



Dear friends of the Center,

In church jargon, we use the word “encounter” to mean an experience of Christ or God. What does such encounter look like in reality?

As a youth, I frequently hiked the White Mountains of New Hampshire. Sitting atop rocky summits and appreciating the scenic vistas below me, I inevitably experienced a deep abiding sense of peace, love, and joy. As a young adult, I experienced this same spiritual presence while watching sunsets on the north shore of Oahu and the beaches of Lake Michigan. It wasn't until much later that I understood

these experiences as deep and intimate personal encounters with God.

To this day, I continue to experience similar encounters of God through nature. I also encounter Christ in other forms of silence and solitude. I often encounter God during Mass. Yet sometimes I'm not fully present, and the spiritual experience falls flat. I most frequently encounter God in prayer while walking my dog each morning. But I don't have the same degree of encounter during our evening walks as I wrestle with the day's details. I experience rich encounters with God as I meditate on daily scriptures and discuss them with Christ. Yet, no encounter seems to occur on days when I hastily read the gospel running out the door late for work.

How do I distinguish between what is true encounter and what is not? Sometimes it's a feeling. Other times there is no feeling, yet I am vaguely aware of having encountered God. For me, the distinguishing mark of genuine encounter with God is *love*. This characteristic *mark of love* involves two elements. The first involves my personal awareness that I am loved. Even amidst sadness, pain, and suffering, I have often been able to experience God's love. Sometimes that love comes through other people like my wife.

The second element involves how I am inspired to respond with loving action. After all, love begets love. When I am open and receive God's love, I am empowered to love others more genuinely and concretely. My thoughts, words and deeds show how I have chosen to love God, his creation, and his creatures. This loving choice includes my conversations and behaviors with family, friends, members of the various tribes to which I belong, and total strangers.

What does an encounter with God actually look like? The ways are infinite and varied. However, evidence of true encounter is found in how we receive and respond to Christ's love, in what we say and how we say it, and by how we collaborate in fostering God's kingdom on earth.

Thank you for your prayerful support and financial partnership in the Center's mission to reach out with the love of God – our Holy and Triune God who wants everyone to encounter him. May you encounter Christ daily and may that encounter inspire you to share your love with the world around you.

Christ's Peace and Joy to your hearts always,



Sean Donovan  
Director of Religious Education

*Pray for :*

**Brundige Family  
Rabineau Family  
Reuter Family  
Tyson Steigmeyer**

**September Mass for  
CIC Intentions:  
Sunday, September 11  
5:30 p.m. at the  
Cathedral**

*Please include your prayer intentions with your green envelope or email them to [cicoffice@catholicinformationcenter.org](mailto:cicoffice@catholicinformationcenter.org)*

# Upcoming Programs

**Finding Flow - A Field Guide to Discover Inner Peace, Balance, and Wholeness**  
**Tuesday, September 13,**  
**7-8:30 p.m. EST**  
**Presented by Brian Plachta**  
**Join us in-person or online**  
**Registration required**



What does inner peace look like to you? How do you feel when you experience wholeness? Unpack these questions and discover a field guide for making a personal spiritual journey to your inner self and God. Learn four ancient practices that spiritual teachers incorporated into their lives to live in the Divine Flow. Presented by Brian Plachta, spiritual mentor, and author of Finding Flow - Spiritual Practices to Reclaim Inner Peace, Balance, and Wholeness (Paulist Press).

**55 Plus Series: What the Camino Taught Me about Life**  
**Thursday, September 15,**  
**10-11:30 a.m. EST**  
**Presented by Fr. Dat Tran, CSP**  
**\$15 donation suggested, lunch included**  
**Registration required**



Before moving to Grand Rapids, Father Dat Tran, the new rector at the Cathedral spent the spring and summer walking the length of the Camino de Santiago. Join Father Dat for a reflection on pilgrimage as a way of living everyday as a Christian disciple. This presentation is part of the 55plus series, exploring spirituality and vitality in the second half of life.

**Interfaith Celebration of Peace**  
**Sunday, Sept. 18, 2-3:30 p.m. EST**  
**Join us in-person**

In anticipation of the International Day of Peace, observed annually on September 21, the Institute for Global Education will co-host a panel of speakers reflecting on the theme of "End racism. Build peace." Achieving true peace entails more than laying down arms. It requires building societies where all members feel that they can flourish and creating a world in which people are treated equally. All are welcome. Co-sponsored by the Catholic Information Center and the Institute for Global Education.



**¡Inscripciones abiertas ahora!**

El Instituto de Formación de Liderazgo para el Ministerio Hispano brinda a los líderes laicos la oportunidad de aprender más sobre la fe y desarrollar las habilidades y actitudes necesarias para mejorar su capacidad de ejercer el ministerio dentro de su comunidad parroquial. El instituto se centrará en cuatro áreas de formación: humana, intelectual, espiritual y pastoral.

Para más información y registrarse:  
[www.catholicinformationcenter.org](http://www.catholicinformationcenter.org)

Your gifts through the enclosed envelope make it possible for adults to learn, celebrate, live and pray the Catholic Faith.

Please consider signing up for regular monthly donations through online giving at [bit.ly/CICGive](http://bit.ly/CICGive)

**Thank you!**



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**For more information, visit [catholicinformationcenter.org](http://catholicinformationcenter.org) or call (616) 459-7267**

# Save the Date

# 2022 Gallagher Talk

**Featuring Father Steven Bell, CSP**

**Thursday, November 10**

**Cathedral Square Center, Grand Rapids**

