- The practice of Visio Divina or Holy Gazing can extend beyond the world of icons to pieces of fine art or the natural world.
- Everything in creation is an image of the invisible God.



March 16th

- On **Thursday, March 16th** we will explore the history and use of icons, art and nature to experience different aspects of God and will include a practice of Visio Divina.



The practice

- The session will begin with a short verse from Scripture to help set the tone for this prayer.
- An image will be provided on the screen to direct our focus.
- You will be led into meditation, reflection and awareness of God's presence in your prayer.



conclusion

- As you ponder on this prayer experience, rest in God's presence.
- Consider how you are going to incorporate this into your life.
- You may choose to write about your experience in a journal.
- We'll see you on **Thursday March 16th at 7pm.**





The Classical Labyrinth

The most ancient of labyrinth designs, the classical design is found

worldwide. It appears as petroglyphs in Spain (dating from around 2000 BCE), on silver coins from Crete, laid out with rocks in northern

Europe, painted on bark in Indonesia and carved on rocks in the deserts of the American Southwest. Constructed from a simple "seed pattern" that is easily taught and remembered, the fact that

it can be faithfully reproduced without reference to any instructions may well account for its universal appeal and proliferation.

The seven concentric circuits have variously been suggested to correspond with the seven days of the week, visible planets, chakras and colors of the rainbow.



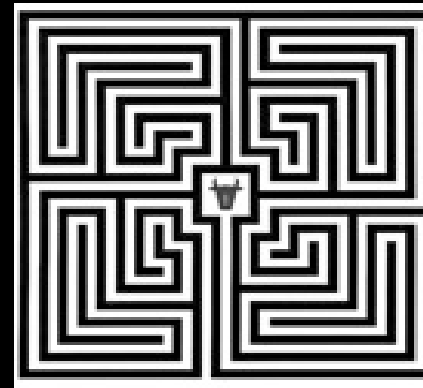
Roman Mosaic Labyrinths

For more than 500 years, from
c.165 BCE to c.400 CE,

elegant labyrinth designs
flourished as floor mosaics in
all corners of the Roman
Empire.

Many were situated near
doorways -- perhaps for
protection -- most were too
compact to be walked,

suggesting that they were
designed for visual
contemplation.



Chartres Cathedral Labyrinth

Most famous of the medieval labyrinths is the pavement labyrinth found within the nave of Chartres Cathedral, France.

Echoing the shape and complexity of Gothic rose windows, this labyrinth was laid in the early 13th century (c.1200-1220 CE) and, though often covered with chairs, can still be walked today. The eleven-circuit design is organized into four quadrants, symbolic of the cross. Reputedly walked by pilgrims as a metaphor of the journey to Jerusalem, medieval church labyrinths illustrate the allegory of Christ's life and destiny. This pattern, recently popularized in the United States by the work of the Rev. Dr. Lauren Artress, is among the most frequently encountered patterns of modern labyrinths.



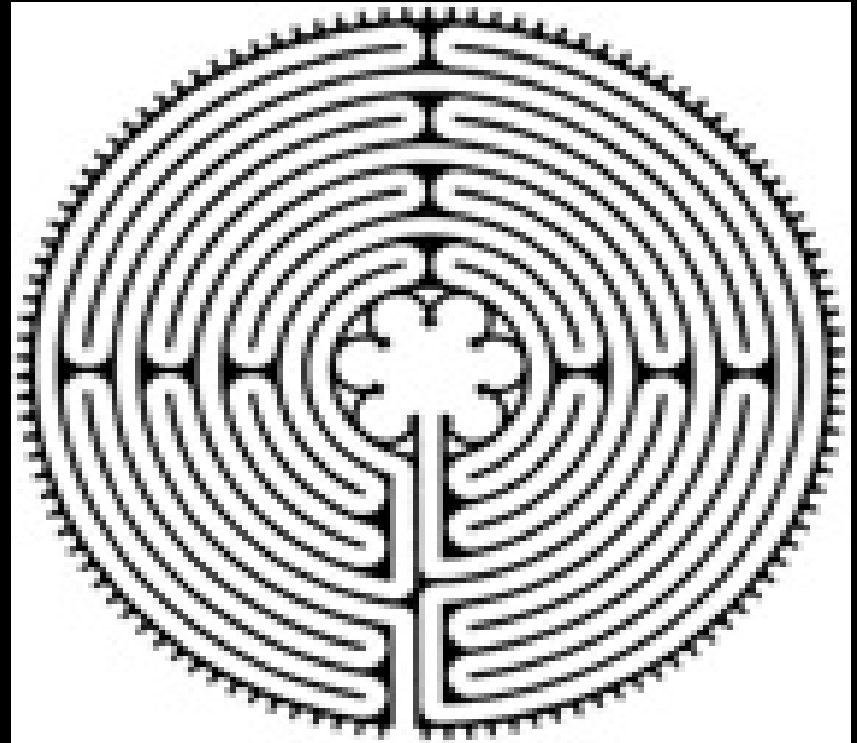






Illustrated Hand-Held Finger Labyrinth

A larger printed version of this Chartres Cathedral labyrinth model can be printed and followed/traced by hand, using a finger or stylus, as an alternative to a labyrinth walk.



Labyrinth Information and Finding a Labyrinth Near You

- LA Retreat Center Community members with labyrinths on-site:
 - Mary & Joseph Retreat Center – Rancho Palos Verdes
 - Holy Spirit Retreat Center – Encino
 - Serra Retreat Center -- Malibu
- Visit the Religious Education Congress Sacred Space Labyrinth: February 24-26, 2023 – Anaheim Convention Center
- Labyrinth Information: Veriditas.org
- Worldwide Labyrinth Locator: LabyrinthLocator.com









Questions



Closing Prayer