

Spiritual Formation in Today's World:
A One-Year Online Offering from The Academy for Spiritual Formation

Session One: February 25-27, 2021 (Thurs – Sat)

Topic: Meeting God in Our Longing

Faculty: Amy Oden

Course Description:

*Don't ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you come alive and go do it.
Because what the world needs is people who have come alive.*
—Howard Thurman

Session One of “Spiritual Formation in Today’s World” invites pilgrims to connect with their deepest longings, desires, and dreams in order to begin re-imagining the world God so loves. We cannot connect with our deepest desires if we’re worn out, exhausted, and participating in grind culture, so pilgrims will be invited to engage practices of Christian mindfulness, to disconnect from that which drains their minds, bodies, and souls, and to re-connect with the ancient wisdom of our ancestors that leads us to green pastures for the sake of God’s kin-dom come on earth as it is in heaven.

Session Two: May 20-22, 2021 (Thurs – Sat)

Topic: Meeting God in Our Healing

Faculty: Safiyah Fosua

Course Description:

When we become aware that we do not have to escape our pains, but that we can mobilize them into a common search for life, those very pains are transformed from expressions of despair into signs of hope.
—Henri Nouwen

Session Two of “Spiritual Formation in Today’s World” invites pilgrims to delve deep into individual and communal healing for the sake of the world. We cannot heal the world without first healing ourselves, so pilgrims will be invited to explore the interconnectedness of personal healing with communal healing, discovering ways to marry the two. Drawing from the ancient and contemporary wisdom of the Christian tradition, Session Two will help pilgrims embrace their grief and pain, not to rid themselves of it, but, instead, to learn from it toward the restoration of heart, mind, body, and soul.

Session Three: Aug 19-21, 2021 (Thurs – Sat)

Topic: Meeting God in Our Reconciling

Faculty: Ray Buckley

Course Description:

The willingness to listen, on both sides, is the beginning of reconciliation.

—Dr. Barbara A. Holmes

Radical self-love demands that we see ourselves and others in the fullness of our complexities and intersections and that we work to create space for those intersections.

—Sonya Renee Taylor

Session Three of “Spiritual Formation in Today’s World” will build upon the deep healing and dreaming that took place in Sessions One and Two, inviting pilgrims to understand reconciliation as radical self-love, as the unabashed embrace of “complexities and intersections” of ourselves, others, and the world. Through practices that invite unique ways of creating space, listening to ourselves and others, and understanding community dynamics, pilgrims will return to the essence of reconciliation as a place of meeting the Other in God’s love.

Session Four: Nov 4-6, 2021 (Thurs – Sat)

Session Four Topic: Meeting God in Our Justice-Seeking

Faculty: Luther Smith

Course Description:

To refuse to participate in the shaping of our future is to give it up. Do not be misled into passivity either by false security (they don't mean me) or by despair (there's nothing we can do). Each of us must find our work and do it.

—Audre Lorde

Session Four of “Spiritual Formation in Today’s World” will invite pilgrims to explore ways of seeking justice grounded in God’s hope and vision for the world. Inviting “active participation in the shaping of the future” (as Audre Lorde so eloquently invites) will marry the healing, longing, and reconciling work of the previous three sessions and help pilgrims develop concrete actions for embodying justice, love, and peace in their daily lives.