

**A STUDY GUIDE  
to accompany**

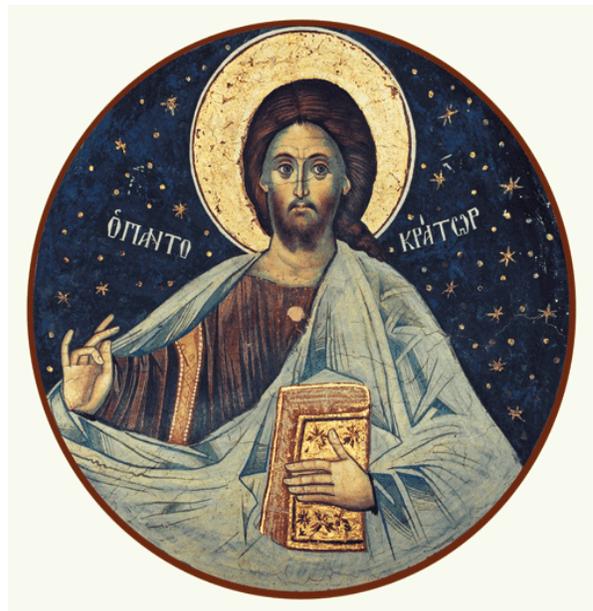
**LIVING BUDDHA, LIVING CHRIST**

**By**

**Thich Nhat Hanh**

**with**

**Introduction by Elaine Pagels**



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## Introduction to the Guide

The Buddha and Christ are perhaps two of the most pivotal figures in the history of humankind. Each left behind amazing teachings and the spiritual tradition that evolved from each legacy has shaped the lives of billions of people over the course of 2000 years. The author of the text, Thich Nhat Hanh, is a revered Buddhist teacher and peacemaker, bridges the dialogue between East and West. In **Living Buddha, Living Christ**, he brings us to a deeper appreciation of the intersection of these two traditions while deepening our understanding of our Christian faith.

This study guide was originally developed to guide discussion of the book in a Lutheran (ELCA) Sunday school class. It has since been expanded and edited twice for an adult forum at an Episcopal parish. The input and feedback from those participating in these settings has been instrumental in the development of this guide.

Although the material can be used in a class setting, it can also be used to guide an individual who wishes to deepen their understanding of both Buddhism and their own Christian heritage.

Each chapter of the text is partnered with readings from the Christian tradition (including the Gospel of Thomas) allowing the reader to better understand the parallels between the teachings of the Buddha and of Jesus. Questions encourage the student to better understand Buddhism but also to deepen their understanding of Christianity and their relationship to their faith. Finally, exercises and meditations are suggested for each chapter.

Understanding spiritual wisdom may start with the intellect but true understanding comes when integrated at the level of the heart. The exercises and meditations will in time enable more careful and mindful listening to ourselves, each other and the “the small quiet voice”. It is not necessary to read all the scriptures, respond to all the questions or complete all the exercises or meditations. However, it is important to engage the process mindfully and with intention. A journal to jot down responses to the questions as well as to record the awakening that comes from the spiritual path is helpful, allowing the each participant to become more aware of their inner journey.

If used in a class setting, readings of the text can be assigned as homework and discussed in class using the suggested study questions and scripture references. Time in class for conversation and discussion deepens the awakening that comes from this cross-pollination. The assignments can also include use of selected exercises to help deepen understanding of the text as well as an individual’s spiritual journey. It is recommended that each class close with a period of silence, in keeping with the contemplative path of both traditions.

May Your Path be Blessed,

Diana Beardsley

## FOREWARD

### Companion Scripture Readings

Genesis 2:7

Wisdom 1:7

Romans 8:14

John 3:7-8

John 15:13

### Questions for Reflection

1. In reading Romans 8:14, note the text indicates that “all” who are led by Spirit are children of God. It does not reduce this to being a follower of Christ (only). How do you react to the idea that those from other spiritual traditions are also sons (and daughters) of God?
2. John 3:7-8 talks of being “born anew”. How is one “born anew”? What is meant by this teaching? Is there more than one spiritual path that can lead to this “awakening”? Why or why not?
3. John 15:13 ~ Sometimes Spirit’s Presence is manifested in the most difficult and challenging times. Brother Steindl-Rast recounts Thich Nhat Hanh’s exile from Vietnam as one of these situations. Can you identify other situations ~~ scriptural, public or personal ~~ where someone risked much for another’s sake while listening to Spirit’s leading?
4. In your own journey, what have you risked for another while on your spiritual path? In doing so, what did you gain or lose?
5. How would you feel if you met a person who was overflowing with love and understanding, someone who was obviously in the flow of Spirit’s outpouring? If you have had this happen in your life, how has this experience affected you?

### Exercises and Meditations

1. Reread the “second” Creation story in Genesis 2. Consider God breathing life into the “first man”. Meditate on this image this week. Journal what it means to be aware “that there has never been a human being who was not alive with God’s Own breath.”
2. In going through life this week, pay close attention to when you engage difficulty out of a place of Spirit and Love or from a more self-centered perspective. What awareness manifests?

## INTRODUCTION

### Companion Scripture Readings

All *Gospel of Thomas* texts are from:

[www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/maps/primary/gthomas.html](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/maps/primary/gthomas.html)

Logion 3: *Jesus said, "If your leaders say to you, 'Look, the (Father's) imperial rule is in the sky,' then the birds of the sky will precede you. If they say to you, 'It is in the sea,' then the fish will precede you. Rather, the (Father's) imperial rule is inside you and outside you. When you know yourselves, then you will be known, and you will understand that you are children of the living Father. But if you do not know yourselves, then you live in poverty, and you are the poverty."*

Logion 108: *Jesus said, "Whoever drinks from my mouth will become like me; I myself shall become that person, and the hidden things will be revealed to him."* Companion synoptic text: John 4: 13-14

Logion 67: *Jesus said, "Those who know all, but are lacking in themselves, are utterly lacking."* Companion synoptic texts: Mark 8: 35-36; Matthew 16:26; Luke 9:25

Logion 2: *Jesus said, "Those who seek should not stop seeking until they find. When they find, they will be disturbed. When they are disturbed, they will marvel, and will rule over all."* Companion synoptic texts: Matthew 7: 7-8, Luke 11: 9-10

Logion 70: *Jesus said, "If you bring forth what is within you, what you have will save you. If you do not have that within you, what you do not have within you [will] kill you."*

Logion 25: *Jesus said, "Love your friends like your own soul, protect them like the pupil of your eye."* Companion synoptic texts: Matthew 22: 39, 19:19b; Mark 12:31; Luke 10:27

### Questions for Reflection

1. What experiences have you observed where Christianity was misused or hijacked? What was your response to these situations?
2. How do you respond to John Paul II's statement from "*Crossing the Threshold of Hope*"?
3. How do you respond to Thich Nhat Hanh's suggestion that the preceding statement is in conflict with the concept of the Trinity?
4. In reading Logion 3 from the Gospel of Thomas, what is the "poverty" of which Jesus speaks?

5. How do you respond to Elaine Pagels' suggestion that there is a difference (and sometimes a tension) between believing in doctrine and dogma that leads to "faith" vs. seeking and searching that leads to "knowledge" and "wisdom"? Does one (faith vs. wisdom) seem more important to you? If so, why? How do you understand the other concept, the one for which you have less of a preference? How do these two ways of knowing spiritual wisdom influence your daily practice and presence in the world?

**Notes:**

## CHAPTER 1 - BE STILL AND KNOW

### Companion Scripture Readings

<i>Dialogue: The Key to Peace</i>	Matthew 18:21-35; Luke 17:3-4; Matthew 5:21-26
<i>Touching Jesus</i>	Luke 8:41-56; Mark 5:21-43; Matthew 9:18-33; Mark 3:1-6
<i>Real Communication</i>	Mark 12:28-34; Matthew 22: 34-40; Luke 10: 25-37; John 3:1-12
<i>Interbeing</i>	Psalm 46:10; Psalm 82:6; John 10:25-38; John 14:8-11; John 14:25-28, John 17:20-23

### Questions for Reflection

1. *Dialogue: The Key to Peace* ~~ How can dialogue lead to peace? Consider this in the context of both within and without oneself. And, if we are called by the Master to love others, what practice is necessary to help us repeatedly engage suffering, work for peace and be open to dialogue with those with whom we disagree? Thich Nhat Hanh suggests that the practice of meditation has allowed him to continue this work. What practices do you use on a regular basis to help you?
2. *Touching Jesus* ~~ Thich Nhat Hanh relates that others have helped him better understand Jesus. Have you yourself experienced difficulty in touching Jesus? If so, have there been others (as in Thich Nhat Hanh's case) who have helped you draw closer to the Master? How have these relationships increased your compassion and understanding?

Several gospel texts tell of individuals touching Jesus or being touched by him and a physical healing occurred. How might these also be metaphors for a deeper healing and understanding?

3. *Real Communication* ~~ Have you ever felt betrayed by your own tradition? Thich Nhat Hanh calls us back to our Christian roots suggesting we embrace both the positive and not-so-positive aspects of our experience so we can embrace ALL the differences we have with others in our daily lives. How do you respond to this idea?

The author suggests that for an organism to be "living" it must be "willing to change and grow". In the Gospels, Jesus repeatedly calls his followers (and his opponents) to do just this. Is there a relationship between the author's concept and being "born again"? If so, what are the parallels?

4. *Interbeing* ~~ This term may succinctly capture the Great Commandment. How might this be so?

5. In the Gospel of John, Jesus teaches that he and the Father are One. And, in John 17, Jesus goes on to teach that we are both in God and in Christ. Read the texts from John and consider if what Jesus is suggesting may, in fact, parallel the concept of interbeing presented here? What might this suggest about the mystical relationship between Jesus and the Father, as well as humanity and Spirit (Psalm 82)?

