

Oct. 15, 1967

Most Rev. Thomas Keating, OCSO  
St. Benedict's Monastery  
Snowmass, Colorado  
USA.

Dear Dom Thomas:

Recently I visited Osage Monastery, Sand Springs, Okla. This reminded me that I have been intending to write you for sometime.

To introduce myself, I live a hermit life on Vancouver Island, the last of Dom Jacques Winandy's group. When I was ordained by Bishop de Roo it was with the mandate to live the hermit life. I came from New Melleray Abbey here in 1965 as a simple professed monk.

My first introduction to centering prayer was through the Letters of Dom Chapman in 1949 where he describes how he directed the nuns to repeat Italian phrases to keep their imaginations occupied so that the will might pray.

I have studied Dom Main who really insists that one repeat the mantra continually, and not think about it but listen to it. In your very fine book OPEN MIND, OPEN HEART which I have studied and prayed over for a year now, you do not recommend this approach. But to use the holy word only when one observes distractions. Is it possible to reconcile these two approaches? If not, can you explain the differences and possibly the historical basis for both.

One other point: you say in your book that the true self and God are the same thing. My understanding of the false and true self derives mostly I suspect from the writings of Thomas Merton. When I think of the true self I think of the body and soul under the direction of the spirit which is in touch with the Holy Spirit. Could you explain a bit about the true self and God being the same.

I realize that you are recovering from an accident, but if at sometime you have moment to consider the above I would appreciate it.

Sincerely in Christ

*Charles Brandt*

Charles A.E. Brandt