

In regard to vibrations, Fr. Keating says, "As you go to a deeper level of reality, you begin to pick up vibrations that were there all the time but not perceived." (*Finding Grace at the Center* by Thomas Keating, p.20) Fr. Pennington also speaks of "...physical vibrations that are helpful" in his book, *Centering Prayer* on p. 234. **The concept of vibrations is common TM or New Age language.** (New Agers believe that during meditation, one begins to feel the subtle **universal energy vibration**) Also, in Keating's book, *Invitation to Love*, p.125, he speaks of "Energy Centers", common New Age language. New Agers believe that the body has seven energy centers called chakras. In Benkovic's book, *The New Age Counterfeit*, p. 11, she explains, "Hinduism teaches at the base of the spine is a triangle which lies in the "Kundalini Shakti" (**Serpent Power**). It is usually dormant, but when it is awakened, it travels up the spine to the top of the head passing through six psychic centers called "chakras". As it passes through a chakra, one receives **psychic** experiences and powers. When it reaches the top chakra, supposedly the power to perform miracles and liberation is realized". Fr. Pennington also refers to energies flowing up and down the spinal system in his book, *Awake in the Spirit*, p. 97. Actress Shirley MacLaine, promoter of the New Age Movement, makes a similar statement in her book, *Going Within*, on p. 64.

Ralph Rath says in his book, *Mantras*, p. 25, "In a foreword to the book, *Kundalini Energy and Christian Spirituality* by Phillip St. Romain, Keating calls kundalini "an enormous energy for good" and does not point out that uncontrolled kundalini can kill or drive a person mad or that some cults use kundalini in an extremely debased way. He does not show discernment here, since all spiritual power comes from the Holy Spirit or the Evil One. KUNDALINI POWER IS OCCULT, AND OCCULT POWER IS DEMONIC.

Keating and Pennington both refer to our God as an "energy force" just as the New Agers do. In Keating's new book, *Invitation to Love*, on p. 102, he says, "the divine energy in itself is infinite potentiality and actuality." Fr. Pennington makes similar statements in his book, *True Self, False Self*, speaking of God as the Divine Love Energy in many places.

Keating and Pennington speak of **unleashing energies** in their books. Clare Merkle, the former New Ager, has written an article on her website, crossveil.org, exposing **CP as occult meditation**. She quotes Basil Pennington in his article on CP, "Love is God's Being" from *Contemplative Prayer Online Magazine*. She quotes Pennington and places in BOLD print the New Age statements. He said "When we go to the **center of our being** and pass through that center into the **very center of God** we get into immediate touch with this divine creating **energy**." Then he says, "When we go to the **center of our being** and pass through that center into the **very center of God** we get into immediate touch

with this divine creating **energy**." Then he says, "When we dare with full assent of love to **unleash these energies** within us surprisingly the initial experience is a flood of **chaotic** thoughts, memories, emotions and feelings. A few lines down, he says "But it is this release that allows us all of this chaos within us with all its imprisoning stress to be brought into harmony so that not only there might be peace and harmony within but that the **divine energy may have the freedom to forward the evolution of consciousness** in us and through us, **as a part of the whole, in the whole of the creation**." Merkle then explains these statements. She says "Typical of New Age meditative practice, the soul becomes the "center", energy replaces grace, God actually becomes a pantheistic energy, and the unleashing of this "energy" leads to chaos and then, mysteriously, an evolution of consciousness" Then she says that New Agers believe that the "evolution of consciousness leads to the awakening of the "Self" as God." She describes CP as a mixture of Buddhist meditative practice and kundalini yogic practice.

Keating also gives a strange definition of the Eucharist in his book, *Open Mind, Open Heart*, p. 128. He says, "The Eucharist is the celebration of life: the coming together of all the material elements of the cosmos, their emergence to consciousness in human persons and the transformation of human consciousness into Divine consciousness. It is the manifestation of the Divine in and through the Christian community. We receive the Eucharist in order to become the Eucharist." On the contrary, the Eucharist is not composed of all of the elements of the universe. It is the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Secondly, the statement regarding consciousness is the basic belief of New Agers, that we are all one and that we are all god.

In summary, the Centering Prayer Movement introduces the reader to mantras, ALC's, True Self, energy centers, vibrations, evolution of consciousness, kundalini energy, and other New Age ideas not presented in this leaflet. St. Teresa of Avila says that true contemplation is a gift from God, initiated by Him, and that no techniques can make it happen. She says in *Interior Mansion*, "For it to be prayer at all, the mind must take a part in it." Mind-emptying prayer was not recommended by Pope John Paul II, who said "it makes no sense in Christianity". Also the Catechism of the Catholic Church describes this type of prayer as erroneous in (#2726) For more detailed information, read my article on CP, "A Closer Look at Centering Prayer" published in the October 2004 issue of *Homiletic & Pastoral Review*.

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