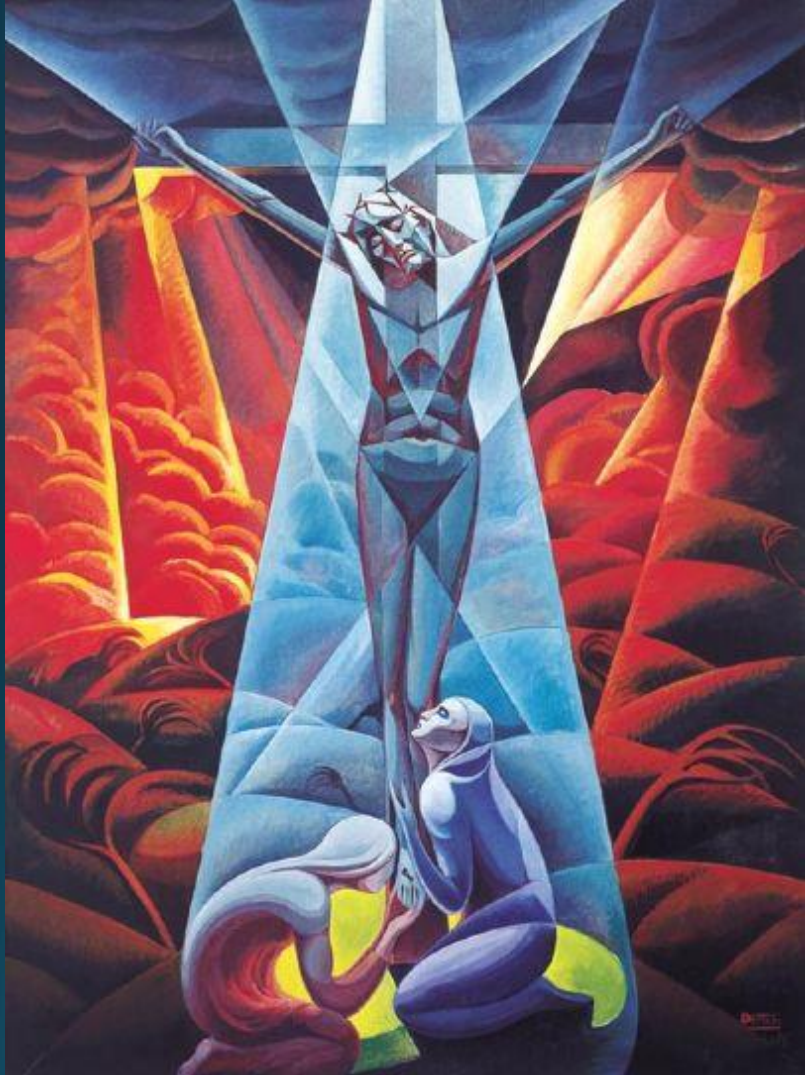




# **Kenosis and Impartiality**

**The Journey School**  
March 21, 2024



*Crucifixion* by Gerardo Dottori, 1928

## Our Exploration This Evening...

- Theological & Historical Foundations of Kenosis
- Kenotic Virtues or Being Qualities
- Kenotic Practices in Service of Being

# The Origins of Kenosis (κένωσις)

Philippians 2:5-8

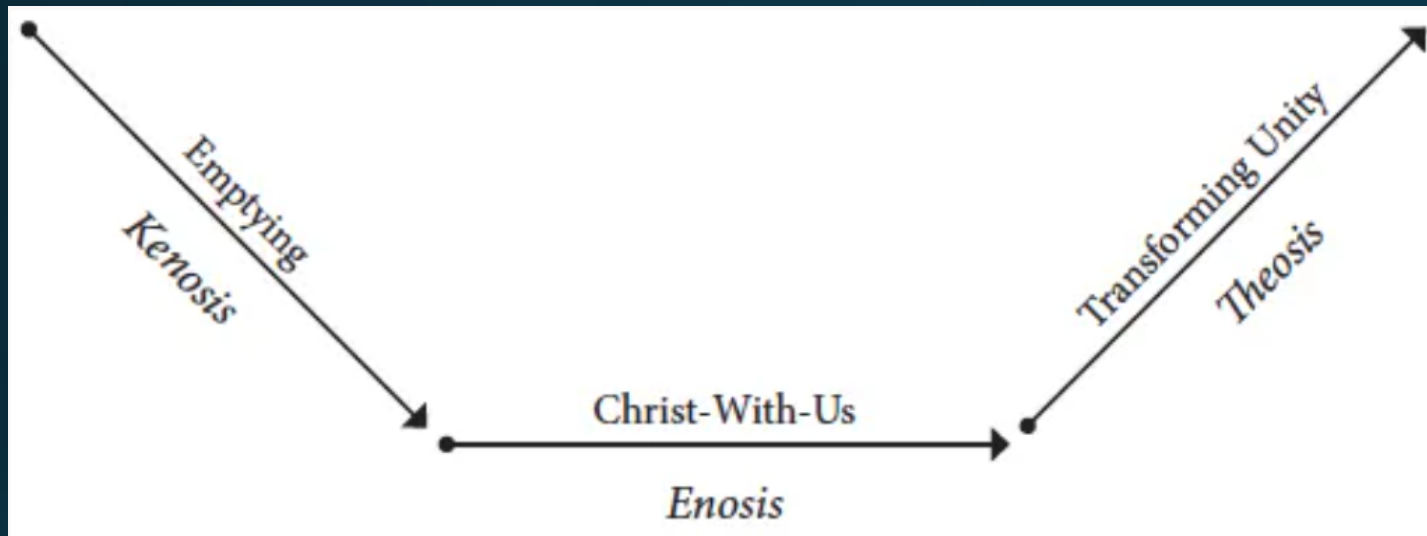
Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but *emptied* himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness.

