



## FINDING A STILL CENTRE

In the midst of our busy lives  
A quiet place in the heart of our community  
October 3rd, 2021

**Music:** You Raise Me Up | BYU Vocal Point [www.youtube.com/watch?v=rcLI0A-IXIc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rcLI0A-IXIc)

**Welcome:** While we are separated by space and perhaps time, we meet knowing God is with us.

### Opening prayer:

Loving God, you have made us in your own image,  
diverse, beautiful and precious in your sight.  
May we see that same precious beauty in every person,  
a unique creation beloved of you.  
May we celebrate the life we can bring to each other.  
Give us the courage to stand unequivocally for justice,  
for truth, and for the reconciliation  
and hope that is ours through Jesus Christ.  
Help us to dismantle racist agendas.  
Help us to transform unjust structures.  
Help us to decolonize our Christianity.  
Help us to love you with all our heart, soul and strength.  
Help us to love one another as you commanded us to do.  
Through Jesus Christ our Lord

**Amen.**

Archbishop Fereimi Cama, Archbishop Richardson, Archbishop Don Tamihere

**Lectio Divina:** Ephesians 3: 13-19 NRSV (A Guidance sheet can be found on page 3)

### Context

The author of this letter may or may not be the Apostle Paul. It is very likely that the author is a keen disciple writing in Paul's style, as writings of apostolic origin held greater authority.

If this is so, the author strongly desires that Paul's witness continue to be passed on to the churches.

The book itself emphasizes the unity of Jew and Gentile. Reconciled by Christ through his death, both have equal access to the Father!

The message of Ephesians is the place of Christ in revealing the divine origin of the Church to all generations. To convey this divine origin, vs. 13 assure listeners that Paul's suffering and imprisonment not be misunderstood as evidence of divine displeasure, rather that his sufferings were on behalf of the church. Because Paul is their unique representative they are called to be in unique relationship to him. In the passage there is a play on words in the Greek 'pater' and 'patria' meaning Fatherhood, God being the

author of all family relationships. Every family no matter where or when is derived from God's paternity.

Understanding something of this first century context, we may imagine ourselves being addressed by these heartfelt words, both as hearers of the word then, and now, which we too may be filled with all the fullness of God.

**I pray therefore that you may not lose heart over my sufferings for you; they are your glory.**

**For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.**

**Centering Prayer and time of silence:** (A guidance sheet and information for letting go can be found on p3-4)

**Music:** Enigma Variations "Nimrod" (Elgar) Academy of St Martin in the Fields  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cn9oXU8k5qE>

### **Closing Prayer: The Night Prayer**

Lord,  
it is night.

The night is for stillness.  
Let us be still in the presence of God.

It is night after a long day.  
What has been done has been done;  
what has not been done has not been done;  
let it be.

The night is dark.  
Let our fears of the darkness of the world and of our own lives  
rest in you.

The night is quiet.  
Let the quietness of your peace enfold us,  
all dear to us,  
and all who have no peace.

The night heralds the dawn.  
Let us look expectantly to a new day,  
new joys,  
new possibilities.

In your name we pray.  
Amen.  
*A NZ Prayer Book p 18*



## Guidance sheet for Lectio meditation

**Begin by taking** a moment to adjust your posture so you are comfortable yet upright, notice your breath....as it comes and goes...

*Sit with each phase for 5 minutes.*

**1: As you read the text for the first time** simply notice what strikes you, (*positively and/or negatively*) **about the reading itself.** What stands out or resonates? Mull over what strikes you most about the passage itself? What might your responses as a listener of this time be?

### **2: Meditatio** (Meditation)

**As you read the text for the second time** notice what resonates this time, as you allow the passage to speak to you and your life today? How might this relate to you? Notice your responses, your thoughts and feelings. What comes to your mind? Allow yourself to dwell meditatively and compassionately on whatever arises.

### **3) Oratio** (Prayer) and **Contemplatio** (Contemplation)

**In this third phase after you read the text,** silently share your thoughts, and responses with God responding simply with heart and mind. Speak to God quietly within, about any new word spoken and any desires it has stirred in you. Is there any action the Spirit may be calling you to consider? Listen for God's response. True prayer calls for honesty with ourselves and transparency before God. Rest in quiet awareness of God's presence.

## Guidance for Prayer of the heart

**Centering Meditation, or Prayer of the Heart,** simply sitting quietly with an open heart, in God's presence for 20 minutes.

### **1) In preparation**

**-pay attention to your breathing,** simply noticing your breath come and go.

**-choose a word, or a phrase, as your 'sacred word'** for this evening.<sup>1</sup>

This '**sacred word**' gives an anchor for the mind, to help you let go of all that gets in the way of deeply opening to God.

**You may invite a word, image or phrase to arise within you.** A fresh image of God may draw you, perhaps a word or phrase from the opening prayer. Give yourself a moment now to choose your sacred word or phrase for tonight.

**2) Begin** by silently saying your sacred word or the phrase you have chosen, rhythmically and repetitively within.

**3) When distractions or thoughts arise,** simply notice them and let them go gently. Simply return to your word or phrase in an attitude of consent, or saying

Yes to God. Imagine the distractions are clouds floating gently across the sky and let them go.

4) Should the word or phrase drop away, rest effortlessly in the silence and loving presence.

### **'Learning to Let Go'**

The theological basis for Centering Prayer lies in the principle of kenosis, Jesus's self-emptying love that forms the core of his own self-understanding and life practice. . . .

*Centering Prayer is a devotional practice, placing ourselves in God's presence and quieting our minds and hearts, but as Cynthia Bourgeault explains, it doesn't only work on that level. What the desert abbas and ammas, the author of the Cloud of Unknowing, and even Thomas Keating could not have known when he formally started teaching the practice five decades ago, was that it works on a physiological level as well, strengthening neural pathways, and making "letting go" that much easier. When it comes to releasing our strong preferences, especially our desire for power and control, it seems safe to say that some practice of kenosis (the act of letting go) is necessary for any movement forward.*

The gospels themselves make clear that [Jesus] is specifically inviting us to this journey and modeling how to do it. Once you see this, it's the touchstone throughout all his teaching: Let go! Don't cling! Don't hoard! Don't assert your importance! Don't fret. "Do not be afraid, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom!" (Luke 12:32). And it's this same core gesture we practice in Centering Prayer: thought by thought by thought. You could really summarize Centering Prayer as *kenosis in meditation form*. . . .

Every time we manage to let go of a thought in Centering Prayer, "consenting to the presence and action of God within," the gesture is actually *physically embodied*. It's not just an attitude; something actually "drops and releases" in the solar plexus region of your body, a subtle but distinct form of interior relaxation. . . . **And in time**, this gentle and persistent "inner aerobics," undertaken under the specific banner of Centering Prayer and in solidarity with Jesus's own kenotic path, will gradually establish that "mind of Christ" within you as your own authentic self.

*Richard Rohr's Daily meditation 14.08.21*