

# A Rising Tide of Oneness

Unity Consciousness  
for a World in Bits  
and Pieces

**Fr. Thomas Keating Symposium**

The Garrison Institute

March 7, 2025



GARRISON INSTITUTE

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## FR. THOMAS KEATING



**Fr. Thomas Keating** (1923–2018) was a visionary Trappist monk priest, and leading figure in the revival of Christian contemplative traditions. A pioneer in developing Centering Prayer, he made contemplative spirituality accessible to modern seekers, bridging the wisdom of monastic life with contemporary concerns.

Born in New York City, Keating entered the Cistercian Order in 1944, eventually serving as abbot of St. Joseph's Abbey in Spencer, Massachusetts (1961–81). Inspired by Vatican II's encouragement of interfaith engagement, he played a key role in interfaith dialogue, engaging with Buddhist, Jewish, Islamic, Hindu, and Native American spiritual traditions to explore the universal language of contemplation.

In 1984 Fr. Keating co-founded Contemplative Outreach, an organization that continues to bring Centering Prayer to people around the world. He also founded the Snowmass Conference, an annual gathering of spiritual leaders from different traditions in Snowmass, Colorado, seeking common ground in their experience of the divine. His books, including *Open Mind*, *Open Heart*, remain essential guides for those drawn to the spiritual life.

Until his death at St Joseph's Abbey in 2018, Keating remained a tireless advocate for unity, compassion, and deep interior prayer. His wisdom continues to inspire countless individuals to seek God in silence, stillness, and love.

Lily Rockefeller  
March 6, 2025

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# PROGRAM SCHEDULE

9:00 a.m. **Program officially begins, coffee service**  
Dining Hall

9:30 a.m. **Opening remarks, gathering silence**  
Meditation Hall

10:00 a.m. **PANEL 1**  
**Oneness as a State of Consciousness**  
Ven. Tenzin Priyadarshi Rinpoche,  
Cyprian Consiglio, Cynthia Bourgeault  
Moderator: Ted Jones  
Meditation Hall and **online\***

11:00 a.m. **Morning break**  
Dining Hall

“When there is no more  
‘me, myself, or mine,’  
Only the ‘I AM’ remains.  
Then the ‘I’ may fall away,  
Leaving just the AM.”

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11:30 a.m. **Morning Immersion Sessions:**

**Centering Prayer Double Sit**  
Colleen Thomas  
Hudson Room

**Meeting Common Challenges  
in Centering Prayer**  
David Frenette  
Dining Hall

**What is Awakened Mind?**  
Ven. Tenzin Priyadarshi Rinpoche  
Heritage Room

**The Spirit of the Snowmass  
Conference**  
William Keepin, Netanel Miles-Yépez,  
Adam Bucko  
Meditation Hall and **online\***

**Stability and Surrender  
in Embodied Prayer**  
Allen Bourque  
Seminar Room

**Screening and Discussion of  
*From the Mind to the Heart***  
Peter Jones, Ted Jones  
Appalachian Room

*\*Available online for hybrid attendees.*

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# PROGRAM SCHEDULE

- 12:30 p.m.     **Lunch break and personal time**  
Dining Hall
- 1-1:30 p.m.     **Bookstore table opens**  
First floor tiled hallway, north side of building
- 1-1:30 p.m.     **Online Session: Centering Prayer**  
(hybrid participants only)  
Facilitator: Mary Anne Best
- 2:00 p.m.     **PANEL 2**  
**Oneness Among the World's Religions**  
Cyprian Consiglio, Matthew Wright,  
Netanel Miles-Yépez  
Moderator: William Keepin  
Meditation Hall and **online\***
- 3:00 p.m.     **Mid-afternoon break**  
Dining Hall
- “This is creation: endless,  
delightful, unpredictable,  
unbelievable; just is-ness and  
is-ing playing with goodness,  
beauty, and truth: without  
purpose, without plan, without  
judgement: in perfect peace in the  
midst of activity and no-activity.”

- 3:30 p.m.     **Afternoon Immersion Sessions**
- Centering Prayer Double Sit**  
Mary Anne Best  
Hudson Room
- Stability and Surrender in Embodied Prayer**  
Allen Bourque  
Seminar Room
- Acting Skillfully in a Polarized World**  
William Keepin , Sabina Alkire  
Heritage Room
- Making a New World: Voices from  
the Younger Generation**  
Keith Kristich, Colleen Thomas  
Meditation Hall and **online\***
- Matter Matters: Rewilding Human Spirituality**  
Mary Jane Yates  
Dining Hall
- Open Rehearsal of *The Secret Embrace*  
Reading-in-the-round**  
Peter Jones, Cynthia Bourgeault  
Appalachian Room

