

## Lay Cistercians of Gethsemani Summer 2009 Newsletter

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Welcome to the LCG newsletter!

The purpose of this news letter is to provide the most current information from our group leaders, area coordinators, members and friends. If you wish to submit to the newsletter you can send your piece AT ANY TIME to [Poetry328@aol.com](mailto:Poetry328@aol.com). You might find it convenient to appoint someone within your group, or region to keep a notebook for news and other related events that would be suitable for the newsletter. There is really not a set time for the publication of the newsletter but if there is enough information forwarded to me I can create one as I gather submissions.



Excerpts from *Going Forth into the Passion* by Adrienne Von Speyr

*In view of the passion, the Son has to part from everything. Not only from the objects he possesses, from the people with whom he lived, from the habits and situations within which he spontaneously moved, but also from the most precious things he has: his mission, his prayer, his work begun but not completed. He has already drawn the finishing line by announcing his suffering and death to his disciples; now he has to take his leave in solitude. He looks at his hands, feels his body: the time of his incarnation is irrevocably drawing to its end. His limbs will become useless to him in a pain as yet unknown and unimaginable. He loves his body because he has received it from the Father, because his Mother formed it, because he used it to fulfill his mission. Together with his body his mission is drawing to its end. The instrument of his body is not used up his coming death cannot be read from it. And since suffering and death are contradictory and absurd in relation to what he had begun, there is no comfort for him in the thought that the breakup taking place now of what he had begun on earth will be completed on another level precisely through the suffering. He has the healthy limbs of a young man, and he feels the irrevocably approaching death as the panic of pure contradiction. But he is not ill. For a sick man it can be a comfort to know that he bears the seed of death in himself against which the battle is useless: it teaches him physical surrender. The Lord, however, is conscious of the presence in himself of all the forces necessary to continue doing the Father's work on earth. The opposing power of sin that will put him to death is so far still outside of him. It is the contradiction but as a superior force. He will be vanquished by it in his earthly reality. That this will be his victory – on a different level, with the Father – his mortal body cannot be aware of.*

## LCGA community news

### UPCOMING EVENTS

I have confirmed with Father Michael a date and a place for our annual LCG summer picnic. Our picnic will be on Sunday, **July 12th** at **Thomas Merton's Hermitage**. We will gather outside the abbey church after mass and then proceed up to the hermitage. We choose the 12th so we would not interfere with any family activities on the 4th of July weekend. I am hoping most of you can attend the picnic. Maybe those of you with Sunday morning commitments can join us for the picnic if not for mass with the monastic community. If so, meet us outside the church between 11:30 and 12:00 noon. If you are able to attend, please bring a dish to share! If you have any questions regarding the picnic, please contact Michael Brown at [tiedyedmystic@yahoo.com](mailto:tiedyedmystic@yahoo.com)

**ANNUAL RETREATS** This newsletter is being written a few days after the June Retreat. What follows in this section is comments from some who attended that retreat.

**Don't forget the Autumn retreat scheduled for September 25-28, 2009. At the present time all rooms in the retreat house and in the monastery are full but if you like you can add your name on the mailing list, or arrange for your own overnight accommodations. It is still necessary for you to let us know if you plan to come.**

From Jane Endriss and the northeast group –

The Northeast group of the LCG continues to meet monthly via teleconference. Currently, we have been studying ***The Cistercian Way*** by Andre Louf. Our teleconferences have been on Thursday evenings around 8 pm. Our schedule includes prayer, announcements, discussion on current topic, prayer petitions, and closing prayer.

From Michelle Oliver

Who we prayed for in June --Just an update - cards were sent to the following from the Lay Cistercians of Gethsemani:

1. A card was sent to Br. Stephen when I returned from the retreat letting him know that he was in our thoughts and prayers.
2. A card was sent to Br. Paul thanking him for his support and assistance to the Lay Cistercians.
3. The following monks are the monks we will be praying for during the month of June and a card has been sent to each of them from the Lay Cistercians of Gethsemani

Br. Camillus Epp  
Br. Ambrose Rico  
Br. Alfred McCartney  
Br. Norbert Meier  
Fr. James Conner

The monks that we will be remembering in a special way during the month of July are:

Br. Julian Wallace  
Br. Rene Richie  
Br. Patrick Hart  
Br. Frederic Collins  
Br. Gerlac O'Loughlin

A card has been sent to each monk letting them know that we are praying for them during the month of July.

