



**This
Graced
Moment:**

*Divine
Energy
animating fresh
possibilities*



BRIGIDINE LIFE and MISSION UNFOLDING

... Making the Connections 3

The 2014 Council of the Congregation challenged us to look more deeply at the underlying and connecting vision and spirit at the heart of the Congregational Forum Directions

Prayer at the heart of our lives and mission

Where do we start when we pray? Where are the places that we go to pray? What sources do we use to pray? What do we pay attention to when we pray? What theologies, gestures, and commitments inform our prayers? From where does our language for prayer come? To talk about prayer is to talk about that which gives us life for prayer has the power to create, transform, and hold our worlds together.

As children, we were taught that prayer was concerned with raising our hearts and minds to God. Today, there is a new story emerging in consciousness, one that invokes awe, wonder and reverence and which expands our notion of God as an everywhere God - a Sustaining Presence in all, through all, never absent, never distant, not in one place more than any other place, a Presence "in whom we live and move and have our being." (Acts 17:28)

Some people find fingering their beads helps them to pray. Others hear the call to prayer as they spread open the daily newspaper. Others again find they are led into deep reflection when they walk in the woods or by the sea. For some, sitting in silence is where they are led to pray. One woman tells of praying in front of the famous photograph of Earth, taken on December 7, 1972, by the crew of the *Apollo 17* spacecraft, as they travelled towards the moon. All these types of prayer can lead into an awareness of God always present and everywhere active in the unfolding universe.

Like many of the prayers in the book of Psalms, our prayer draws us to reflect on the nature of God and to contemplate the Divine Energy present and animating new possibilities throughout all creation and in all the moments of both our personal lives and the unfolding story of our Community and our world.

Prayer also leads us to reflect on ourselves as part of the whole and on our responsibility to be bearers of compassion and love for all. To pray is to shape the world, to allow our heart to be expanded as we tune into the Divine Presence within all including the voices of our brothers and sisters, especially the most marginalized and oppressed in our world.

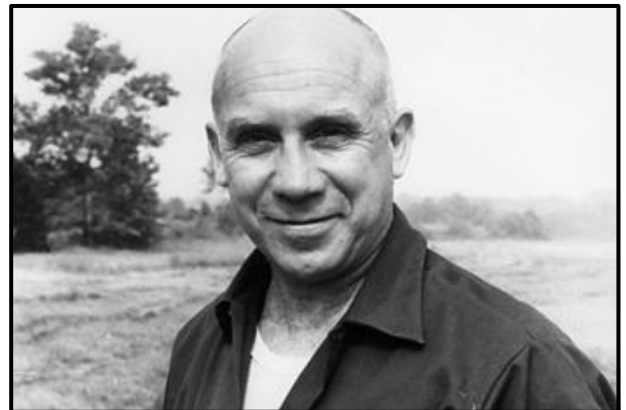
“As we move into a more contemplative phase of our lives we find ourselves continuing to journey more deeply into an awareness of the challenges that this understanding of spirituality presents.”

(2011 Congregational Forum Booklet, p 12)

Thomas Merton (1915 - 1968) often referred to what he called “*a contemplative orientation*” to life.” Regardless of our age, stage of life, personality or ministry, we are invited to find a balance in our lives - a balance between being and doing, between inner awareness and outward engagement - that will lead to a fuller fruiting of our lives and our relationships. Merton said, “*We are living in a world that is absolutely transparent and God is shining through it all the time ... in people, in things, in nature and in events.*”

(Refer Thomas Merton, *Contemplative Prayer*, 1973)

Our call then is to remember to see. This will enable us both personally and communally to be more aware of the Divine Presence within us and all around us.

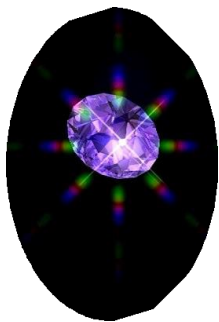


Thomas Merton (1915 - 1968)
Trappist Monk
Gethsemani Abbey, Kentucky, USA

Merton suggested a threefold pattern for those who wish to live contemplatively:

- **Remember** that that which is deep within us is like a “*pure diamond, blazing with the invisible light of heaven.*” In prayer we return to this deep centre to find our true meaning and the very ground of our being.
- **Know** that this “*pure diamond*” is also at the heart of each person (even those who are different from us) and at the heart of all things. Through prayer we learn to live compassionately - to see the connection between ourselves and all beings who suffer (including our brothers and sisters and the planet.)
- **Be prepared to take compassionate action** for the transformation of the world. Prayer ensures this action flows from our deepest centre so that we remain transparent, strong and gentle rather than limited by ego, self-interest or fear.

(Refer, Thomas Merton, *Contemplative Prayer*, 1973)



As we recommit to making time for prayerful reflection with open hearts and minds, where DO you find you are more aware of the Divine Presence calling you to life?

What compassionate action do you sense God is calling us to take as a Community at this time?