

The Welcoming Prayer

Part of a three-pronged approach to contemplative prayer, the Welcoming Prayer is sometimes referred to as “Consent on the Go” by Fr. Thomas Keating and Contemplative Outreach. (www.contemplativeoutreach.org)

From the website:

“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. The purpose of the Welcoming Prayer is to deepen our relationship with God through consenting in the ordinary activities of our day — “consent-on-the-go.””

“The Welcoming Prayer helps to dismantle acquired emotional programs 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.”

Mark’s Thoughts:

The Welcoming Prayer is done in any moment as a means of awareness and acceptance. Regular practice can help shift one’s awareness of and relationship to the daily emotional programming that we all have, eventually freeing us from stuck emotional states. More fundamentally, the practice, along with that of *Lectio Divina* and *Centering Prayer*, helps to shift our core into a non-dual state, which will help draw us into a more centered life. Like all the practices within Christianity, it is based on a Christian anthropology that assumes there is no division between the spiritual and material aspects of life, but that our “mind” needs to be trained in that state.

The Practice:

1. Feel and sink into what you are experiencing at this moment *in your body*.
(It is important that this step not be focused on what you *think* but what it *feels like*. In Christian tradition, wisdom and understanding is located in the heart. What is the sensation in your body right now? Name it and focus on it.)
2. “Welcome” what you are experiencing right now in your body as a way to consent to the divine indwelling.
(“I welcome and embrace _____ (using the name of the feeling).)”)
3. “Let go” by saying, “I let go of my desire for security, affection, and control as I embrace this moment as it is.”
(Without judgement, cede your desire to control and allow the moment to be.”)