



The Wellsprings of Mercy

Retreat led by Dr. Christine Bochen

A day away...

“Excellent, thought-provoking, spiritually mature subject matter.”

“I am taking many ideas back to Parish with me to work with in our soon to happen planning for the coming year.”

“Hard to top this one!”

These were some of the comments on the evaluations for the May 21 retreat, ‘Wellsprings of Mercy’ with Dr. Christine Bochen. Dr. Bochen, a highly respected academic and expert on Thomas Merton, led us in an interactive day that was engaging, inspiring and most important, relevant to the daily lives of pastoral ministers.

The presentation was divided into two parts with plenty of time for discussion and reflection. First Dr. Bochen highlighted the fact that Pope Francis has declared this coming year the ‘Jubilee of Mercy’ and how mercy is the hallmark of Pope Francis’ papacy. The year also coincides with the 100th year anniversary of Thomas Merton’s birth. Many of his writings explore the theme of mercy and its transformative power. Dr. Bochen walked us through Fr. Merton’s works while weaving us in and

out of his own remarkable spiritual journey to shed some light on the development of his own understanding of mercy. The hunger for mercy, the need to nurture a climate of mercy and the surprising statement that mercy and grace are inconsistent seemed to be the take away from the morning session.

The afternoon session focused on Merton’s vision of church; a place where God’s nature is revealed through mystery, shared truth, deep friendship, healing and nurturing a climate of mercy. In *Love and Living*, Merton writes, “The whole climate of the New Testament is one of liberation by mercy.” (p. 210)

The Church “is called to keep alive on earth this irreplaceable climate of mercy, truth and faith in which the creative and life-giving joy of reconciliation in Christ always not only remains possible but is a continuous and ever-renewed actuality.” (*Love and Living*, p. 655)

There was lively discussion around the similarity between Merton’s vision and that of Pope Francis. Looking through

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**Goodbye and Thank you!
God Speed on your journey...**

Dcn. Jim Nail
Meghan Robinson
Dcn. Gary DiLallo
Dcn. Brian Mahoney
Dcn. Tom Driscoll

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Called to serve

By Cathy Kamp, Pastoral Associate, St. Joseph's, Penfield, NY

Over the past few weeks I have had the opportunity to re-read and ponder the words of our United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord*. I am always surprised again to see in print: "Lay ecclesial ministry has emerged and taken shape in our country through the work of the Holy Spirit." (14) Our ministry is not a solution to a problem but rather the Holy Spirit calling forth the People of God to exercise the gifts bestowed at Baptism. "All of the baptized are called to work for the transformation of the world." (8)

While all of the baptized answer the call in the secular realm, some of us are blessed to work in parish and other Roman Catholic Church settings. This is our particular call. "The laity can also feel

called, or in fact be called, to cooperate with their pastors in the service of the ecclesial community, for the sake of its growth and life." (9) Though we work and minister in many different areas of Church life, we share the bond of knowing we do what we do only with the grace of our loving God and the nourishment of souls in the Eucharist.

The Bishops also point to our responsibility to prepare and form ourselves, initially and in an ongoing fashion. We need to engage the human, spiritual, academic, and pastoral formation necessary to be the grounded women and men of faith our parishioners will seek in times of

joy and sorrow.

The Pastoral Associates/Ministers Association is here to assist you with ongoing spiritual enrichment and continuing education and to provide a professional support group. As our newly elected Executive Committee comes together—Mary Jo DiNoto, Lori Cunliffe, Sheryl Zabel, and myself with the support of Bernard Grizard, Betsy McDermott and Karen Rinefierd—we invite you to be in touch. Let us know how the association can best support you in your vital ministry.

Blessings,
Cathy Kamp

Election Results

Thank you for voting!

Lori Cunliffe from St. Patrick's in Victor and Sheryl Zabel from Assumption in Fairport are the two new officers on the Pastoral Associates'/Pastoral Ministers' Association Executive Committee. Thank you to Amy Voll and Augie Misiurewicz who have served for more than three years each.

Prayer Circle

- ⇒ In Thanksgiving for those Pastoral Associates and Ministers who are retiring or moving on.
- ⇒ Pray for all parishes that will receive new leadership that God's mercy will touch this new configuration of professional staff & priests & their parishioners.
- ⇒ For all PAs to be able to make at least one of our gatherings a year.
- ⇒ Meghan Robinson and her pinched nerve!
- ⇒ That our homilists and leaders inspire peacemaking by confronting the corruption that broadens the disparity between the rich and the poor .

Gleanings Newsletter

We are delighted to print articles, meditations, parish stories, prayer requests, book reviews etc. from pastoral associates/ministers of all parishes and ministries in the Rochester Diocese. Please submit ideas and contributions often to bmcdermott@dor.org; 328-3228, ext. 1287.

My years at St. Michael have been blessed.

By Pat Albrecht, Pastoral Associate, St. Michael, Newark



Pat Albrecht

Many years ago now, more than 30, I felt a need in my heart for “something more”. At that time I was working for an insurance agency/auctioneer 3 days a week. I was also doing a great deal of volunteering at Notre Dame Retreat House, particularly in women’s retreat ministry.