And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death – even death on a cross.



*Theatre of Philippi* by Reynold Mainse

# The Pattern: Kenosis, Enosis, Theosis



From *I Live, No Longer I: Paul's Spirituality of Suffering, Transformation, and Joy*  
by Laura Reece Hogan

Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

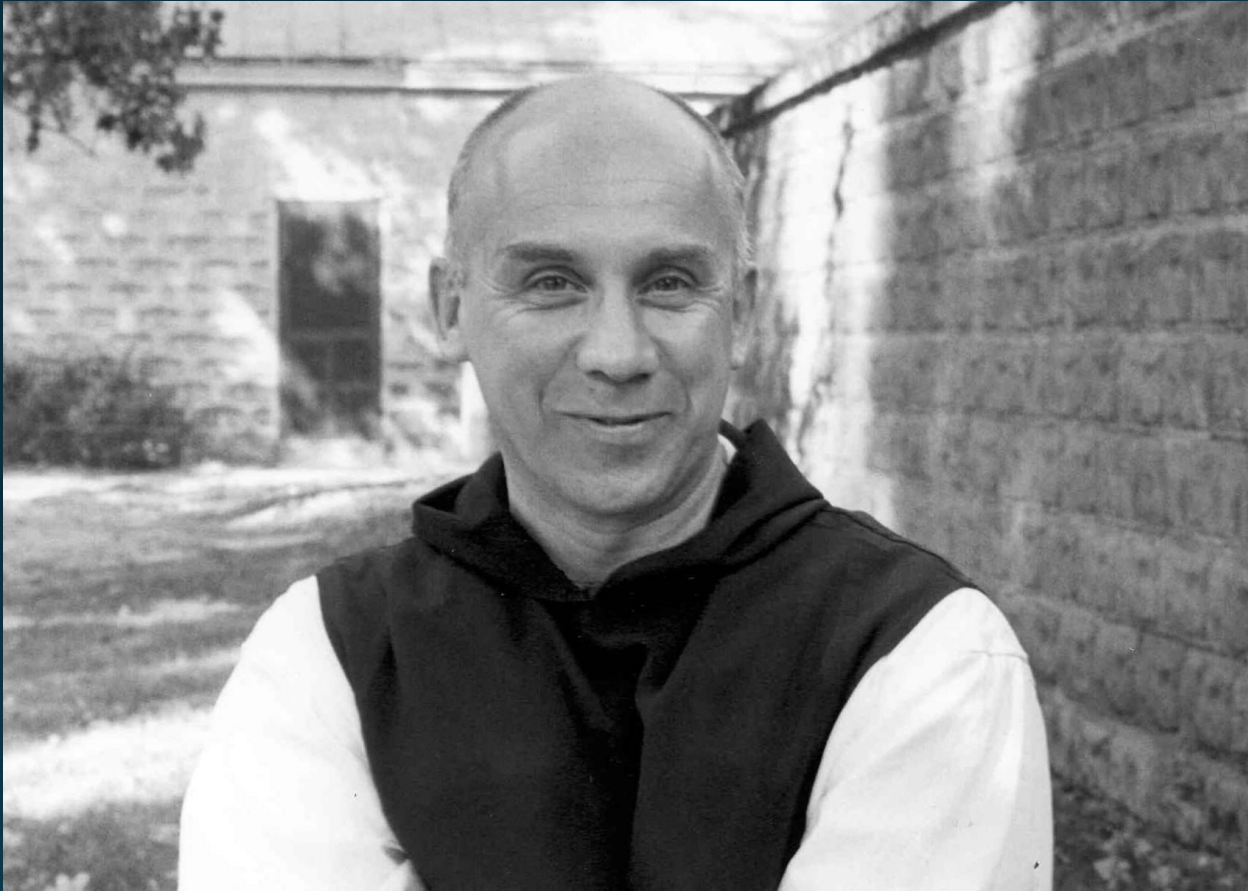
Philippians 2:9-11



*Portrait of Meister Eckhart*

## **Detachment** *(abegescheidenheit)* & **Serenity in** **Abandonment** *(gelazeneheit)*

How much more then should we withdraw from all things in order to concentrate all our powers on perceiving and knowing the one infinite, uncreated, eternal truth! To this end, then, assemble all your powers, all your senses, your entire mind and memory; direct them into the ground where your treasure lies buried. But if this is to happen, realize that you must drop all other works—you must come to an *unknowing*, if you would find it.



*Thomas Merton*

## The Joy of Emptiness of Nothingness

This is the gift of understanding: we pass out of ourselves into the joy of emptiness of nothingness, in which there are no longer any particular objects of knowledge but only God's truth without limit, without defect, without stain.

*New Seeds of Contemplation*



Cynthia Bourgeault with Thomas Keating

## Jesus as Our Model for the Kenotic Life

“The unitive point is reached not through the concentration of being but through the free squandering of it; not through acquisition or attainment but through self-emptying; not through ‘up’ but through ‘down.’ This is the way of kenosis, the revolutionary path that Jesus introduced into the consciousness of the West.”

*The Wisdom Jesus*, p. 66



## Kenosis and the Trinity

“The Trinity, understood in a wisdom sense, is really **an icon of self-emptying love**. The three persons go round and round like buckets on a watermill, constantly overflowing into one another. And as they do so, the mill turns and the energy of love becomes manifest and accessible. The Cappadocians called this complete intercirculation of love *perichoresis*, which literally means ‘the dance around.’”

Cynthia Bourgeault

*Trinity Window, Saint Gabriel of the Sorrowful Mother, Avondale, PA*





*Jesus Washing Peter's Feet* by Sister Marie Boniface

## Kenotic Virtues (Being Qualities)

- Humility
- Obedience
- Charity & Generosity
