



HOMECOMING

Bethany Retreat House

Volume 7, Number 3

December 2004

SHAWL MINISTRY FORMS

by Sue Rogers, RSCJ

A number of years ago *Presence*, the journal of Spiritual Directors International, ran an article on the shawl-knitting ministry. The article was a spark that got a lot of groups forming across the globe for the purpose of making shawls to give to specific individuals as a prayerful, tangible way to bring comfort in life's challenging times. The Gary diocesan paper, the *Northwest Indiana Catholic*, recently chronicled one such group in northwest Indiana. The SDI article has evolved into a book co-authored by Susan Jorgensen and Susan Izzard.

"Everyone seems to be knitting these days; it's *the* handcraft of the hour." If you agree with Susan Jorgensen, you may also be interested in her spirituality of knitting. In her book, *Knitting into the Mystery*, Susan suggests that knitting prayer shawls is a contemplative activity that enables the recipient of the shawl "to encounter God's love in a tangible way." Susan has called together many shawl-knitting groups and feels that knitting can be a ministry that sweeps both the knitter and the receiver into God's healing energy.

Does this idea appeal to you? Do you know someone in need of spiritual or physical healing that you'd like to help? Would you like to be part of a shawl-making group?

Bethany is gathering a group to participate in the shawl-making ministry. Crocheters as well as knitters are welcome. Patterns are available and some experience with knitting or crocheting is necessary. The group will meet on a regular basis to knit and crochet God's love into shawls for those who need healing, strength, and comfort. If you'd like to join, please call the Bethany office at 219-398-5047. Details of the group will form around those who are interested in participating.

SPECIAL CHRISTMAS SHOPPING EVENT

Stop by the retreat house Saturday, December 18, for Bethany's annual Christmas shopping event from 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.! Pick up last-minute gifts and register for a \$20 gift certificate drawing held at 3:30 p.m. (Winner need not be present.) Peruse a large selection of books discounted 40 percent.

Gifts from Bethany feed the souls of those you care about and help support the ministry of the retreat house.

See page 2 for special seasonal discount coupon.

CHOICES

by Carol Slager

It is my choice as I greet the day,
To extend a heart filled with warmth
And a smile of compassion.

It is my choice to affirm more,
Condemn less, be humble,
Accept those who are different.

It is my choice to still any anger,
pray first, speak second,
Forgive and let go.

It is my choice to lend an ear of empathy
To a grieving friend,
And carry the spirit of Christmas throughout the
year.

It is my choice to send a note,
Make the call, say thank you,
appreciate everything.

It is my choice to plant the flowers,
Share my joy,
And let God take care of the weeds.

It is my choice to acknowledge that there is purpose
To everyone and everything,
Yet I see only a piece of the panoramic view.

It is my choice to encourage and love,
Giving life the best of me,
To best make a difference in my world.

First published in *Catalyst Literary Journal*, Volume Three, Issue One, March 2004 and at www.catalystlj.tripod.com.

Carol Slager of Schererville, IN, is wife and mother of two boys. She is a registered pharmacist and a member of the Visitation women's group that meets monthly at Bethany.

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S CHAIR

by Joyce Diltz, PHJC



It is with a sense of loss for Bethany and for me personally that I share the news that Laura Garza has moved on to full-time employment elsewhere. Her gentle presence, welcoming smile, and many office talents are sorely missed.

We welcome Anecia Ventura to Bethany as she joins the office staff. She will introduce herself in the next issue.

Two friends of Bethany have gone home to God since our last newsletter. Tim Galvin, a frequent visitor to the retreat house and an enthusiastic benefactor, died of complications from surgery in July. Dottie Budzik, one of the "quilting ladies" from Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church who periodically help sew the gift-wrap bags found in the bookstore here, died in September after a long illness. We offer our prayers for them and their families and friends as we savor fond memories of each of them.

As our world prepares for Christmas, we at Bethany Retreat House want to let you know about Christmas-related opportunities here: our Advent daytime retreat gift certificate promotion, a special bookstore Christmas shopping event, and some bookstore sales on location for the rest of the year. We hope an Advent retreat might be part of your Advent preparation for Christmas and that your gift-list will include some soul-nourishing gifts from our bookstore and retreat offerings.

My best wishes to you and yours for a blessed Christmas season and a new year full of peace and joy!