### **Exercises and Meditations**

1. From *Religious Life is Life* ~~ What spiritual traditions and life events have influenced your “religious” life? Set aside some time to ponder how these experiences have deepened your relationships with others and with God. Take a little time to journal your discoveries.
2. From *Real Communication* ~~ Take time this week to be grateful for both the positive and difficult experiences that come your way. Embrace them each in the moment and then let go of them. Journal your experience.
3. From *Real Communication* ~~ Real communication requires that those on both sides of an issue be willing to change. Can you allow what is “good, beautiful, and meaningful” to inform all your relationships? Can you accept the conflicting elements that are within you and their underlying causes? If you recognize this is a challenge, consider taking this as a focus for your prayer/meditation time this week.
4. From *Interbeing* ~~ Set aside 15 minutes a day each day this week to be silent. Turn off the radio, TV, escape to a quiet place away from the rush and demands of daily life. Sit quietly, simply listening. What do you discover? Journal your experience throughout the week.

### **Notes:**

## CHAPTER 2 – MINDFULNESS AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

### Companion Scripture Readings

<i>The Seed of the Holy Spirit</i>	Matthew 3:13-17; Luke 10: 38-42; Mark 5:21-34
<i>The Present Moment</i>	Matthew 6:25-33; Luke 12:22-31
<i>Making Peace</i>	Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 22:39; Mark 12:31; Matthew 7:1-5; Luke 6:37-42; Romans 7:14–25; James 4:1-12
<i>I Am There for You</i>	Matthew 28:20
<i>The Light that Reveals</i>	Matthew 3:13-4:11; Mark 1:9-13; Luke 3:21-22 and 4:1-14a; Luke 5:16; Mark 1:35; Matthew 26:36; Matthew 18:1-5; Mark 10:15; Luke 18:17
<i>Out True Home</i>	Matthew 10:35-39; Luke 12:49-53; Thomas 16; Luke 14:25-27 Matthew 12:50; John 15:4

### Questions for Reflection

1. *The Seed of the Holy Spirit* ~~ Consider the discussion of the Buddhist concept of “mindfulness” and then the story of Mary and Martha. Does it appear Mary was mindful of the present...or pre-occupied? Is she mindful of the moment? What is Jesus’ teaching? Luke 10: 38-42

Jesus heals the woman with a lifelong issue of blood but his blessing is that she “go in peace”. What is meant by this? Is this story simply about physical healing or does it point to something more? Mark 5:21-34

2. *The Present Moment* ~~ Consider Jesus’ teachings not to worry about the future. Can one be mindful of the moment but still worry about the future?
3. *Making Peace* ~~ Meditation and prayer can help us make peace both with ourselves and with others. Jesus suggests we attend first to ourselves before judging others. Even Paul wrestled with this struggle and James discusses this in his letter. Only after we make peace with ourselves can we readily forgive and make peace with those with who we are in conflict. What do you find to be your biggest challenge, making peace with those around you, or making peace with yourself?
4. *The Light that Reveals* ~~ If we are called to be disciples of Jesus, reflecting His Light to the world, then we must nurture our on-going relationship with Him. Consider how you enter into this relationship with Him on a regular basis. Consider that Jesus himself went “on retreat” for 40 days at the beginning of his ministry and withdrew from his daily teaching/healing ministries to pray. What practice might you adopt to deepen your on-going

relationship with Him? Matthew 3:13-4:11; Mark 1:9-13; Luke 3:21-22 and 4:1-14a; Luke 5:16; Mark 1:35; Matthew 26:36

Jesus teaches that we must become like a child to truly grasp God's kingdom. What is he asking us to do/become in this text? How can one become as a little child if one is an adult? Matthew 18:1-5; Mark 10:15; Luke 18:17

The author touches on the concept of the Trinity and the importance of the Holy Spirit in our personal journey. How do you understand the concept of the Holy Spirit? Does it have real meaning for you or is it more of a theological/intellectual concept?

5. *Our True Home* ~~The traditional Buddhist greeting is, in some ways, not much different than the typical start of an Episcopal gathering ("the Lord be with you... and also with you"). In both cases, the Holy is being recognized individually and corporately. The "Passing of the Peace" used during many worship services can be a similar tool for awakening our awareness when used intentionally. Consider the import of these greetings when you use them.

How would you define your *Sangha*, "community of practice"? Jesus cautions us that our spiritual community may not parallel that of our nuclear family or fit cultural norms. After reading the scriptures for this section, how do you define your faith community? How does it support you? How do you support others in the community? Matthew 10:35-40; Luke 12:49-53; Thomas 16; Luke 14:25-27; Matthew 12:50; John 15:4

### **Exercises and Meditations**

1. From *Present Moment* ~~ During your quiet time this week, try the meditation that Thich Nhat Hanh offers of breathing/smiling/dwelling or the breathing/heart awareness exercise that follows. After being present to this process for 15 minutes or so, what do you discover? Were you worrying about anything during the time you were breathing/smiling/dwelling? What changes do you notice in your perspective, awareness, and physical self?
2. From *Making Peace* ~~ Thich Nhat Hanh suggests that for us to make peace with ourselves we have to be truly aware of ourselves. Often we are too busy to be quiet or even run from being in silence because it is very uncomfortable. As part of your prayer time this week, sit in silence for 15 minutes (or more if possible). Pay attention to what you experience – feelings, thoughts, sensations, and emotions. Note the experience, but then let it go. Do not judge or cling. Just be attentive to what is going on within you. Make some notes in your journal about your experience.

3. From *I Am There for You* ~~ This section suggests that when we spend time with another, it is best if we slow down and be truly present to who they are and what they are saying. As part of your practice this week, make a specific effort to do this with one or two people in your life. Observe when you are not paying **real** attention to what they are saying and then make a special effort to be totally present to them.

Consider Jesus' promise to always be with us (Matthew 28:20). As you go through your week, when things seem frustrating and discouraging, consider His Presence with you listening to your concerns attentively. Does this awareness shift your perception in any way? Journal what you discover.

4. From *The Light that Reveals* ~~ Consider the practice you identified in question three above that would help you deepen your relationship with Jesus. Incorporate that practice into your spiritual discipline.

**Notes:**

## CHAPTER 3 – THE FIRST SUPPER

### Companion Scripture Readings

*To Be Grateful*

I Corinthians 11:20-29

*Living in the Presence of God*

Genesis 1; Genesis 9:3-4

*The Bread We Eat*

Matthew 26:26-30; Luke 22:14-20; Mark 14:22-25

*The Body of Reality*

John 14:8-11; John 14:25-28

### Questions for Reflection

1. *To Be Grateful* ~~ This chapter focuses on being aware and mindful, of being truly present to the many gifts God gives us. Paul in I Corinthians chastises the early church which is gathering for the regular agape feast for not being grateful, but in fact being just the opposite, in essence for being like “pigs”. How grateful are you for the little miracles of life that Thich Nhat Hanh suggests e.g., seeing a flower, breathing fresh air, eating a meal?
2. *Looking into Our Food* ~~ In Buddhism before every meal the Five Contemplations are recited to help the monk or nun deepen their appreciation of the meal they are about to eat. How often do you say thanksgiving before a meal? When you do, is it done mindfully? When it is done in deep gratefulness is the experience of the meal changed in any way?
3. *Living in the Presence of God* ~ Read Genesis 1. Consider God’s work through Creation and that Presence in your every breathing moment. As our text suggests, “Piety is the recognition that everything is linked to the presence of God in every moment.” How do you experience this?
4. *The Bread We Eat* ~~ Read Matthew’s and Luke’s versions of the “Last Supper”. The feast of Passover/Seder is celebrated as a thanksgiving and a memorial for the release of Israel from bondage in Egypt. Jesus followed the tradition with his disciples. In Christianity, the tradition continues and is the basis for the Eucharist/Holy Communion, helping us celebrate our release from the old ways of being and seeing. “. What meaning do these texts have for you personally? What meaning does Eucharist/ Holy Communion have for you?
5. *The Body of Reality* ~~ Read the texts from the Gospel of John. What is Jesus saying about the Ultimate Reality?

### Exercises and Meditation

1. From *Looking into Our Food* ~~ This week eat at least one meal in total silence. Eat slowly, paying careful attention to the food on your plate, the actual process of eating and giving thanks for this wonderful gift. How does this change your perspective of meal time?

2. From *Living in the Presence of God* ~~ Spend one day this week living in the Presence of God. When you wake up, be mindful of how you feel, the comfortable bed you slept in, the light coming in the window. When your feet touch the floor, pay attention to the sensation and gift of being able to walk. When you turn on the faucet, be thankful for the clean water that is available to you on demand. Note in your journal your experiences and observations as you go through the day with gratitude.
3. From *The Bread We Eat* ~~ If possible this week, attend a worship service at a church that offers Eucharist/Holy Communion. Listen carefully to the readings, the liturgy and when receiving the bread and wine, consider what these words mean to you personally at this time in your life and in your spiritual journey. Journal your experience.

