

Contemplative Wisdom School

Rev. Dr. Cynthia Bourgeault

Wisdom Schools have two purposes. The first is to make available to Christians the breadth and depth of their own Christian heritage, paying particular attention to new resources and insights that come to us from the Near East and our own Western mystical tradition. In a growing network of North American Wisdom Schools we have delved deeply into Thomas Merton, Jacob Boehme, *The Gospel of Thomas and Gospel of Mary Magdalene*, *Meditations on the Tarot*, and *The Cloud of Unknowing*. We have also explored modern classics such as Jacques Lusseryran's *And There was Light* and Jim Marion's *Putting on the Mind of Christ*. A core textbook has been *The Roots of Christian Mysticism* by Olivier Clement. Our goal has been to recover the true catholicity of the Christian tradition by returning to our own wellsprings.

The wider tradition is unanimous, however, in its assertion that the deeper Christianity cannot be known by the mind alone; it requires a transformation of the entire being. That is our second...and in fact, primary...purpose. From time immemorial there have been wisdom schools to raise human consciousness and transform society, and we work with the core practices that sustain the transformation of consciousness: meditation, contemplative prayer, *lectio divina*, the language of sacred gesture, and the daily practices of mindfulness, inner observation and surrender.

Our upcoming New York Wisdom School provides a pioneering opportunity for experienced practitioners of Centering Prayer to begin to allow the transformation of consciousness inevitably set in motion by this prayer to open the gateways to a wider and deeper understanding of the Christian Wisdom tradition. These three 5-day seminar retreats will serve as an introduction to the Wisdom tradition and a powerful bridge between the purifying practices of Centering Prayer and the opening of the unitive "eye of the heart." Each seminar will include Morning Worship, Centering Prayer periods, teaching sessions, mindful work, sharing, discussions, a desert day, free time and closing worship.

Requirements:

- 1) an established Centering Prayer practice
- 2) an ability to participate in all three seminars

Required Texts:

Bourgeault, Cynthia, *The Wisdom Way of Knowing*
Bauman, Lynn, ed. *The Gospel of Thomas* - (Session 1)
LeLoup, Jean-Yves, *The Gospel of Mary Magdalene* - (Session 2)
Progoff, Ira, ed., *The Cloud of Unknowing* - (Session 3)
Marion, Jim, *Putting on the Mind of Christ*

Recommended Texts:

Bourgeault, Cynthia, *Encountering the Wisdom Jesus* (CD cassette series)
Clement, Olivier, *The Roots of Christian Mysticism*

Dates: September 23-27, 2009; December 2-6, 2009;
January 27-31, 2010

Cost: \$1350 - \$650 deposit due with Registration; (*non-refundable after March 1, 2009*)

Place: Bethany Spirituality Center, Highland Mills, NY

Contact: Cathy McCarthy, Program Administrator
Contemplative Outreach of Orange County
Post Office Box 208
Cornwall, New York 12518-0208
845 534-5180; email cmccarthy001@hvc.rr.com

Website - www.centeringprayernys.org

For information and/or Registration Form, please contact Cathy McCarthy.