



CONTEMPLATIVE OUTREACH ONTARIO

SILENCE SOLITUDE SOLIDARITY SERVICE

OUR NEWSLETTER



WINTER 2018 – N°9

A Word from the Editor

It is hard to believe that our last Newsletter came out over a year ago! During that time, many things have happened. I moved from Toronto to Cobourg — and that was a challenging time and disruptive period on many fronts, including the telephone! I know I lost many messages. So, I do apologize to those of you who might have left a message that was never answered.

Most importantly, our dear Father Thomas Keating passed away on October 25, 2018. While he is not with us physically anymore, he is now — along with Carolyn who died nearly four years ago — watching over each and every one of us. How comforting! I do hope you have had a chance to view the beautiful video of the Memorial Service in Denver, Colorado, if you were not able to be there in person.

Before his passing, Father Thomas reworded the Vision of Contemplative Outreach, as well as the Theological and Administrative Principles (the latter are now Guidelines for Service) and wrote a comment on each of them. As we have done in the past, we will cite one principle at a time with the related comment. In this issue, we will start with the Vision.

Over the course of these many months, the membership of the COO team has also seen some changes, as indicated on page 2.

We are still working on a Canadian website with regional links. We feel confident that we will get there eventually and appreciate your patience!

Last but not least, and to answer the many people who participated in COO 2016, we are scheduling a COO 2019 for September in Richmond Hill. See details on page 2.

Have a blessed and joyous Christmas and a happy New Year! Let's all pray for peace in this troubled world of ours.

Marie-Noëlle Maillard
logos302@sympatico.ca

Vision of Contemplative Outreach

We embrace the process of transformation in Christ, both in ourselves and in others, through the practice of Centering Prayer.

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Your COO Team

Rev. Kevin Steeper, representing the Southwestern region

Jennifer Pothier and Marie-Noëlle Maillard, representing the Central region

Hélène Goulet and Susan Kehoe, representing the Eastern region.

Upcoming Events

* **United in Prayer Day: Saturday, March 16, 2019.** Each region — or part of a region — will decide what to do. Usually the material from Contemplative Outreach Limited in Butler, New Jersey, is available around February.

* **SAVE THE WEEKEND!**
COO 2019, September 27-29, 2019 in Richmond Hill. The theme is: Cultivate the roots. The leaves and branches will take care of themselves. (Confucius). Our guest speakers will be Kess Frey, from Anchorage, Alaska and Nada Conic, from Toronto, Ontario. Mark your calendars and stay tuned for details.

* **Sneak Preview for 2020:** A retreat during March Break with Susan Komis, at Jericho House in the Niagara Region on the theme *Dark Night of Soul: Night of Sense, Night of Spirit*. It comes after the retreat on Teresa of Avila, also with Susan Komis, in March Break 2018, at Jericho House.

Regional Spotlights

SOUTHWESTERN (SWOCCO)

Greetings from SWOCCO!

I am sure that, like me, many of you are still mourning the passing of our spiritual

father, Thomas Keating. Certainly, his death was not unexpected but there is still part of us that finds it hard to believe that he is gone from our lives. However, he has given us the great gift of Centering Prayer that continues to nourish us as we make our way in Christ.

The various groups that gather under the banner of Centering Prayer here in Southwestern Ontario have been experiencing the ups and downs that come with the spiritual journey. We had a wonderful retreat weekend at the beginning of May 2018 at the Holy Family Retreat Centre in Oxley, Ontario. A good number of participants from the region took part and we found much strength and joy in being together in silence and prayer in a lovely setting.

However, we also acknowledge our struggle as members of the various groups grow older and some of the groups grow smaller in size. On one hand, it can be discouraging but perhaps our Centering Prayer groups are called to be in the words of Jesus, "a little salt, a little light and a little yeast" for the sake of the Kingdom of God in the world.

At present we are making plans for our Advent Reflection Day that will take place on Dec. 1, 2019 at the Church of the Ascension in Windsor. We are also getting ready for some further events in 2109 that will continue to share the good news of Centering Prayer.

Blessings and Peace,

The Rev. Kevin Steeper, coordinator
kevin@lakeshoreuc.org

CENTRAL (COCO)

Since the summer of 2017, the COCO Servant Leadership Team (six of us) has not been idle despite my unavailability. We met roughly every two or three months.

Communication:

Marilyn Brandon continues to publish regularly a "Group Profile." From the beginning, these profiles have been well received and have shown themselves to be an excellent community-building tool. So far, she has published twelve profiles. If you think you may have missed one or more, please let us know and we'll send them out to you.

In addition, we still publish a one-page COCO NEWS FLASH whenever we need to send information out. It remains a viable communication tool and can be prepared much more quickly than the COO Newsletter.

Introductory Workshops:

In November 2017, Elyse Strathy and Johnson Ling facilitated an Introductory Workshop at SSJD (Sisterhood of Saint John the Divine) in Toronto, organized by SSJD. The workshop was well and enthusiastically attended by thirty-five people.

Our two newly commissioned presenters, Sue Woollard and Mary Catherine Doyle, also gave their own Introductory Workshop in Brampton; this was held on June 2, 2018 and attracted twenty-eight attendees.