**Notes:**

## CHAPTER 4 – LIVING BUDDHA, LIVING CHRIST

### Companion Scripture Readings

<i>His Life is His Teaching</i>	Luke 11:9-13; Matthew 7:7-11; Thomas 94; Thomas 2; Matthew 7:12-21; John 6:45-51; John 14:1-12
<i>Mindfulness is the Buddha</i>	Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; John 1:29-34; Acts 2:1-5; 2 Corinthians 5:16-18; Galatians 5:13-25
<i>More Doors</i>	Mark 4:11-12; Matthew 13:10-15; Luke 8:9-10
<i>The Mother of all Buddhas</i>	Matthew 6:1-6; Matthew 5:43-48; Matthew 7:1-4; Matthew 22:34-40; Mark 12:28-34; Matthew 13:10-17; Mark 4:10-12; Luke 8:9-10
<i>Touching Our Ancestors</i>	John 8:31-47; Romans 4:18-25
<i>I am the Way</i>	John 14:5-11
<i>I Am Always There for You</i>	Matthew 18: 19-20; Matthew 28:18-20
<i>Freedom from Notions</i>	Matthew 19:27-30; Matthew 20:1-16; Luke 12:13-21
<i>Seeing the Way, Taking the...</i>	John 14:5-6, Acts 9:1-2; Acts 18:24-26; Matthew 10:37-39; Thomas 55; Matthew 6:24-25; Mark 8:34-37
<i>Your Body is the Body...</i>	Romans 7:4-6; I Corinthians 12:12-27; Ephesians 2:11-22

### Questions for Reflection

1. *His Life is His Teaching* ~~ What does the author mean by appreciating Jesus as “both a historical door and an ultimate door”? Consider Luke 11:9-13; Matthew 7:7-11; Thomas 94; Thomas 2

Consider the concept of non-duality suggested by Thich Nhat Hanh. How do you understand this concept? How does it apply to Jesus Christ? How does it apply to you? John 14:1-12; John 6: 45-51

Where do you focus your faith – on the crucifixion, on the resurrection, on Jesus’ teachings or a combination?

2. *Mindfulness is the Buddha* ~~ Buddha was enlightened and Jesus became “enlightened” at His baptism. The followers of Jesus received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and their lives were irrevocably changed. How has your spiritual path changed you? How has the Holy Spirit touched you? Have you become more mindful, e.g., tolerant, open, compassionate, understanding, reflecting the fruits of the Spirit?
3. *More Doors* ~~ How do you respond to the idea that the Kingdom of God is here and now? If this is true, does it call you to live your life differently than if one assumes that the Kingdom of God is a future event? Mark 4:11-12; Matthew 13:10-15; Luke 8:9-10

Christianity does not have “dharma-doors” e.g., “teaching doors” but there is a view that the Holy Spirit always leads us to new ways of understanding if we listen. Thich Nhat Hanh suggests that “we should not be afraid of more Dharma doors”. If the same were said of our understanding of Christianity, and the Holy Spirit encouraged you to change your beliefs and understanding, how would you respond?

Thich Nhat Hanh also suggests that new ways of understanding allow the teaching (dharma doors) to become a living organism that allows for growth and a deeper wisdom as the world changes. From your perspective, can the same be said of Christian teaching and belief? How has it changed and grown? What examples can you identify that might reflect your view?

4. *The Mother of all Buddhas* ~~ The living Dharma (way of understanding and love) is mindfulness. In Christianity, we might consider the Great Commandment our “Dharma” and there are many ways to move this “law” into everyday practice. In Buddhism, it is mindfulness which is deepened through practice, practice is deepened through meditation. In Christianity, we often start with “the Law” – the action – and forget the need for prayer and mindfulness of “the Holy”. Are the results different depending on the outcome used? If so, in what respect? Matthew 6:1-6; Matthew 5:43-48; Matthew 7:1-4; Matthew 22:34-40; Mark 12:28-34

Buddhists consider “mindfulness” instrumental in deepening their spiritual practice. In Christianity, this might be considered “awakening to the Kingdom of Heaven”. Jesus offered many parables about “awareness”. What do these texts suggest is necessary? Matthew 13:10-17; Mark 4:10-12; Luke 8:9-10

5. *Touching Our Ancestors* ~~ The Old Testament writers put great import on the ancestors of the nation, Israel. The Jews of Jesus’ time did also, and in doing so, at times completely missed the point. Paul, in writing to the Roman community between 57-58 A.D. also ties the history of the Jews to the new “faith” of Christianity. Who are your spiritual teachers/ancestors? What have you learned from them? Like the Jews of Jesus’ time, are there beliefs that could now be left as you grow on your journey?
6. *I am the Way* ~~ Buddhism has both a historical orientation (Theravada) and a metaphysical one (Mahayana). Christianity has developed similarly, with some Christians basing their faith in the “historical” teaching of the Church and a more literal view of the Scriptures while other Christians are more “metaphysical” in their belief. So, when Jesus says, “I am the Way”, what does this mean to you?
7. *I Am Always There for You* ~~ After reading this section, consider these Scriptures from our own sacred texts: Matthew 28:18-20; Matthew 18: 19-20. How is Jesus present to you in your daily life? How do you make yourself available to His Presence and help?

8. *Seeing the Way is Seeing Me* ~~ The author tells of a story of a pilgrim who came to Buddha but could not see him because his eyes were closed. What stories/teachings from the Christian scriptures convey the same truth?
9. *Freedom from Notions* ~~ Jesus often taught that what society and religion considered important are, in fact, not. Consider Christianity as you experience it, what aspects of the tradition seem not of importance to you? Or, very important? What freedom does Jesus lead you toward? What do the companion scripture texts (Matthew 19:27-30; Matthew 20:1-16; Luke 12:13-21) suggest about our notions?

The teachings of Buddha have at times been taken out of context. In the East, there is a saying that one often focuses on the “finger pointing toward the moon” and in practice completely misses “the moon”. In your experience, what teachings of Jesus have been taken out of context so that we end up focusing on the means, not the end? What happens when we do this?

10. *Seeing the Way, Taking the Path* ~~ The Gospel teaching that one must lose one’s life to gain it can be interpreted literally (consider the Christian martyrs of the 1<sup>st</sup> through 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries). But one might also consider this a call to renounce the “self” or “ego”. Do you see parallels between Buddha’s teaching and Jesus’? How does your practice deepen your understanding of this teaching?
11. *Your Body is the Body of Christ* ~~ How would you respond to the author’s question as to whether God has to be personified? How would you explain the concept of the “mystical body of Christ” to someone who was unfamiliar with the concept? Paul often emphasized this to the early church, consider the following texts: Romans 7:4-6; I Corinthians 12:12-27; Ephesians 2:11-22. How do these explain how our body is also the body of Christ?

### **Exercises and Meditation**

1. From *His Life is His Teaching*. Depending on our personal “theology” or frame of reference, we will engage our secular and spiritual lives through our preferred perspective. How might this inform your world view and effect your conversations with other Christians and non-Christians? Consider your personal theology this week and how it influences your relationships and world view. Journal what your awareness.
2. From *The Mother of All Buddhas*. After reading the Scriptures suggested for this section, consider how Jesus is calling you to become more aware. Prayerfully sit with this question during the week. How are you called to deepen your own “mindfulness” or “awakening”? Whatever practice you select, use it throughout the week and pay attention to how your perceptions/actions change. What do you discover?

3. From *I Am Understanding, I Am Love*. When we consider the Gospel telling of Jesus' life (the birth narrative telling of the star, shepherds, and Magi); the calling of the disciples from Peter to Mary Magdalene to John to Thomas or the recognition by the Samaritan woman at the well, it becomes clear that Jesus had an amazing presence and spirit. This week, in prayer, sit with Jesus (however you perceive him ~~ as friend, teacher, brother, Savior, or God). Be aware of how "relationship" may change your awareness and meeting of Christ. What do you experience?
4. From *Suffering and the Way Out*. Make a concerted effort this week to set time aside for silence and being apart from life's daily demands. Ideally, the minimum time should be an hour or two. Find a quiet place where you will not be disturbed and be silent. Do not engage in any action, simply sit in silence and pay attention to what you think, feel, experience. What do you discover?

Notes:

## CHAPTER 5 – COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

### Companion Scripture Readings

<i>Mindfulness of Working</i>	I Corinthians 11:17-22; 33-34; I Corinthians 16:19; Romans 16:3-5; 16:23
<i>Community as a Body</i>	John 15:1-10; Matthew 18:19-20; Matthew 12:46-50; Matthew 18:15-18; Romans 14: 1-23
<i>The Holy Spirit is...</i>	Matthew 4:16; Luke 1:79; Matthew 5:14-16; Matthew 6:22-23; Luke 11:33-36; II Corinthians 4:1-6; Thomas 24:3; Thomas 32; Thomas 33:1-3
<i>To Be Real Salt</i>	Matthew 5:13; Mark 9:50; Luke 14:34-35
<i>Are We Practicing...</i>	Matthew 5:3-10; Matthew 7:15-18; Mark 10:13-16; Mark 12:28-34 Matthew 12:9-14; Mathew 15:21-28; Mark 3:1-6; Mark 5:21-34

### Questions for Reflection

1. *Mindfulness of Working* ~~ Have you ever had an encounter with community similar to that described by Thich Nhat Hanh? Have you been in community where this dynamic of support was tangible and real? How did this support your spiritual journey? It is interesting to note that even in the early church, this often was not the case (I Corinthians 11:17-22; 33-34). Also note the early church was a small community often meeting in one member's home (I Corinthians 16:19; Romans 16:3-5 and 16:23) not in a building that we might label as the "church" today. How might the size of a modern church be counter-productive to the type of support suggested here?
2. *Community as Refuge* ~~ Thich Nhat Hanh makes a pertinent observation in this section. Can you apply it to your own experience? We do not need a "perfect" church to practice. An imperfect church is good enough. We can build and improve the church/community by practicing mindfully step-by-step. Taking refuge in the church/community (e.g., Sangha) is not a matter of devotion. It is a matter of practice. How can you apply this to your own journey and spiritual community?
3. *Community as a Body* ~~ Consider the Buddhist concept of Sangha compared to the relationship to the Christian concept of "brothers and sisters in Christ". How do these appear to be similar in concept? Different? Do you think the use of the phrase and concept has changed since the early days of the Christian church? If so, how? John 15:1-5; Matthew 18:19-20; Matthew 12:46-50; Matthew 18:15-18; Romans 14: 1 -23
4. *The Holy Spirit is the Soul of the Church* ~~ How can you tell when a church or faith community is filled with the Holy Spirit? What is different about such a gathering compared to others?

