

School for Ministry Development

Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Florida

Course Title: Listening to Silence: Contemplative Prayer

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Course Objectives:

To look at contemplative prayer as lived relationship with God reflected in both stillness and action

To understand the paths of apophatic and cataphatic prayer

To explore general categories of contemplative prayer

To experience a variety of contemplative prayer forms

Required Reading: C. W. McPherson; **Keeping Silence: Christian Practices for Entering Stillness**; Morehouse Publishing

Writing Assignment: Submit an experiential paper of 500-1000 words. In preparation, practice one or more of the prayer forms in **Keeping Silence** for at least one week. As you write, consider what is your desire for your prayer life? What drew you to your choice(s)? Did you find it "easy" or challenging? What was your affective (feeling) response to praying in this way? How did you deal with inner and outer distractions? Did you find yourself critiquing; i.e., am I doing it "right"? Was it truly quality time with God? Be honest as you write your experience.

Debra McMaster is a spiritual director in Clearwater, Florida, with a passion for contemplative prayer.

She is a graduate of the Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation in *Spiritual Guidance* and *Leading Contemplative Groups and Retreats*. Debra has received training in *Listening Hearts* discernment process, the Merton Institute's Bridges to Contemplative Living, and labyrinth facilitation through Veriditas, the worldwide labyrinth movement.

She is a member of Spiritual Directors International and of Wellspring Alliance, a Florida network of spiritual directors.