



# Homecoming

Bethany Retreat House

Volume 14, Number 4

December 2010

## Advent Season Invites Going Deeper

by Joyce Diltz, PHJC

As so often happens, Thanksgiving weekend this year was also the first Sunday of Advent. Those of us who take to heart the season of Advent find ourselves living in two worlds as it were, the American cultural/material world of the Christmas season that Thanksgiving annually ushers in, and the spiritual season of Advent with its invitation to watch and wait in preparation for the Lord's coming.

It takes some inner gymnastics to live simultaneously in both worlds, and I confess that I have been pretty unsuccessful at embracing both at once. Because of some past times of experiencing Advent alone for four weeks – without Christmas simultaneously – and then moving whole-heartedly into the Christmas season on Christmas Eve, I have had a hard time ever since embracing holiday decorations and Christmas music and Christmas parties much before December 25.

As a struggling advent lover who also lives in the United States where the economy depends on an early and enthusiastic shopping season, I am trying to straddle the gap between the “American Christmas season” and the liturgical season of Advent, the latter of which has the capacity to feed our souls at deep levels as we move gently toward the liturgical feast and season of Christmas.

Advent invites us to look forward to the three comings of Christ: his historical birth, his presence among us now, and his coming in glory at the end of time. We live Advent and Christmas with a keen sense of the gift of Jesus' birth, of the mystery and the tenderness, the warmth, the sign of God's great love made visible in our midst.

Many of us focus exclusively on the image of the Child in our experience of this season. But there is much richness for us to look deeply into our days to discover the God who lives among us today, in the stuff of our lives, in our relationships, in our prayer, in the inner stirrings that inspire, encourage, unsettle, and invite us to more than we would know or do on our own. It is this

experience of God-with-us that the term “Emmanuel” describes. It is primarily in this arena of daily human life that we long for and discover and know God present among us. It is God's great gift to us, God's beloved people, that God continues to live and move among us, 2000-plus years after Jesus' birth.

We simultaneously live with a deep desire for God's coming in fulness among us, for God to be here without the “veil” that keeps God from view. We long for a time when God's reign will be here in fulness, when the Isaiah prophecies will be fulfilled – no more war or preparing for war, no more tears, no more death, a time when everyone is welcome and no one is excluded, when everyone is treasured and revered.

May we take time in this precious Advent season to lean into our longings, to let them live in our consciousness so they make room for God in us. May this Advent be a time of grace that, lived well, leads us into a rich celebration of God-with-us in the Christmas season.

### One-Day Christmas Sale! Bethany Retreat House Bookstore

**Friday, December 17, 2010, 10 a.m. - 8 p.m.**

(No need to call ahead!)

Printery House boxed greeting cards 20% off

All books by Henri Nouwen 20% off

Mandala books 20% off

Journal books & blank journals 20% off

Children's books 20% off

Music CD's 15% off

And more!

*Markdowns on in-stock items only.*

**Open House guests eligible to win \$20 gift certificate.**

# From the Director's Chair

by Joyce Diltz, PHJC



I have been enjoying a new album by Velma Frye called "Take Heart." Her song "Leaning into Darkness" helps me embrace the Advent mysteries anew this year: "It is enough to wait in the holy darkness . . . waiting with purpose for who I will become. . . ." It reminds me that at its best Advent is not an empty waiting but a "pregnant" time full of life and promise. Our Advent attentiveness is a time of trusting what is growing unseen, of waiting on what is yet to be revealed, both for us personally and for our world. "I have seen too many stars to let the darkness overwhelm me" is Velma's faith statement – and my own – that gets us through the dark times of winter, advent, and our life trials.

Enclosed with this e-mail is our annual appeal letter. We depend on your generosity to help us continue Bethany's ministry of providing space and resources for prayer and reflection. Any gift you can make is used to maximum advantage and greatly appreciated.

The retreat house will be closed to overnight guests the week after Christmas for some household work. When you come here in the new year, you can enjoy improvements in the kitchen and in the downstairs living room – all made possible by your past donations to the retreat house.

I wish you and your families and loved ones a very blessed Christmas season. May it be full of the hope and promise that our gracious God offers us. May God-with-us be your constant companion.

## Homecoming

a newsletter of Bethany Retreat House  
published four times a year at  
2202 Lituanica Avenue  
East Chicago, IN 46312  
219-398-5047  
fax 219-398-9329

Website: [www.bethanyretreathouse.org](http://www.bethanyretreathouse.org)  
E-mail: [bethanyrh@sbcglobal.net](mailto:bethanyrh@sbcglobal.net)  
editor: Joyce Diltz, PHJC  
assistant: Mary Wysock  
editorial advisor: Linda M. Diltz

The newsletter is currently funded  
by a grant for 2010 from  
the Foundations of East Chicago.