5. *The Holy Spirit is the Energy of Love* ~~ How can you begin to transform yourself into a reflection of Christ? What can you do differently in your Sangha/community/church to bring Light to that gathering? Matthew 5:14-16; Matthew 6:22-23; Luke 11:33-36; II Corinthians 4:1-6; Thomas 24:3; Thomas 32; Thomas 33:1-3
6. *To Be Real Salt* ~~ How are you “salt” to the world and community? What could you do to be more so? Matthew 5:13; Mark 9:50; Luke 14:34-35
7. *Are We Practicing the True Teaching?* ~~ Do you believe you are making Jesus’ presence real in the world today? If so, how? Sometimes it is easier to do this in the world than in our faith communities. Do you believe you are reflecting this Presence in your faith community? If so, how?
  - a) On touching the poor and oppressed ~~ Matthew 5:3-10; Matthew 7:15-18; Mark 10:13-16; Mark 12:28-34.
  - b) On reaching those who are hurt and ill~~ Matthew 12:9-14; Matthew 15:21-28; Mark 3:1-6; Mark 5:21-34

### **Exercises and Meditations**

1. From *Mindfulness of Working* ~~ The concept of remaining mindful while completing the on-going tasks of daily life tends to be counter-cultural for Americans and those raised in the West. This week, identify one task that you will do with mindfulness. This could be washing dishes, making the bed, mowing the lawn, any task at all. While performing the task stay focused on everything that is necessary for you to complete the action. What do you discover?
2. From *The Holy Spirit Is* ~~ Consider your involvement in your faith community, making a list of all the ways you are involved. Identify those activities that contribute to the Light of the gathering engendering Spirit’s Presence. Now, make a list of times where your actions or thoughts were not conducive to supporting the community. What was the outcome in these situations? What was the impact on other individuals, the community or even yourself?
3. From *Are We Practicing the True Teaching?* ~~ Make a commitment in the coming weeks to practice “the true teaching”. Look for opportunities to be Light to the world. This could be opening dialogue with those of a different faith or political view. Or, consider making a specific effort to help the poor or oppressed. Another possibility is to observe carefully your shopping habits and use of natural resources. Can you voluntarily forgo what you want and settle for what you need so that others might benefit? Or, you might consider engaging in social justice efforts in your community. The challenge is to practice the true teaching of Jesus.

## CHAPTER 6 - A PEACEFUL HEART

### Companion Scripture Readings

<i>Collective Awareness</i>	Exodus 20:13; Leviticus 19:18; Deuteronomy 5:17; Matthew 5:9; Matthew 5:21-26; Mark 11:25
<i>Looking Deeply</i>	Exodus 21:23-25; Leviticus 24:19-20; Deuteronomy 19:21; Matthew 5:38-42; Luke 6:27-31
<i>The Highest Form of Prayer</i>	Matthew 5:43-48; Luke 6:27-38; John 3:11-23; I Corinthians 14:20
<i>Understanding Brings Liberation</i>	Matthew 5:43-48; 1 John 3:11-23
<i>Understanding Brings Compassion</i>	John 8:31-33; John 14:5-7; John 16:13
<i>Understanding Transforms...</i>	Matthew 6: 7-15; Luke 11:2-4 and 9-10; Luke 6:27-38; Ephesians 4:20-32; I Corinthians 14:20

### Questions for Reflection

1. *Collective Awareness* ~~ How do you respond to the idea that we have to be at peace as an individual to be an effective peacemaker? How does the chapter suggest we do this? Exodus 20:13; Leviticus 19:18; Deuteronomy 5:17; Matthew 5:9; Matthew 5:21-26; Mark 11:25

What do you think about the concept that we are all collectively responsible for evil and violence? What steps can each of us take in a concrete way to move in this direction?

Thich Nhat Hanh suggests that enlightenment is a collective activity, saying "For us to achieve results, our enlightenment must be collective." In Christianity this is called "the reconciliation of all things". How has your spiritual community contributed to this collective awareness? What steps can you take in a concrete way to move in this direction?

2. *Looking Deeply* ~~ How can you respond to Jesus' teaching discussed in this section? Matthew 5:38-42; Luke 6:27-31

Does the church and particularly your faith community, look deeply at what Jesus calls us to be and do? If so how? If not, how could this come about?

How does your spiritual community help you look more deeply at working for peace on a personal, community or world level?

3. *The Highest Form of Prayer* ~~ Thich Nhat Hanh speaks of prayer as actively engaging in challenging situations. He would suggest that prayer is “doing something” or “love is a verb”. What is your experience of this?

How do you practice forgiveness and “loving your enemy”? In essence, how can you practice the “Great Commandment” in your daily life? Matthew 5:43-48; Luke 6:27-38; I John 3:11-18; I Corinthians 14:20

4. *Understanding Brings Liberation* ~~ Many times we consider those who have chosen the religious life as withdrawing from the world. The author suggests that this is really an active, not passive, response and call. How do you understand this?

From your perspective, what is the cause of suffering? What is the way of liberation? Matthew 5:43-48, I John 3:11-23

5. *Understanding Brings Compassion* ~~ What is the greatest spiritual truth you subscribe to and that guides your actions?

What do you believe is the truth that Jesus repeatedly alludes to in the Gospel according to John? John 8:31-33; John 14:5-7; John 16:13

6. *Understanding Transforms & Understanding Ourselves Helps Us Understand Others & Understanding Brings Forgiveness* ~ Have you ever had an experience where you were angry, frustrated or just basically put out by someone but when you heard their personal story your attitude toward them changed? Consider this in light of the teaching in these sections.

How do we go about forgiving those who have deeply wronged us? Matthew 6: 7-15; Luke 11:2-4 and 9-10; Luke 6:27-38; Ephesians 4:20-32; I Corinthians 14:20;

Consider this week a person with whom you have had a disagreement or whom you might consider an “enemy”. What is necessary for you to forgive them, to understand them so that both you (and the relationship) might be transformed?

### **Exercises and Meditations**

Pema Chodron, a Zen Buddhist nun and teacher, suggests we respond differently to conflict than we normally do. Below is her experience and what she discovered. After reading it, consider if this might parallel situations you find yourself in at this time. With whom do you know that you need to “make peace”? Try to respond differently than usual when encountering this person, using the approach she suggests. If helpful, talk to a spiritual friend, mentor or spiritual director

about your experience and how a different response changes you spiritually. This extract is from her book, *Practicing Peace in Times of War*, pp. 22-23:

*I try to practice what I preach; I'm not always that good at it, but I really do try. The other night, I was getting hard-hearted, closed-minded, and fundamentalist about somebody else, and I remembered this expression that you can never hate somebody if you stand in their shoes. I was angry at him because he was holding such a rigid view. In that instant I was able to put myself in his shoes and I realized, "I'm just as riled up, and self-righteous and closed-minded about this as he is. We're in exactly the same place!" And I saw that the more I held on to my view, the more polarized we would become, and the more we'd be just mirror images of one another—two people with closed minds and hard hearts who both think they're right, screaming at each other. It changed for me when I saw it from his side, and I was able to see my own aggression and ridiculousness.*

**Notes:**

## Chapter 7 ~~ For A Future to Be Possible

### Companion Scripture Readings

<i>Rerooting</i>	Deuteronomy 4: 8-10; Deuteronomy 11:18-20; Proverbs 22:4-6; Isaiah 28:8-10
<i>The Jewels of Our Tradition</i>	Leviticus 19:3; Ephesians 6:1-4
<i>Cultivating Compassion</i>	Genesis 1:27-30; Genesis 2:15-17; Leviticus 19:17-18; Deuteronomy 5:1-21; Matthew 5:2-10; Matthew 5:21-48; Matthew 7:12; Matthew 19: 16-22; Mark 12:28-34; Luke 6:20-38; Luke 10:25-37; Romans 13:8-10; Romans 15:1-6; Thomas 25
<i>Cultivating Loving Kindness</i>	Luke 10:25-37; Luke 12:42-48; Luke 16:1-15;
<i>The Oneness of Body and Mind</i>	Genesis 2: 18-25; Matthew 5:27-32; Matthew 19:3-12; Ephesians 5:21-33
<i>Unmindful Speech Can Kill</i>	Luke 6:36-37; Matthew 7:1-5; Romans 12:14-19; James 3:1-12
<i>Mindful Consuming</i>	Matthew 6:25-34; Matthew 19:16-24; Luke 12:13-31; Romans 14:16-23; Luke 12:15-34; Ephesians 5:1-20; I Corinthians 11:31-33; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12
<i>Real Love Never Ends</i>	Exodus 20:1-17; Matthew 5: 43-48; Matthew 22:34-40; John 13:34-35; John 15:12; Romans 12:9-13; Romans 13:8-10; I Corinthians 13:1-13

### Questions for Reflection:

Last chapter focused on teaching, what in Christian tradition is known as “*theoria*” or theory. This chapter focuses more on taking the teaching (*theoria*, theory) into everyday life through experience (*praxis*, practice). The questions and exercises that follow may challenge you to do so.

