

Centering Prayer

Thomas Merton said:

There is a pervasive form of contemporary violence, that is activism and overwork. The rush and pressure of modern life are, in fact, a form of violence. When we allow ourselves to be carried away by a multitude of conflicting concerns, when we surrender to too many demands, when we commit ourselves to too many projects, when we want to help everyone in everything, we have, in some sense, succumbed to this violence.

When our minds and hearts are frenzied about our work—whatever our work is, even when it is simply caring for our families or doing good for others—we destroy our own inner capacity for peace. We harm the fruitfulness of our work, because that over-busyness kills the root of our inner wisdom, and that wisdom is what makes the work fruitful.

In the silence of this moment, let us confess the truth of our lives; the places where we have made space for peace and where we have not.

From the Hebrew Union prayer book for the beginning of the Jewish Sabbath:

Our noisy day, our noisy week, has now descended beyond our sight.
In the silence of our praying place we close the door upon the hectic joys
and fears, the accomplishments and anguish of the week we have left
behind.

What was but moments ago the substance of our life has become memory;
what we did must now be woven into what we are.

On this day we shall not do, but be.

We are to walk the path of our humanity, no longer ride unseeing through a
world we do not touch and only vaguely sense.

No longer can we tear the world apart to make our fire.

On this day heat and warmth and light must come from deep within
ourselves.

May it be so for us. Amen