



Homecoming

Bethany Retreat House

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October 2009

Bethany Hosts Autumn Tea Fundraiser

by Mary Wysock

Bethany Retreat House and the Friends of Bethany held an afternoon Autumn Tea on September 27 to raise money for the Retreat Scholarship Fund. The tea took place at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Social Hall in Hammond with 80 people in attendance.

The seed for the tea was planted when Sr. Joyce Diltz, PHJC, attended the February Friendship Tea given by the Education Department at Calumet College of St. Joseph. There she met Denyse Buck, former owner of Serenitea, who offered to help Bethany host a tea. Denyse's tireless efforts, along with those of her husband George and a dedicated committee,

shaped the tea into the wonderful event that it was.

As guests arrived for the tea, they were greeted by the sights and smells of autumn in a hall transformed into a harvest banquet of fall colors. A variety of teas were available to sample, and the room was surrounded by an abundant display of door prizes and basket raffles. Attendees were asked to bring their own cup and saucer and share stories inspired by the cup with those at their table. Family history and special memories emerged as they told the cup's story and how it related to their lives.

As Sr. Joyce welcomed everyone to the tea, she suggested that having tea is like what happens at Bethany Retreat House – we step back from busy-ness, take time to enjoy the simple things in life with

See Tea, p. 2



Renae Brantley and Sr. Judith Diltz, PHJC, listen to Fr. Jerry Schweitzer at the tea.

Bethany Initiates Retreat Scholarship Fund

by Joyce Diltz, PHJC

Through its Autumn Tea fundraiser (see related article above) Bethany Retreat House now has \$3,400 in its Retreat Scholarship Fund to assist individuals to come to Bethany for retreat and for ongoing spiritual direction. In this difficult economic time when there is little discretionary money available for people to make retreat, Bethany wants people to know that the fund is available to assist them in making a retreat or in coming for spiritual direction.

The Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ, who sponsor Bethany, have always been committed to serving people regardless of their ability to pay for services. This fund is a way to extend that spirit of service in today's economic climate, one that could keep people from seeking spiritual

support and encouragement when they need it most.

Individuals can request assistance from the fund when they schedule their retreat or their spiritual direction session. In that conversation with Bethany's director, Sr. Joyce Diltz, PHJC, they can ask for assistance from the fund to supplement the amount they are able to give toward the usual suggested offering for services. For example, if someone is able to pay only \$20 for an overnight private retreat instead of the suggested \$45 per night, the scholarship fund would pay the remaining \$25.

The Retreat Scholarship Fund was initiated through the Autumn Tea. Ongoing donations to the fund will continue to be accepted to replenish the fund and keep it available for guests who need assistance.

From the Director's Chair

by Joyce Diltz, PHJC



Thank you to each of you who helped with, contributed to, or attended our Autumn Tea. It was a wonderful experience of community and of devotion to a good cause!

We are so blessed to live in a climate with changing seasons! This time of year presents such sensual delights for us. I love the feel of the autumn air, the beginning rustle of leaves, the magnificent colors that are constantly changing. In our neighborhood ornamental grasses glow with autumn gold as they wave their fronds in the breeze. Glancing out my conference room window that overlooks the arbor, I was taken aback recently by the array of colors in that small space: the deep burgundy of Virginia Creeper, the yellow and red and paling green of the three ash trees, each majoring in one of those colors. How beautiful change can be!

Perhaps an invitation for us in this season is to trust that the changes in our lives can have their own beauty as well, that the seasons of youth and mid-life and aging each have their own blessings, even as they also bring their limits and their struggles. Fall reminds us how beautiful letting go can be. It costs us dearly, but it has its own artistry even in the loss. Like in nature, God uses everything to work transformation, to craft beauty. What mysteries we are as God works in our lives!

With fall, our monthly spirituality groups resume for another year. A second dream group has filled up quickly and a third could form for one Wednesday evening a month. If you are interested in that possibility, please let us know.

May you know abundance of blessings in this season of harvest!

Tea *cont. from p.1*

conversation and reflection, and become refreshed as we visit with the one who knows us and appreciates us.

The Autumn Tea menu was developed by Denyse Buck. Savory roast beef on whole-grain bread, cucumber and caprese sandwiches, and fresh fruit were presented on tiered serving trays. Delicious scones were served with several jams and a sweet white sauce. The meal was finished off with another tiered serving tray of assorted petite desserts. Everyone ate to their heart's content and commented how wonderful the food tasted.

Guest speaker Fr. Jerry Schweitzer of Wanatah shared stories about autumn changes and how they mirror the seasons in our lives. He reminded us that as we live through different seasons of our lives – childhood, adulthood, and aging – we are forever changed by their events. We would all benefit from a place like Bethany to rest and ponder the seasons of joy and

sorrow, sickness and healing, as Jesus did in the original Bethany with his friends Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. Taking time out to reflect on changes and invite God into our lives gives us the strength to learn what we need to move on to the next season.

After Fr. Jerry's presentation it was time for the raffle and door prizes! Thanks to many generous donors, there were over 50 door prizes, 32 gift baskets, and three special raffle items. Among these many prizes were several spa packages; a Longaberger basket and an original watercolor painting by Kathy Los Rathburn; tickets to the Star Plaza Theatre, Theatre at the Center, and Kerasotes ShowPlace; gift certificates for restaurants and for a day of prayer and a weekend retreat at Bethany; and Octoberfest, Vera Bradley, Hoosier Lottery, and many other baskets. There was a flurry of winners and everyone seemed to go home with a prize.