Bethany Retreat House  
is a ministry of the  
Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ  
(Ancilla Domini Sisters, Inc.)  
congregation of women religious.

## Bethany Bookstore Offers Gifts for All

Bethany's bookstore holds a treasure trove of resources for Christmas gift giving. What follows are only some of its many offerings. Some special titles for gift-giving include:

- ★ *This Will be Remembered of Her: Stories of Women Reshaping the World* by Megan McKenna
- ★ *Adult Faith* by Dairmuid O'Murchu
- ★ *A Life in Letters* by Thomas Merton
- ★ *Dream as Metaphor: The Power of the Image* by Ann Sayre Wiseman
- ★ *The Meaning of Mary Magdalene and Love is Stronger than Death* by Cynthia Bourgeault
- ★ *Embraced by God: Facing Chemotherapy with Faith* by Steve Givens
- ★ *Living Your Unlived Life* by Robert Johnson
- ★ *On the Threshold of Transformation: Daily Meditations for Men* by Richard Rohr.

In addition, Bethany's bookstore carries Christmas and meditation music CDs, blank books and works

about journaling, titles on dreams and dream work, children's books, an assortment of titles on loss and grief, and a myriad of books on prayer and spirituality.

**Come in to explore for yourself!**



Andrea Zaragosa and her grandson shop in the bookstore.

# BRH Bookshelf



## *Holiness and the Feminine Spirit:*

### *The Art of Janet McKenzie*

Edited by Susan Perry

Orbis Books, 2009, cloth, 146 pages, \$28.00

Reviewed by Deb Szrom Steppe

I sometimes pray best when I pray without any words at all. Janet McKenzie's art provides rich, eye-opening, and deeply moving opportunities to do that. In this book there are twenty-eight portrayals of feminine holiness – women working to bring about the Kingdom of God. Many naturally are of Mary, the mother of Jesus, but others include St. Monica, Mary Magdalene, and others.

McKenzie's images are multicultural, relatable, and very emotional. Images of Mary and Jesus as anything but white are somewhat new to me. I found this refreshing and challenging too.

The power of the artistic work is magnified by the commentary that follows each piece. These reflections are written by women writers from various cultural, religious, and experiential backgrounds including Joan Chittister, Joyce Rupp, Wendy Beckett, and Edwina Gately, among others. Reading the reflections allowed me to see elements of the art that I had not noticed on my own and opened my eyes to perspectives far beyond my own experience. A reflection by Helen Prejean, member of the Sisters of St. Joseph known for her work against the death penalty, was especially poignant.

I am glad to have this book as Advent and Christmas approach. I need to see Mary in a new way. I need to open my heart to Jesus' presence in people who don't look like me. I need, as written in the reflection by Anita Price Baird, to know that I am wrapped in the mantle of Mary's love.

## Thank You Memorial Donors:

### In Memory of

**Juanita Rodriguez** by Sylvia Castillo

**Jan Klein** by Kathryn Copak

**Patrick Dougherty** by R. Louis & Martha Gonzalez

**Theodore Parks** by R. Louis & Martha Gonzalez

**Alice E. Kotso** by R. Louis & Martha Gonzalez

**David Munoz** by R. Louis & Martha Gonzalez

**Betty G. Love** by R. Louis & Martha Gonzalez

**Koyoko Hernandez** by R. Louis & Martha Gonzalez

**Sr. Lorine Huelskamp, PHJC**, by Sr. Florence Kuhn, PHJC

**Anne Blaskey** by John M. Mroczkowski

### In Honor of

**Best Friend** by Linda Sue Baker

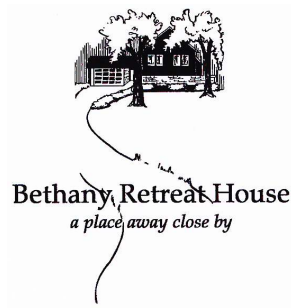
**Toni Heinzman**, “ #1 Charity Worker,” by Ken Sone

## With Heartfelt Thanks

To Our Recent Donors, including  
the Donors to Our Autumn Tea:

Ray Kosinski of Ace Catering • Dorene Albright • Trish Alt  
Srs. Mary Baird & Nancy Raboin, PHJC • Rosemary Balczon  
Ancilla Mission Club • Karen Barnett  
Rev. Joseph Bathke, CPPS • Carol Bauer  
Christine Beauchamp • Joan Beck • Lisa Beecher  
Sr. Shirley Bell, PHJC • Kathy Bohling  
Sr. Bonnie Boilini, PHJC • Dee & George Buck  
Calumet College of Saint Joseph • Jean E. Campbell  
Sylvia Castillo • Dr. David & Lynn Cox • Jim DeVault  
Helen Diltz • Sr. Joyce Diltz, PHJC • Sr. Judith Diltz, PHJC  
Sr. Michele Dvorak, PHJC • Anita Eshelman • Yolanda Fabian  
Frances Felus • Judy Fidkowski-Tetzlaff  
Rev. Tom Franzman • Linda Gajewski • Rev. Robert Gehring  
R. Louis & Martha Gonzalez • Mary Jo Gorman  
Susan Gryfakis • Pam & Tim Guiden  
Sr. Margaret Haas, BVM • Barbara Hargrove  
Toni Heinzman • Sr. Magdalen Hellman, PHJC  
Sr. Margaret Ann Henss, PHJC • Deb Herman • Sandi Holtrof  
Sr. Josephine Iffert, PHJC • The Inn of Hammond  
Tom Jessen • Eileen & Mark Jurek • Christine Juscik  
Sr. Annemarie Kampwerth, PHJC • Linda Kazragys  
Margie Kelly • Kolas Bookstore  
Marge Kullerstrand at *The Times* • Mark Kurowski  
Sr. Ann Linzmeyer, PHJC • Nancy Machnikowski  
Karen Maravilla of It's Just Serendipity  
Sr. Marybeth Martin, PHJC • Mary Kane Mauer  
Karen McMahon • Bob Meaney • Msgr. F.J. Melevage  
Caitlin Mills-Groninger • Sue Mills-Groninger • Toni Mola  
John M. Mroczkowski • Judy Nies • Jeannine & Melvin Nix  
Rev. David Nowak • Joyce Oboy • Mary Onohan  
Mary Paquin • Patricia Paschke • Marianna Pazik  
Chuck Pease of CJ Printing • Shirley Phillips  
Michael Prendergast • Sr. Kathleen Quinn, PHJC  
Ramada of Hammond • Mary Margaret Ramker  
Susan Ring • Richard Rosinski • St. Catherine Hospital  
St. Catherine Hospital Auxiliary • Margaret Saliga  
St. Mary's Church, Crown Point • Salon Delux  
Barb & Tim Schilling • Sr. Edith Schnieder, PHJC  
Mary Severa • Rev. Michael J. Shea • Linda & Ed Sienkiewicz  
Sr. Kathleen Smith, SP • Richard Stanich  
Star Plaza Theatre • Rob Szrom • Frances Szymanski  
Theatre at the Centre • Sr. Pam Tholkes, PHJC  
Paula Timko • Valerie Trtan • Jeff Casey of Towle Theatre  
Phyllis Vauter • Sr. Linda Volk, PHJC • David & Sharon Vree  
Sr. Karen Walther, SSND • Jackie Wells  
Deaconess Louise Williams • Evelyn Wrona  
Mary Wysock • Frank Zolvinski

We are very grateful to all our donors  
and we apologize if we may have inadvertently  
omitted someone's name.



**Bethany Retreat House**  
2202 Lituania Avenue  
East Chicago, IN 46312

Non Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Hammond, IN  
Permit No. 68

**As part of your Advent season,  
consider spending some retreat time  
at Bethany  
for a day or two away  
to be scheduled at your convenience.  
Gift certificates are available.**

**Call 219-398-5047 for details.**

# Second Annual Autumn Tea Warms Hearts

by Mary Wysock

On October 3 more than 100 guests attended Bethany Retreat House’s second annual Autumn Tea held at Calumet College of St. Joseph in Hammond.

After tea delicacies were consumed and door prizes and raffles were awarded, the tea brought in more than \$3,800 for the Retreat Scholarship Fund at Bethany Retreat House. The fund assists guest who need help paying for a retreat or spiritual direction.

Many hands and hearts went into the planning and delivery of this wonderful event, and we are grateful to all who attended or made a contribution to support the tea. There is a list of tea donors on page 3.

Donors gave in many ways for the tea, including



*Karen McMahon shares a story about her teacup as she begins her presentation on the Mary and Martha story.*

monetary donations, door or raffle prizes, baked goods, and time and energy to prepare for and serve the tea. We are grateful for Karen McMahon and Mark Kurowski for their moving presentations at the tea and for Jim DeVault for the beautiful piano music that filled the room.

Special thanks go to all those on the planning committee including Dee & George Buck, the tea experts; Sr. Michele Dvorak, PHJC; Barb Hargrove; Sr. Marybeth Martin, PHJC; Mary Paquin; Sr. Kathleen Quinn, PHJC; Sue Ring; Sr. Pam Tholkes, PHJC; and Deaconess Louise Williams.

Sr. Joyce summarized the event beautifully when she said, “People’s generosity and good will are such a wonderful blessing and make the tea ever more meaningful.”