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Committee on

Contemplative Spiritual Formation

Online Meeting Program

Theme: Non-dual Consciousness

**20 November 2020**

**8 am (Eastern Time) /2 pm Hamburg/ 9 pm (Philippines)**

[**Wisdom Room**](about:blank)**, Meditation Chapel**

**Checking In:**

As a ground rule for our gathering today - for the check-in and for the rest of our gathering today - only share what you are comfortable to do so. In addition, I ask everyone to remember that this is a spiritual space of confidentiality and trust.

Name feelings: Here we are, eight months after the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, and in many parts of the world the second wave has arrived with a vengeance. Many of us have experienced both negative and positive emotions since the middle of March.

God is present in all parts of our lives – not just the easy or serene moments. Acknowledge how you are feeling in this moment. This could be up or could be down. If being calm is hard, acknowledge it. If you find yourself frustrated or stressed, acknowledge it.

As our check-in, I invite you to state your name and what county you live in. Then I invite you to share with us how you are feeling now and what you are most grateful for today.

**Opening Prayer**

[See page 3.]

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**Christian Meditation** (20 min.)

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We will be having 20 min. of silent prayer. It will be an opportunity to become more aware of the present moment and perhaps the Divine indwelling in you.

I have some suggestions for what to do during the silence, as most persons are not accustomed to this state. Please note that this is not the only way.

First, when your eyes are closed, pay attention to your breathing. It’s something we do from birth to death, normally without any awareness. To become grounded in the present, notice your breathing during the 20 min. of silence.

Second, select a sacred word or phrase, such as “Yahweh” the Hebrew word for God, saying “Yah” as you inhale and “Weh” as you exhale. Another mantra word is “Maranatha” meaning “Come Lord Jesus.” Recite it as four syllables of equal length: “Ma-ra” as you inhale and “Na-tha” as you exhale. Whatever word you select, gently repeat it over and over during the silence.

Third, during the silence, addictive thought patterns and obsessive ways of feeling will circle by, again and again, saying “Think me! Think me! Feel me! Feel me!” as they try harder to be noticed. In 90% of our thinking, our monkey brain rehashes the past and worries about the future. However, God is only to be found and experienced in the present. Use the imagery of some small boats lining the shoreline next to a stream or river that is nearby. When one of these repetitive thoughts arises, gently name the thought or feeling, put it in one of the waiting boats and push it gently into the moving water, letting it flow downstream away from your present consciousness. If you choose, you can deal with it after our session today.

So, I invite you to close your eyes and we’ll start the silence now.

**Reflection**

a long, loving look

Non-dual consciousness is about receiving and being present to the moment and to the Now, exactly as it is, without splitting or dividing it, without judgment, analysis, negative critique, mental commentary, liking , or disliking; without resistance; and even without registering your preferences.  
  
In other words, your mind, heart, soul, and senses are open and receptive to the moment, just as it is. That allows you to say, “Just this,” and love things in themselves, as themselves, and by themselves, regardless of how they benefit or make demands on you.  Is there any other way to love anything?  
  
You gradually learn to hold everything – attractive and non-attractive alike – together in one accepting gaze.  This is divine seeing.  Contemplation has been well-described as “a long, loving look at the Real.” Note that it is a deep looking more than a knee-jerk thinking (which is not really thinking at all, but usually narcissistic reacting).  *Contemplata* in Latin means to gaze at something eagerly or with intense interest.  It does **not** mean to think about it!  
  
The non-dual, contemplative mind is a whole new mind! (See Romans 12:2 and Ephesians 4:23.) It is truly an entirely different “software and processing system” and , at this point in history, it must be taught, as our culture no longer practices it naturally.

the sacrament of the present moment

The great task of religion is to keep you fully awake, alert, and conscious.  Then you will know whatever it is that you need to know.   When you are present, you will know the Presence.  It is that simple and that hard.  Too much religion has encouraged you to be unconscious, but God respects you too much for that.  
  
In the Garden of Gethsemane, the last words Jesus spoke to his apostles were, “Stay awake.”  In fact, he says it twice (see Matthew 26:38-41).  The Buddha offered the same wisdom; “Buddha,” in fact, means “I am awake.”  
  
Staying awake comes not from willpower but from a wholehearted surrender to the moment – as it is.  If you can be present, you will experience what most of us mean by God, and you do not even need to call it God.  It’s largely a matter of letting go of resistance to what the moment offers or of clinging to a past moment.  It is an acceptance of the full reality of what is right here and now.  It will be the task of your whole lifetime.  
  
You cannot get there by any method whatsoever; you can only be there.  The purest form of spirituality is to find God in what is right in front of you – the ability to accept what the French Jesuit and mystic Jean-Pierre de Caussade (1675-1751) called the sacrament of the present moment.  
  
Rohr, Richard. ***Just This***. 2017, pp. 29-30, 31-32.

1. *What am I hearing?*
2. *How is it touching my life now?*
3. *How will I respond?*

**LGBTQ / GNRC News**

*An update, news, or a pressing issue in the community locally or globally that affects or concerns us as LGBTQ and as Catholics. How am I / are we responding?*

**Spoken Prayers**

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| **Opening Prayer** | **Closing Prayer** |
| ***A Prayer for Our Earth***  All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe  and in the smallest of your creatures.  You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.  Pour out upon us the power of your love,  that we may protect life and beauty.  Fill us with peace, that we may live  as brothers and sisters, harming no one.  O God of the poor,  help us to rescue the abandoned  and forgotten of this earth,  so precious in your eyes.  Bring healing to our lives,  that we may protect the world and not prey on it,  that we may sow beauty,  not pollution and destruction.  Touch the hearts  of those who look only for gain  at the expense of the poor and the earth.  Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,  to be filled with awe and contemplation,  to recognize that we are profoundly united  with every creature  as we journey towards your infinite light.  We thank you for being with us each day.  Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle  for justice, love and peace.  [Pope Francis. ***Laudato Si*** (Encyclical Letter: Praise be to You – On Care for Our Common Home), para. 246, 2015] | ***Evolving Spirituality: Mysticism***  We celebrate  our common origin  with everything that exists.  We celebrate  the Divine Presence,  the Ground and Sustainer  of everything that exists,  in whom we live and move and have our being.  We acknowledge  this awesome mystery  embodied  in every human person,  aware that  each gives the Divine Presence  unique and personal expression.  Here,  now,  the Divine Energizing Presence is everywhere present,  visible in every human person  who loves.  Here,  now,  this Presence comes to visible expression  in each of us.  We give thanks for men and women  throughout human history  who sought to articulate  human connectedness with the Divine  and with all of creation.  We give thanks especially for Jesus of Nazareth.  He inspires us to name ourselves  as “temples” of the Divine Spirit  and challenges us to live and act accordingly.  Jesus challenges us  to look into our hearts,  to examine the way we are neighbor,  to overcome our prejudices,  to put an end to divisions,  to stretch our generosity,  to overcome our fear of the mystery,  to see the Divine present in our everyday loving,  to make the “reign” of love visible  throughout our world.  We believe  the same Spirit of Divinity  that came to visibility in Jesus  yearns for visible expression in us.  This is our common dignity  whatever our race or creed,  whatever our place or time.  We long to see our common dignity  proclaimed  honored  and celebrated by all religions.  We pray that the one Spirit all people share  may be given free and generous expression  for the betterment of humanity  and our world.  Amen.  [Adapted from: Morwood, Michael. ***Praying a New Story***. Orbis Books.] |