



EPISCOPAL HOUSE *of* PRAYER

September/October 2019



Words on...discernment

Greetings!

In a few weeks, I will offer a weekend retreat on Discernment and Contemplative Dialogue. I invite you to consider joining us in Collegeville.

Common treatments of discernment in the ancient Christian tradition often suggested that seekers should look to their bad moods and bad habits in order to root

out the source of any influence upon the soul that did not come from God.

Teachings on the passions, or seven deadly sins, as they are contemporarily known, encouraged serious seekers to hone in on where God was not, in order to recognize habits and ways of life that would lead in the other direction, towards God.

In contemporary teaching on discernment, there is common emphasis on the practice of listening with the intent to listen deeply for the voice of God. In a busy society, it can be difficult to listen for the quiet, still voice of God within, when there are so many other, often louder voices competing for our attention. I honor both of these sets of wisdom from our ancient and contemporary repertoire of teachings on discernment. I also offer my own emphasis on the import of participation as a key contemplative posture for discernment as we look for and respond fully to God's action and presence in our lives.

A posture of participation in discernment assumes the theological claim that God is always, already acting and present to us right in the midst of our daily life experience. We need not become perfect or arrive "over there" in order to hear God's voice; God is always, already pursuing us, awaiting our listening ear and willing response. As the leaves fall and the winter winds begin to move across the land, may you hear and discern the whispers of God's constant, loving communication, realized right in the midst of your ordinary, daily life.

Community Reflection Corner

[Members of the Contemplative Body](#), Collegetown, gather every last Wednesday of the month for meditation, simple supper, and sharing. In September, the following poem by John O'Donohue was the impetus for our shared reflection. Parker Palmer calls such poems, sacred texts, and images "third things," and suggests that because the soul is shy, such third things can help us to enter more deeply into reflection through the creative, imaginative faculties of the mind and heart. May your heart and mind open, as did for those of us who gathered together this month.

When the rhythm of the heart becomes hectic,
time takes on the strain until it breaks;
Then all the unattended stress falls in
on the mind like an endless, increasing weight.
The light in the mind becomes dim.
Things you could take in your stride before
now become laborsome events of will.
Weariness invades your spirit.
Gravity begins falling inside you,
dragging down every bone.
The tide you never valued has gone out.
And you are marooned on unsure ground.
Something within you has closed down;
And you cannot push yourself back to life.
You have been forced to enter empty time.
The desire that drove you has relinquished.
There is nothing else to do now but rest
and patiently learn to receive the self
you have forsaken in the race of days.

At first your thinking will darken
and sadness take over like listless weather.
The flow of unwept tears will frighten you.
You have traveled too fast over false ground;
Now your soul has come to take you back.
Take refuge in your senses, open up
to all the small miracles you rushed through.
Become inclined to watch the way of rain
when it falls slow and free.
Imitate the habit of twilight,
taking time to open the well of color
that fostered the brightness of day.
Draw alongside the silence of stone
until its calmness can claim you.
Be excessively gentle with yourself.
Stay clear of those vexed in spirit.
Learn to linger around someone of ease
who feels they have all the time in the world.
Gradually, you will return to yourself,
having learned a new respect for your heart
and the joy that dwells far within slow time.

by John O'Donohue

Community Chant Corner

Chant and sacred song are an important element of our weekly prayer and retreat experiences at the Episcopal House of Prayer. Over the years, a number of beloved and favorite chants have echoed in the oratory, even as new ones are heard for the first time. I invite all members of our community to consider either recording some of your favorite chants and/or listening to them when they are posted in the newsletters.

Thank you Jodie Milroy and Bill Brand for offering this month's chant: [Spirit of Truth](#)

From the August Newsletter [Listen, Listen](#)

From the July Newsletter [Let Me Hear](#)

From the June Newsletter [As the Deer](#)

From the May Newsletter [Bind my Head](#)

From the March Newsletter, [Holy Wisdom, Holy Logos](#)

If you enjoy song and sacred words, consider joining us for our December retreat

SACRED SONG: CELEBRATING CHANT & SACRED WORDS

with a Public Concert by [Sara Thomsen](#) to follow,

Saturday, December 14

7pm

Saint John's Parish, Fruit Farm Road, Colledgeville

Coming in October...

Discernment and Contemplative Dialogue: Noticing and Responding to Wisdom in Daily Life

Offered by Christine Luna Munger

Thursday, October 10 – Sunday, October 13

\$425 (Scholarships available)

Deep listening is a contemplative skill central to the practices of discernment and contemplative dialogue. During this retreat, we will hone our listening skills as we seek deep encounter with God, ourselves, and others. We will explore some of our assumptions about God, ourselves, and others to deepen understanding and healing in our relationships.

Christine will present her ongoing work with the Five Ordinary Movements (ups and downs, back and forth, cycling of spirals, tension of a web, and vibration of concentric circles) as a Wisdom framework for engaging contemplative dialogue and discernment. Participants will be invited to do their own “wisdom work” through exploration of key relationships and significant life decisions.

Our time together will include presenter teaching, creative reflection activities, shared contemplative prayer experiences, leisure time in solitude, and individual and group spiritual companionship.

[Register](#)

Dr. Christine Luna Munger, Obl OSB serves as the Director of the Episcopal House of Prayer. She served as Coordinator & Professional Professor of Theology for the Spiritual Direction Certificate in the graduate department of Theology at St. Catherine University from 2012-2018. Christine has published resources for spiritual direction for Spiritual Directors International (SDI), including the Comparison of Helping Relationships chart, a brochure—What to Expect in Christian Spiritual Direction, two SDI Learns from...videos, and an article—Five Ordinary Movements in Spiritual Direction. Christine is a wife and mother of two young children. She is bilingual (English & Spanish) and enjoys all forms of dance and being outdoors.

Please pray for those who participated in the September retreat experience: Embracing the Divine Within led by [Preeti Banerjee](#)



Join us in October!

Monday evenings, [EHoP in the City Short-Session Teaching Series: Mystics](#)

Monday, October 7, St. Paul's on Lake of the Isles, Hildegard with Susan Stabile

Saturdays, [EHoP in the City Day-Long Teaching Series: Christian Prayer](#)

Saturday, October 26, Group Spiritual Direction

In October, watch for word about next year's line-up of retreat offerings...

If you are seeking spiritual transformation, we invite you to join us for weekly Contemplative Prayer in Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Collegeville.

All are welcome!

[Visit our website](#)

The Episcopal House of Prayer is a contemplative ministry grounded in the Christian tradition, with locations in Collegeville and Minneapolis, Minnesota. This ministry is dedicated to supporting individuals and groups as they seek to be "formed into Christ" (Galations 4:19).

[Donate](#)

