



I suddenly saw that all the time it was not I who had been seeking God, but God who had been seeking me. I had made myself the centre of my own existence and had my back turned to God.

—Bede Griffiths (The Golden String)

ॐ भूर् भुवः सुवः
तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यं
भर्गो देवस्यधीमहि
धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात्

Om bhur bhuvah suvah
Tatsaviturvarenyam
Bhargo devasyadhimahi
Diyo yo nah prachodayat.



Let us meditate on the
glorious splendor
Of the Divine Light
And may that Light enlighten
Our meditation

— The Gayatri Mantra
From the Rig Veda



Sangha Shantivanam of Santa Cruz

MISSION STATEMENT

We are a welcoming spiritual community, rooted in the Christian tradition, promoting the Universal Call to Contemplation.

Drawing on the wisdom inherent in all the world's spiritual traditions, we seek to understand the experience of Ultimate Reality and to become a sign of unity and an instrument of peace.

OUR VISION AND PRACTICE

We aim to follow the monastic ideal of a contemplative life lived in community and a communal life that leads to contemplation. We study and discuss the texts of wisdom traditions and spiritual teachers to increase understanding, peace and well-being in order to serve one another in the sangha community and the greater world. With a focus on prayer and meditation, we encourage each other to commit to daily spiritual practice, attendance at Sangha meetings (virtual and in-person), and spiritual and financial support of the sangha.

HISTORY



Sangha Shantivanam was formed in Santa Cruz, California in 2005 under the guidance of Fr. Cyprian Consiglio, OSB, cam. currently Prior of the New Camaldoli Hermitage in Big Sur:

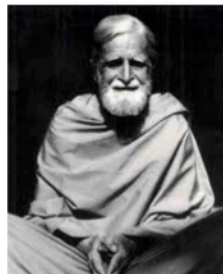
It has become more and more clear that, aside from their very presence, silent as it may be, monks and contemplatives are called to share with the world and the church today the way of contemplative prayer; the way of meditation. It is the main gift they have to offer.

*Prayer in the Cave of the Heart:
The Universal Call to Contemplation
—Cyprian Consiglio*

We are a group of about 25 active members (as well as auxiliary) who meet twice monthly in person and virtually on Zoom, to read and study sacred texts, to practice meditation and participate in local peacemaking efforts.

WHAT WE DO

Our meetings are built around a prayer service, developed by Fr. Cyprian, and based on that of Fr. Bede Griffiths from Shantivanam in Tamil Nadu, India. Fr. Bede was a Benedictine monk and priest who became a leader in the development of East-West dialogue bringing the wisdom of The East and its focus on meditation to the West, helping Christianity rediscover its contemplative roots as expressed in the early desert mothers and fathers.



Our liturgy includes opening Sanskrit chants, followed by a reading from universal wisdom, an opening prayer, chanting of psalms, and reading the Gospel. We invite guest teachers to deepen our study of particular texts we are studying together. Every gathering includes a period of silent meditation. We close with intercessory prayers and metta. We also meet twice yearly for extended retreats which include deeper study of a text we are reading, practice of yoga and time for silence and contemplation.



Sangha Shantivanam hosts an annual Interfaith New Year's Eve Vigil for Peace as well as participates in other interfaith efforts initiated in our local community such as "The Tent of Abraham." A small group from our sangha made a pilgrimage with Fr. Cyprian to Shantivanam in India in 2007. We have hosted fundraising events to support charities both in India as well as other parts of the world. We have several yoga and Tai Chi teachers in the group who lead small classes.

HOW WE ARE ORGANIZED

A small service committee of members helps to facilitate our course of study, invite guest speakers, organize retreats and manage organizational needs. This leadership group meets monthly and all meetings are open.

We have a small, but excellent library for members. Books are catalogued and managed by volunteers. Sangha Shantivanam is a 501c3 non-profit organization and all contributions are tax deductible. We depend on member contributions to sustain our work.

WHAT WE HAVE STUDIED

Over the years, we have read and studied together the sacred texts of Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Sufism, Judaism, Native American, and The Divine Feminine Spirituality. Many local clergy and guest teachers have come to speak with us about their faith and sacred texts. We have studied the writings of many of the great mystics in Christianity both foundational and contemporary as well as mystical poets and artists. A bibliography of suggested reading is available.

*We are a welcoming community and invite you to
check us out on Zoom or in person when we meet together.*

For more information and zoom link to our meetings email: bgsangha1@gmail.com