



Committee on
Contemplative Spiritual Formation

Online Meeting Program

Theme: *"An Episcopal Bishop's Change of Perspective: Will Others Follow?"*

Saturday, January 29, 2022

8 a.m. Vancouver, San Francisco /10 a.m. Chicago, Winnipeg, Mexico City/

11 a.m. New York, Toronto / 12 noon Sao Paulo /

1 p.m. Sao Paulo, Buenos Aires, Santiago, Halifax

4 p.m. London / 5 p.m. Hamburg, Madrid / 6 p.m. Cairo / 00:01 (Jan. 30) Manila

Gaia Room, Meditation Chapel

[If you have registered with the Meditation Chapel, but can't find the email with the link that was sent to you, please send an email to dignitytoronto@gmail.com. For new Meditation Chapel users, register ahead of time [here](#).]

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.

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 share:

- your name,
- what county you live in,
- how you are feeling now, and
- what you are most grateful for today.

Opening Prayer

Please turn to page 3.

+ Christian Meditation - Silent Prayer +

We'll now move from spoken prayer to 20 min. of silent prayer. It will be an opportunity to stop our repetitive thinking and become more aware of the present moment and the Divine indwelling in us.

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. **Do not try to think or image anything - spiritual or otherwise.**

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 of 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, we'll start our 20 min. of silence. Please turn off your microphone and your video camera too. Sit still and upright. Close your eyes lightly. Sit relaxed but alert. Take two or three deep breaths. [pause] Feel yourself supported in whatever position you're in. Sink into that space where silence awaits you. Rest in the Divine who is resting in you. You are consenting to God's presence and action in your life. So, I invite you to be silent, still and aware. Listen and learn, being open to heart wisdom and grace.

Bishop John Shelby Spong's Presentation at Elmhurst College on Homosexuality, September 2011 (excerpted video)

Possible Sharing Questions:

*What am I hearing? What part of the video **resonates** or challenges me? As an LGBTI person?*

*How is it **touching** my life now?*

How can we bring the message to Catholic priests and bishops where we live?

*How will I respond? Is there an **invitation** for me to be or to do in the next few weeks?*

LGBTI/ GNRC News

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

Spoken Prayers

A Prayer for Our Earth [Opening Prayer]

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), 2015, para. 246]

Evolving Spirituality: Mysticism [Closing Prayer]

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.]