Special thanks go to the many generous donors who made these prizes

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Bethany Retreat House
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congregation of women religious.

possible and to the tea committee whose tireless efforts and creativity made this event a great success: Dorene Albright, Renae Brantley, Denyse and George Buck, Sr. Joyce Diltz, PHJC, Sr. Michele Dvorak, PHJC, Pat Lennon, Sr. Marybeth Martin, PHJC, Mary Paquin, Sr. Kathleen Quinn, PHJC, Susan Ring, Sr. Pamela Tholkes, PHJC, Deaconess Louise Williams, and Mary Wysock.

Everyone had a good time and Bethany raised \$3,400 which will allow more people to participate in retreats and spiritual direction.

From the vision of Sr. Joyce to the guiding light and generosity of Denyse and George Buck and a host of volunteers and donors, Bethany's first tea was a huge success! Many attendees commented on what a wonderful time they had and said they wanted us to do it again. So plan to attend the Autumn Tea next year. You won't be sorry you did!

BRH Bookshelf



*Walking the Sacred Path:
Spiritual Exercises for Today*
by **Dan Schutte**
Twenty-Third Publications, 2009, paper,
124 pages, \$12.95
Reviewed by Deb Szrom Steppe

Dan Schutte, famous for composing inspiring liturgical music and an original member of the St. Louis Jesuits, has reached out in a new medium with *Walking the Sacred Path*.

The author (whom I've known personally for a long time) has always struck me as someone who is fundamentally in love with God. In this work Dan invites us to develop that relationship for ourselves. These 30 exercises, loosely framed within the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, provide a fruitful path to that end.

Each exercise has a suggested piece of music, a reading from Scripture, the author's reflection, questions to consider, and a closing prayer. They take us on themes like God's beauty, our desires, our generosity with God, discernment, and contemplations on the life of Jesus. While sometimes Ignatian in form, the reflections are contemporary, well written, and very rich. I found that some exercises opened up so much for me that I'd spend a week or so on that one exercise before being ready to move on.

I found the author's guidance to be very gentle. It seemed like he was very aware of not getting in the way of God's process with the reader. He offers suggestions and gives the reader the option of using them or not, depending on where God is leading.

As helpful as I found this book for myself, I see it as a tremendous resource for use with groups like RCIA, catechists, parish staff, etc. It would serve as a wonderful introduction to Ignatian spirituality to a newcomer. And yet, those who are familiar with the Spiritual Exercises would be well served by its freshness, its newness, and by Schutte's loving style.

This is one of many fine books that can be purchased through **Bethany Retreat House bookstore: 219-398-5047.**

We are Most Grateful to
All Our Donors
Including Regular and In-kind Donors
and Donors to the Autumn Tea:

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Mary Wysock • Kathy Zaehring

We are very sorry if we have
inadvertently missed anyone.

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In Memory of . . .

**Patricia A. Fabian** from Gregory Fabian  
**Mary Ann Kelley** from Sue Bednarz  
**Senator Ted Kennedy** from John Mroczkowski  
**Cindy King** from Louie & Martha Gonzalez  
**Adam Maletta** from Louie & Martha Gonzalez  
**Sr. Lorine Huelskamp, PHJC**  
from Sr. Florence Kuhn, PHJC  
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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.

Volunteer Corner

by Mary Wysock

Denyse and George Buck were tremendously generous with their time and resources for Bethany's first Autumn Tea.

A love of tea started young for Dee, who has fond memories of her Irish father hosting a "tea party" for his children almost every night. "It was not a formal tea party," she said.

"Sometimes it was watered down tea, sometimes milk and toast or fruit. It was not the food, but the fact that he took time out of his busy schedule to sit with us and talk with us."

These early memories helped contribute to Dee's understanding of the culture of tea. "God gives all of us gifts and this is quite literally what I bring to the table: a love of tea and fellowship, taking the time to say, 'I want to spend time with you.'"

Dee's interest in having a tea room came from a wonderful Christian woman, Sandi Strong. "She showed me that the tea room was not only about tea but the ministry of tea. Every day at the tea room was not really a profit thing; it was an outreach to the people who came in."

Dee and George owned a tea room in Demotte called Booknook and then they opened Serenitea in Highland. Dee

greatly enjoyed having a tea room but could not have done it without the help of her friends. Her philosophy of life is to give, "And my friends give just as much as I do. I would never surround myself with people other than those who are kind and giving. And George realizes that he is called to join in this effort."

Faith plays a big part in Dee and George's willingness to help the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ with their fundraising teas. Dee lived by and was taught by PHJC sisters all during her childhood and elementary school years. "I always thought they were wonderful," she said. "I always felt God's love through them."

She did her first charitable tea for Calumet College in February 2009 when asked by Sr. Michele Dvorak, PHJC, to help. She then helped Bethany this past September, even though it was the beginning of a new school year for her and George who are elementary school teachers. "I feel if God is calling you, you need to listen, no matter how busy you are with other things," she said.

Dee and George live in Highland and have three adult children and four grandchildren. "I'm so glad that God had this plan for us, and for 37 years of friendship and marriage," said Dee.

Bethany Retreat House is grateful for your gifts, Dee and George, and for your willingness to share them so generously!



Sr. Joyce thanks Denyse and George Buck at the Autumn Tea.