



A Different Way of Knowing Prayer

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Unedited Transcript

Let me offer you just one example of what I might mean by a practice. Probably, the most universal and common one is what we call prayer. Now, you've all heard that word all your life, but we largely thought of it as talking to God, or making announcements to God, and when we say practice, we are not talking about a merely mental exercise or even a verbal exercise, but somehow something that includes embodiment, physicality. So, here at the center, for example, we practice a form of centering prayer, where we sit together for 20 minutes in the morning in a somewhat disciplined posture, there is not a perfect one, but you sit there not in your ideal world, not in your identity world. In fact, that's exactly what you let go off. Just this morning as we did, I looked around the circle, which I probably shouldn't have been doing, and I said, you know, what, we are all absolute equals now. We are just naked beings sitting in our nakedness without our identity, without our smarts just being in the presence of God. Now, that might seem like that's almost nothing. Actually, it ends up being almost everything, because you have to get back to what Thomas Merton called beyond the shadow and beyond the disguise, where you knock on the hard bottom of your own reality. That's what practice does for you. It gives you the discipline to get out of your head and much more in your soul, in your body where you frankly, you learn in a different way, you know in a different way. It really is practice is a different way of knowing the moment and therefore of knowing yourself. I hope that makes sense, but don't knock it till you've tried it.