1. *Rerooting* ~~ The author suggests that to truly find our center it is often best that we become “re-rooted” in our own tradition. He suggests this is critical especially for those who have left their tradition in search of something else and also speaking specifically of the younger generation. Do you believe this is a valid observation as it relates to Christianity? If so, in what way? And if so, what do you feel is needed to achieve this “re-rooting”?  
Deuteronomy 4: 8-10; Deuteronomy 11:18-20; Proverbs 22:4-6; Isaiah 28:8-10
2. *The Jewels of Our Tradition* ~~ The author talks about how our ancestors connect us to tradition. This is not a common concept in the modern Western world. Consider your “blood” ancestors, what is their legacy in your life today...how have they sustained you? Who are your “spiritual” ancestors (those who have been your teachers along the journey)? How have you/can you take what they have gifted you with into the healing of the world?  
Leviticus 19:3; Ephesians 6:1-4

3. *Cultivating Compassion*~~ Do the Five Wonderful Precepts of Buddhism have anything in common with the Judeo-Christian tradition? If so, what are the parallels? What are the differences as you perceive them? You might want to consider the following texts while responding to this question: Deuteronomy 5:1-21; Matthew 5:2-10; Matthew 5:21-48; Matthew 7:12; Matthew 19: 16-22; Mark 12:28-34; Luke 6:20-38; Luke 10:25-37; Romans 13:8-10; Romans 15:1-6; Thomas 25

Identify 5 “jewels” of Christianity as you embrace and understand it. If you were to tell someone about your faith, what are the five things you would want them to know? How do these parallel (or differ) from the Five Wonderful Precepts of Buddhism?

As suggested above, the material in this section may closely parallel teachings in our own tradition although in the Judeo-Christian tradition we typically restrict the idea of loving-kindness to humans only. Read the texts from Genesis and then consider what this suggests about the food we eat (note that neither creation story says anything about God giving permission to eat animals!)? How do you respond to the idea of extending loving kindness to all living beings? What practical implications does that have? Genesis 1:27-30; Genesis 2:15-17

4. *Cultivating Loving Kindness* ~~ Most of us would say that we do not steal or take what is not rightfully ours. But, Jesus suggests we may in fact be thieves even when we do not recognize it (Luke 10: 25-37; Luke 12:42-48; Luke 16:1-15). If we expand this concept consider that we live in a culture that is highly consumer-oriented where material goods often drive our behaviors and values. Is it possible to see our constant desire for the newest phone or car or stylish clothing item as, in essence, taking resources (stealing) from others? Is this a type of greed we should consider changing in our daily living? Does our choice of items have an impact on someone in Bangladesh or on limited resources of water/soil that support another community or eco-system necessary for life? If so, how? What effort could you take to ensure you are engaging in actions that are in the best interest of the global community and just not in self-interest?
5. *The Oneness of Body and Mind* ~~ Buddhism has guidelines as it relates to sexual relationships based on the concept that the physical, emotional and spiritual aspects of ourselves are inter-connected. In our Scriptures -- the Old Testament, Jesus’ teachings and those of Paul – this is also a topic of discussion. How does the Third Precept compare to the texts that have guided our tradition? What would be the underlying reasons for similarities and parallels? Genesis 2: 18-25; Matthew 5:27-32; Matthew 19:3-12; Ephesians 5:21-33
6. *More than One Root* ~~ Can a person be rooted in more than one spiritual tradition? Do you think there are issues with inter-faith marriage? If so, what are they? And, might there be also benefits? What might these be?

7. *Unmindful Speech Can Kill* ~~ How does the 4<sup>th</sup> Precept parallel the teachings of Jesus and other New Testament writers? Are there differences? Luke 6:36-37; Matthew 7:1-5; Romans 12:14-19; James 3:1-12
8. *Mindful Consuming* ~~ How do you respond to the concepts of emptiness, non-self, and interbeing discussed in this section (you may want to also refer back to the discussion of Interbeing in Chapter 1)? How do you respond to the idea that “your body is not your own”? Matthew 6:25-34; Matthew 19:16-24; Luke 12:15-34; Romans 14:16-23; Luke 12:42-48; Ephesians 5:1-20; I Corinthians 11:31-33; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12
9. *Real Love Never Ends* ~~ Often, we make our material world or our emotional needs our “God”. In reading the scripture texts, what are the “best values” that you could study and practice? Exodus 20:1-17; Matthew 22:34-40; John 13:34-35; John 15:12; Romans 12:9-13; Romans 13:8-10; I Corinthians 13:1-13
10. *Practicing and Sharing* ~~ What do you believe are the core teachings of Christianity that are treasures that help us “dwell in peace” leading you “along a path of beauty, wholesomeness and truth”? How do you share these with those around you, especially young people with whom you may have contact?

### **Exercises and Meditations:**

1. From *Cultivating Compassion* ~~ At the end of each day this week, look back on your thoughts, words and actions. Did you deal peacefully with others? If you identify ways that you did not, can you accept this and deal compassionately with yourself? Journal what you discover about compassion throughout this week.

In cultivating compassion this week, consider going meatless for several days. When eating, give thanks to the plants and microscopic organisms that are being “sacrificed” so that you may be nourished.

2. From *Cultivating Loving Kindness* ~~ How do you practice generosity to the world around you? These actions may be small or large. Make a list of things you do on a daily and periodic basis to show loving compassion to the world around you.

Looking back over the week, assess if you have been “mindful” in your relationships or do you catch yourself multi-tasking when you are with others instead of being “present” to the person and listening deeply to what is behind their words? If you see this behavior in yourself, pick a time each day when you will try to be totally mindful to the present situation. This is not an easy exercise so pick a small window of time, say 15 minutes to start. If you notice your thoughts drifting, do not judge yourself; simply bring your attention back to the

task or conversation that is in the present moment. Journal what you experience as you go through a week of this practice.

3. From *Unmindful Speech Can Kill* ~ In Buddhism, mindful speech mean being truthful but it goes further than that to something called “right speech”. This means that one does not gossip, spread rumors or repeat something about a situation or person unless one is absolutely sure the information is true. Pay attention this week to what you say and see how often your speech is “right speech”. If it is not from time to time, note this and be intentional about speaking differently the next time. Throughout the week, consider how you can cultivate the art of listening and speaking.

If you find yourself upset this week, try the technique of “mindful breathing” outlined in this chapter. Observe what happens. Come back to this technique whenever you feel frustrated, angry, sad or depressed.

4. From *Mindful Consuming* ~ Often, as Westerners, we are not mindful of what we consume. We are used to fulfilling all of our needs and most of our “wants”. This week, for one day, make a list of everything you consume, be it food, radio, TV, internet, alcohol, etc., On another day, keep a “time log” recording how you spend your resources (time, money, energy) in work, with family, in prayer/meditation, exercise, and so forth. Become aware of where your time, energy and resources are directed, what does it tell you about your priorities? Do you focus on your “needs” or your “wants”? Spend time in prayer/meditation discerning what is truly necessary and if there are life style changes you are being called to make.
5. From *Real Love Never Ends* ~ It is difficult to love unconditionally, either ourselves or others. Yet, the path of Jesus calls us to this practice. In Buddhism there is a practice known as *tonglen*, a heart-centered meditation practice that helps the practitioner develop compassion for him/herself and others. The process is simple although not necessarily easy. Sit as you normally do for prayer/meditation. Breathe slowly paying close attention to your in-breath and out-breath. After breathing slowly, mindfully and deeply for a few minutes, on the in-breath image that you are breathing in the pain, suffering, hurt, anxiety, or upset...either yours or another’s. Take this suffering into your heart center. Hold it there for a few seconds and then on the out-breath, release the suffering and instead focus on sending God’s Love, Light and healing.

A similar practice is that of *metta*. This practice also helps us develop compassion toward ourselves, others and all of creation. You can easily find instructions on the internet for this practice, but below is a brief overview. Consider using this practice this week when you are not feeling loved or when you realize you do not love others deeply. Ideally, direct the thoughts first to yourself, then to someone you are at odds with, then to everyone you know and then, lastly, to all Creation. To begin, find a comfortable place to sit. Once you are settled, begin slowly breathing. Do this for a few minutes. Once you have settled into the

breathing, begin to recite the following. First direct the intention to yourself, then to others, then to Creation.

*May I be peaceful. May I be happy. May I be safe. May I awaken to the light of my true nature. May I be free.*

*May (name) be peaceful. May (name) be happy. May (name) be safe. May (name) awaken to the light of his/her true nature...May (name) be free.*

*May all family and friends be peaceful. May all family and friends be happy. May all family and friends be safe. May all family and friends awaken to the light of their true nature. May all family and friends be free.*

*May all of Creation be peaceful. May all of Creation be happy...May all of Creation be safe. May all of Creation awaken to the light of its true nature....May all of Creation be free.*

**Notes:**

## Chapter 8 ~ Taking Refuge

### Companion Scripture Readings

<i>The Foundation of Stability...</i>	Matthew 7: 24-27; Mark 12: 28-38; Luke 14:16-33; Luke 12:16-21; I Timothy 6: 6-11; Thomas 63; Thomas 64
<i>Embracing not Fighting</i>	Matthew 5:2-10; Matthew 18:21-35; Matthew 5:14-16; John 1:1-5; John 1:9-14; Thomas 24; Genesis 1:26-27; Psalm 8:4-10; Galatians 3:27-28; Psalm 56: 10-12; Psalm 112:6-8; Luke 12:3-5; John 1:1-5; John 1:9-14; Matthew 5:14-16, Thomas 24
<i>Touching the Living Christ</i>	Matthew 6:1-8; Matthew 23:1-36; Mark 12:38-44; Luke 11:37-52; Luke 18:9-14; Luke 20:45-47; Thomas 14

### Questions for Reflection

1. *A Safe Island* ~ Within Christianity, what do you consider to be devotional practices? What do you believe are transformational practices? What has been your experience on your journey in both contexts?
2. *Mindfulness is the Refuge* ~ In this section, Thich Nhat Hanh discusses the Three Jewels of Buddhism. Are there parallels in the Christian tradition from your perspective? In Buddhism, the idea and practice of mindfulness helps one find peace and happiness. What practice(s) in your own experience, carry similar meaning for you?
3. *The Foundation of Stability and Calm* ~ Jesus' teachings suggest that we often take comfort in things that do not provide a foundation of stability. In reading the texts from our own tradition, what do you discover about the ideas and/or activities that are contrary to our spiritual growth? Matthew 7: 24-27; Mark 12: 28-33; Luke 14:16-33; Luke 12:16-21; I Timothy 6: 6-11; Thomas 63; Thomas 64
4. *Embracing not Fighting* ~ When and where do you recognize the presence of the Holy Spirit?