- Impartiality:  
Kenosis in  
Discernment

# Humility, in the Tradition of St. Benedict

## *Humility*

Cultivate humility.  
To be exalted is to be in danger.

Pride is considered a sin because it warps our existence.

It establishes our lives on a false foundation.

No one can win all the time.  
Therefore, a life based on bettering others will always be unfulfilled.

The way to affiliation with the sublime is not to add,  
but is to take away more each day until we have been freed,  
even from desire for perfection.



# The Twelve Stages of Humility

1. Be attentive to the sacred nature of each moment.
2. Learn to distrust and question our own will.
3. Accept the limitations of our power and control.
4. Cultivate a patient and quiet mind.
5. Practice radical self-honesty.
6. Find contentment in all our circumstances.
7. Remember our smallness and impermanence.
8. Follow the wisdom of our trusted guides.
9. Restrain our judgment and criticism.
10. Take no pleasure in the misfortune of others.
11. Speak gently, briefly, and with candor.
12. Maintain a humble demeanor and appearance in all we do.



*Thy Will Be Done* by Jorge Cocco

## Kenotic Practices in Service of Being

What efforts can we make in the direction of kenosis? How can we cultivate these kenotic *being qualities*?

- Contemplative Practices
- The Work of Inner Christianity
- Embodied Practices
- A Practice of Remembrance



*Saint Benedict's Monastery in Old Snowmass, Aspen Times*

## Kenosis in Contemplative Practice

- Centering Prayer
- Welcoming Prayer

*Let go by saying, "I let go of my desire for security, affection, control and embrace this moment as it is."*

# Kenosis in The Work of Inner Christianity

- “If anyone would like to acquire humility, I can, I think, tell him the first step. The first step is to realise that one is proud. And a biggish step, too. At least, nothing whatever can be done before it. If you think you are not conceited, it means you are very conceited indeed.” – C.S. Lewis in *Mere Christianity*
- **Self-Observation: The Giants of Pride and Vanity**
- **Non-Identification**
- **External Considering**
- **Conscious Labor & Intentional Suffering**



*Icon of Saint Ephraim the Syrian*

# Embodied Practices of Kenosis

- Prostration in Prayer
- Yin/Restorative Yoga
- Breathwork
- Sacred Dance
- Gurdjieff Movements
- Massage Therapy
- Myofascial Release