From Robert Johnson

LCG SUPPORTS INTERNATIONAL LAY CISTERCIANS

LCG has contributed \$500 to support and sustain the nascent International Association of Lay Cistercian Communities (IALCC.) Our LCG is an important element of the world-wide Cistercian charism and our generous contribution reflects our common identity with our brothers and sisters, world-wide. Our contribution to IALCC came from many of our local communities which “passed the hat” for support. The International organization is guided by a steering committee of representatives from the three language communities (Spanish, French and English) and was commissioned in 2008 to plan the 5<sup>th</sup> lay Cistercian world Encounter planned for 2011. Our prayers are magnified and enhanced throughout the world.

From our Canadians Cheryl Kayahara-Bass, Oshawa, Ontario, Canada

I would like to introduce to our American brothers and sisters our tiny beginnings; we’re small in number, only two, but by our Lord’s words, that meets the minimum requirement! In the terms of this world, we are as different as one can imagine, but prayer and the Spirit of God work to bring us together in what has been joyful fellowship since Nancy sought to live the Cistercian life and follow the Benedictine rule in a lay context. I then had my first companion along the Lay Cistercian road since I took my pledge in 2003. We’ve never physically met due to distance and circumstance, but have travelled a wonderful road of study and sharing for quite some time. I am immensely looking forward to meeting my Cistercian sister at Gethsemani in September.

I will just give a few biographical details on each of us. First, Nancy is a wonderful Christian woman with a career of both teaching and nursing behind her. She also has a strong background in Scripture and Religious Studies, and we’ve enjoyed some wonderful studies of the Rule of Saint Benedict and other holy writings. She is also deeply involved in her parish church, a constant intercessor for those in trouble and need, and is a rock-solid, self-confessed ‘daughter of the church’. She travels a great deal, takes on the burdens of others and is a very dynamic individual.

I, on the other hand, am a visual artist/philosophy professor/musician, with a very irregular life, who is possibly a natural contemplative, if that makes any sense to say, but at least a natural hermit. Before I joined the Lay Contemplatives of Gethsemani (formerly the Cistercian Lay Contemplatives), I had kept a Lay Rule on my own that was close to the Lay Cistercian Plan of Life for at least fifteen years, as well as in an Anglican Lay Order for a time, because I believe that prayer is, well, the greatest justification for human existence. For many reasons, I took the opportunity to become Roman Catholic before I made my pledge as a Cistercian Lay Contemplative.

That about sums up our membership at this time, and we look forward to meeting other members, amidst the silence of course, at our retreat in September.

From the Toledo Group

We have been meeting every month since our first meeting back in November 2008. we have been discussing Joan Chittister's book 'wisdom distilled from the daily' and have been having some great discussions every time we meet. of particular note we enjoyed having Mary Guilbert join us for one of our meetings. We also have welcomed to our group the new pastor for the Lutheran campus ministry at the University of Toledo, Eric Griffith. In addition, to keep everyone in our group informed and to share information we have launched a blog and this can be checked out by going to this link: [laycisterciansoftoledo.wordpress.com](http://laycisterciansoftoledo.wordpress.com). The homilies and chapter talks may be found on this site but they are password protected. If anyone would like the password they can email me at [laycisterciansoftoledo@gmail.com](mailto:laycisterciansoftoledo@gmail.com). We also post there other writings from the members of our group and these are not password protected.