What does Jesus teach about embracing and not fighting? How would life be different if you truly incorporated these teachings into daily life? Matthew 5:2-10; Matthew 18:21-35

The idea that humanity is a microcosm of God is part of traditional Christianity but generally not something we hear in church. If we are, in fact, called to become a "little Christ", would that enable you to embrace all aspects of life instead of pushing against that which causes you suffering? Genesis 1:26-27; Psalm 8:4-10; Galatians 3:27-28

5. *Embracing Not Fighting* identifies what may seem to be a major difference between Buddhism and Western Christianity. Yet, it may be more clearly identified as the difference between devotional vs. transformational practice (consider the section, *A Safe Island*, at the start of this chapter as well as these texts: Psalm 56: 10-12; Psalm 112:6-8; Luke 12:3-5; John 1:1-5; John 1:9-14; Matthew 5:14-16, Thomas 24). In Christian devotional practice, we often take action to “separate” ourselves from evil and our Scriptures are interpreted through a “devotional” and dualistic frame of reference (e.g., good vs. evil; the Devil vs. Jesus) not through a transformational point of view. In transformational practice, one embraces the tensions and opposites inherent in a situation in an effort to move into a non-dualistic way of seeing and being. Observe your thoughts and actions over time, identifying situations when you engage reality “devotionally” or “transformatively”. How are these experiences different?
6. *Touching the Living Christ* ~~ Jesus used similar teaching stories to address the same idea as the story related here. Often we focus on ritual, religious tradition, doctrine and canon law but disregard the “heart of devotion”. After reading the following texts from our tradition, consider the parallels between Mrs. Ly and the characters in these stories. Can you find parallels in the church today? In your own life and practice? Matthew 6:1-8; Matthew 23:1-36; Mark 12:38-44; Luke 11:37-52; Luke 18:9-14; Luke 20:45-47; Thomas 14
7. *A Mini-Pure Land* ~~ After reading this section, are there parallels in Christianity? What might these be? Have you had any experiences in a community that might parallel a “Pure Land” as discussed here? Was there any impact on your spiritual practice or path?
8. *Devotional and Transformational Practices* ~~ In Buddhism, mindfulness and mindful breathing are foundational practices to touching life deeply. Are there similar practices in Christianity that help you move more deeply into the Presence of God? If so, what are these?

### **Exercises and Meditations**

1. From *A Safe Island* ~~ One way to develop mindfulness is to set an alarm to go off periodically throughout the day. When the bell sounds, you stop what you are doing, and be mindful of where you are, what you are doing and your breath. You can also use a moment or two to say a short blessing, a prayer of gratitude or repeat a short scripture verse that touches you. There are actually free (or nearly free) apps for smart phones for this purpose! Just web search for one that meets your needs.
2. From *The Foundation of Stability and Calm* ~~ In this section, Thich Nhat Hanh provides a meditation focused on the Buddhist Trinity. Using Thich Nhat Hanh’s meditation as a template, take time to rewrite it using the Christian Trinity. Then use your meditation as part of your devotional practice this week.

3. From *Touching the Living Christ* ~~ The traditional Christian practice of “The Prayer of the Heart” is mentioned in this section. This practice is grounded in the Eastern Orthodox tradition although it is also sometimes practiced in the West. The prayer (sometimes thought to be the words St Paul alludes to when suggesting that we pray “without ceasing”) is only one line:

***“Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, the sinner.”*** This is repeated throughout the prayer time.

Or, alternatively, one may match the in- and out-breaths with these words: ***“I breathe in Jesus; I breathe out Jesus. I breathe in the gift of God's Life; I breathe out the gift of my own life in God.”***

This week as part of your practice, consider incorporating one of these methods of staying mindful and present in your time of prayer.

**Notes:**

## Chapter 9 ~~ The Other Shore

### Companion Scripture Readings

<i>Continuation</i>	Matthew 11:11-15; Matthew 16: 13-14; Matthew 17:10-13; Matthew 22:23-32; Mark 9: 9-13; Mark 12:18-27; Luke 9:7-8; Luke 20:27-44; John 1:21- 27; I Corinthians 15:50-55; Galatians 1:15-16
<i>Manifestation and Remanifestation Each Moment is a Moment...</i>	John 1:9-13; John 3:3-8; Thomas 3; Thomas 11; Thomas 18 Matthew 6:12-15; Matthew 18:21-22; Luke 17:3-4; Luke 6:36-38; Colossians 3: 1- 15; 1 John 1:5-2:12
<i>Enlightenment Grows</i>	Matthew 5:38-48; Matthew 13:45-46; Matthew 22:34-40; Mark 4:3-8 & 13-20; Mark 12:29-34; Luke 6:27-38; Luke 8: 5-8 & 11-15; Luke 10:25-42; John 14:11-21; Thomas 9; Thomas 22; Thomas 25; Thomas 27
<i>The Other Shore is this Shore</i>	Matthew 6:9-15; Matthew 6:25-34a; Luke 12: 22-34; Luke 17:20-21; John 14:15-21 & 25-28
<i>Everything Can Be Spiritual Touching the Living Buddha</i>	Matthew 19:16-24; John 11:25-26a Matthew 3: 7-12; Matthew 22:15-33; Matthew 23:1- 12; Matthew 23:16-36; Mark 12:18-27; Luke 11:39-52
<i>Trees and Birds Preaching Dharma</i>	Genesis 1:1-5; Genesis 1:13-19; Psalm 104:1-6; Matthew 5:14-16; Matthew 6:22-23; Matthew 17:1-6; Luke 1:76-79; Luke 11:33-36; John 1:1-9; John 3:16-21; John 8:12; John 12:34-36; Thomas 77
<i>The Holy Spirit Can Be Identified</i>	Matthew 12:1-14; Mark 3:1-6; Luke 6:1-11; Matthew 23; Luke 11:42-46
<i>Touching the Ultimate Dimension Touching the Water within...</i>	Matthew 13:31-34 Matthew 6:19-21; Matthew 13:44-45; Luke 12:33-34; Thomas 76; Thomas 109

### Questions for Reflection

1. *Continuation* ~~ The concept of reincarnation often seems contrary to Christian theology and doctrine. However, as this chapter unfolds, you may find the popular concept of reincarnation re-defined by the author. Consider the following Scriptures from our tradition as you consider your own beliefs on life, death and after-life this week. What do these texts suggest about “reality” after you “die”? Do you continue or not after death? How? Where? When? Matthew 11:11-15; Matthew 16: 13-14; Matthew 17:10-13; Matthew 22:23-32; Mark 9: 9-13; Mark 12:18-27; Luke 9:7-8; Luke 20:27-44; John 1:21- 27; I Corinthians 15:50-55; Galatians 1:15-16
2. *Manifestation and Remanifestation* ~~ In talking about “death”, Jesus often tried to convey to his listeners that what they believed about the “after life” might not be accurate. Often we hear these teachings literally but it may also be important to consider these texts

allegorically. After reading the scriptures from *Continuation* above, the texts below, Thich Nhat Hanh's discussion of manifestation and re-manifestation as well as taking into consideration recent findings in quantum physics, what do the concepts of death and rebirth mean to you? John 1:9-13; John 3:3-8; Thomas 3; Thomas 11; Thomas 18

3. *True Faith is Alive* ~~ Consider Jesus' repeated admonishments to the Pharisees and Sadducees not to get mired in ritual, doctrine and following the letter of the Law while ignoring the underlying intent. Now, consider your own beliefs, especially those dealing with religious doctrine and spirituality. Have these changed for you over time? If so, how? Consider the impetus/cause for your shift(s) in perspective. How has this affected your faith? If your beliefs have changed over time, has this changed your actions and response to the world around you? Has it changed your personal spiritual practices?
4. *Each Moment is a Moment of Renewal* ~~ Is it possible that a common thread between Buddhism and Christianity is that we are always able to start anew? Consider that in Buddhism "mindfulness" leads to a new way of seeing and responding; in Christianity, when we seek forgiveness we can always "start anew" and continue on as a "new" person. Matthew 6:12-15; Matthew 18:21-22; Luke 17:3-4; Luke 6:36-38; Colossians 3: 1- 15; 1 John 1:5-2:12
5. *Enlightenment Grows* ~~ Thich Nhat Hanh suggests that enlightenment must be alive and growing, this is a responsibility of those who follow Buddha. Similarly, one might suggest that to truly be a follower of Jesus, we must actively grow in compassion and the loving kindness of Christ on a daily basis. This is our response to Jesus and God's Love. Jesus' teachings give us dramatic insight into this process. Read the texts and identify what Jesus teaches about how we can grow spiritually. Note what you discover in your journal. Matthew 5:38-48; Matthew 13:45-46; Matthew 22:34-40; Mark 4:3-8 & 13-20; Mark 12:29-34; Luke 6:27-38; Luke 8: 5-8 & 11-15; Luke 10:25-42; John 14:11-21; Thomas 9; Thomas 22; Thomas 25; Thomas 27
6. *The Extinction of Notions* ~~ How do you respond to the idea that "The ultimate dimension of reality has nothing to do with concepts. It is not just absolute reality that cannot be talked about. Nothing can be conceived or talked about."?
7. *The Other Shore is this Shore* ~~ The Buddha spoke of "salvation" or "emancipation" as *parayana* or the "other shore". Sometimes this concept is not clear enough and the term used is *tathata*, the "reality that is". Consider the Christian concepts of "salvation" and the "Kingdom of God" or "God's Domain" and your understanding of these concepts. Could you use the term "salvation" interchangeably with the term "emancipation" and "the Reality that is" with "the Kingdom of God"? Why or why not? Matthew 6:9-15; Matthew 6:25-34a; Luke 12: 22-34; Luke 17:20-21; John 14:15-21 & 25-28

