



Retreat of the
Circle of Service

ECI Extension Contemplativa Internacional

Orlando, January 25-27, 2020

Meeting notes

Vision

The synthesis of our vision is Love. We are called to be transformed in Christ and to support, nurture, transmit, and foster the same process in others: Love that is expressed through solidarity. We recognize that we have the capacity to love and be loved.

It is GOD in us SERVING GOD in all.

It is PRAYING and LOVING.

It is PRESENCE

We move within the 5 "S" realm.

Service

Silence

Solitude

Solidarity

Simplicity

Service to the Communities

As we reflect on our service to the communities, three fundamental questions arise that help us trace the path we are invited to follow.

What are we called to?

Where do we stand in our community service?

How can we foster openness and an inclusive approach in our groups?

We understand that our call is to give them love and service and that, in order to improve our service, it is necessary to listen to the communities, respecting their identity and level of consciousness. We need to build spaces of trust so that comments are welcomed and we receive feedback from the communities. It is important to adapt to those we serve without losing sight of what is integral, essential to us.

This approach is valid for both those communities that meet in person, as well as those that meet through the Zoom platform.

It is necessary to nurture the facilitators, by imitation, transmission and modelling, promoting openness and an inclusive outlook among the groups.

We also feel the need to foster a sense of belonging among the prayer groups that gather in all the different countries.

We consider it very important *to* recognize and tend to the various aptitudes in members of the praying communities as well as encouraging their participation in a global project. We intend to incorporate, embrace, invite everyone to serve. We aspire to foster initiative and commitment to serve.

This attitude of openness can help us transcend the limitations of the Service Circle and expand its capabilities, while preserving our integrity.

Another challenge we face is finding ways to connect with the "disconnected", unattached, lone rangers. How to reach out to them, to assist them in their needs? How to make unaffiliated individuals feel part of ECI? Some feel part of the Centering Prayer Community, but do not favor institutional affiliation.

What inspires us is embracing the human family and the planet.

Service Beyond

We have a universal call -- *silence is everyone's* . Our vision is welcoming, supporting diversity and acceptance of others.

Fostering a cooperating attitude towards other communities with whom we share a common contemplative mission, and serving the marginalized. "Whoever is not against us is with us."

The "local" unit is not just local! We need to broaden our community vision.

Each community will tailor its answers to its local needs.

Service to the marginalized is broad, and encompasses people in prison, the homeless, people in nursing homes and the handicapped in general. As for psychiatric asylums and hospitals, we must proceed with caution, discerning how to better serve the mentally ill.

To serve the hearing impaired, we need facilitators who are proficient in sign language.

We already have examples of this type of service in our communities. We need to make them known to inspire others and extend our vision.

Communication platform

We have to start by strengthening what we already have: our current website, our Zoom spaces, FaceBook, workshops and videos on Youtube.

At the same time, we must allow ourselves to think big, and aim at having a powerful new website, with a vision for *the future* that allows for connections with the various other social networks (*Instagram, Twiter, etc.*) and those that will come. It is important that the new web page should make online courses possible.

We need to think of our website as an information platform.

Service teams

An important point is making our website easy to find - maybe think of "OC.org" as a Web Domain, and always include contact details with all resources, videos, etc.

Next steps - road map

- The Circle's face-to-face meetings will be annual. The next meeting will take place in Snowmass (Colorado) from April 28 to May 2, 2021.
- Our Next Circle Zoom meeting, Sunday, February 23/2020, 7:00 p.m. Miami Time.
- On March 21, 2020 we celebrate our Annual World Day of Centering Prayer.
- Prayer Day for Service Teams or all those who want to serve: Saturday, May 23, 2020. (Announcement on March 21, World Day of Centering Prayer).