From the Chicago Group

Our June meeting continued the rich process of Lectio Divina, this time led by Tom Leonard. Our group is refreshed and inspired by the mix of individual reading/contemplation interlaced with community response as an added benefit. Mary Haley led us in a thoughtful consideration of the Rule of Benedict--Prologue and Chapters 1 and 2 (our "assigned reading for this meeting.") This is part of our continuing effort to better know and understand various elements of the Cistercian charism and way of life. We continue blessed by the generosity of St. Peter's Church which allows us to meet at their beautiful facility in downtown Chicago (and we also attend Saturday noon Mass there as part of our meeting.) We close our meetings with a recitation of prayers for the liturgical hour of None--maintaining a continuing, if distant, contact with our monks at Gethsemani.

#### From the Indiana Group

Indiana LCG members gathered in Fort Wayne in early March for a day of recollection focusing on Contemplation. This was facilitated by Barry Cappleman. Members also shared experiences and resources. A resource that some of us were not familiar with and liked is the book Preferring Christ; a devotional commentary on the Rule of St. Benedict, by Norvene Vest. An earlier version also included a workbook; however the current in-print version does not. A day of recollection on Silence and Solitude will be held in early September in the Indianapolis area. Martha Ardis will be facilitating this meeting.

We have several new members now in formation. Several of our other members have decided to become Friends of LCG at this time. The Indianapolis area group meets monthly at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Church on the first Saturday of each month. We are currently reading and studying the Waters of Siloe as well as the Rule of St. Benedict. We find that the time for sharing is especially valuable for us. The group in the northern part of the state is also trying to meet on a regular basis. Geography continues to be one of our challenges and we are trying to find creative ways to develop more community. Peter Hentz, one of our LCG members, has recently completed the Ecclesial Lay Ministry (ELM) course, a study program of 12 courses, and several workshops, which prepares one for lay ministry.

#### From The New England Group

New England has 5 members. The newest member in Formation is Johanne Dellaire from Hooksett, NH. The New England Group meets at Joseph House (a retreat house) in Manchester, NH. We will have our next meeting this Saturday from 2:30PM to 6PM. The meeting will join a retreat on Contemplation that is in progress. Aside from the New England Group I am mentoring 4 other gentlemen outside our Region. Two are from Virginia, one is from Texas and one is from New Jersey. They are each progressing well in their Formation and we meet via Conference Call. Our last Conference Call was Thursday, June 18th. Three of the gentlemen will be participating in the June LCG Retreat.

#### From Gray Matthews from the Memphis Group

Two people from **Memphis, TN** who will be making their voiw of commitment at the September retreat, **Pat Minderman** and **Judy Weddle**, after a two year discernment period, will be making their vow of commitment at the 2009 LCG retreat in September. Fellow TN members will be in attendance and support at this retreat: Juli Gallup, Gray Matthews and Bill Sanders. We have another member who plans to make his commitment in 2010, Bob Rose, who will be attending the June 2009 retreat.

#### From Keith McCormic from the Cleveland Group

This is a new group, about a year old. There are only two active members in Cleveland me and Gary Emond. Nick Graydon is a new LC who was sent to our Chapter because we were the closests to his home which is in a nearby township. Nick is not able to attend our meetings here in Cleveland on a regular basis but we are in contact with him by email and phone.

We meet several times during the week and sing the Office. We also discuss spiritual reading which we are doing. We often do have visitors.

From the Columbus Group

We have 18 – 24 people coming to our monthly meeting with 6 people in formation. Ian Miller, Pat Kurz, and Ron Fournier will be making their commitments during the September retreat. Larry Charles teaches a section from the Rule of Benedict. We also spend time in centering prayer, sharing in each others lives, and prayer, and then we eat. One of our newest attenders is Steve Baney, a Methodist minister. Please pray for him, and his wife as they are trying to adopt a child. We are very blessed to have him in our group.

**Contributions from our members**

Homily from Father Michael June 2009

Leprosy was an awful curse in Jesus' time. Thought to be a highly contagious disease, it separated you from those you most loved, isolated you from all who cared most about you. So for Jesus to stretch out his hand and touch the leper was a very courageous and deeply significant move. Is Jesus inviting us to the same kind of healing each day as he draws near to us in this Eucharist? He touches us through our sharing in his Body and Blood, touches us in our weakened and sometimes alienated condition, a condition perhaps like that of Abraham and Sarai in their bareness. Might we also say: "Lord, if you wish, you can make me clean."

