

## Living with the Mystics

Thomas Keating 1923 - 2018

We will be 'living with' Fr Thomas Keating, in the period between February 4<sup>th</sup> and May 5<sup>th</sup>, and at the end we'll be coming together to share our experiences.

Thomas Keating entered the Order of Cistercians in Valley Falls, Rhode Island, January 1944. He was appointed Superior of St. Benedict's Monastery, Snowmass, Colorado, in 1958, and was elected abbot of St. Joseph's Abbey, Spencer, Massachusetts, in 1961. He returned to Snowmass after retiring as abbot of Spencer in 1988. He was one of three principal developers of Centering Prayer, a contemporary method of contemplative prayer that emerged from St. Joseph's Abbey in 1975.

Thomas Keating was a prolific author. Possibly the most interesting books, and the most worth getting, are the trilogy:

*Invitation to Love,*  
*Open Mind, Open Heart,* and  
*The Mystery of Christ.*

These are available in a number of editions, and are also available printed together in *Foundations for Centering Prayer and the Christian Contemplative Life: Open Mind, Open Heart / Invitation to Love / Mystery of Christ.*

*"The root of prayer is interior silence. We may think of prayer as thoughts or feelings expressed in words. But this is only one expression. Deep prayer is the laying aside of thoughts. It is the opening of the mind and heart, body and feelings - our whole being - to God, the Ultimate Mystery." Open Mind; Open Heart. by Thomas Keating*

These are published in a number of editions and available new and used, for example at ABE books <https://www.abebooks.co.uk/book-search/author/thomas-keating/>

Thomas Keating flourished in the modern world, and there are many videos of him to be found, principally on YouTube. Also, the Contemplative Outreach website has a large number of videos under the resources section. The best way to find these are through web searches, so 'Thomas Keating YouTube' or 'Contemplative Outreach video'.

If I could recommend one talk, it is 'Thomas Keating's Reflections on the Contemplative Dimension of Life'. Here he re-states his constant theme: *"The contemplative dimension of life is the innate capacity of every human being.....a state that is indescribable and furthers the incentive of generous people to pursue the God who is unknowable (with human faculties)..."*

There is a set of talks by him on the WCCM website, so search 'WCCM Thomas Keating CDs'. The talks were produced by Meditatio in 2007.

*Richard Broughton*