



Homecoming

Bethany Retreat House

Volume 15, Number 2

June 2011

Airport Time Helps Bridge Two Worlds

by Joyce Diltz, PHJC

Air travel today is not what it used to be. The restrictions imposed since 9/11 require us to be at the airport at least two hours before our flight, cause us to wait in long lines, and subject us to annoying and sometimes humiliating searches of our possessions, our clothes, and our bodies. We deal with these intrusions on varying days with varying degrees of tolerance and accommodation.

I do not appreciate these intrusions, though I recognize the need for them to some degree. But in the midst of my annoyance, I am also discovering a benefit that emerges from the increased time I have to wander the airport and wait at my gate for the departure.

The waiting time in the airport has become a space for me in which to make the transition from what I have just left to where I will be going next.

So often in daily life, we go quickly from one activity or one encounter to another, without time to take them in and reflect on them. This fast-paced way of living robs us of being fully present to life and having the time to savor and “digest” what we have experienced in this particular moment, with this unique person I have just encountered. It keeps us from recognizing the depth of meaning that events and relationships can offer us.

I have traveled by air several times over the last few years for a distance learning program of studies and have flown to other destinations over the past several decades. I usually carry a book or some articles I hope to read in flight, or my journal to write in, and these also help me as an introvert to keep from being engaged more than I would like in lengthy conversations with someone who is looking for a good ear.

I have recently realized that this protective stance is also part of my inner travel process. Besides the physical experience of getting to the airport, through security, to the gate, onto the plane, and then all of that in reverse order once we land, there is also an inner process that I go through as I travel. The days before a flight are very full for me as I take care of details at the retreat house and in my personal life, organizing what I need for the trip, getting in extra appointments to make up for the time I will

be away, covering details so the office and retreat house can go on in my absence. I work really hard at all this, and it costs me some sleep and some anxiety – more than I would like to admit. So getting to the airport and surrendering my bag closes that preparatory organizing part of the trip and lets me breathe a sigh of relief that that work is done. Once I find my departure gate, I am able to let go of these pre-trip tensions and begin to look ahead to where I am going and to whom I will be with at my destination.

Once on the plane, part of my in-flight experience can look like sleep to my seat mates, but it is often a reflective, prayerful reverie about what is next for me. And part of the time *is* sleep, a bridge between the two worlds I am traversing.

See Airport, p. 2

Bethany Retreat House
Third Annual

Autumn Tea

Sunday, September 25, 2011
at Calumet College of St. Joseph



All are welcome to enjoy a wonderful afternoon of tea delicacies to benefit the Bethany Retreat House Scholarship Fund. The Scholarship Fund helps those who cannot afford the full fee to make a retreat or engage in spiritual direction.

The afternoon includes a tea luncheon, entry into the door prize drawings, entertainment, and basket raffles. Don't miss out on the fun!

For registration information, call 219-398-5047 or click on the web www.bethanyretreathouse.org.

Volunteer Alert: If you want to lend a helping hand or donate a door prize or item for a raffle basket, please let us know. We would be most grateful.

From the Director's Chair

by Joyce Diltz, PHJC



It would be hard to miss the hand of God in the beauty of nature as we live through these spring days into summer. I delight in nature's "orchestra" of flowers as one by one each "section" has its time to shine. They seem to "play" by color, first the yellows, then the purples, then whites, and then a medley of many colors to entertain and sustain us throughout summer days.

Our meditation garden is a beautifully inviting place, thanks in large part to our Garden Day volunteers and to Phil Gutierrez who is tending it every week. Please plan to come by to enjoy some prayerful time in our beautiful, restful garden.

We are very grateful to the Foundations of East Chicago who have once again awarded a grant to Bethany Retreat House to fund the publication and mailing of the **Homecoming** newsletter, this time for the 2011 calendar year.

We will soon begin organizing for our third annual Autumn Tea and will be needing to gather a steering committee and volunteers. If you would like to share your time and energy with us for this generous and satisfying endeavor, we would welcome your help. We also welcome items for door prizes and for gift baskets and appreciate all those who dig through their gift drawers and treasure boxes to share items with us for the tea.

A significant joy of the summer for me is welcoming and accompanying those who come for retreat. Summer is an especially good time to retreat, and I invite you to consider planning some days at Bethany to give you and God some time for presence to one another, some time in which to let your relationship deepen. You would thank yourself for this choice for a long time.

