Centering Prayer is a receptive method of silent prayer that prepares us to receive the gift of contemplative prayer, prayer in which we experience God’s presence within us, closer than breathing, closer than thinking, closer than consciousness itself. This method of prayer is both a relationship with God and a discipline to foster that relationship.

Centering Prayer is not meant to replace other kinds of prayer. Rather, it adds depth of meaning to all prayer and facilitates the movement from more active modes of prayer – verbal, mental or affective prayer – into a receptive prayer of resting in God. Centering Prayer emphasizes prayer as a personal relationship with God and as a movement beyond conversation with Christ to communion with Christ.

In 1974, Father William Meninger, a Trappist monk and retreat master at St. Josephs Abbey in Spencer, Mass., found a dusty little book in the abbey library, The Cloud of Unknowing. As he read it, he was delighted to discover that this anonymous 14th century book presented contemplative meditation as a teachable, spiritual process enabling the ordinary person to enter and receive a direct experience of union with God.

This form of meditation, recently known as ‘Centering Prayer’ (from a text of Thomas Merton) can be traced from and through the earliest centuries of Christianity. The Centering Prayer centers one on God.

“Centering Prayer, also called contemplative meditation, is a method of silent prayer that prepares us to receive the gift of contemplative prayer, prayer in which we experience God’s presence within us, closer than breathing, closer than thinking, closer than consciousness itself. This method of prayer is both a relationship with God and a discipline to foster that relationship.
Centering Prayer is not meant to replace other kinds of prayer. Rather, it adds depth of meaning to all prayer and facilitates the movement from more active modes of prayer—verbal, mental or affective prayer—into a receptive prayer of resting in God. Centering Prayer emphasizes prayer as a personal relationship with God and as a movement beyond conversation with Christ to communion with Him.

The source of Centering Prayer, as in all methods leading to contemplative prayer, is the Indwelling Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The focus of Centering Prayer is the deepening of our relationship with the living Christ. The effects of Centering Prayer are ecclesial, as the prayer tends to build communities of faith and bond the members together in mutual friendship and love.”

**Julian of Norwich Workshop**
Father William Meninger, **Monday, Oct. 12, 9:45-10:45 am**, DeSales Chapel, St. John Neumann Parish, Reston, Virginia

This book is not a translation or a paraphrase of Julian's *Showings of Divine Love*. Rather, it is a commentary intended to provide information, reflections, and some further theological understanding that may enhance the modern Christian's reading of Julian's book. It may be read independently, prior to reading Julian's book, or together with it, chapter by chapter.

Other than what is contained in her singular work, *Showings of Divine Love*, we know almost nothing of the personal life of Julian. We do, however, know something about her background, as a recluse, or anchoress, and the social, cultural, and political life of late-fourteenth-century England. Although nothing of it is mentioned in her *Showings*, the times in which Julian lived were fraught with political, social, and economic upheavals in both Church and state. There are, indeed, many parallels to the present age. This, in part, helps to explain why Julian speaks so loudly to today after six hundred years of silence.
On the thirteenth of May, 1373, Julian received a series of sixteen visions centered on the person and sufferings of Jesus and on the Trinity. A short time later, she wrote an account of them in twenty-five chapters (known as the "Short Text"). Twenty years later, after much prayer and reflection, she wrote another account consisting of eighty-six chapters (called the "Long Text"). During this important interim, Julian the visionary became Julian the theologian.

Julian's visions correspond to the classic understanding of such phenomena. Some visions were spiritual locutions. In this experience, God spoke directly to her heart in such a way as to communicate with absolute, unquestioned clarity the desired message. Actual words were probably not used but the visionary was left with no doubt as to the authenticity or the meaning of the message. Other visions were visual or experienced as coming through the corporeal senses. These resulted from the direct action of God on the imagination. Still others were spiritual visions, not easily expressed and usually concerned with the deeper mysteries of God, such as the Trinity. Many of Julian's visions were combinations of all three types.

Father William Meninger, OCSO

Father William was born, raised and educated in the Boston area in Massachusetts. His mother was born and raised in County Kerry and his father was a Quaker from Pennsylvania.

Ordained in 1958, after eight years in St. John's Seminary, he was incardinated into the Diocese of Yakima, Washington where he worked on an Indian Reservation and with Mexican traveling workers for six years.

In 1963 he entered the Trappists at St. Joseph's Abbey in Spencer, Massachusetts, where he served in the guest house for 15 years, taught Scripture, liturgy and patristics; served as subprior, prior and dean of the junior professed monks.

In 1979 he was transferred to a daughter house, St. Benedict Monastery in Snowmass, Colorado, where he served as Prior, vocation director, novice master, and teacher of theology and scripture.

Fr. Meninger spent 3 years in Israel where he studied scripture and taught at the Center for Biblical Studies in Jerusalem and at the Trappist Monastery of Latroun.

He also did graduate studies at Seattle University, Harvard Divinity School, and Boston University.

In 1974 he originated the workshop on Contemplative Meditation (later known as Centering Prayer) which he now teaches worldwide along with workshops on Forgiveness, the Enneagram,
Sacred Scriptures, and Prayer. He leaves the monastery only 4 times each year to do this lest he lose his own monastic orientation while sharing it with others.

Website: www.contemplativeprayer.net

Books by Father Meninger:

**The Committed Life: An Adaptation of the Introduction to the Devout Life by St. Francis De Sales** by William A. Meninger

**The Temple of the Lord: And Other Stories** by William A. Meninger

**Sundays at the Magic Monastery: Homilies from the Trappists of St. Benedict’s Monastery** by Thomas Keating, William Meninger, et al

**The Loving Search for God : Contemplative Prayer and the Cloud of Unknowing** by William A. Meninger

**The Process of Forgiveness** by William A. Meninger

**Bringing "the Imitation of Christ" into the Twenty-First Century** by William A. Meninger

**1012 Monastery Road (new edition).** By Father William Meninger, OCSO. Daily life in the monastery as a model for the spiritual journey.

**Julian of Norwich--A Mystic For Today.** By Father William Meninger, OCSO. Informative commentaries and reflections on *Showings of Divine Love*, by Julian of Norwich, who received visions on the person and sufferings of Jesus, and on the Trinity, in 1373.

**A Joyful Noise.** By Father William Meninger, OCSO. A Monastic Approach to the Psalms. Explores the traditional monastic approach to interpreting the psalms, dating back to the early desert fathers and mothers and used for lectio divina.

**All Manner of Things.** By Father William Meninger, OCSO. *Lectio Divina with Julian of Norwich.*

This book is not a translation or a paraphrase of Julian's *Showings of Divine Love*. Rather, it is a commentary intended to provide information, reflections, and further theological understanding that may enhance the modern Christian's reading of Julian's book. It may be read independently, prior to reading her book, or together with it, chapter by chapter.

A free will offering will be accepted at these presentations. It will be donated to the education fund for the children in Manta, Ecuador.