



HOMECOMING

Bethany Retreat House

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LONGING FOR GOD, OUR ADVENT PRAYER by Joyce Diltz, PHJC

I really like the season of Advent and I delight and take comfort in the many prophecies of what life will be like in God's reign. My heart beats a little faster when I hear the promises of God-with-us. What a precious gift that God chose to live among us! And what a joy to ponder these mysteries each year as the daylight grows shorter and the days grow colder.

The liturgical readings of Advent remind us of God's promises and give us images of what life will be like when God's reign comes in fulness. In chapter 30, vs. 19-21, Isaiah says, ". . . no more will you weep. [God] will be gracious to you when you cry out, as soon as God hears, God will answer you. The Lord will give you the bread you need and the water for which you thirst. No longer will your Teacher hide himself, but with your own eyes you shall see your Teacher, while from behind, a voice

shall sound in your ears: 'This is the way; walk in it. . . .'" Isaiah shows us a God who cares about us, who listens to us and responds, a God who guides us. This is our God for whom we long, our God who lives among us but is too often not perceived, not noticed. Advent invites us to *notice* God-with-us, to watch for God's presence, and to follow God's loving guidance. May the images in the Advent scriptures comfort and console us and encourage us as we long for God's coming among us in fulness. God is here, but not yet fully. Jesus established God's reign among us, and yet our brokenness and divisions keep us from fully living in that reign.

In so many painful situations, we ache for God to be with us – in divisions among us, in the inability of peoples and politicians to find common ground, in the violence we do to one another, in death that comes too soon or too close.

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BETHANY OFFERINGS

Despite our best efforts to the contrary, many people do not know what Bethany Retreat House has to offer the local community. Please help us spread the word about these opportunities available at the retreat house:

Daytime 9:00-5:00 personal retreat. Stop the busy world for a day of quiet attentiveness to God and to your deepest longings. Bethany offers silent space in which to catch up with your inner self. Use the time to read, pray, journal, rest. Spiritual direction can also be part of your day away.

Ongoing monthly dream group. If you are interested in exploring your night dreams in community, a new dream group is forming to meet on the third Wednesday evening of each month from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. See www.bethanyretreathouse.org to access our dream flyer for more information and a registration form.

Ongoing spiritual direction. If you long for meaning in life or desire help learning to pray, if you want assistance sifting through the pros and cons of an important life decision, if you genuinely want to deepen your spiritual life and want help to do so, or if you find yourself hungry for more than the Ten Commandments and the rules of the Church can provide for your life as a person of faith, ongoing spiritual direction may be what you are seeking. Call Sr. Joyce to begin the conversation.

BRH BOOKSHELF



These recent titles will delight and inspire people on your Christmas list:

- Chittister, Joan. *In God's Holy Light: Wisdom from the Desert Monastics*. Franciscan Media, 2015, \$22.99
- Irish Jesuits. *Sacred Space, The Prayer Book 2016*. Loyola Press, 2015, \$15.95
- *Love is Our Mission: Pope Francis in America*. Franciscan Media, 2015, \$19.99
- Manney, Jim. *Ignatian Book of Days*. Loyola Press, 2014, \$12.95
- Martin, James. *The Abbey*. Harper One, 2015, book \$24.99, audio \$29.99
- Morneau, Robert F. *Living Prayer, A Simple Guide to Everyday Enlightenment*. Franciscan Media, 2015, \$14.99
- O'Murchu, Diarmud. *Inclusivity: a Gospel Mandate*. Orbis Books, 2015, \$22
- Roberts, Tom. *Joan Chittister: Her Journey from Certainty to Faith*. Orbis Books, 2015, \$25
- Rolheiser, Ronald. *Sacred Fire*. Image Books, 2014, \$25
- Sanders, Annmarie, ed. *Transformational Leadership: Conversations with the Leadership Conference of Women Religious*. Orbis Books, 2015, \$20

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(Ancilla Domini Sisters, Inc.)
congregation of women religious.

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S CHAIR

by Joyce Diltz, PHJC



I am always aware of the seasons as I write this column, and I marvel at how quickly they pass, one flowing into another. In nature, there is much more darkness this time of year, and I see the many Christmas lights on people's homes as our human stand against the night – Let it be dark! We will turn even that into something festive and joyous! In a different way, isn't that what we ponder and celebrate in the weeks ahead – our God who comes as light into the darkness of our winter, both literally and figuratively? May our eyes be open and our hearts expectant – in our daily living, in our prayer, in our physical preparations for Christmas.

Thanks to all who participated in our annual autumn tea in October – by attending or donating prizes, by baking or working in the kitchen, by serving on the committee. It was a lovely day celebrating God's abundance on so many levels.

We are gathering people for a new dream group. Details are on page one. If you would like to explore your night dreams in community with others, you could do well to join us. As we hear the Advent scripture readings, notice how many dreams were given for guidance in these stories!

Perhaps you might include a daytime retreat in your Advent observance. Stepping out of the busy-ness of the season for a day can shift our perspective and help us better hear the "still small voice within."

With this newsletter you are also receiving our annual appeal letter. Your donations help us meet our operating expenses in continuing to welcome and accompany people who desire to recognize and heed God's "voice within." We are deeply grateful for whatever contribution you are able to make.

May your Advent days increase your longing for God and your Christmas season be rich in experiences of God-with-us!

IN MEMORY OF

Catherine Gasior

by Bernie and Nancy Baltrushaitis

Zeke Godinez

by Martha and R. Louie Gonzalez

Carlos Godinez

by Martha and R. Louie Gonzalez

Josephine Vasquez

by Martha and R. Louie Gonzalez

IN HONOR OF

Sr. Jeanette Schutte, PHJC

by Sr. Mary Carolyn Welhoelter, PHJC

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We long for God's coming in fulness to help us reverence one another, to honor and trust those who are different from us, to live lives full of love and devoid of violence. It is this longing that Advent helps us feel consciously and give expression to. It is into this longing that our God comes to live among us. May we be awake to God's coming with our eyes open and our hearts responsive!