



## Contemplative Spiritual Formation Gathering

Online Meeting Program

Theme: ***"Why Contemplation?"***

**Saturday, May 31, 2025**

**7 a.m.** San Francisco/Vancouver; **8 a.m.** Denver, Calgary, Mexico;

**9 a.m.** Chicago/Winnipeg/Lima; **10 a.m.** Toronto/New York/Santiago;

**11:00 a.m.** Sao Paulo/Buenos Aires/Halifax;

**3 p.m.** London/Kinshasa; **4 p.m.** Hamburg/Zurich/Cape Town; **5 p.m.** Cairo;

**7:30 p.m.** New Delhi; **10 p.m.** Manila/Singapore/Perth

### 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](mailto:dignitytoronto@gmail.com). For new Meditation Chapel users, register ahead of time [here](#).

<https://meditationchapel.org/gaia-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.

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
- one thing you are grateful for today.

## Opening Spoken Prayer

[See p. 4]

### + 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.

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## Reading

### Why Contemplation?

*Father Richard Rohr describes the importance of a practice of contemplation:*

Contemplation is about seeing, but a kind of seeing that is much more than mere looking because it also includes *recognizing* and thus *appreciating*. The contemplative mind does not tell us *what* to see but teaches us *how* to see what we behold.

Contemplation allows us to see the truth of things in their wholeness. It is a mental discipline and gift that detaches us, even neurologically, from our addiction to our habitual way of thinking and from our minds which like to think they are in control. We stop believing our little binary mind (which strips things down to two choices and then usually identifies with one of them) and begin to recognize the inadequacy of that limited way of knowing reality. In fact, a binary mind is a recipe for superficiality, if not silliness. Only the contemplative, or the deeply intuitive, can start venturing out into much broader and more open-ended horizons. This is probably why Einstein said that “Imagination is more important than knowledge. Knowledge is limited. Imagination encircles the world.”

But how do we learn this contemplative mind, this deep, mysterious, and life-giving way of seeing, of being with, reality? Why does it not come naturally to us? Actually, it does come *momentarily*, in states of great love and great suffering, but such wide-eyed seeing normally does not last. We return quickly to dualistic analysis and use our judgments to retake control. *A prayer practice – contemplation – is simply a way of maintaining the fruits of great love and great suffering over the long haul and in different situations.* And that takes a lot of practice – in fact, our whole life becomes one continual practice.

To begin to see with new eyes, we must observe – and usually be humiliated by – the habitual way we encounter each and every moment. It is humiliating because we will see that we are well-practiced in just a few predictable responses. Few of our responses are original, fresh, or naturally respectful of what is right in front of us. The most common human responses to a new moment are mistrust, cynicism, fear, knee-jerk reactions, a spirit of dismissal, and overriding judgmentalism. It is so *dis-couraging* when we have the *courage* to finally see that these are the common ways that the ego tries to be in control of the data instead of allowing the moment to get some control over us – and teach us something new!

To let the moment teach us, we must allow ourselves to be at least slightly stunned by it until it draws us inward and upward, toward a subtle experience of wonder. We normally need a single moment of gratuitous awe to get us started – and such moments are the only solid foundation for the entire religious instinct and journey.

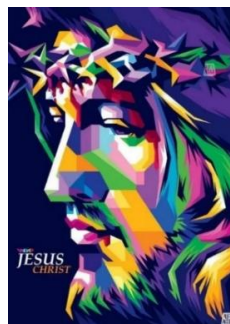
Richard Rohr’s Daily Meditations, March 23, 2025

### Possible Sharing Questions:

*What am I hearing? What phrase or idea **resonates** or challenges me? As an LGBTQ person?*

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

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



## Spoken Prayers

### *Rainbow Christ Prayer [Opening Prayer]*

Rainbow Christ, you embody all the colors of the world. Rainbows serve as bridges between different realms: Heaven and Earth, east and west, queer and non-queer. Inspire us to remember the values expressed in the rainbow flag of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer [now called 2SLGBTQIA] community.

**Red** is for life, the root of spirit. Living and Self-Loving Christ, you are our Root. Free us from shame, and grant us the grace of healthy pride so we can follow our own inner light. With the red stripe in the rainbow, we give thanks that God created us just the way we are.