Airport *cont. from page 1*

Conversely, when I enter the airport for the homeward part of my trip, I use the time to savor who I have been with, conversations we've had, experiences we've shared. Time waiting at the gate and time in flight become once again a bridge between the two worlds of where I've been and where I'm going. Once the flight ends and I am in Chicago and on a van destined for home, that time helps me connect with the region and people where I live, catching up on weather, news, and getting familiar again with the details I will need to deal with once I'm home.

A friend who leads pilgrimages has talked about his time in the airport before the trip as the space in which he gets into his role as pilgrim guide, gradually assuming the role he will play for others on the pilgrimage. In reverse, he is able to shed that role on his return flight as he goes through the airports, gradually leaves his fellow

pilgrims behind, and makes his way home again to his daily life.

On my last trip, the van service was two hours late in picking me up, so the transition process was extended for me. Annoying though it was, that time, too, offered me space in which to take in and embrace the world of people and cement and the myriad vehicles that make up my home in and welcome me back to Chicago land.

Pope Encourages Ongoing Spiritual Direction

Pope Benedict XVI said in Rome on May 19 that every Christian would benefit from spiritual direction! Yes, it's true. Spiritual direction for more than the theology faculty from around the world that he was addressing. Spiritual direction for more than priests, nuns, and monks. Spiritual direction for more than Catholics. He said, "...again the Church continues to recommend the

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
E-mail: bethanyrh@sbcglobal.net
editor: Joyce Diltz, PHJC
assistant: Mary Wysock
editorial advisor: Linda M. Diltz

The newsletter is currently funded
by a grant for 2011 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.

practice of spiritual direction, not only to all those who wish to follow the Lord up close, but to every Christian who wishes to live responsibly his baptism, that is, the new life in Christ."

Imagine a world where approximately two billion people actively tend their spiritual lives by meeting regularly with a spiritual director! The pope added the recommendation for spiritual direction "[to] everyone, in fact, and in a particular way all those who have received the divine call to a closer following, needs to be supported personally by a sure guide in doctrine and expert in the things of God."

Pope Benedict likened spiritual direction to that "personal relationship that the Lord had with his disciples, that special bond with which he led them, following him, to embrace the will of the Father (cf., Luke 22:42), that is, to embrace the cross."

*From June 2011 **Membership Moments**, a publication of **Spiritual Directors International**.*

BRH Bookshelf



Transforming Our Days: Finding God Amid the Noise of Modern Life

by **Richard R. Gaillardetz**

Ligouri Press, 2007, paper, 128 pages, \$15.95

Reviewed by **Deb Szrom Steppe**

I like technology. I like being able to connect with friends and family by e-mail. I like being able to cook in the microwave and let our dishwasher take care of my least favorite chore. But I also find that, at times, our household with two teenagers can be consumed by electronics: the internet, cell phones, iPods, and television. I was drawn to this book immediately.

Gaillardetz certainly does not advocate withdrawing from all technology. Instead he offers a clear perspective on how technology shapes our lives in subtle and expanding ways. Most importantly, the author offers the reader a fresh look at spirituality and grace, free from the trappings of the technological world that invites us into a genuine relationship with our Trinitarian God.

A basic concept the author uses is that of a “focal” thing versus a “commodity.” A meal can be an example of a focal thing. When it is planned and prepared with the whole family involved in cooking, setting the table and cleaning up, the meal is a focal event. It requires time and attention. There is a risk of it not coming out as planned and it is a communal event shared with others. There is a rich texture to the experience. When rushing through a drive-up window alone at a fast food restaurant, a meal is merely a commodity.

The author elegantly brings these concepts to spirituality. Our spirituality can become like a commodity too. When we divide our lives into religious moments and secular or “un-godly” moments, we reinforce the technological view of life: God is a commodity that I sometimes inject into my days.

What we need then, according to Gaillardetz, is to retrieve an authentic Trinitarian spirituality. Believing in a Triune God means that God is not some distant entity, but God is in essence loving, life-giving relationality. God does not have a relationship with us; God is the relationship. As humans made in the image of God, we are invited to discover ourselves in the life of communion with others and the world around us. These rich and textured relationships make up an authentic spirituality that inoculates us from a commodity-driven existence.

I have not taken away any technology from our household since reading this book, but I am much more aware of engaging in “focal” times with our sons, as well as opening my mind and heart to a Trinitarian God who is beyond all the limits of my technological view of life.