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Having just come back from the LCG retreat at the Abbey of Gethsemani, I am always struck by the profound sense of peace and simplicity of the monks. When I come back to the busy-ness of my daily life, there is a lingering longing to be again at the Abbey -- and experience the "resonance" with the community of people (monks and retreatants) who truly strive to "let go" or surrender into God's care.

I saw this quote this morning, and it reminds me of that experience:

*".....a life of wisdom consists of being constantly engaged in letting go, and letting the fragility of the self manifest itself. When you are with someone who really has that capacity to a full-blown level, it affects you. When you meet these kinds of people, you enter into a kind of resonance with them. You relax – there's something very enjoyable about that way of being. There's a joy in that kind of life." Otto Scharmer et al in Theory U*

Peace  
Jane Endress

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FINDING SANITY IN AN INSANE WORLD

By Barry Cappleman (Indiana)

It is often said, "We live in an insane world." We do live in an insane world, but not for the reasons of which we normally think. I heard that one definition of insanity is when one does the same thing over and over and expects better results. Ever since the "fall of humankind" we have been doing the same thing to fill our emptiness, even though it does not work. King Solomon in the book, Ecclesiastes, is very frank in the various ways he attempted to fill his empty spot.

We find that he attempted to fill his empty spot by acquiring wisdom, getting a little drunk, possessions, sex, becoming a workaholic, getting more money, and getting more power, just to name a few of the things he tried, and after every attempt to fill the emptiness in his heart with such things, he said it was “all vanity,” which basically means it was all empty. This looks like much today. Finding fulfillment like Solomon did, did not work then and it won’t work today.

Lest we ourselves think we have not fallen into the trap of attempting to find fulfillment like Solomon did, let us read Ecclesiastes 12:12 (NASB): “But beyond this, my son, be warned: the writing of many books is endless, and excessive devotion to books is wearying to the body.” Someone once said that when we read books and do not share our knowledge with others, that we become intellectual gluttons. Sometimes I wonder that even we as Lay Cistercians believe, because we read the various types of books and follow the “Plan of Life,” that we somehow attempt to fill our hearts with just the elements of the “Plan of Life” without really endeavoring to use the “Plan of Life” as tools to help us reach a deeper relationship with our God and Savior. When we use the “Plan of Life” or any other tool God gave us to help us relate to Him better as an end in itself, then we too will experience those things as vanity and emptiness.

God has blessed us with many blessings and gifts. Rewarded for our work (Ecclesiastes 3:13) and riches (Ecclesiastes 5:19) are both gifts from God. However, when those gifts own us, they become burdensome and harmful, empty and idols. The gifts probably helped us feel good, and there is nothing necessarily wrong with feeling good. After all Jesus said, “I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly.” But sometimes positive feelings can even become empty because we treasure “the feeling” and not our Creator.

So what will bring us to sanity and a closer relationship with God? Solomon, after all his struggles, got it right at the end of Ecclesiastes. Read and reread what the wise King Solomon writes in Ecclesiastes 12:13: “The conclusion, when all has been heard: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person.” Solomon did all the work and heartache of exploring life for us and God inspired him to write it down so that we can go straight to the source of all joy, contentment and purpose of life. Wouldn’t we be wise in heeding Solomon’s counsel?  
*(For further reading I suggest “Living On The Ragged Edge” by Charles Swindoll, Copyrighted 1985 and “Passing From Self To God” by Robert Thomas, OCSO)*

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ARISE

Words by Randy Cox  
Gethsemani Abbey 3/18/09

This is the text to a choral piece I wrote during my March retreat at Gethsemani. The music is being written by Don Michael Dicie, a composer for Oxford University Press (and my organist).

