

**For Immediate Release**

November 6, 2017

**Contact: Mary Ann Brussat**

Brussat@SpiritualityandPractice.com

917-748-1575

**New Project Identifies Spiritual Practices  
to Strengthen and Deepen American Democracy**

The Practicing Democracy Project, a collaboration between The Center for Spirituality & Practice and the Fetzer Institute, launched this month with a new Internet presence and plans to engage a wide variety of people in shaping America's democracy.

The Project is based upon the assumption that democracy is more than a system of government. It is a way of life that flourishes when people are united around a shared spiritual and moral vision of what America could be. This commitment to the common good transcends ideology, race, and class.

"During and after the 2016 presidential election, we've seen increased interest among people along all points of the political spectrum in what makes a democracy work well and what can hinder it," says Mary Ann Brussat, the Project Director. "People want to be more involved. This renewed interest fits with our belief that the truest measure of a democracy's health is how well it is practiced. It's an inside-out endeavor. We start with inner work which prepares us to be more effective in our outer work in our communities."

The Project is identifying spiritual practices that support essential civic virtues like courtesy, generosity, diversity, and service. Other practices deal with obstacles that depress democracy such as apathy, fear of strangers, and violence. "These practices come from all of us and can help us grow," explains Michelle Scheidt, the Program Officer for the Project at the Fetzer Institute. "With them we can cultivate sacred connections with our neighbors and build a shared vision for a flourishing society."

---

. 223 West Foothill Blvd., 2nd Floor

Claremont • CA • 91711

909 • 447 • 8800

Supplementing practice instructions are collections of quotes about democracy, recommended books with excerpts, films that touch on pivotal moments in American history, articles, prayers, and more. The Project will curate resources for different constituencies, providing program plans for congregations, schools, businesses, advocacy groups, government agencies, and more.

These resources are being hosted on The Practicing Democracy Project website:  
[www.PracticingDemocracy.net](http://www.PracticingDemocracy.net)

The main site also points to topic pages on such key elements of democracy as Civility, Resilience, and Respect. The initial plans are for a two-year project with Practicing Democracy Fellows joining the Spirituality & Practice team to curate resources.

The Center for Spirituality & Practice, located in Claremont, California, runs a multifaith website ([www.SpiritualityandPractice.com](http://www.SpiritualityandPractice.com)) providing resources for spiritual journeys. They are the leading source of online spirituality e-courses and have a 40,000-page wisdom archive of book and film reviews, profiles of spiritual teachers, articles on spiritual practices, spiritual quotes, and more.

The Fetzer Institute, located in Kalamazoo, Michigan, is a growing community of people that believes the connection between the inner life of spirit and outer life of service and action holds the key to lasting change. At the Institute and as individuals, they seek to help build the spiritual foundation for a loving world.

A twice-a-month email from The Practicing Democracy Project will provide updates on the newest content on the website and community programs underway.

###