*\*Available online for hybrid attendees.*

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# PROGRAM SCHEDULE

- 4:30 p.m. **Late-afternoon break**  
Dining Hall
- 5:00 p.m. **PANEL 3**  
**Oneness in our One World**  
Sabina Alkire, Tristan Johannes, Adam Bucko  
Moderator: William Keepin  
Meditation Hall and **online\***
- 6:00 p.m. **Closing Remarks**  
Jonathan F.P. Rose and Daniel Siegel  
Meditation Hall
- 6:15 p.m. **Book Signing**  
Dining Hall
- 6:15 p.m. **Visit bookstore table**  
First floor tiled hallway, north side of building
- 7:00 p.m. **Dinner**  
Dining Hall  
*Prepaid registration required*
- 8:00 p.m. **Screening of *A Rising Tide of Silence***  
Meditation Hall

“Non-duality for the Christian is to be guided by the Spirit, instead of by the false self or the ego.”



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## SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

### **Acting Skillfully in a Polarized World**

William Keepin, Sabina Alkire

In our increasingly polarized world, how can we act skillfully in compassionate service to others—neither shying away from the divisive challenges, yet also holding the inherent oneness of humanity deeply in our hearts?

This panel approaches this question in two ways: First, we explore the spiritual qualities cultivated in contemplative prayer practice—presence, inner balance, courage, compassion, and holding space and prayer for those we work with, including our adversaries. These are essential skills for effective action, and all the more important in a polarized world.

Second, we explore two examples of real-world service projects that directly confront and transform structural injustices in human societies: Sabina's work on multidimensional poverty, and its application for genuine poverty relief; and Will's work on transmuting gender injustice

into "beloved community." Both initiatives entail skillful application of "interspiritual activism" in a multi-cultural context.

### **Centering Prayer Double Sit**

Colleen Thomas (*morning*)  
Mary Anne Best (*afternoon*)

For those wishing more intensive group practice or for a more meditative rhythm to the day. Two prayer periods, around 25 minutes, with meditative walking. No instruction or discussion, just shared silence.

### **Making a New World: Voices from the Younger Generation**

Keith Kristich, Colleen Thomas

Join Colleen, Keith, and friends for an interactive forum exploring the unique perspectives and concerns of a younger generation of contemplative practitioners. As contemplation moves beyond monasteries and younger practitioners navigate a world with fewer connections to traditional contemplative spaces and living teachers, how do we stand face-to-face with the pressing issues of our

time? How do we "give legs" to Thomas Keating's radiant vision of planetary oneness?

### **Matter Matters: Rewilding Human Spirituality**

Mary Jane Yates

"Because the Divine matters... everything matters." These words of Fr. Thomas were among the last to be published. In "A Life Surrendered to God," he also left us with the inspiration to find ways and means of providing more and more opportunities for spiritual growth—and partnerships with other traditions. Terra Divina (sacred reading of the earth) is emerging as a practice with enormous potential to connect the human family not only with our more-than-human world but also with ancient Indigenous wisdom and more "secular" disciplines such as Nature and Forest Therapy and Eco-Mindfulness. In this session, Mary Jane will introduce participants to the foundations and practice of Terra Divina as a pathway to healing for both our inner and outer worlds.

### **Meeting Common Challenges in Centering Prayer**

David Frenette

It is common for established Centering Prayer practitioners to face challenges in their practice, including dryness, anxiety and dread, and the absence of God's palpable presence. This session will explore these challenges and show how they can be helped through a better understanding of unity consciousness. Suggestions will include how to better prepare for and close the period of Centering Prayer, as well as how to persevere during stuck times. Included will be instruction, guided meditation, and a Q&A period.

### **Open Rehearsal of *The Secret Embrace* reading-in-the-round**

Peter Jones, Cynthia Bourgeault

Attendees are invited to watch teachers and presenters conduct a rehearsal reading of the eight poems comprising Fr. Thomas Keating's *The Secret Embrace*.

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## SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

### **Screening and Discussion of *From the Mind to the Heart***

Peter Jones, Ted Jones

Fr. Thomas Keating's remarkable short film *From the Mind to the Heart* was originally created in collaboration with his nephew, Peter C. Jones, for use as a series of short "dharma talks" to be screened individually during the course of a longer Centering Prayer retreat. In this unique immersion session, two of Fr. Thomas's nephews, documentary filmmaker and fine art photographer Peter Jones and Insight Meditation teacher Ted Jones, will walk you through the video both artistically and spiritually, sharing rare personal glimpses of Fr. Thomas, while preparing you to use this material in either a retreat or class series format.