8. *Everything Can Be Spiritual* ~~ How do you respond to the idea that “eternal life is the kind of life that includes death”? Can you describe the Kingdom of God? Take into consideration Thich Nhat Hanh’s caution in the next section (*Touching the Living Buddha*) regarding the use of words and concepts. Matthew 19:16-24; John 11:25-26a
9. *Touching the Living Buddha* ~~ Consider the underlying wisdom of this section as it relates to Christianity. Jesus repeatedly cautioned his listeners not to take teachings at face value. How have words and concepts kept you “stuck” in your perception of “reality”? Matthew 3:7-12; Matthew 22:15-33; Matthew 23:1-12; Matthew 23:16-36; Mark 12:18-27; Luke 11:39-52
10. *Trees and Birds Preaching Dharma* ~~ Thich Nhat Hanh talks of the Light emanating from the Buddha, but it is interesting to consider the following texts from our tradition that say something quite similar. In reading the texts below, consider that God’s first creative act was to create “light” and later in the Scripture further God refines its properties. What does our tradition have to suggest about light and its impact on the cosmos? Genesis 1:1-5; Genesis 1:13-19; Psalm 104:1-6; Matthew 5:14-16; Matthew 6:22-23; Matthew 17:1-6; Luke 1:76-79; Luke 11:33-36; John 1:1-9; John 3:16-21; John 8:12; John 12:34-36; Thomas 77

When we are separated from God, we sometimes say this is being in “darkness”. Victor Hugo’s comment resonates with St John of the Cross’ concept of the “dark night of the soul”. Have you ever experienced the “Dark Night of the Soul”? If so, what was this like for you; did it in any way change you? And, if so, how?

11. *Rinsing the Mouth, Washing the Ears* ~~ This section suggests that problems arise when we get locked into our concepts and ideas, often leading to misunderstanding. Consider how this may apply to your faith (or even secular) community. When you speak of God or Jesus, does the person you are speaking with have the same ideas, definitions, concepts? How does having concepts become problematic? Is there a way to resolve this difficulty?
12. *The Holy Spirit Can Be Identified* ~~ How do you respond to the statement, “It is safer to approach God through the Holy Spirit than through theology” and that it is “risky to talk about God”? Consider Jesus’ discourses with the theologians of his time regarding following the law as interpreted by the “lawyers”, what disconnect existed then in religion? Now? Matthew 12:1-14; Mark 3:1-6; Luke 6:1-11; Matthew 23; Luke 11:42-46
13. *Touching the Ultimate Dimension* ~~ Have you ever experienced “touching the ultimate dimension”? How do you respond to Thich Nhat Hanh’s comment that there is not much difference between Christians and Buddhists?

14. *Touching the Water Within the Waves* ~~ Read the following Scriptures and then imagine yourself as the main character in each parable. After you discover the buried treasure or the pearl, what happens? How do things shift/change? What wisdom do you discover that you can take back into your daily world? Matthew 6:19-21; Matthew 13:44-45; Luke 12:33-34; Thomas 76; Thomas 109

### **Exercises and Meditations**

1. From *Manifestation and Remanifestation* ~~ To better understand the idea of impermanence discussed in this section, try this exercise. Sit quietly and begin to deeply breathe. Pick one sense object to focus your attention on – a sound, a smell, a physical sensation, or similar. Pay attention to this with as much care and attention as possible. How long can you stay focused? How long before the sense object changes or dissipates?
2. From *Enlightenment Grows* ~~ In reading the Scripture texts related to this section how can you live more compassionately and with understanding as a follower of Jesus? Is there one specific way you feel would help you at this time? If so, intentionally incorporate it in your daily life and practice.
3. From *Nirvana is Available Now* ~~ This week take some time to go to the beach or nearby lake. Pay attention to the sound of the water and the waves lapping onto the shore. Now, sitting quietly, consider how your life is a coming and going, a movement within a greater movement. If you do not have the opportunity to be near water, consider sitting outside on a breezy day. Pay attention to the wind brushing your skin. It too comes and goes (John 3:8); contemplate your breath and your life within this framework as you sit in silence.
4. From *Touching the Living Buddha* ~~ Pay close attention to how you see “reality” this week. If you find yourself in a difficult situation, try reframing it, approaching the problem from a different angle. For example, consider looking for the positive aspects of a challenging situation or person. How might this help you perceive the situation differently? How might this situation help you grow spiritually, help you “touch the Divine”?
5. From *Trees and Birds Preaching the Dharma* ~~ When we are separated from God, we sometimes say this is being in “darkness”. Victor Hugo’s comment resonates with St John of the Cross’ concept of the “dark night of the soul”. Research what this idea means in our tradition. Have you ever experienced the Dark Night of the Soul? If so, spend some time considering how the experience changes you, your views, and your spiritual path.
6. From *Touching the Ultimate Dimensions* ~~ During this week, read Matthew 13:31-34 and then use *lectio divina* (or another contemplative method that works for you) to move into this parable. If you are not familiar with *lectio divina*, ask your facilitator or access an on-line resource (a basic instruction can be found below). Then consider Thich Nhat Hanh’s questions... “What is the seed?” “Where is the soil?” “What is the yeast?” What do you discover? <http://www.beliefnet.com/Faiths/Christianity/Catholic/2000/08/How-To-Practice-Lectio-Divina.aspx>

## Chapter 10 – Faith and Practice

### **Companion Scripture Readings**

<i>Penetrating the Heart of Reality</i>	Matthew 10:37; Matthew 12:46-50, Mark 3:31-35; Luke 8:19-21; Luke 12:51-53; Luke 14:25-26; Matthew 5:7; Matthew 6:19-21; Matthew 6:25-33; Matthew 13:44; Luke 12:22-34; Matthew 5:3-12; Matthew 5:17-20; Matthew 5:21-24; Matthew 6:5-14; Luke 6:20-38; I Corinthians 13
<i>Only the Son and the Holy Spirit...</i>	Exodus 3:1-6; Exodus 33:18-23; Exodus 34:29-35; Matthew 17:1-6; Mark 9:1-6; Luke 9:28-36; Matthew 3:11-12; Matthew 5:8; Luke 3:15-17; John 3:3-17; John 14:5-27; John 16:1-16 & 22-28; Acts 9:1-20
<i>Taking Refuge</i>	Titus 2:1-10; Titus 3: 1-7; I Thessalonians 4:1-8; Ephesians 5:1-21
<i>Interior Recollection</i>	Psalm 46:10; Matthew 6:5-13; Matthew 14:23; Matthew 26:36-44; Mark 1:35; Mark 6:46; Luke 5:16; Luke 6:12-13; Luke 11:1-13; Luke 22:41-43; John 6:15
<i>The Original Mind</i>	Matthew 5:42; Matthew 25: 31-46; Luke 12:33-34; Acts 20:35; Galatians 2:10; I Timothy 6:17-19; James 2:2-9; I John 3:17
<i>Religious Experience is... Empty of What?</i>	Matthew 19:16-22; Luke 10:38-42; Romans 7:19-20 Matthew 13:31–32; Mark 4:30–32; Luke 13:18–19; Matthew 16: 23-26; Matthew 19:16-22; Luke 10:38-42; Philippians 2:6-8
<i>The Nature of Interbeing</i>	Matthew 10:46-52; Matthew 13: 15-17; Mark 8:14-21; John 9:1-11
<i>The Ground of Experience</i>	John 3:1-8; Thomas 22; Matthew 18:1-4; Mark 10:13-17; Luke 18:15-17
<i>Total Surrender</i>	Matthew 5:17-20; Matthew 22:23-32; Mark 12:18-27; Luke 17:20-21; Thomas 3; Thomas 113
<i>The Difference is Emphasis</i>	Matthew 7:21-27; Matthew 16:24-26; Mark 8:34-38; Luke 9:23-27; John 8:31; John 14:15-17; John 14:23-24
<i>Real Dialogue Brings Understanding</i>	Matthew 13:3-9; Matthew 13:24-32; Mark 4:3-9; Luke 8:5-8; Thomas 9; Matthew 7:24-27; Luke 6: 46-49; Matthew 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30; Luke 10:29-37, Luke 17:11-19; John 4:4-41

### Questions for Reflection

1. *Penetrating the Heart of Reality* ~~ Early in this section, it is suggested that our faith must always be growing. Thich Nhat Hanh shares that in Buddhism the process of contemplation and letting go of the physical world leads to a deeper wisdom and knowledge. Consider the follow Scriptures through this same frame of reference. How do you hear these parables and teachings now (compared to hearing them as a child or young adult)? How has your faith changed?
  - a) Who is family? Matthew 10:37; Matthew 12:46-50, Mark 3:31-35; Luke 8:19-21; Luke 12:51-53; Luke 14:25-26; John 7:2-9
  - b) What is truly necessary and needed for true happiness? Matthew 5:7; Matthew 6:19-21; Matthew 6:25-33; Matthew 13:44; Luke 12:22-34
  - c) What is “true” religion? Matthew 5:3-12; Matthew 5:17-20; Matthew 5:21-24; Matthew 6:5-14; Luke 6:20-38; I Corinthians 13
  
