

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 17th 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

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.”

“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



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