



EPISCOPAL HOUSE *of* PRAYER

March 2020



Words on...Contemplative Dialogue

Greetings.

Each month, I continue to offer reflections on the Cycle of Contemplative Dialogue. This month, I introduce practical pieces that support the ongoing work of contemplative dialogue: contemplative postures. Three postures that support contemplative dialogue are spaciousness, suppleness, and surrender. I associate these three postures with what I consider to be the “active” phases in the Cycle of Contemplative Dialogue with Others (grounded in self, open to others, seeking God are the three active phases, while facing suffering and commitment to wholeness are the passive phases). Among the three active phases, spaciousness aligns with grounding in self; suppleness aligns with open to others; surrender aligns with seeking God. Below, I group each of the three postures with one of the [Five Ordinary Movements](#) and one of the phases in the Cycle of Contemplative Dialogue. I hope you can acquire an intuitive sense of the feel of these groupings.

Ups and Downs/Grounded in Self/Spaciousness

Back and Forth/Open to Others/Suppleness

Cycling of Spirals/Seeking God/Surrender

Tension of a Web/Facing Suffering

Vibration of Concentric Circles/Commitment to Wholeness

Eveylyn Underhill teaches that the essence of mysticism is summed up in two experiences: union with the flux of life and union with the Whole (Practical Mysticism, p. 15-16). Within any pair of opposites, we can find a hidden “third thing.” In the case of Underhill’s assertion and the three postures for contemplation, we might pair a sense of

union with the posture of spaciousness; we might pair the flux of life with the posture of suppleness; and we might pair the Whole of life with the posture of surrender. These intuitive pairings allow us to more easily grasp their meaning; however, in reality, all three of the postures work together in tandem. For the sake of our learning, it is helpful to parse them apart one at a time (which I will do in future newsletters).

Given the turn of events around the world in recent months, and especially given the intensity of these events as they are felt in the United States in recent weeks, many of us currently experience unexpected (even forced) spaciousness because of orders to shelter in space. Many of us currently experience super-suppleness because of the forceful fluxes that emerge as we face the brave work of responding to the current pandemic. No matter where we find ourselves on the continuum between spaciousness and suppleness, the third invitation to surrender also emerges.

To surrender is not to give up; rather, to surrender, in its spiritual sense, is to recognize the full meaning of what faces us (be it joy or sorrow), and yet, to consciously choose to be with whatever presents itself. To surrender is to honor that Something, Someone, beyond our own self and our own vision, is already constantly tending to both the flux and the Whole of life. To surrender is to join our particular sense of spacious or supple activity with the Sacred Actions of the Holy One. To surrender usually involves letting go of clarity, assurance, and control. Yet, to surrender is also to say yes to the powerful, enlivening work of the Hand of God at work in creation. In the weeks that come, I invite you to consider where spaciousness, suppleness, and surrender are emerging in your own context.

I offer the following [video/meditation](#) as a practical help in that emergence.

In peace,
Christine Luna Munger, Director

Community Prayer Corner

This year, we began to offer "short teachings" on prayer after the weekly contemplative sit in Collegetown. These short-teachings intend to engage those gathered whether they are new to, or seasoned in, contemplative prayer. The session lasts fifteen minutes and includes three parts: 1) a short selection of text on prayer from the tradition, 2) short teaching on the text, 3) questions and opportunity for reflection. As the body of these short-teachings grow, they will be shared in this new corner of the newsletter. They will be arranged by topic and will include two pages or less of text.

Forms of Prayer

[Forms of Contemplative Prayer by Evelyn Underhill](#)

Techniques or Methods of Prayer

[Attention in Contemplative Prayer by Evelyn Underhill](#)

[Awareness as Waking Up to Wisdom by Anthony de Mello](#) (new this month)

Silence in Contemplative Prayer

[Why Silent Prayer by Henri Nouwen](#) (new this month)

[Silence as Revelation by Anthony de Mello](#) (new this month)

The Role of the Heart in Prayer

[The Role of the Heart by Henri Nouwen](#) (new this month)

Community Reflection Corner

Haikus by Roy Dorn, Member of the Contemplative Body

contemplative work

illusion to reality

by getting real

taking it all in

living fierce reality

eternal return

why me

who was born to be

seeing as being

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 for this month's chant.

[We are Swimming in Mercy](#)

From the February Newsletter [Beloved One, You are my being](#)

Chants from 2019 Newsletters

[I am in Thou](#)

[All Shall be Well](#)

[Spirit of Truth](#)

[Listen, Listen](#)

[Let Me Hear](#)

[As the Deer](#)

[Bind my Head](#)

[Holy Wisdom, Holy Logos](#)

Please pray for those who are directly impacted by Covid-19, be that in their personal health or in their commitment to serving others in this time of pandemic.

If you are seeking spiritual transformation, we invite you to join us for weekly Contemplative Prayer (online) in 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" (Galatians 4:19).

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