

In the Centre of Nothingness

Apophatic prayer and the awakening of the apophatic self

A Spiritual Direction Formation Programme for spiritual directors and people interested in contemplation

Thursday 23rd and Friday 24th July 2026

Online

Dr Kerrie Hide



At the centre of our being is a point of nothingness ...

a point or spark which belongs entirely to God, ...

This little point of nothingness and of absolute poverty

is the pure glory of God in us.

Thomas Merton, *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*, (1966), 140-142

In this Mystic Heart formation offering, we will continue the theme of being pregnant with nothing, focusing on how we awaken the centre of nothingness in the ground of our heart through apophatic prayer. We will continue to develop a hermeneutic of beholding for interpreting mystical texts by authors such as Thomas Merton, Denys the Areopagite, Meister Eckhart, Marguerite Porete, the Helfta Mystics, Jan van Ruusbroec, Julian of Norwich, the Clou of Unknowing author, John of the Cross and many others. Our focus will be on creating a atmosphere and contemplative practices that support the awakening of a oneing hear awareness or Christ consciousness. Together we will continue to create a rich vocabulary of “apophatic knowing” and its meaning for an evolutionary world, as well as deepen our capacity for communion in heart dialogue.

Through beholding communally, we will enter into the depthless depths of apophatic metaphors, into the evolutionary flow of how the prayer of the author, the writing, the reading, and the prayer of the reader, one together unfold and awaken ever revealing apophatic wisdom. Attention will be given to how spiritual directors may be naturally at home with apophatic language and create an atmosphere in the spiritual direction encounter that enables apophatic knowing to arise into conscious awareness without limiting its ongoing revelatory power. We will continue to awaken new sensitivities to the endless possibilities how the Spirit opens us to unitive participatory love knowing. Emphasis is on claiming the ontological space of contemplation and nurturing the oneing heart awareness that arises in stillness and silence. The presentations and processes will assist participants to sensitively go deeper into their own inner journey, so they can lovingly companion themselves and others into the depthless depths of divine-human intimacy encountered apophatically.

In the light of contemplation, we will cultivate a confidential, trustworthy, and sacred spaciousness, which includes enhancing contemplative presence to each other and fostering communion consciousness. While it will be very helpful if participants have participated in previous Mystic Heart offerings, this offering can also be engaged with in its own right. However, it is essential that participants have a routine of contemplative prayer, are in spiritual direction, and participate in regular silent retreats. The retreat will be offered online only this year

For more information about the course see over the page. To register, please go to

<https://contemplatio.com.au/schola-contemplatio/mystical-heart/>

About Kerrie

Kerrie has been a spiritual director for forty years. She enjoys offering spiritual direction, giving retreats, teaching, researching and writing. Her most recent book *Love's Oneing: A Book about Contemplation*, situates nine mystics within a lived experience of prayer, providing an exegesis of essential teachings about contemplation and offering a contemplative practice to help ground the insights. *Love's Oneing* has been described by Ilia Delio as leading us "into the heart of contemplation, not as an exercise or as a method, but as a deep awakening of our truest reality". Kerrie's book, *Gifted Origins to Graced Fulfilment: The Soteriology of Julian of Norwich*, won first prize in the Catholic Press Association Awards, USA, 2002. Kerrie's first book, *A Woman's Healing Song: Prayers of Consolation for the Separated and Divorced*, has been commended by many people grieving.



Kerrie has published in international and national journals, is a regular contributor to the Contemplative Evolution Network (CEN) and is published in edited collections, including most recently, "Salvation as Oneing" in Justine Holcombe ed. *Theologies of Salvation* and "The Ecstasy of Agape" in Ilia Delio (ed), *Personal Transformation and a New Creation: The Spiritual Revolution of Beatrice Bruteau*.

To Register

This two day offering will begin on Thursday 23rd July at 9.00 and finish on Friday 24th July at 5.00 pm. This year the course will be offered online only and the cost will be \$445.00. This will include two days of teaching, two follow up zoom sessions and course materials. For more information and to register, please visit Kerrie's website Contemplatio: www.contemplatio.com.au and follow the links to Mystic Heart 2026. Or contact Robyn Fitzgerald at robyn.fitzgerald@proton.me

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We invite practicing spiritual directors and those interested in contemplation.