### **The Spirit of the Snowmass Conference**

William Keepin , Netanel Miles-Yépez, Adam Bucko

We will explore the groundbreaking "Snowmass Conference" convened by Fr. Thomas Keating—an annual conference held in Snowmass, Colorado, that brought key leaders together each year from the major religious and spiritual traditions of the world for 32 years. These diverse religious leaders came not to compare notes on their respective theologies in an interfaith exercise, but rather to share their deep personal spiritual journeys and the transformative practices that most impacted their lives and vocations. In this way, they ventured well beyond traditional inter-religious discourse, and were delighted to become close friends in a shared spiritual quest. They developed 8 key points of common agreement and skillfully explored their religious differences. The Snowmass Conference offers a profoundly inspiring precedent for global harmony among the world religions.

### **Stability and Surrender in Embodied Prayer**

Allen Bourque

*This session will be offered once in the morning and once in the afternoon.*

We will be using simple Embodied Prayer practices as a vehicle to explore the synergy of stability and surrender (without collapse!) and to become more skillful in reestablishing stability when we lose it. This session is suitable both for beginners and for those with extensive experience of conscious movement, and its kinesthetic relevance to Thomas Keating's teachings on "flowing oneness" will be immediately apparent. We will be exploring in the body the same terrain that he is exploring in his mystical teaching.

### **What is Awakened Mind?**

Ven. Tenzin Priyadarshi Rinpoche

Kalyanamitra: (Sanskrit) for a spiritual or a virtuous friend who helps you realize your deeper aspirations, one who uplifts your path to a higher level of ethical and spiritual well-being. Fr. Thomas Keating and Rinpoche shared a deep spiritual friendship. Over a span of years they enjoyed meaningful and delightful interactions, including Snowmass Dialogs, conversations with His Holiness the Dalai Lama at MIT, and many private and warmhearted adventures in silence. Rinpoche will speak on aspects of the awakened mind during this brief immersion session, with time allowed for dialog with the audience.

**“Powerlessness is  
our greatest treasure.”**

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## PRESENTERS



**Cynthia Bourgeault** is co-chair and program leader of the “Rising Tide of Oneness” symposium. An Episcopal priest, writer, and internationally acclaimed retreat leader, she worked closely with Fr. Thomas Keating for more than thirty years. She is the author of three books on Centering Prayer as well as a dozen more books on aspects of the Christian Contemplative and Wisdom traditions. Her most recent published work is *Thomas Keating: The Making of a Modern Christian Mystic*.



**Sabina Alkire** is the Director of the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) at University of Oxford. Sabina is an economist and advocate for human flourishing. Professor Alkire’s approach to social justice and poverty is multidimensional and infused with contemplative wisdom, inviting us to see economic challenges through a compassionate and holistic lens.



**Mary Anne Best** is the abbess of The Church of Conscious Harmony in Austin, Texas, a contemplative Christian community. Previously, she served as the development director of Contemplative Outreach, stewarding fundraising and the production of special projects as an editor and project coordinator for the development of new works by Thomas Keating during the last ten years of his life. She has led numerous Centering Prayer retreats, and was a principal writer for online courses and the Contemplative Life Program (CLP).



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## PRESENTERS



**Allen Bourque** has been teaching contemplative movement for over ten years. He is a long-term practitioner of Centering Prayer, a student of Cynthia Bourgeault, and a teacher of Tai Chi and contemplative movement, currently most active in the Integral Christian community.



**Adam Bucko** is a spiritual activist, Episcopal priest, and director of the Center for Spiritual Imagination, dedicated to democratizing the gifts of monastic spirituality. He has co-founded several nonprofits focused on the intersection of contemplation and justice and spent over 15 years working alongside youth experiencing homelessness in New York City. His work reflects a commitment to teaching contemplative spirituality in the context of hearing and responding to the cry of the poor and the cry of the earth.



**Cyprian Consiglio** is a Camaldolese Benedictine monk, musician, and author whose work bridges Eastern and Western contemplative traditions. His sacred music and interfaith dialogue invites an experience of unity and peace through contemplative expression. He currently serves as the secretary general of Dialogue Interreligieux Monastique · Monastic Interreligious Dialogue (DIMMID).

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## PRESENTERS



**David Frenette** is a contemplative teacher and author of *The Path of Centering Prayer: Deepening Your Experience of God*. A longtime student of Fr. Thomas Keating, David has spent over 35 years in contemplative service, including a decade living monastically and co-leading retreats.



**Peter C. Jones** is a documentary filmmaker, fine art photographer, and author whose work celebrates contemplative themes. His documentary on the global reach of Father Keating *A Rising Tide of Silence* premiered at the Aspen Film Festival in 2013. Jones brings a thoughtful and artistic lens to stories of spirituality and human connection, as seen in his sequel film, *Thomas Keating: From the Mind to the Heart*.



