



Homecoming

Bethany Retreat House

Volume 8, Number 3

December 2005

Bethany Retreat House

*a place away
close by*

spiritual direction

individually directed
retreats

private retreats

one-day to thirty-day
retreats

retreat in daily life

spirituality library

bookstore

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

Bethany Retreat House

is a ministry of the

Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ

(Ancilla Domini Sisters)

congregation of

women religious.

Dear Friends,

I wish you the joy of God's presence among us as we celebrate this holy season of Christmas. I am reminded of the story of the abbot of a monastery where spirit had grown dull and the monks lost sight of their purpose. The abbot went to consult a hermit who lived in the woods near the monastery to see what wisdom he could offer to this community. The hermit said to the abbot, "The messiah is in your midst." Not fully understanding, yet trusting the wisdom of the hermit, the abbot shared this word with his monks, "The messiah is in your midst." The monks took these words to heart and began treating each other with great kindness and tender care, for one of them must indeed be the messiah! Not knowing which brother monk it was, they treated each with reverence and attentiveness. And so the community became transformed because the messiah lived among them!

This story embodies the Christmas mystery so well, for God is indeed in our midst. Our God who came to live among us 2000 years ago has not left, but comes to us daily in every face and every event. We need only live with eyes and hearts of faith, welcoming and reverencing God in each person we encounter.

It is this attentiveness to God, this watching for and responding to God in the stories of our lives, that Bethany Retreat House seeks to foster by providing space and resources to help people grow more attentive and responsive to the God who lives among us. Individuals who come here for ongoing spiritual direction and retreat, for use of our spiritual reading library and meditation garden, and who purchase spiritual reading materials from our bookstore are each in their own way opening themselves to the transforming love of God who longs to be in ever deepening relationship with us.

Though Bethany is primarily a ministry of presence and of providing space for prayer and reflection, the infrastructure behind the ministry requires dollars to make it happen. At this time of our annual appeal, I write to invite you to share financially in the ministry of Bethany Retreat House. Your gift will help us provide scholarships for those unable to pay the full stipend; add plants to our meditation garden and books, periodicals, and videos to our library; maintain, replace, and repair office equipment; and pay salaries, rent, utilities and other operational expenses.

This year we are especially in need of donations to begin a fund to generate income for the retreat house on a long-term basis. Any amount, small or large, will help us continue and develop the ministry here. Whether you make a once-a-year contribution or a monthly donation, your gift will help continue the ministry of offering retreat space, spiritual direction, and other resources to help individuals grow more attentive and responsive to the God who lives among us and speaks to us both in the outer world of events and relationships and in the inner quiet of our hearts.

If you are able to contribute financially to the ministry here, we welcome your assistance. If you are able to pray for the ministry of Bethany Retreat House and for all who come here, we gratefully accept your prayers. And we welcome volunteers as well.

I am especially grateful to those of you who this year have already sent your annual gift without the prompting of this letter.

May 2006 hold many blessings for you each day as you believe in and look for God who is present in our midst.

Sincerely,

Sr. Joyce Diltz, PHJC

Sister Joyce Diltz, PHJC
Director

~~~~~ With Heartfelt Thanks To Our Recent Donors:

John & Margaret Brooks ~ Helen & Richard Diltz ~ Rob Diltz ~ Deacon Jim Etter ~ Elizabeth Flores ~ Karen Galvin ~ Susan Grafykis ~ Louie & Martha Gonzalez ~ Rich Heide ~ Toni Heinzman ~ Rev. Ed Kennedy ~ Don Mayerski ~ Barbara Menard ~ Vickie L. Michalak ~ Deacon Brian Nosbusch ~ Frances Szymanski ~ Judy Tetzlaff ~ Srs. Marjaleen Kelley & Celine Tomasic ~ Phyllis Vauter ~ Louise Williams ~ Andrea Zaragosa ~ Frank Zolvinski

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



Ancilla Domini Sisters
2202 Lituanica Avenue
East Chicago, IN 46312

Non Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
East Chicago, IN
Permit No. 482

**In the new year
consider spending some retreat
time at Bethany . . .
for a day away, 24 hours, or a
weekend
to be scheduled at your
convenience.
Gift certificates are available.**

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

BRH Bookshelf



When Women Pray: Our Personal Stories of Extraordinary Grace

By Lyn Holley Doucet & Robin Hebert

The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2004, 189 pages, paper, \$16.95.

Reviewed by Deb Szrom Steppe

In beginning a new journey, or taking up a journey that has become unfamiliar, it is good to have guides who have traveled those roads before. Lyn Holley Doucet and Robin Hebert are just such guides in *When Women Pray*.

This work begins with the essay so aptly titled “We Invite You to a Life of Prayer.” The authors extend this invitation in a very personal way by sharing their own stories, inviting the reader to share in their journeys of the experience of God’s grace. With humility and candor the authors share their real-life stories filled with issues that many of us face: relationships, divorce, aging, parenthood, etc.

The book is a collection of these personal essays that teach about different aspects of prayer. After most of the essays, the authors flesh out the specifics of a prayer topic, giving practical knowledge and suggestions. The authors cover many elements of the foundations of prayer – making time, journaling, the Examen of St. Ignatius, spiritual direction, groups, etc. Sometimes the author introduces an original poem, and sometimes the essays

are quite powerful and stand on their own. I found this book to be well balanced. The authors tell significant moments in their lives without revealing too many details and share incredible moments of grace with genuine humility.

The authors describe themselves as “two women of ordinary circumstances,” but they bring much expertise to this work as well. They are experienced in spiritual direction, retreats, music, pastoral counseling, writing and professional speaking.

When Women Pray would be a wonderful gift for someone who is looking to become more prayerful but isn’t quite sure where to start.

This book can be incredibly helpful for the non-beginner as well. In the suggested reading list and the bibliography the authors provide a great resource for works on prayer and spirituality.

In a deeper and more profound way, *When Women Pray* is very good for folks like me, whose recent prayer has been less than stellar. It is a poignant reminder of the many gifts of being faithful to God in prayer, and a gentle road map to find one’s way back to being a person of prayer.

Bethany’s Top Ten Book List now online. In an effort to conserve on printing costs, we are now making our periodic Top Ten Book List available on our website: www.bethanyretreathouse.org. If you do not have internet access and would like us to mail you a copy, please call the office (219-398-5047) to request a copy.

Volunteer Corner

Bookstore

The retreat house bookstore travels to parishes, health fairs, and diocesan events 15 or more weekends per year. As this outreach has developed over the last 13 plus years, it has evolved into a science of coordinating many pieces of the “puzzle” that get books from the publishers, to Bethany shelves, into boxes and then into the car (yes, *one* car, carefully packed like a can of sardines!) for the weekend, onto tables at the weekend site, into eager customers’ hands at the sale, and then back into boxes and car for the return to Bethany and the bookstore shelves here. An important key in this whole process is volunteers, and we would like to invite more people to get involved in this part of the Bethany ministry.

We need people interested in carefully packing the books and loading them into the car, both at Bethany on Fridays before the sale and on Sundays at the sale location after the event. We also need people to help set up the sale and sell books at the sale sight. If you would like to help with a sale at your parish, or if you would like to offer your services as a frequent bookstore volunteer, we would welcome your volunteer assistance.

Newsletter

Bethany is in need of someone to take over production of the newsletter. This would involve word processing and some writing. Finding someone to take charge of the newsletter would help us get out four issues per year on a more regular schedule.