Contemplative Spiritual Formation Gathering

Online Meeting Program

Theme: **"Part of the Whole"**

Saturday, November 28, 2026

6 a.m. San Francisco; **7 a.m.** Denver/Vancouver;

8 a.m. Chicago/Calgary/Mexico; **9 a.m.** Toronto/New York/Winnipeg/Lima;

11 a.m. Sao Paulo/Buenos Aires/Santiago; **2 p.m.** London;

3 p.m. Hamburg/Zurich/Warsaw/Kinshasa; **7:30 p.m.** New Delhi;

10 p.m. Manila/Singapore/Hong Kong

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.
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 Prayer

[See p. 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.

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. The suggestion from the World Community for Christian Mediation (WCCM) is another mantra word "Maranatha" meaning "Come Lord Jesus" or "You are within us Jesus." Recite it as four syllables of equal length: "Ma-ra" as you inhale and "Na-tha" as you exhale. [Whatever word you select, WCCM suggests that you gently repeat it over and over during the silence. On the other hand, Centering Prayer, as founded by Thomas Keating, suggests that you use the mantra word when you recognize that your mind is active.] **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. But in 90% of our thinking, our monkey brain simply 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

Author and activist Liza J. Rankow considers how intergenerational service is the fruit of understanding our universal connection:

In the subtropical forests of northeastern India, there is a network of living root bridges that traverse the steep terrain across valleys and rivers. Generation after generation, the Indigenous peoples of the region have twisted and woven the aerial roots of giant ficus trees, guiding their growth from one bank of the

river to join with roots from the opposite shore. Over decades, the roots become thick and strong enough to walk upon. These bridges can last for centuries but require the tending of each generation, weaving in new young roots to shape and sustain them. When the monsoons come, and gentle streams turn into raging torrents, the bridges hold, and the people can pass safely across them….

Each individual root makes an essential contribution but is insufficient alone. The bridge requires their union in a common purpose. A similar commitment and collaborative strength are needed now as we cross the hazardous terrain of this epochal turning.

These times are calling us to reach toward one another, to recognize the truth of who we are and who we can become, together. To take love seriously—as if the world depends on it. Because, of course, it does. "The moment we choose to love we begin to move against domination, against oppression," wrote scholar and activist bell hooks (1952–2021). "The moment we choose to love we begin to move towards freedom, to act in ways that liberate ourselves and others." [1]…

The culture of colonial modernity tells us we are separate, atomized beings, and we are now experiencing the conditions that ideology creates. However, the nature of Life is oneness. We are woven together with all that is. Remembering this shifts *everything*. Our capacity as agents of transformation is amplified through our belonging within the web of all being. And just like with a spider's web, where a tap anywhere transmits vibration to the whole of it, every touch upon the web of Life vibrates everywhere. [2] Every act of love and justice ripples out farther than we will ever know. And every act of violation likewise echoes beyond our reckoning.…

Times of crisis call us to our soul's intent, the reason we are alive now, at this crucial moment in history. We can move beyond what is comfortable or familiar, to let the qualities of "who we are, *really*" shine forth. Through this, we inspire others to remember and live into the deeper truth that lies within them, and that in turn ignites an ever-wider awakening.

We may never see our impact on the life of another or understand how pivotal the smallest acts can be. But I truly believe that if we are guided by the intention to be a beneficial presence, if we commit ourselves to making a positive difference in the world, Life will not waste our willingness.

[*Richard Rohr's Daily Meditation*, November 11, 2026]

Spoken Prayers

A Prayer for Our Earth [Opening Prayer]	***Evolving Spirituality: Mysticism*** [Closing 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.	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.

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]



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
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.]

For further information on the GNRC Contemplative Spiritual Formation Committee, see

https://rainbowcatholics.org/project/csf/