

## What is contemplative dialogue?

It's a contemplative way of being together; a way of engaging meaningful conversations that are rooted in deep listening ... We listen from an inner silence that allows a space, an openness where something new can emerge.

We come together in a circle of peers, of equals (where no one is an expert, no one is teaching, dominating, persuading). We come with the intention of creating "a field of presence and love" by grounding our awareness in our hearts, our Source, our interiority.

And at the same time, we offer ourselves wholeheartedly to creating communion in this circle as we intentionally listen for something new to emerge. We listen deeply to learn what **WE** think and we listen for new possibilities to arise.

### Skills needed:

- contemplative **listening**: means listening with receptivity and without judgment — a listening that is inwardly quiet; reverently present. We focus on the person speaking ... avoid crosstalk that is, addressing or responding to a person in the circle.
- contemplative **speaking**: means speaking briefly ... saying what really matters to you, sharing what is arising in the present moment. We speak from our center, briefly, what really matters, what I think, feel—a few sentences—then STOP.
- intentionally **creating a WE** space among us as we enter into conversation (dialogue) by listening to, responding and building on one another's thoughts.

### The process: "Guardian of the Process"

- begin with a few moments of **silence** centering ourselves,
  - creating an openness within
  - focus the attention of the group on a particular issue / Scripture / etc.
  - pose a question for all to ponder
- first round – **listening**
  - each person is invited to share their distilled thoughts using an economy of words
  - an individual may pass
  - allow a pause for everyone to reflect on what has been said
- second round – **listening**
  - each person may add to s/he said
  - an individual may pass
  - allow a pause for everyone to reflect on what has been said
- third round – **dialogue**, conversation **creating a WE**
  - an opportunity to respond – either to what we ourselves said or to what another has said, a reflective conversation
  - use an economy of words
  - pause before adding another piece

*Adapting and blending LCWR's "Contemplative Dialogue" with the "Sacred Circle Process"*