Arise, my Son, arise  
This is your crowning day  
Night has passed  
Your Glory is at last  
Is laid upon your wounded head  
Arise, my Son, arise

Arise, my Christ, arise  
This is your crowning day  
Morn has come  
And sin is undone

Your Kingdom finally is begun  
Arise, my Christ, arise

**CHORUS**

Arise, Arise O Godhead Son  
Out of darkness, into light  
Arise, Arise O Godhead Son  
Uplifted now as Three in One  
Arise, Arise, Arise, Arise  
Arise, O Godhead Son

**CHORALE**

The suff'ring now is over  
The cold, dark tomb no more  
As morning breaks upon the stone  
Our joy is lifted to the Throne

**Call to Prayer**

~ comes on the air,  
as distant memory  
that defines itself  
in the moment  
present  
from measureless  
absence.

Its story begun  
with tender encouragement  
gets lost in stir and  
shuffle of feet  
from chair to hallway.

It faintly trails off  
with distant thought  
told to itself  
when no one  
is listening.

*These two poems are from*

*Br. Paul Quenon*

True Humility is the complete  
resting of the human will in  
God - Mother Eva Mary, CT

**Facts of Spring**

Big bell clangs out  
the facts of Spring:  
born is something,  
something's slain

for life will feed on life.

The crow that flees  
from grackle swarm,  
furious that he  
has chick in beak,

feeds a chick of his own.

And grackle chick  
was fed on bugs  
for something lives  
and something dies.

Hear the hard and holy  
song of Spring. ii

The ear's delight  
the darling birds  
devour each day  
their weight in bugs

their hum and buzz  
transform to song,  
yet God must alone  
bemoan the bug.

## Reflections upon my 1st Retreat Trip to Gethsemani Abbey, KY in June 2009

Five members of the local (Columbus, Ohio) LCG group (Lay Cistercians of Gethsemani) attended the 3 day Retreat June 26-29, 2009. Fr. Michael Casagram, the mentor to LCG, and Abbot Elias spoke and taught the group. Both men spoke with great humility and with confidence.

Several members also attended the monthly Sunday afternoon Thomas Merton Study Group meeting lead by Br. Paul Quenon, who was a novice under Merton's tutelage fifty-one years ago. I was very excited and pleased to be able to get to the study group meeting, and hope to continue with a Merton Study Group in Central Ohio.

All attendees also attended as many of the Daily Office Prayer times and daily Masses as possible.

These included 315am Vigils, 545am Lauds, 615am Mass (1030am Sunday), 730am Terce, 1215pm Sext, 215pm None, 530pm Vespers, 730pm Compline, Adoration and Benediction, Conference Meetings, and Study Group Meeting.

I personally attended all daily prayer offices from Sext on Friday until Lauds on Monday morning. One of the obvious questions I had Was: Could I be a Cistercian Monk of Strict Observance? There are two words that I can define the weekend.

### BREATHLESS and RELENTLESS

1. Breathless in that Singing for approximately 5 hours a day definitely added a lot of oxygen and hyperventilation to my system, and indeed I was in Total Awe of the commitment of the monks.
2. Relentless in that I was a basket case of exhaustion by the time I got home Monday afternoon.
3. I have been seriously studying contemporary monastic books and history for at least ten years, and for many years before as part of my continual lifelong research of medieval history. I have only been to a couple of low-keyed Benedictine monasteries that had four prayer times each day.
4. I have been looking forward to actually participating in the daily schedule at Gethsemani for a number of years. Three years ago I added 8 prayer times to my cell phone daily appointment calendar. I do a fairly good commitment of daily stopping what I am doing and at least quietly saying at least a Jesus Prayer, sometimes a Morning Prayer or Evening Prayer liturgy, and sometimes an extended study time Lectio Divina for my MP/EP liturgies.
5. The chanting of the Psalms is in a rhythm that is totally new to me. It is cheerful and has two liltts at the end of each line. The chanting also seems to have a subtle drone not unlike a sweet Irish or Eastern European bagpipe, not the Scottish war pipe! I hope to work with my choirmaster so that he will also know this form of chanting. I suspect that Taize singing is based somehow upon this type of chant.
6. It seemed that ALL monks were at all prayer offices!!! Totally Amazing!!!

