



# Homecoming

Bethany Retreat House

Volume 16, Number 4

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## Good-bye, Hello

Over the summer Angela Cuevas, Bethany's recent assistant, welcomed into her family a new baby girl, Serenity Alexandra. After the maternity leave, it became evident to Angela that she needed to stay home with her children. Thank you, Angie, for the enthusiasm with which you shared in Bethany's mission while you were with us. We wish you the best in this new chapter of your life.

Subsequently, and just in time for the anniversary celebration, Lizette Chagolla accepted the assistant to the director position here. Liz brings a wealth of office and event planning experience to her role at Bethany. Welcome, Liz! We are happy to have you as part of the Bethany community.

## Sisters in the News

Roman Catholic sisters have found themselves in the news frequently in the past several months. For anyone who would like to understand how sisters have changed so much over the past 50 years, a new documentary film, *Band of Sisters*, by Mary Fishman is an excellent resource. The film follows the story of Catholic sisters from different congregations across the United States in their work for civil rights, women's rights, immigration reform, environmental justice, and other causes. It also covers how the sisters increasingly find themselves in tension with more conservative elements in the church today.

As a ministry of the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ religious congregation and with a director who is a Catholic sister, the issues and the history covered in the film are very important to Bethany Retreat House.

The film will screen locally December 9 at 3 p.m. and December 10 at 6:45 p.m. at St. Maria Goretti Church, Dyer, Indiana. A free will offering will be collected.

## Bethany Library

If you haven't yet discovered Bethany's library, it is *full* of resources to feed your soul. Besides its 700 books, it has over 100 films and several hundred audio programs on CD.

Library holdings are available for borrowing. Library use is free for those who come to the retreat house regularly for one of its groups or for spiritual direction. For others, a \$10 annual fee will provide a library card and borrowing privileges.

The dream groups have been borrowing CDs on dreamwork for several years and find drive time a good way to listen. Whether you find it good to listen in small spurts as you run errands or for an hour at a time, the many CD programs offer ways to get new information and to hear inspiring lectures.

You are welcome and encouraged to borrow items pertinent to you at this time in your spiritual journey. With so many holdings, there are many resources awaiting you!

## Annual One-day Christmas Sale! Bethany Retreat House Bookstore

**Friday, December 7, 2012, 10 a.m. - 8 p.m.**  
(No need to call ahead on sale day!)

All enneagram & Myers Briggs books 20% off

All mandala books 20% off

All dream & Jungian books 20% off

All grief books 20% off

All journal books & blank journals 20% off

All children's books 20% off

Select music CDs 20% off

All greeting cards 10% off

Select used music cassettes & CDs – Free!

And more –

along with our usual array of spiritually nourishing books, quilted sweatshirts, and environment-friendly gift-wrap bags and totes.

*Markdowns off original price on in-stock items only.*

*Excludes special orders.*

Christmas sale guests are eligible to win a \$25 gift certificate raffle.

# From the Director's Chair

by Joyce Diltz, PHJC



I am amazed at how we seem to clip through this year, one season after another. In our personal lives, we move through one event after another, and in our work lives it is often the moving from one deadline or one project to another. Regardless of the realm or the content, we mark and measure our lives to a large extent by what we experience.

Another way to “measure” our lives is to name and savor the blessings that make up each of our stories. The Thanksgiving holiday invites us to that kind of remembering and cherishing with grateful hearts. It is with huge disappointment that I hear of major stores opening on Thanksgiving day “after dinner” so people can begin their bargain hunting. How sad that we can’t let the holiday stand as sacred, set apart for family and thankfulness, without rushing into the season of bargain hunting that is in stark contrast to the Thanksgiving feast of friends, family, and gratitude.

The season of Advent follows quickly upon Thanksgiving. It is a season of waiting in stillness and darkness for the fullness of life, the promised one. May the readings of this holy season feed our hearts in deep ways to help us both embrace our longing for God’s presence among us and to recognize that presence already with us in our relationships and daily living.

Blessed holy days to you. May you know God-with-us in tangible ways.

In another vein, new dream groups are forming here. Depending on interest, groups will meet on the third Wednesday or Thursday evening of each month. See our website for details. Call or e-mail if you are interested. Current dream group members find the experience very satisfying and very exciting.

## Celebrating 20 Years

One hundred sixty people gathered on September 30 to celebrate 20 years of Bethany Retreat House and its ministry of encouraging people to pay attention to the inner life.

Bob Meaney and Poor Handmaid of Jesus Christ Sisters Kathleen Quinn, Michele Dvorak, and Patricia Kolas dramatized the Martha and Mary of Bethany story from Luke’s gospel.

Vinita Hampton Wright and Rev. Jerry Schweitzer shared personal reflections on listening to the voice within. Sr. Connie Bach, PHJC, led guests in singing “Come Away,” a song about both Bethany of scripture and of East Chicago that she wrote for the occasion. We hope in the near future to share the song on our website!

