



## Centering Prayer

Centering Prayer is a method of contemplative prayer in which we rest silently in the presence of God. It is a very simple method that is easy to learn. We may think of prayer as thoughts or feelings expressed in words, but Centering Prayer emphasizes prayer as a movement beyond conversation with Christ to communion with Him. By helping us to foster interior silence, and let go of all distractions, Centering Prayer can help us be more present and aware of God's presence within us, closer than breathing, closer than thinking, closer than consciousness itself. This method of prayer is both a relationship with God and a discipline to foster that relationship. Centering Prayer adds depth of meaning to all the other ways we pray and facilitates the movement from more active forms of prayer, to a stance of simply resting in God's presence. It helps us move from a head-based knowledge of God, to a deeper heart-knowing and experiencing of his love and presence within us. The method of Centering Prayer follows these 4 steps:

- CHOOSE A SACRED WORD AS THE SYMBOL OF YOUR INTENTION  
Choose a 1-2 syllable word that will help to serve as a placeholder for your intention. (ex. "Jesus", "love", "peace", etc). This is different than a mantra. Use the same word throughout your prayer session.
- SIT COMFORTABLY, WITH EYES CLOSED, AND INTRODUCE THE SACRED WORD SILENTLY AND GENTLY. THEN LET IT GO.  
Sit still and straight with your eyes closed or lowered towards the ground. Establish a slow, deep, natural rhythm of breathing. Allow your hands to rest in a comfortable or meaningful position in your lap. Begin by repeating your sacred word several times until it naturally fades away.
- WHEN ENGAGED WITH YOUR THOUGHTS, RETURN EVER SO GENTLY TO THE SACRED WORD.  
Allow yourself to rest in the silence and in God's presence. Anytime your attention begins to focus on anything (a thought, insight, memory, physical sensation, feeling, image, etc), return to repeating your sacred word until it brings you back into the silence.
- AT THE END OF THE PRAYER PERIOD, REMAIN IN SILENCE WITH EYES CLOSED FOR A COUPLE MINUTES.

"GOD'S FIRST LANGUAGE IS SILENCE. EVERYTHING ELSE IS A POOR TRANSLATION."  
- Saint John of the Cross