

# THE WELCOMING PRAYER

## *Consent on the go*

*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*



**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 consenting to God’s presence and action in our physical and emotional reactions to events and situations in daily life.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of the Welcoming Prayer is to deepen our relationship with God through consenting in ordinary activities. 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. It contributes to the process of transformation in Christ initiated in Centering Prayer.

## **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**

Mary Mrozowski, one of the founders of Contemplative Outreach, formulated the Welcoming Prayer. She based it 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 was so powerful in bringing about inner change that it soon spread throughout the Contemplative Outreach network.



“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

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# The Welcoming Prayer Method

## There are three movements of the prayer:

**Feel and sink into** what you are experiencing this moment in your body.

**“WELCOME”** what you are experiencing this moment in your body  
as an opportunity to consent to the Divine Indwelling.

**Let go** by saying “I let go of my desire for security, affection, control  
and embrace this moment as it is.”

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“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

## Welcoming Prayer Workshops

A daily practice of Centering Prayer is recommended as a prerequisite for the following Welcoming Prayer programs.

### A One-day Introductory Workshop.

This workshop introduces participants to the actual method of the Welcoming Prayer and provides an opportunity to practice. The day includes discussions of the human condition and the false-self system as the conceptual background of the Welcoming Prayer.

### A Weekend Introductory Workshop.

This workshop includes all the elements of a one-day with additional time for focusing, working with what is happening in our bodies, and practicing the prayer.

### A Five-day Immersion.

This in-depth introduction, review and opportunity for sustained practice of the Welcoming Prayer establishes the prayer as a part of our daily lives and helps to deepen our relationship with God.

For more information about the Welcoming Prayer or any Contemplative Outreach Welcoming Prayer programs, please contact your local coordinator or

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