**Orange** is for sexuality, the fire of spirit. Erotic Christ, you are our Fire, the Word made flesh. Free us from exploitation, and grant us the grace of mutual relationships. With the orange stripe in the rainbow, kindle a fire of passion in us.

**Yellow** is for self-esteem, the core of spirit. Out Christ, you are our Core. Free us from closets of secrecy, and give us the guts and grace to come out. With the yellow stripe in the rainbow, build our confidence.

**Green** is for love, the heart of spirit. Transgressive Outlaw Christ, you are our Heart, breaking rules out of love. In a world obsessed with purity, you touch the sick and eat with outcasts. Free us from conformity, and grant us the grace of deviance. With the green stripe in the rainbow, fill our hearts with untamed compassion for all beings.

**Blue** is for self-expression, the voice of spirit. Liberator Christ, you are our Voice, speaking out against all forms of oppression. Free us from apathy, and grant us the grace of activism. With the blue stripe in the rainbow, motivate us to call for justice.

**Violet** is for vision, the wisdom of spirit. Interconnected Christ, you are our Wisdom, creating and sustaining the universe. Free us from isolation, and grant us the grace of interdependence. With the violet stripe in the rainbow, connect us with others and with the whole creation."

Rainbow colors come together to make one light, the crown of universal consciousness. Hybrid and All-Encompassing Christ, you are our Crown, both human and divine. Free us from rigid categories, and grant us the grace of interwoven identities. With the rainbow, lead us beyond black-and-white thinking to experience the whole spectrum of life.

### *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 all gender identities  
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

<p>Rainbow Christ, you light up the world. You make rainbows as a promise to support all life on Earth. In the rainbow space we can see all the hidden connections between sexualities, genders, and races. Like the rainbow, may we embody all the colors of the world! Amen.</p> <p>[written by Kittridge Cherry and Patrick Cheng. <i>Rainbow Theology</i>, 2013, 155-156.</p>	<p>yearns for visible expression in us.</p> <p>This is our common dignity whatever our race or creed, whatever our place or time.</p> <p>We long to see our common dignity proclaimed honored and celebrated by all religions.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>[Adapted from: Morwood, Michael. <i>Praying a New Story</i>. Orbis Books.]</p>
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For further information on the GNRC Contemplative Spiritual Formation Committee, see  
<https://rainbowcatholics.org/contemplative-spiritual-formation-gathering/>

## APPENDIX

### ***Contemplation: A Path to Compassion***

*Father Richard reminds us that regular contemplative practice is not an end in itself, but for the sake of solidarity with the suffering of the world:*

One of the main works of contemplation is detaching from the ego, from the self, from impure motivations of success or power, money or control. That will never stop, but it isn't really that meaningful unless that detachment is accompanied by an attachment. What do we find after all the months and years we've been practicing some form of contemplation or meditation? Do we have an increased attachment, sympathy, empathy, and compassion for what I call in *The Tears of Things* the suffering of the world? For the women of Gaza, the children of Ukraine, the starving people of Africa, the poorest of the poor, and all those marginalized in the United States and around the world? If the emptiness of "letting go" is not pretty soon filled up by "holding on" to some kind of deep solidarity with the suffering of the world, I don't know that it's Christian contemplation or even meaningful contemplation at all. It seems we're simply back into private spirituality again.

We've spent much of our history of contemplation seeking individually pure motivation. That's a real temptation, but are we really going to spend the years ahead seeking only to be motivated to love Jesus on some private level? What does it even mean to love Jesus? What is the positive act of love? When we are in silent meditation or prayer, that's what we're praying is growing inside of us. As we let go of false motivations, and false, ego-based concerns, we've got to pray, hope, and desire for an increase in compassion, in caring, in solidarity with human suffering.

I believe that's what the cross means. The raised arms of Jesus are an act of solidarity and compassion with the human situation. So, as we sit in silence this morning and every morning, let's pray that's what we're praying for: an increase in compassion by letting go of false purity codes and agendas, which we think make us holy or worthy of God's love. It doesn't matter if we have perfect motivation or a perfect practice. What is motivating us? Instead of perfection, let's look for growth. Ultimately, we only see that growth over time as we grow in communion with those who suffer, grow in solidarity with human and beyond-human pain, and with the tears of things.

Richard Rohr's Daily Meditations, March 28, 2025