I personally gave a very brief introduction in French before two masses at the *paroisse de l'Immaculée Conception* in St. Catharines in October 2018. I did so at the request of Brenda Coleman, a very active member from the Niagara Region.

Formation: We had a Facilitators' Day in Burlington in February 2018, attended by nineteen people.

The mid-summer potluck dinner tradition is still alive and well. One such dinner was held in Toronto in August 2017, while two others were given in the Near North (Midland, June 2017 and Barrie, June 2018).

Please note: The Near North plans to have another potluck dinner on Saturday,

June 1, 2019, at Marilyn Brandon's home (31 Maple Avenue West, Beeton). Contact: brandon3923@gmail.com.

Retreats:

With Susan Komis, from St. Louis, Missouri, as facilitator, we had a retreat on Teresa of Avila during March Break 2018 at Jericho House in the Niagara Region. Susan will come back in March 2020 for another retreat on St. John of the Cross (see page 2).

Together with H el ene Goulet from COEO, I attended the Deepening Session in St. Louis, Missouri, in June 2018, under the leadership of Susan Komis, Susan Rush, and Kess Frey, all three from Contemplative Outreach USA.

Lastly, the COCO Team decided to draft a fundraising letter that will be sent to all COCO groups, asking whether they would be interested in **collectively** participating in the day-to-day operations of our community. Such involvement would represent a tangible sign of their membership in COCO. The letter is almost ready and will be sent out in the very near future.

We continue to be of service to you.

Marie-No elle Maillard, coordinator
logos302@sympatico.ca

EASTERN (COEO)

What we gather in contemplation we give out in love.

Meister Eckhart

This past year has been what we called a Pause year. Probably a good thing for contemplatives to do now and again...

Instead of the usual 3-4 day retreats in our Pilgrims Way series, we opted for one – an Introduction to CP in October. Early in December we offered to the wider contemplative community an Advent 2 day of immersion into silence, with the

invitation – *come away, come pause awhile in the silence of community prayer, in the silence of nature, in the silence of the heart.*

Mary Ellen Berry and I offered wisdom from the Desert: Abbas and Ammas, a gentle rhythm of contemplative prayer periods. Art, walking meditation outside and canvas labyrinth inside, and soul-friending were options available for participants.

On April 4-7, 2019, we will hold our tenth annual CP Lenten retreat. This year we have discerned to hold it in complete silence that is no “teachings” or presenters. Our plan is to model it on the Snowmass intensive format, albeit a little shorter – day immersion – *In Silence we find our Home.*

The longer retreats are held at a lovely spot in the Ottawa valley – Galilee Centre in Arnprior, Ontario, about forty minutes west of Ottawa. SAVE the DATE!! We would love to see you there.

Over the past year I have followed a wonderful year-long e-course offered by CO Ltd. In partnership with a very good website for spiritual nourishment: Spirituality & Practice

e-courses@spiritualityandpractice.com

I recommend the course and offer the following from week 98 that suggests returning to the back sections of *Open Mind, Open Heart*, where Fr. Thomas lists “forty-two Guidelines for Christian Life, Growth and Transformation.” He states that “they are designed to provide a conceptual background for the practice of Centering Prayer” and urges that they should be read according to the method of Lectio Divina.

May the 2018 celebration of the Feast of the Incarnation give you pause to “*receive in a very deep way the teachings and implications of divine love.*”

Susan Kehoe, coordinator
smkehoe@rogers.com

Seeds Sown

* The Anglican Church in St. Catharines has now a Centering Prayer group. The facilitator is Colleen O’Neill. Contact: hearttouch.welland@outlook.com.

* St. Anna’s church in Brampton has now a Centering Prayer group whose facilitator is Debbie Baker-Jervis. Contact: dbakerjervis@yahoo.ca

Changes

* Teresa Marchildon, from Midland, has a new email address: Teresa.Marchildon@gmail.com

* The Toronto West-End group is now facilitated by Anne Marie Rodrigue. Contact: anzures64@hotmail.com

Thomas Keating On Servant Leadership

Jesus emphasized servant leadership to his apostles over and over again. What we do for others is not to fix them, which presumes that we know how to fix them and presupposes that we are coming from a superior position. We are called by God to care for others as a privilege. All the members of the human family are members of what St. Paul calls the Mystical Body of Christ. He doesn’t need our leadership talents. But he does appreciate and need our practical love and humble service. He manifested the divine humility by sacrificing all the honor and privileges of his nature as the Son of God. If we made that disposition our own, trying to fix situations would change into allowing God

to heal the wounds that are impossible for us to deal with, let alone to fix. By making ourselves the servant of those we serve, the divine healing work of Christ can flow through us without our egos getting in the way. Servant leadership leads to gratitude for being able to serve.

In *Contemplative Outreach NEWS*, June 2018

Wherever you are in Ontario, if you want to share something with other members of COO, such as a reading or a book, or contribute to our newsletter in any way, please contact the editor at logos302@sympatico.ca. Many thanks. Merci beaucoup.

This newsletter is being sent to all facilitators, as well as to members-at-large of the COCO community. Facilitators, please forward this Newsletter, in turn, to all members of your groups. Group members, please feel free to forward it to interested friends. If for any reason you wish to receive future Newsletters directly, please contact the editor. Similarly, please advise the editor if you no longer wish to receive this publication.