

*“Welcoming Prayer is the practice that actively lets go of thoughts and feelings that support the false-self system. It embraces painful emotions experienced in the body rather than avoiding them or trying to suppress them. It does not embrace the suffering as such but the presence of the Holy Spirit in the particular pain, whether physical, emotional, or mental. Thus, it is the full acceptance of the content of the present moment. [In] giving the experience over to the Holy Spirit, the false-self system is gradually undermined and the true self liberated.”*

~ Father Thomas Keating

*The Welcoming Prayer is a “powerful path for connecting the inner consent of Centering Prayer with the outer requirement of unconditional presence in daily life.”*

~ The Rev. Dr. Cynthia Bourgeault

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# The Welcoming Prayer

**“To welcome and to let go is one of the most radically loving, faith-filled gestures we can make in each moment of each day. It is an open-hearted embrace of all that is in ourselves and in the world.”**

~ Mary Mrozowski

# THE WELCOMING PRAYER

... *consent on the go* ...

"Deliberately dismantle the emotional programs of the false self." With these words, Fr. Thomas Keating instructs practitioners of Centering Prayer in his classic work on the contemplative dimension of the Gospel *Open Mind, Open Heart*. The Welcoming Prayer provides a method for living Fr. Keating's teachings.

## DEFINITION

The Welcoming Prayer is a method of actively letting go of thoughts and feelings that support the false-self system.

## PURPOSE

The purpose of the Welcoming Prayer is to deepen our relationship with God through consenting to God's presence and action in the ordinary activities of daily life. The Welcoming Prayer helps to dismantle the emotional programs of the false-self system and to heal the wounds of a lifetime by addressing them where they are stored—in the body. In this way, the Welcoming Prayer complements the dynamic of Centering Prayer in the rest of the day.

## FREEDOM FROM THE FALSE-SELF

The practice of Welcoming Prayer is an opportunity to make choices free of the false-self system—responding instead of reacting to the present moment. Through the action of the Holy Spirit, our practice empowers us to take appropriate action as freely and lovingly as possible in any situation that presents itself in our lives.

## HISTORY

The founding genius behind the Welcoming Prayer was Mary Mrozowski, one of Thomas Keating's closest associates and a prime mover in the development and popularization of his teachings. She based the Welcoming Prayer on the 17<sup>th</sup>-century French spiritual classic *Abandonment to Divine Providence* by Jean-Pierre de Caussade as well as Fr. Keating's teachings and her own lived experience of transformation with its underlying attitude of surrender. The practice proved so powerful in bringing about real inner change that it was soon being offered throughout the Contemplative Outreach network.

*"What God arranges for us to experience at each moment is the best and holiest thing that could happen to us."*

~ Jean-Pierre de Caussade

### *The Welcoming Prayer Method*

*Notice and sink into* the feelings, emotions, thoughts, sensations, and commentaries in your body.

*Welcome* the divine indwelling in the feelings, emotions, thoughts, commentaries, or sensations in your body by saying "*Welcome.*"

*Let go* by repeating the following sentences:

"I let go of the desire for security, affection, control."

"I let go of the desire to change this situation."

## WELCOMING PRAYER WORKSHOPS

### A One-day Introductory Workshop.

The purpose of this workshop is to introduce participants to the actual method of the Welcoming Prayer and to provide an opportunity to practice. Also included are discussions of the Human Condition and the False-Self System as the conceptual background of the Welcoming Prayer.  
*Pre-requisite: established Centering Prayer practice.*

### A Weekend Introductory Workshop.

This workshop includes all the elements of a one-day with additional time for noticing, working with what is happening in our bodies and practicing the prayer.  
*Pre-requisite: established Centering Prayer practice.*

**A Five-day Immersion.** An in-depth introduction, review and immersion into Welcoming Prayer practice to establish it as a part of our daily lives and to deepen our relationship with God.  
*Pre-requisite: established Centering Prayer practice.*



For more information on One-Day or Weekend Workshops, contact your local coordinator, or Cherry Haisten, Welcoming Prayer Service Team Leader, at [chaisten@comcast.net](mailto:chaisten@comcast.net).

For a five-day immersion, contact Cherry Haisten at [chaisten@comcast.net](mailto:chaisten@comcast.net).

See also the *Contemplative Outreach, Ltd., Newsletter & Website: [contemplativeoutreach.org](http://contemplativeoutreach.org).*