As time unfolded I felt a call to a fuller spiritual life and since I am married and have a family, I began looking at religious congregations that had a lay component. I found the Sisters of Mercy. I followed their process for a period of time and decided that indeed I was called to be an Associate of the Sisters of Mercy. On April 12, 1988, I made my covenant with Mercy and continued to work at the insurance agency and volunteer at the retreat house.

About 3 months after I became a Mercy Associate, a ministry opening for Director of Associates was publicized. I talked to my spiritual director and a few others, prayed and then applied for the position. The short story is that I was hired and began part time ministry with Mercy in August 1988. A year or two later in addition to ministry at Mercy, I was offered another

part time position as Associate Director at a retreat house. Being Associate Director there meant I had responsibility for the day to day management of the facility as well as being part of the women’s retreat ministry team. Those were wonderful days both at Mercy and at the retreat house.

During this time I was taking classes at SBI/St. Bernard’s School of Theology and Ministry. In 1993 I received my certification as a Business Manager and in 1995 in Pastoral Ministry. I could not have done any of this without the support of my husband and my family. I spent a lot of time on the road from one place to another and studying as well.

[I felt a need in my heart for “something more”.]

In June 1997 the administration of the retreat house changed and in July I felt it was time to move on and follow my heart again, this time to Pastoral Ministry in a parish setting. I went to Gloucester on retreat, came back a week later and applied for and was hired for the Pastoral Associate’s

position at St. Mary’s, Waterloo. I felt deeply that I had made the right decision to move on and St. Mary’s was where I was meant to be. Pastoral Ministry fit very well. It was a blessing to be trusted with the lives of God’s people on so many levels. I stayed at St. Mary’s until 2002 when I was hired as Pastoral Associate at St. Michael in Newark.

My years at St. Michael have been blessed. My responsibilities are many and varied. I work with those who are seeking Baptism for their child/children as well as with those who have lost a loved one. This allows me the privilege of being with parishioners at the beginning and at the end of life. There are hospitals to visit and the sick at home. I am a resource person for RCIA and am responsible for registering new parishioners as well as taking care of those who come to the door looking for assistance. We have a couple of women’s groups that I facilitate, “Faith Sandwiched In” and “Touched by Cancer”.

My days are full and there are challenges along the way but none that can’t be ironed out with patience and conversation. I know without any doubt that I am exactly where God wants me to be and I am grateful every day to be a Pastoral Associate.

Book Review

By Bernie Tomasso, Ss. Mary & Martha, Auburn

The Light Is On For You: The Life-changing Power of Confession by Cardinal Donald Wuerl. The Word Among Us Press : 2014, 163 pages.

This book was given to our RCIA group at the final session. It is extremely pastoral and includes several vignettes from penitents who are regulars and ones who have been away from the sacrament or the church for extended periods of time. It relies on scripture and personal experiences of Cardinal Wuerl in administering the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Time and again he encourages the reader to examine their life according to the beatitudes or ten commandments. The appendixes include the Rite for the Sacrament, sample prayers, and three examinations of conscience. The first is brief, the second is a longer, and the final is based on Catholic Social Teaching. It also includes a brief glossary.

2015 Dates of Interest

Saturday, June 20

Priest Ordination. 10:30 am. Sacred Heart Cathedral.

Tuesday, June 23

Annual Gathering of the Ministerium. 9:30 –3:00. Burgundy Basin, Pittsford. Helen M. Alvaré , Professor of Law, George Mason University. **Topic: “Religious Freedom and Complementarity”** NB: Professor Alvaré is one of four keynote speakers at the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia next September; Pope Francis will be in attendance. Register online through St. Bernard’s.

Summer Fun...

St. Bernard's "Garden Party" Series.

Our “Garden Party” Series is an opportunity for Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, quality theological reflection and catechesis, and fellowship and hospitality. Details at: <http://www.stbernards.edu/events/st-bernarde28099s-events-calendar/>

Thursday, July 30

“Catholic Apologetics: Explaining the Fullness of the Faith” with Rev. Dr. Scott Caton .

Wednesday, August 26

“Catholic Discipleship: Living the Fullness of the Faith” with Rev. Jim Schwartz, D.Min and Cathy Kamp, M.Div.

Also St. Bernard's and Holy Sepulchre/Ascension Garden are offering a year long Lecture Series on **End of Life Issues: Religious Beliefs, Traditions and Myths Surrounding Death, Dying and Grief.** see [Seminar Series Brochure \[PDF\]](#) .



Question of the Month



What are some ideas from all of you out there to finding, training and keeping volunteers?

Please send your ideas, secrets, suggestions and frustrations to bmcdermott@dor.org. A sentence, a paragraph or a full article will be welcomed. These are serious questions pastoral associates and ministers have posed that we are putting out for general feedback from experience and your wisdom!

Please email bmcdermott@dor.org who will include your advice in the next newsletter.

Also, submit questions where others’ best practices would be helpful and challenging.

Pastoral Associates’/Pastoral Ministers’ Association Executive Committee



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(A day well spent...continued from page 1)

some quotes from the two on the topic of mercy and Church, it was difficult to tell who wrote or said what, even though the quotes are separated by some 60 or 70 years. This brought a renewed sense of joy and hope for the future, as well as the commitment to be a Church of mercy.

When asked what would have made the day perfect, six of you responded, “It was!” Another said, “Having **all** pastoral ministers able to enjoy this time away.” Touché to both comments.

Summarized by Betsy McDermott