After the program guests moved to the parish hall where they enjoyed elegant and delicious mini desserts



In the Bethany story dramatization, *Jesus (Bob Meaney) reaches out to help Martha of Bethany (Sr. Michele Dvorak, PHJC) in her distress about her sister Mary’s failure to help.*

lovingly prepared by Denyse Buck and her team.

Guests had the opportunity to shop at Bethany’s bookstore to take home something to nurture their inner life, and door and raffle prizes followed that theme. Everyone had a great time!

## Homecoming

a newsletter of Bethany Retreat House  
published four times a year at  
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Bethany Retreat House  
is a ministry of the  
Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ  
(Ancilla Domini Sisters, Inc.)  
congregation of women religious.

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“I wonder sometimes if we haven’t banished the way of the heart in favor of the way of the mind, if we emphasize learning about God over being with God.” Sue Monk Kidd, *When the Heart Waits*, p. 133.

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## Coffee Punch Recipe

*At the anniversary celebration, several guests requested the recipe for the coffee punch which so many people enjoyed. Here is the recipe from Denyse Buck.*

### Ingredients:

2 oz. instant coffee  
2 cups water  
2 cups sugar  
1 gallon whole milk  
1 gallon chocolate ice cream  
1 gallon vanilla ice cream

Bring coffee, water and sugar to a boil. Simmer until it looks like a syrup. Let cool. Combine syrup, milk and ice creams in a punch bowl, stir, and enjoy!

# BRH Bookshelf



*Sacred Darkness: Encountering Divine Love  
in Life's Darkest Places*

By Paul Coutinho, SJ

Loyola Press, 2012, paper, 172 pages \$14.95

Reviewed by Deb Szrom Steppe

I live in the northern part of the country. The sun set today just after 4:30 in the afternoon. There is a physical darkness that is very much a part of my waking hours in these autumn days.

Paul Coutinho's book has given me a different perspective on darkness and different way to look on these days of diminishing daylight. He proposes that in darkness we "meet the quiet and holy; in darkness we encounter God in a way that is unnamed, formless and beyond ordinary comprehension" (p. 1). Rather than equating darkness with evil, the author invites the reader to see the darkness at the heart of human experience as immense, mysterious and universal.

This book is a collection of 40 essays divided into three sections: universal darkness, personal darkness and darkness in the journeys of life. Every essay is just a few pages long, but each gives the reader much to ponder.

I was touched by many of the essays. One that I kept finding myself drawn to was in the section of universal darkness: "God of the Israelites Dwelt in Darkness." In it, the author cites Old Testament examples of God's presence in darkness. His interpretations were different from what I've heard before and were very engaging. In one example the author cites, God comes to speak to Moses in a thick dark cloud in front of all the people (Exodus 19:16-19). In this darkness, Moses is separated from the worldly voices that might distract him and his fears and insecurities melt away. What a wonderful image!

The author combines personal stories from his own life and the lives of people he's met to give a rich, relatable texture to his essays. He also blends Indian, Buddhist and Hindu philosophies with Western Christian thought in a way that adds an ancient perspective to his ideas.

It's easy for me to want to run away from the darkness in my life – in weaknesses, fractured relationships and dark autumn skies. In reading Paul Coutinho's book, I am reminded of the intimate, loving and healing God dwelling in those very places.

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

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and we apologize if we may have  
inadvertently omitted someone's name.

## In Memory of

Ed Felus by Frances Felus

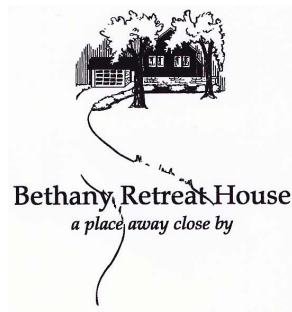
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make welcome Christmas gifts!

## Bethany's Bookstore, a Treasure Trove by Rosemary Balczo

What I like best about bookstore at Bethany Retreat House is that it is concentrated like orange juice – all unessential ingredients have been removed. While the space is humble, the contents are rich. Every book, card, and CD is chosen with care and has one focus: to help individuals nurture their inner life.

These are the books you read and reread, underline and highlight, put down and pick back up, carry around with you, and loan to friends. These are the cards you send to friends and strangers alike on days of celebration or in times of consolation. This is the music that calms and soothes your spirit while it slows your heart rate

and leads you into silence. Whether you have five minutes or two hours – your time here is well spent.



*Srs. Kathy Haas, PHJC, and Marybeth Martin, PHJC, browse the bookstore at Bethany Retreat House.*

If you asked me what part the bookstore at Bethany Retreat House has played in my life for the past 20 years, I would refer you to an inscription that hung over the door at the ancient library of Thebes: “Medicine for the Soul.” Spiritual health and wholeness are the hallmark of this sacred space located in the center of Bethany Retreat House. Helping people respond to the God who dwells within is its mission.

According to Rainer Maria Rilke, “The only journey is the one within.” There is no better place to begin or continue such a trip than at the bookstore in Bethany Retreat House.