And they work several hours a day doing manual labor and they also have serious study (or mentoring and writing) obligations.

7. I was actually not very prepared for a 1+ hour Vigils office in the middle of the night!!! That takes about 2 hours out of every night. On Saturday and on Sunday by the middle of the morning I was very lethargic and sleepy. How in the world do they do that every night for 50+ years???

8. By the way, I do have a night Vigils appointment alarm for 3am on my cell phone and I do wake up during the week at that time for a five minute prayer (but not for 1+ hours)!!

9. I drank too many cups of coffee to be awake for Vigils and Lauds, and by Monday I was very sleep deprived. But by Saturday night I was able to wake up for Vigils and Lauds without my cell phone appointment alarms, however, while catnapping I began to have re-occurrences of my combat nightmares from the Vietnam War. It may be that coming to Gethsemani and following the monks schedule would indeed cure of this problem.

10. I was impressed with the simplicity of straight line designs of the buildings. However, I do really like the Gothic arches and enjoy seeing medieval arches and religious events designed into the stained glass windows.

11. I was impressed with the way the dishes, trash, and excess food were collected for cleaning, recycling and use in their compost.

12. The library was fantastic and I spent all the time I could there browsing.

13. I had heat exhaustion earlier that week and was unable to visit Thomas Merton's hermitage the afternoon that they allowed us to visit. Maybe later...

14. Last night I found myself eagerly listening to my copy of the compline service that I have. Does anyone have electronic copies of other daily offices in this form of chanting, perhaps from other monasteries?

15. What will I do different after having visited Gethsemani?

I will add an early morning Listening prayer time for Contemplation. I am changed in that I know that I cannot do what they are doing every day, I simply don't have the stamina to be what they are: near supermen prayer warriors called of God.

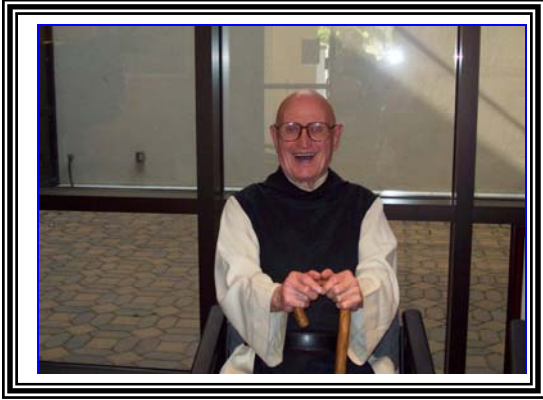
But I can do more Work of God than I am currently doing. Also I have gotten kind of lazy with housework and yardwork, and my own daily exercise and martial arts training program has gotten a little bit lax. (I have been training in martial arts now for 58 years and should be pretty good at it by now!!!)

Indeed the Due Diligence of the monks makes me want to be more diligent in everything that is important to my life.  
Sincerely, pax and cheers, judojo

Joe D Phillips, Columbus/Pataskala, Ohio

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Picture of Bro. Camillus Submitted by Sue Kephart from The Columbus Group



My inspiration, the old monk ---  
Faithfully at his post  
Ready to greet and tell of his stories  
And what he remembers most.

He tells me that he is the oldest one  
And boy how things have changed!  
Especially when that Merton guy  
Made the rules all rearranged.

He will tell you everything he knows  
To the most minute detail  
From fifty plus years of residence  
You'll not tire from all the tales.

Linda Boerstler © 2009

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*From Juli Gallup  
Tennessee*

*What Matters is that You Came...*

Yoga is something I started with a small group of women a number of years ago. Every other week, we would meet together and we had a yoga class together. Our teacher was well versed in the mind/body connection of yoga and was an excellent teacher. We would work on different poses, based on what our bodies could do, mindful of what was going on in the inner world as well.