**Ted Jones** teaches meditation at North Shore Insight Meditation Community in Newburyport, Massachusetts. Ted is the nephew of the late Fr. Thomas Keating, and he was present at Fr. Thomas's bedside for much of the final month of his life.

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## PRESENTERS



**Tristan Johannes** is a Pentecostal minister, spiritual activist, and vipassana meditator who draws on Centering Prayer and Christian meditation in his practice as a spiritual leader. He currently serves on the Board of GenderWorks, a nonprofit organization located in Cape Town, South Africa. Tristan has ten years of experience implementing and facilitating programs for young adults that develop skills, are trauma informed, and healing-based. He is a contributor to the new book *Gender Equity and Reconciliation: Thirty Years of Healing the Most Ancient Wound in the Human Family*.



**William Keepin, PhD**, is a mathematical physicist, scholar/practitioner of interspirituality, and gender equality activist. He collaborated with Fr. Thomas Keating for nearly 20 years, and convened five international conferences on interspirituality, including a 30-year reunion of the Snowmass Conference for inter-religious dialogue convened by Thomas Keating. Will's five books include the titles *Belonging to God* (foreword by Thomas Keating), and *Gender Equity and Reconciliation*.



**Keith Kristich** is the founder of Closer Than Breath, an online contemplative community dedicated to the teaching and practice of contemplative prayer. As a writer and retreat leader, Keith brings an interspiritual approach to his teaching. He is a commissioned Presenter of Centering Prayer through Contemplative Outreach.

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## PRESENTERS



**Netanel Miles-Yépez** is an artist, philosopher, religion scholar, and spiritual teacher. He is the current head of the Inayati-Maimuni lineage of Sufism, and is considered a leading thinker in the Interspiritual and New Monasticism movements.



**Venerable Tenzin Priyadarshi Rinpoche** is a Buddhist monk and global ethics leader. Ven. Tenzin Priyadarshi Rinpoche combines a contemplative life with his commitment to compassionate action as the president and CEO of the Dalai Lama Center for Ethics at MIT. His work spans spiritual traditions and promotes understanding across diverse communities.



**Daniel Siegel** is a founding co-director of the UCLA Mindful Awareness Research Center and the founder and director of education at the Mindsight Institute. With numerous bestsellers and a professional series of textbooks, he's a leading voice in interpersonal neurobiology, shaping minds worldwide with wisdom and compassion.

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## PRESENTERS



**Colleen Thomas** is an ordained minister, spiritual director, and writer. She is the diversity outreach coordinator for Contemplative Outreach Ltd. and co-host of the podcast *Opening Minds, Opening Hearts*. Colleen worked in television in Los Angeles for 15 years before relocating to her hometown of Washington, DC. She holds a master's degree in theology and art from Fuller Theological Seminary.



**Rev. Matthew Wright** is an Episcopal priest and retreat leader working to renew the Christian Wisdom tradition within a wider interspiritual context. Matthew is also a student within the Mevlevi Sufi tradition under the guidance of Shaikh Kabir and Camille Helminski. He lives with his wife and two cats in Woodstock, New York, where he serves as priest-in-charge at St. Gregory's Episcopal Church.



**Mary Jane Yates** has been an avid practitioner and leader in the Centering Prayer movement since 2007. She holds a Master of Science in health promotion and completed her training as a Nature and Forest Therapy guide in 2019. Recently retired from full-time work, she spends much of her time with the many outdoor beings and presences of the Treaty 6 First Nations territory of Alberta, Canada.

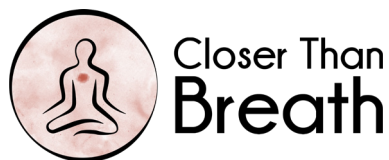
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## SUPPORT

With gratitude for their contributions and partnership:



The Family of  
Thomas Keating



Cynthia Bourgeault



Gwen and Rod  
Rehnborg



Anonymous

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## STEERING COMMITTEE

With gratitude for their leadership and vision:

### CO-CHAIRS

Cynthia Bourgeault  
Jonathan F.P. Rose

### MEMBERS

Mary Anne Best	William Keepin
Fr. Adam Bucko	Keith Kristich
David Frenette	Lily Rockefeller
Jeanne Johnson	Colleen Thomas
Peter Jones	Steve Varley
Ted Jones	

### About the Garrison Institute

The Garrison Institute's mission is to apply the skills and wisdom cultivated through contemplative practice, together with the insights emerging from science, to today's urgent social and environmental challenges, leveraging transformational change and helping build a more compassionate, resilient future.

Learn more about the Institute, read articles, register for retreats, and more on [garrisoninstitute.org](https://garrisoninstitute.org).

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