

## Contemplative Outreach: CHAPTER SIMPLIFICATION INITIATIVE

Fr. Thomas Keating shared with those who worked closely with him that he wished to simplify the role of the coordinator and the purpose of the chapter. He based this on conversations he had with coordinators who came to Snowmass to attend retreats. He recognized that many coordinators were burdened by their role which was almost like a full-time job. He wanted to simplify the chapter's purpose to three essentials:

1. Offer the Centering Prayer Program as taught by Commissioned Presenters
2. Form on-going Centering Prayer groups, and
3. Provide Support to all members of the chapter, especially those new to Centering Prayer, as well as enrichment for facilitators of Centering Prayer groups.

Since the Vision was published in 2017 the Chapter Support Team has been working to make the role of the coordinator more manageable and to encourage a coordinating team approach. The following areas of service, make up a coordinating team, along with a team leader and three or four additional team members, (to be determined as needed by the local chapter), are identified during a chapter planning meeting of local members of on-going Centering Prayer groups:

**Communications: (Computer skills needed)** Data base, Publicity, Newsletter (2 or 3 persons) Website (if needed).

**Introductory Program:** Includes the Introduction to CP and the 4-6 continuing follow up sessions by scheduling, assisting the local hosting site, assigning presenters. Need 3-4 members in addition to leader.

**Silent Saturdays/Day Retreats or Events:** (i.e. United in Prayer): Need 3-4 members in addition to leader.

**Facilitator Enrichment and Support:** Includes identifying facilitators from the on-going CP groups in the Area and providing support and enrichment from the many resources available; see Volunteer Services. Need 3-4 members in addition to leader.

**Coordinator:** Includes overseeing the teams like a coach, plans/facilitates the coordinating team meetings, and allows his/her name listed on the COL website.

In the beginning, the finances may be handled by the coordinator until the need to discern a financial team. (COL website for document: *Operational and Financial Guidelines for Chapters*)

**Some of the new concepts from the 2017 Vision:**

Contemplative Outreach aspires to function without a hierarchical structure and is designed to share Centering Prayer and its contemplative vision as widely as possible. (from Guideline 1 commentary)

Contemplative Outreach invites members of the community to serve in ways best suited to their call and special qualifications. (from Guideline 4 commentary) (*Equalization of Value*, La Loux; from Video series Misconceptions # 4)

All who provide Contemplative Outreach Services do so in consideration of their personal, family, and professional responsibilities which come first. (Guideline 5)

Chapter members reach decisions through prayerful discernment, aiming at consensus. (from Guideline 7 and commentary).

**Chapter Planning and Prayerful Discernment: (CPPD)**

This CPPD program was updated in 2018 by the Chapter Support Service Team to reflect the spirit of the 2017 revised Vision of COL. (This was formerly known as the *Visioning Day*). It is offered in a variety of time/formats. Originally designed as a face to face local chapter full day or two half days, in the summer of 2020, due to the pandemic, this program can now also be offered via Zoom with two, 2 hour meetings, over two or three weeks. Chapter Planning for the first meeting and Prayerful Discernment for the second meeting: all materials, schedules and mentoring available to plan or assist as needed.

Contact: Marie Howard, Coordinator of Volunteers; [mrhfamlife@aol.com](mailto:mrhfamlife@aol.com) or [Office@coutreach.org](mailto:Office@coutreach.org) Phone: 973.838.3384, or visit the CO website; [www.contemplativeoutreach.org](http://www.contemplativeoutreach.org) Volunteer Resources for more information.