

Contemplative Musings

by Patricia Rome Robertson



The word contemplative originates from the Old French word contemplation, derived from the Latin contemplationem which means 'act of looking at,' from contemplari, meaning 'to gaze attentively, observe'. Originally it meant 'to mark out a space for observation' (as an augur would). In English, it meant 'religious musing.'

Have you made any New Years' resolutions? Sometimes they actually work to help us change our lives, hopefully improving them as we live into a new way of being. My most common one is to lose weight – something that has been on my agenda for years. Although I rarely lose more than 5 five pounds (and then perhaps gain them back over the rest of the year), at least I keep my weight within a manageable range. And, of course it has more to do with healthful eating and exercise as well as getting good sleep and engaging in life. It's really true that when you change one thing in your life other parts change as well, whether you want them to or not. Life is interconnected. One change leads to another which leads to another and before you know it your life is experienced differently.

Recently I saw a news program that suggested that for 2016 losing weight is no longer the number one resolution made by most people. There seems to be a new trend. More folks are resolving to get involved in meditation, or mindfulness practice, or yoga. Scientific research has shown that these kinds of practices, that enable us to drop out of the busy analytic mind into the mind of the heart and body, produce a new kind of focus and energy in everyday life. Of course, mystics have been saying that for years. Even more than weight-loss, meditation changes you and your whole life perspective. You will see life differently. That's what the contemplative path is all about.

The new St. Barnabas web site has a page devoted to Contemplative Ministries. The introduction says this:

Contemplative Ministries at St. Barnabas is about growing in our ability to see and live into what/who is really in front of us from a deeper level. It's about being Present, being open to The Presence of the Holy which is always active in the world. It's about living into the non-dual Reality of Divine Love. This ability is developed through conscious, intentional practice that we engage in together and follow individually when we are apart.

So, if you are among those who made a New Year's resolution to become more centered and focused through meditation or mindfulness practice, then we have just the practices for you! The website describes in detail the Centering Prayer group, the Book Group and the periodic Wisdom Days. Taken together the practices that we engage in together will change not only us but the world around us. Centering Prayer is a Christian form of meditation. It is a practice that, if engaged in regularly over time, will radically change your view of the world and of the nature of

God. Coupled with mindful body awareness, chanting and movement, Centering Prayer will transform your life!

Even if you didn't make such a resolution, I encourage you to explore this particular way of deepening your relationship with the Holy Life in whom we live and move and have our very being. There is a growing group of folks to walk with on this path so you will not be alone. In fact, that is one of the fruits of this work – a community of practitioners whose very presence enlivens those around them. One such opportunity will be held on **Saturday, February 13** in the St. Barnabas Parish Hall, as we gather for what we call a “Wisdom Day”, to grow in the various practices that engage our hearts and deepen our lives in God.

My New Year's resolution this year is simple. I resolve to continue to walk the Contemplative path of engaging the life of Christ in God. Won't you join me?

New Year Blessings,

Patricia+