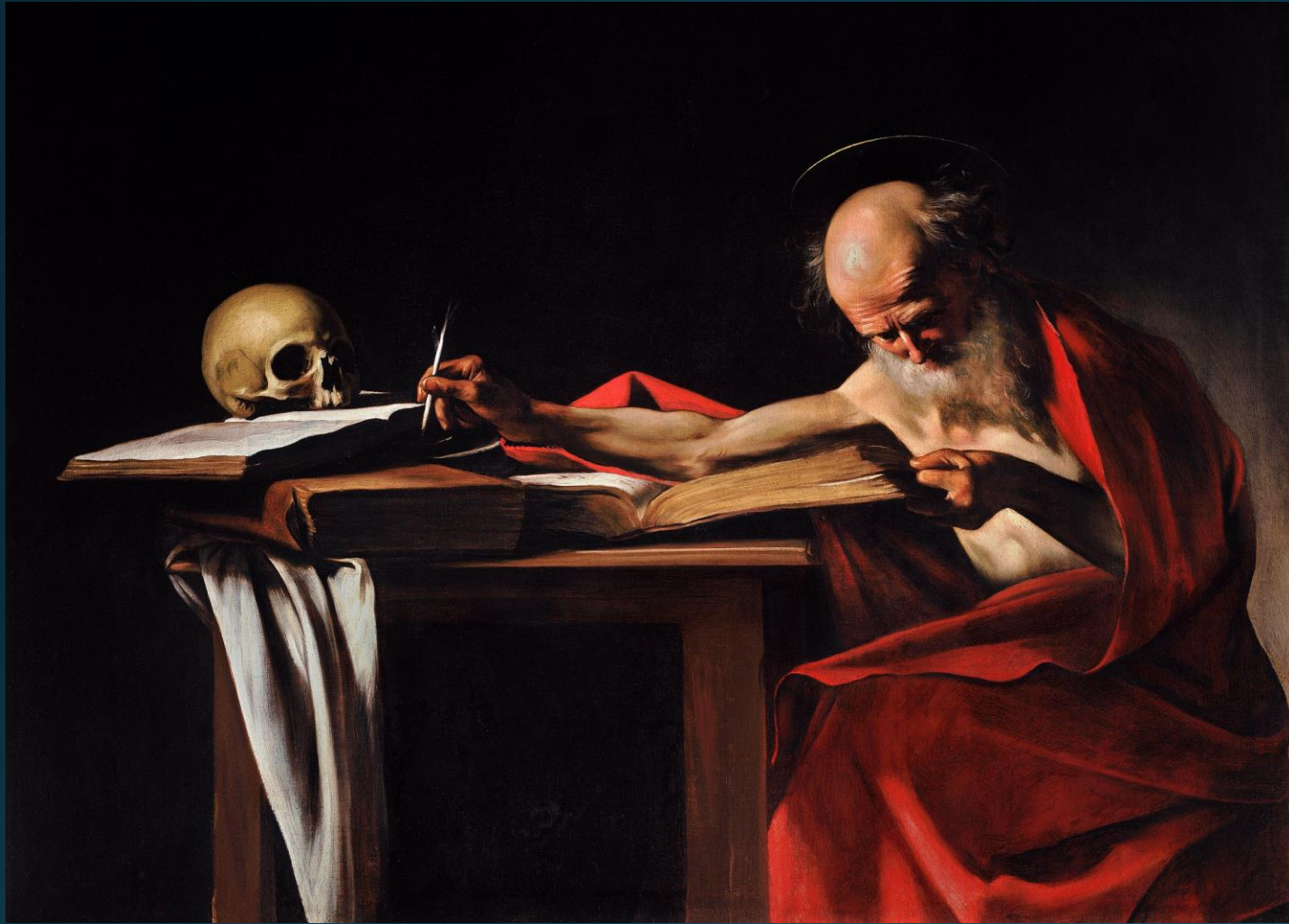
# The Practice of Kenotic Service

Kenosis, or self-emptying love, is another way of expressing contemplative service. It is love that gives itself away for love's sake. We learn how hard it is to do this when we attempt it and we recognize our limitations as givers and receivers.

Participation in contemplative service helps us to realize ourselves as servants and follow the model of Jesus. Attempting to serve in love, we get a small glimpse of what is not love within us, of what needs to be emptied from us.

*The Contemplative Life Program: Contemplative Service*





*Saint Jerome Writing* by Caravaggio, 1605

## Memento Mori

“Mortem cotidie ante oculos suspectam habere”

“Keep death daily before one’s eyes.”

*- The Rule of St. Benedict, Chapter 4: The Tools of Good Works*

# The Pattern & Promise of *Resurrected Life*