COMPLIMENTARY ADVENT GIFT CERTIFICATES

The retreat house is pleased to offer complimentary gift certificates for a private Advent daytime retreat with lunch to first-time guests at Bethany. These retreats will be individually scheduled upon request until December 22. A typical daytime retreat at Bethany provides each retreatant with a silent environment and private room for reflection, prayer, rest, and journaling; use of the retreat house library of books, conference tapes, magazines and videos; use of the chapel; and access to Bethany's kitchen for snacks and a simple lunch. Spiritual direction is available for the usual sliding scale stipend of \$40-60 per session but is not included in the complimentary package. These sessions need to be scheduled at the time of registration.

These complimentary gift certificates are available either for one's self or for a friend or loved one. Please call the office at 219-398-5047 to arrange for one of these gift certificates.

Because of his boundless love,
Jesus became what we are that
he might make us to be what
he is.

Irenaeus
Third Century

BOOK SALES ON LOCATION

In an effort to foster the practice of spiritual reading, Bethany Retreat House frequently takes the bookstore to parish, diocesan, and other events. We are currently scheduled to bring the bookstore to the following parishes for the weekend liturgies:

Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Hammond
January 29-30
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Valparaiso
February 5-6
St. Paul, Valparaiso
February 19-20

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Bethany Retreat House
is a ministry of the
Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ
congregation of women religious.

BETHANY AWARDED LAPTOP GRANT

The retreat house is the happy recipient of a new Dell Inspiron 8600 laptop computer and a Hewlett Packard 1100 printer. Awarded by the East Chicago Community Development Foundation, Inc., this laptop serves as a workstation during office hours and provides computer access for the director during time away from the office. The retreat house is very grateful to the foundation for awarding this grant.

Bethany Retreat House Bookstore Coupon

This coupon entitles bearer to 10 percent off one purchase of \$50 or more in regularly-priced in-stock bookstore merchandise.

Good only at the
2202 Lituania Avenue location.

One coupon per customer.

No copies accepted.

Valid through December 23, 2004.

BRH BOOKSHELF



And Morning Came: Scriptures for the Resurrection

Megan McKenna, Sheed & Ward, 2003, \$24.95.

Reviewed by Deborah Ormechea

Those familiar with the works of Megan McKenna will truly appreciate this latest work. For those unfamiliar with her work I would like to give a very short biography so that the reader will understand the depth of her knowledge, wisdom, compassion, and understanding, "Megan McKenna is an internationally known author, lecturer, retreat leader, and spiritual director" (book jacket). She received her doctorate from the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, Calif., and has taught and worked in the United States and many other countries. McKenna was made an Ambassador of Peace by Pax Christi in 2001.

When Sister Joyce asked me to review this book I was quite puzzled because here we are, focusing on the end of the summer and the end of the year, already preparing for the winter soon to come. I was being asked to shift my focus to the scriptures of the resurrection, something we normally do in the spring.

After prayerful reading and reflection I began to understand that this book is worthy of our attention at any time of year and, in fact, reminds us of the many deaths and resurrections we encounter almost daily. Staggering statistics and frightening accounts of national and international events will surely influence our prayer life and deepen our respect and compassion for those whose lives are shared throughout the pages.

Through McKenna's theological reflections on the Gospels and Acts of the Apostles, interspersed with wonderful stories from many different cultures, we are better able to understand the apostles and disciples, the evolving Christian community, the many communities surrounding the new Christians, and many of the cultured communities throughout the world. We are also better able to understand that hope is something all humans grasp for and count on. Forgiveness, death, and resurrection are part of our everyday existence.

"There is a short, marvelous Japanese poem to help us to remember how we are to live:

I fall down

I get up

I fall down

All the while I am dancing" (pg. 155).

While *And Morning Came* may not be an easy book to read it is certainly worth your consideration, and I highly recommend it as a Christmas gift – either to yourself or to someone you love.

This and many other fine books can be purchased through Bethany Retreat House bookstore: 219-398-5047.

Deborah Ormechea lives in Flint, Michigan. Married and the mother of four children, she has many years of experience in parish ministry, religious education, and spiritual direction.

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## WITH HEARTFELT THANKS TO OUR RECENT DONORS:

Anonymous  
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As part of your Christmas gift-giving,  
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from Bethany's bookstore:  
books, music CDs, talks on tape,  
calendars, crosses,  
and  
volunteer-made tote and gift-wrap bags and  
quilted sweatshirts.

Gift certificates are available  
for retreats and for bookstore items.

Call 219-398-5047 for details.



Do you long for space and quiet  
in which to pray?  
Would you like an encouraging presence  
in spiritual direction?

Come to Bethany ~ *a place away close by.*

219-398-5047

[www.bethanyretreathouse.org](http://www.bethanyretreathouse.org)