2. *Only the Son and the Holy Spirit Know Him* ~~ In the Old Testament, it was often suggested that one could not “see” God or be in God’s Holy Presence without serious repercussions. The same thread is present in the Transfiguration of Jesus. Consider this concept as a teaching story (instead of a historical retelling). Read the following texts and consider their meaning from a metaphorical perspective. What happens when one comes into God’s Presence? Exodus 3:1-6; Exodus 33:18-23; Exodus 34:29-35; Matthew 17:1-6; Mark 9:1-6; Luke 9:28-36
 

Is it possible that truly “seeing God” might result in such a shattering of our view of reality that it is impossible to come into the Presence in its fullness? Is it possible that through the teachings of the Master and the on-going guidance of the Holy Spirit we might gradually encounter the Holy with increasing intensity? What do these texts suggest about this possibility? Matthew 3:11-12; Matthew 5:8; Luke 3:15-17; John 3:3-17; John 14:5-27; John 16:1-16 & 22-28; Acts 9:1-20
  
3. *Taking Refuge* ~~ What does our tradition suggest that we do to “take refuge”? Consider many of the texts you have studied during this and prior weeks. Consider these additional texts as you ponder the question: Titus 2:1-10; Titus 3: 1-7; I Thessalonians 4:1-8; Ephesians 5:1-21
  
4. *Interior Recollection* ~~ Our own tradition suggests that we should seek silence, use few words and cultivate a listening and trusting presence. What guidance do these texts provide relating to the process of “interior recollection”? Psalm 46:10; Matthew 6:5-13; Matthew 14:23; Matthew 26:36-44; Mark 1:35; Mark 6:46; Luke 5:16; Luke 6:12-13; Luke 11:1-13; Luke 22:41-43; John 6:15

5. *The Original Mind* ~~ What does our own tradition teach us as it relates to living the simple life and practicing the “mind of love”? Matthew 5:42; Matthew 25: 31-46; Luke 12:33-34; Acts 20:35; Galatians 2:10; I Timothy 6:17-19; James 2:2-9; I John 3:17
6. *Religious Experience is Human Experience* ~~ “Habit energy” or old habits are hard to change, it is difficult to choose a different way of responding. Too often, we simply react in response to a stimulus, not stopping to be mindful and intentionally respond to a difficult situation. The young rich man (and Jesus) clearly knew what his “habit energy” was (Matthew 19:16-22). Martha had the habit of worrying and staying busy (Luke 10:38-42). Even St Paul also recognized his own limits and “habit energy” (Romans 7:19-20). What “habit energy” gets in your way, impeding spiritual growth and wholeness?
7. *Empty of What?* ~~ Read the texts from the synoptic Gospels of the parable of the mustard seed. What does this suggest about the Holy Spirit’s presence in your life? Matthew 13:31–32; Mark 4:30–32; Luke 13:18–19

The ideas of impermanence and non-self that are common to Buddhism also are integral to the Christian faith. In Christianity, the concept is called *kenosis* or “self-emptying”. What do the following passages suggest about the process of self-emptying? What aspects of “self” might you discard to become more open and present to the small seed of the Holy Spirit that resides within you? Matthew 16: 23-25; Matthew 19:16-22; Luke 10:38-42; Matthew 16:24-26; Philippians 2:6-8

8. *The Nature of Interbeing* ~~ This section tells a story about developing the ability to see reality differently than we normally do. Jesus, in fact, was always urging his disciples to do the same. Additionally, his healings of the blind might be metaphors for allowing the individual to wake up and see the world anew. What do these texts suggest about seeing anew and engaging reality in a different way? Matthew 10:46-52; Matthew 13: 15-17; Mark 8:14-21; John 9:1-11
9. *The Ground of Experience* ~~ What does it mean to be reborn? What does this image/metaphor mean to you? How do you respond to the idea that the “death” of the self-centered and self-sufficient ego is needed if there is to be an appearance of a new and liberated self who lives and acts in the Spirit? John 3:1-8; Thomas 22; Matthew 18:1-4; Mark 10:13-17; Luke 18:15-17
10. *Total Surrender* ~~ Jesus was often flooded with questions about “heaven” and the “after life”. After reading this section, what might he have been trying to convey to his disciples but which, for the most part, was missed repeatedly? What do you hear that is germane to your own understanding and journey? Matthew 5:17-20; Matthew 22:23-32; Mark 12:18-27; Luke 17:20-21; Thomas 3; Thomas 113

11. *Two Types of Causation* ~~ Have you ever experienced a transcendent moment when reality as you normally experience it was changed? If so, what shifted for you?
12. *Who is Not Unique* ~~ How do you respond to John Paul II's view of Jesus and other traditions?
13. *The Difference is Emphasis* ~~ Although Christian doctrine teaches that Jesus is the "bridge" between humankind and man, Jesus offered a different view. What do the following texts suggest? Matthew 7:21-27; Matthew 16:24-26; Mark 8:34-38; Luke 9:23-27; John 8:31; John 14:15-17; John 14:23-24

After spending time with this book, where have you discovered similarities between Buddhism and Christianity? Conversely, where do you believe there are differences? Do the differences in your mind preclude dialogue and understanding between the two traditions?

14. *Real Dialogue Brings Understanding* ~~ Jesus often spoke about the need for the listener to be grounded in their own tradition and teaching. This is similar to what Thich Nhat Hanh suggests about the need to be rooted in one's own tradition. What do these Scripture texts suggest about this idea? Matthew 13:3-9; Matthew 13:24-32; Mark 4:3-9; Luke 8:5-8; Thomas 9; Matthew 7:24-27; Luke 6: 46-49

Although Jesus taught that his followers should listen, see and do as he teaches, he also repeatedly responded to those who were not Jewish with compassion and taught his followers to do the same. Consider these texts, how do they call you to respond to those you meet regardless of their religious affiliation or beliefs? Matthew 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30; Luke 10:29-37; Luke 17:11-19; John 4:4-41

### **Exercises and Meditation**

1. From *The Substance of Faith* ~~ In Christianity, when we have and use a "set of tools" to help us on our journey, we call this a "rule of life". This can consist of many spiritual disciplines including prayer/meditation, worship, regular spiritual direction, reading of sacred texts, periodic retreats, etc. Consider the tools you have found to be most helpful on your journey, what other tools might you consider adopting for your spiritual "tool box"? For more information consult a spiritual director, your pastor/priest or possibly one of the websites below:

Anglican: <http://www.peterborough-cursillo.btck.co.uk/DevelopingandUsingARuleofLife>

Episcopal: <http://www.reddoorchurchcape.org/RuleofLife/Rule%20of%20Life.aspx>

Generic: <http://www.orientalorthodoxorder.com/PDFs/Rule%20of%20Life.pdf>

2. From *Only the Son and the Holy Spirit Know Him* ~~ The book talks about two ways of detaching; emptiness (*sunyata*) and non-emptiness (*asunyata*). In Christianity, the theological concepts of *ataphatic* and *cataphatic* experiences parallel these ideas. Take some time this week to research these two ideas and then consider your own experiences. When and where have you experienced these ways of moving closer to God? Does one seem to resonate for you more than another? If so, why might this be?
3. From *Taking Refuge* ~~ This week consider “taking refuge” in Jesus. Prior to your prayer time, list or recite all the names for Jesus you can. As you slowly and mindfully say the names in your time of prayer/contemplation, consider the qualities identified with each. While using this approach during the week, pay attention to how your prayer practice unfolds and any differences you observe in your daily relating to the world around you. If you find this prayer form fruitful, you may want to add it to your “tool box”.
4. From *Interior Recollection* ~~ If you have not already done so, consider adopting *lectio divina* or “the prayer of the heart” as part of your regular spiritual practice. Consider seeking help from the class facilitator, your priest/pastor or a spiritual director. There are numerous websites that might help if you are not familiar with the method. These sites may be helpful: <http://www.prayeroftheheart.com/POHMethod.html>  
<http://www.carmelite.org/index.php?nuc=content&id=72>
5. From *How Not to Lose the Contemplative Life* ~~ Take time this week to be mindful in the midst of daily activities. For example, when doing dishes, sweeping, mowing the yard or simply walking. Complete the chosen task slowly, paying attention to all the small actions necessary, being present to each movement and what it takes for this to occur.
6. From *Mindful Living is Possible* ~~ In our tradition, the Sabbath was set aside as a day of rest, a day of worship, and a day of being present with God. If you generally do not honor the Sabbath, pick one day this week to live mindfully. Rest from meetings, phone calls, texting, computer input, TV, worry, sadness and work. Pay attention to those around you, to the beauty of nature and to the wonder of “little” things.
7. From *Loving God is Loving Living Beings* ~~ Take time this week to pray the Lord’s Prayer. Pray it slowly; savoring each word, letting each phrase settle into your heart. Do this for fifteen minutes each day. What do you discover about the prayer and its meaning? About how you “hear” and your response to it?
8. From *The Ground of Experience* ~~ There have been many opportunities throughout this course to identify practices or “tools” that you can use to deepen your experience of God and become more like a “little child”. What other practices have you used in the past that you might share with others? Which new practices will you consider adopting in your own practice going forward?

9. From *Two Types of Causation* ~~ Consider taking the *quicumque vult* from the Book of Common Prayer as the focus of your meditation/prayer time this week. Read the text slowly three times, then simply sit quietly for a period of time. Journal what you discover. Alternatively, spend your meditation/prayer time this week contemplating a phenomenon – a flower, the sky, or the wind blowing through the trees. Similarly, journal what you experience.
10. From *Real Dialogue Brings Tolerance* ~~ If possible, locate a Buddhist Sangha near where you live and make arrangements to attend a gathering. Sangha gatherings are generally open to visitors and the format of the time together is one of meditation and teaching. If you are able to do so, what is your experience?

**Notes:**