



Image by Mary Southard

**The Dominican Sisters of Hope**  
invite you to join with them in exploring

***Unity from the Depths:  
A Contemplative Response to Personal and Collective Division***

*Unitive consciousness—the awareness that we are all one in Love  
—lays a solid foundation for social critique and acts of justice.*

Richard Rohr

In these tumultuous times of inner and outer conflict we wonder how our world might come to a place where healing might begin. More than ever, a contemplative approach, which embraces a countercultural stance that acknowledges a unitive consciousness among all creation, is necessary. By compassionately holding and not turning from the reality of our own conflicted feelings and internal divisions, we can begin to permit the current political and social divisiveness to break us open and lead us to fruitful choices of action.

*This online series, presented by Mariandale Center's Contemplative Formation Program team members, is commissioned and sponsored by the Dominican Sisters of Hope, who believe that a contemplative response to polarization is the evolutionary and critical way toward greater unity.*

Four reflective online mornings may be taken individually or as a whole.

Dates, topics, and facilitators/presenters:

9:00 – 12:30:

**Saturday, May 22: *Discovering New Paths to Reconciliation and Unity in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century***

- Gaynell Cronin and Jack Rathschmidt, OFM Cap.

*Honestly acknowledging the Dark Clouds that he sees dividing us as sisters and brothers, Pope Francis, in his letter **Fratelli Tutti (We are all Brothers and Sisters)**, offers us a pathway not only to insight but action. Naming the struggles in our families, church, nation and world, this reflection morning will explore how Pope Francis' plea for solidarity across national, racial and cultural divides can be a guide for our own conversion and hope.*

**Sunday, June 13: *Living from the Depths: from Chaos to Union***

- Don Bisson, FMS and Janet Corso

*In these dangerous and challenging times, to live superficially and not plummet to depths leaves us vulnerable to projections, rigidity and false innocence. The contemplative way is to penetrate deeper than the shadows and fears to a place of peace which the world cannot provide. Mere religious observations are inadequate. This topic will be an opportunity in contemplative awareness to touch into the deeper Mystery.*

**Saturday, September 25: *St. Francis of Assisi: A Model of Union and Reconciliation***

- Jack Rathschmidt, OFM, Cap and Don Bisson, FMS

*Born into a feudal society, St. Francis is both an historical figure and a mythological one. Credited with challenging the ruling class (majori) to be more just to the poor and lowly (minori) Francis has been a model of peace, reconciliation and lover of all creation. Using the writings of Francis and his first followers, we will search for ways to apply his contemplative practices and wisdom to our contemporary situation.*

**Sunday, October 24: *Contemplative Prayer and Practices: Healing the Wounds of Division***

- Gaynell Cronin and Janet Corso

*Our usual prayer and spiritual practices may seem inadequate in the face of our own feelings of powerlessness and the large wounds of and brokenness evident in our country and the world. How might we be a contemplative and healing presence willing to stay with our own woundedness, and be transformed ourselves in order to best serve others? During this time together we will explore specifically how prayer and practices can be courageous contemplative acts of healing.*

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