I found yoga to be a deeply beneficial practice, although I did not utilize it as much as I could have. I learned a great deal about my body, about my inner world, and about the connection between the mind and the body. It was a practice that taught me to breath, that taught me about what it feels like relax my physical self and to quiet my inner self. A wise teacher, our instructor taught us to modify poses base on our individual flexibility, both inwardly and outwardly.

I participated in the group for a year before we went our separate ways. There were times that I would keep up with it, but mostly, without the accountability of the group, it began to be less of a priority. I just couldn't seem to find the time or energy to do it. I even tried to go back for a few private lessons with my teacher, but even that only lasted a few sessions.

When I went to the Abbey of Gethsemani, part of what I wanted to do was to re-establish my yoga practice as a way to help me become more centered as a person, and to be able to come to that place where I could meditate on things pleasing to God and be more focused in my prayer life. Yoga had helped me do that before and I hoped to find that place in my life once again.

Graciously, it was arranged for me to have access to the meditation room while I was there. It afforded more space and a much better view than my room had to offer and I was thankful to have space to move about it. I chose a very simple series of poses called the Sun Salutation to begin with, the goal to do it twice a day. Nothing difficult, a series of poses I had done well in the past and knew well. I wanted to set myself up for success...

I started by standing up straight, hands in prayer position before me. I seemed a little shaky in the pose, which seemed a little odd. I swept my arms up and arched my back before moving into a forward bend, still feeling a little wobbly. I put my left foot back to move into a lunge position and stepped out of the pose. Actually, I didn't step out; I *fell* out of the pose. I struggled with the lunge and put my left knee down for balance and fell out of the pose again. My frustration level rose quickly as I tried to move into the next pose and fell out of it as well.

Finally in total disgust with myself, I grabbed a bolster (a special type of pillow used in yoga) and put myself in a relaxation pose on the ground. I figured you can't fall out of that, and for several minutes afterwards, I chastised my self for my weakness and inability to even maintain a simple pose without falling out. It took me a good ten minutes to settle down, to where I could begin to find a quiet place in my mind and try to relax my body.

I asked God to help me know what to do and in His quiet gentle way, He spoke to me...

*"It doesn't matter that you can't get it right. That's not what you are here for. It doesn't matter that you can't do the poses perfectly, that you can't hold them for very long that you are wobbly and are off center and off balance. It doesn't matter..."*

*"What matters is that you came to the practice."*

What mattered was that I came. And that I keep on coming. The desire of my heart that brought me to Gethsemani, to that room, to that moment, was that I would find my balance, my center, that I would find a way to reconnect to a deeper, more meaningful relationship with my heavenly Father. Getting the poses right, being able to be at a place of proficiency that I had attained before, holding them for more than a few seconds – none of that mattered.

For by coming to the practice, I had done what I could and what I needed to do. The rest would come if I chose to continue to come, to be committed to the process and to the practice of what. I didn't have to have it all down pat at that moment, I just needed to come and that's what I had done. As the week went by, I found myself a little steadier and by the end of the week, I could move through the basic series, holding them for a short time, but I wasn't as off centered as I had been before...

How often are we like that with God? We think we have to come to Him with it all together, having figured out the answers before we ask of Him. We think we have to have it all together in order to feel His presence, experience His grace and His mercy, to be known and still be accepted by Him.

But we have it all wrong. He loves us, as wobbly and off-centered as we are. Lost in our own world of hurt, impacted by living in a sinful world and by the choices we have made. Our righteousness may be as rags, but when He sees us, He sees a child that He loves and He adores.

What matters to Him is that we come. You see what He wants from me, is me. What He wants from you, is you. The rest will come, if we continue to come to Him. He will provide us with the direction we need in our lives, we don't have to get it all right. And even if you are years in your walk with Him, there will be those times in your life when you don't have it all together, you don't have the answers, and your faith is waning and your hope gone. In those times, He bids us to come.

Come ye who are burdened and heavy laden – and He will give you rest.

What matters is that you come..

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**It is one thing to see the land of peace from a wooded ridge...and another to tread the road that leads to it." St. Augustine**