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

With Heartfelt Thanks To Our Recent Donors:

Linda Sue Baker • Christine Beauchamp • Joan Beck
Christine R. Blue • John & Margaret Brooks • Karen Candiano
Helen Diltz • Sr. Michele Dvorak, PHJC • Al & Yolan Fabian
Judy Fidkowski-Tetzlaff • Susan Gryfakis • Richard Heide
Tom Jessen • Jeannie Kuhn • Agnes Marzec • Tom Morgan
Jeannine & Mel Nix • Rev. David Nowak
Jeanette & Don Palla • Liz Pardo • Marianna Pazik
Chuck Pease of CJ Printing
Shirley Phillips • Mary Beth Stanek • Richard Stanich
Rob Szrom • Phyllis Vauter • Deanna Waggy
E. Louise Williams • Frank Zolvinski

In Memory of . . .

Mary Ann Armstrong by R. Louie & Martha Gonzalez
George B. Buksar by R. Louie & Martha Gonzalez
Dr. Charles Comer by R. Louie & Martha Gonzalez
Lavon M. Etter by James F. Etter
James Fowler by Nancy & Bernard Baltrushaitis
Dorothy Gruett and Raymond Michalak by Vickie Michalak
Mary Hluska by Al & Yolan Fabian
Fran Novosel by Kathy Los Rathburn
Anthony “Tony” Oppolo by R. Louie & Martha Gonzalez
Timothy P. Ring by R. Louie & Martha Gonzalez
Caridad A. Rivas by R. Louie & Martha Gonzalez
Terry by Kathy Los Rathburn
Bernice Mary Szymanski by Frances A. Szymanski

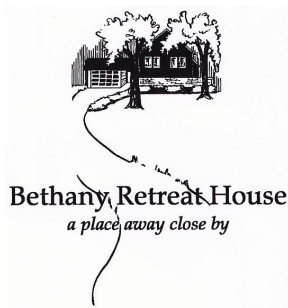
We are very grateful to all our donors and we apologize if we may have inadvertently omitted someone's name.

Dream Groups Have Fall Openings

When dream groups resume at Bethany in September, there are openings in the groups that meet the first Tuesday of each month and the third Wednesday of each month. Each group meets from 6:30-8:30 p.m. Details can be found at www.bethanyretreathouse.org and 219-398-5047.

Another dream group meets at Lindenwood Retreat and Conference Center at the PHJC Ministry Center, Donaldson, Indiana, on the first Wednesday of each month. That group meets from 6:30-8:30 eastern time. Details for that group are available at www.lindenwood.org and 574-935-1780.

For anyone interested in exploring their night dreams in supportive community, the dream group offers a rich opportunity.



Bethany Retreat House
2202 Lituanica Avenue
East Chicago, IN 46312

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

Bethany Retreat House serves as a quiet place in the midst of demanding lives where people can find both space and resources for prayer and reflection. Rooted in the mission of Jesus Christ and the tradition of Blessed Catherine Kasper, Bethany is dedicated to help individuals nurture their inner life and respond to the God who dwells within.

Mission Statement

Volunteer Corner by Mary Wysock

Mary Paquin is a volunteer we can always count on to lend a helping hand here at Bethany Retreat House. She is one of those behind-the-scenes, salt-of-the-earth volunteers who doesn't bring attention to herself but is very generous with her time and resources.

She first became acquainted with the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ (PHJC) who sponsor Bethany Retreat House at Our Lady of Perpetual Help School which she attended for eight years. In February 1992, Mary and her mother became PHJC Associates, individuals who feel a special calling to live the spirituality and support the ministries of the PHJCs.

Mary first became aware of Bethany 19 years ago and participates in the women's group and a dream group here. "Bethany Retreat House has the best selection of spiritual books and recordings in the area, and I am happy to have a place to go for spiritual direction and private retreats," she said.



At Bethany Mary has helped with everything from mailing our quarterly newsletter to serving on the committee of the Autumn Tea. In addition, she volunteers regularly at Nazareth Home to cuddle the babies and toddlers and attends meetings and helps with fundraisers for Sojourner Truth House. Both of these are PHJC ministries in northwest Indiana.

Mary lives in Hammond with her husband Alan of 48 years. She has two sons and one daughter, eight grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. She retired from School City of Hammond to spend time with her family.

She has been an active member of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in Hammond for 61 years. Currently she serves as extraordinary minister of the Eucharist and money counter. She is also a member of the choir.

Mary has made a substantial contribution to our day-to-day operations for which we are very grateful. In addition, her kind nature and quick wit always brighten our day when she is around. Thanks, Mary. You are truly a blessing.