



CONTEMPLATIVE OUTREACH CHICAGO

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NOVEMBER 4 CENTERING PRAYER WORKSHOP WILL FEATURE PROFESSOR DAVID BELCASTRO, PAST PRESIDENT OF THE THOMAS MERTON SOCIETY AND EDITOR OF *THE MERTON ANNUAL*

Professor David Belcastro will be one of four featured session-leaders at the sixth annual One-Day Fall Workshop sponsored by Contemplative Outreach – Chicago on Saturday November 4 at Benedictine University in Lisle, Illinois. Prof. Belcastro's session will focus on Thomas Merton's interest in Yoga Philosophy and Practice, which eventually led to his pilgrimage to Mahabalipuram and his last poem, entitled "The Kandy Express." In addition, the session will include an introduction to yoga meditation, as Dr. Belcastro believes Merton understood it.

About his plans for the workshop session, Prof. Belcastro says, "We will gain insight into an approach to spiritual formation that integrates body, mind and soul; the individual person with the Hidden Ground of Love; and social action and contemplative vision."

Prof. Belcastro is Professor Emeritus at Capital University Department of Religion and Philosophy, Adjunct Professor of Theology in Ohio Dominican University's Graduate Program, and Yoga Philosophy and Practice teacher at Marian Correctional Institution. He is a past President of the International Thomas Merton Society and Editor of *The Merton Annual*. He has authored numerous publications and presentations on Merton, Albert Camus and Czelaw Milosz, and holds a PhD from University of St. Andrews, Scotland in Patristic Studies.

Other workshop sessions will be offered on sacred chant, Taize spirituality, and the Perennial Wisdom. Alternatively, attendees may choose to participate in an all-day, in-depth introductory session on the practice of Centering Prayer.

Complete information on the One-Day Fall Workshop is available at <http://centeringprayerchicago.org/events/annual-fall-one-day-workshop-2/> or contact get.info@centeringprayerchicago.org or call 847-698-5298.

Background Information on Centering Prayer

In the early 1970s, Trappist monk and priest Thomas Keating and two other Trappists, Fr. William Meninger and the late Fr. Basil Pennington, worked to bring people living outside monasteries a form of silent prayer now known

as Centering Prayer. With roots in the fourteenth century book, *The Cloud of Unknowing*, this kind of prayer allows people to sit silently and become receptive to God's gift of contemplation.

Of course, contemplation has been an important part of Christianity from the beginning. Centering Prayer presents the teachings of earlier times in an updated form. This method of prayer is both a relationship with God and a discipline to foster that relationship.

Centering Prayer is not meant to replace other kinds of prayer. Rather, it adds depth of meaning to all prayer and facilitates the movement from more active modes of prayer — verbal, mental or affective prayer — into a receptive prayer of resting in God. Centering Prayer emphasizes prayer as a personal relationship with God and as a movement beyond conversation with Christ to communion with Him.

Background Information on Contemplative Outreach - Chicago

Contemplative Outreach - Chicago has been serving the contemplative community in northeastern Illinois and northwestern Indiana since 1989. We are a chapter of Contemplative Outreach, Ltd., an international spiritual network with offices in Butler, N.J., which was founded in 1984. Our mission is to teach the method of Centering Prayer and to support those whose Spiritual Journey includes a practice of this prayer. The volunteers in our chapter are grounded in contemplative service - "God in us serving God in others."