



February 2018

Letter to Our Ministry Associates

Upcoming Events

February 11: Evening for Lovers

February 23-25: Silent Ignatian Spiritual Exercises Men's Retreat

March 4: Lenten Day of Prayer

March 16-18: Eucharist Retreat

March 23-25: Silent Sacred Listening & Speaking Women's Retreat

April 14: Caregivers Workshop

April 21: Earth Day Celebration

April 27-29: Medieval Women Mystics Retreat

May 18-19: Exploring Nature's Ways Retreat

June 1-3: Serenity Retreat for Recovering Alcoholics

June 7-10: Silent Solanus Casey Retreat w/Fr. Dan Crosby

June 15-17: Retreat for Those Left Behind by Suicide

July 27-29: Twelve Step Retreat

August 4: Continuing the Journey of Widowhood

Who Was Here

- 15 Private Retreatants
- Diocese of La Crosse Lay Formation & Deacon Formation
- Knights of Columbus
- Priest Support Group Retreat
- Retrouvaille Board Meeting
- Evangelical Lutheran Church
- Bedrock Recovery Serenity Retreat
- Newman Catholic Sophomores
- Sacred Circle of Spiritual Directors
- WDEF Religious Educators
- Retreat for Mothers
- St. Paul Seminary Diaconate Retreat
- Diamond Approach I & II

LIVING GRATITUDE



As I end my first month as Ministry Associates Coordinator, gratitude is the word that comes to my mind. I believe the beginning of a new year, and for me, the beginning of a new chapter in my life, is a good time to focus on gratitude. Gratitude for my new position; gratitude for St. Anthony's; gratitude for my new friends and co-workers; and gratitude for God for my many blessings!

I spent the past 19 years working in research, so you may find me often quoting research. Over the past 10 years or so, much research has focused on gratitude. This research suggests an "attitude of gratitude" can be linked to better health, sounder sleep, less anxiety, less depression, greater satisfaction with life, and kinder behavior toward others. Some studies show that feeling grateful makes people less likely to become angry and makes one better able to handle adversity.

For me, gratitude is a way to be aware of God's unconditional love. I try to put gratitude in the forefront of the core of who I am. Sometimes gratitude helps me tune in to the very heart of God. Gratitude is a way of making myself aware of all the goodness that God has bestowed on my life and in our world. It can be so easy to focus on the negative and to overlook the goodness, especially if I don't allow myself to be still long enough to see God's presence in my life. Jean Baptiste Massieu, an eighteenth century deaf French educator said, "Gratitude is the memory of the heart." For me it is important to write down the things for which I

am grateful, so that when I'm not feeling very centered I can look back at them and remember. If I focus on the negative, on what is wrong or lacking, I become more negative and dissatisfied. But, if I focus on the positive, I become more positive and satisfied. So, I choose to focus on gratitude each day. It changes my attitude. Being grateful for what you have makes you realize just how blessed you are. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, German pastor and theologian during WWII, said, "We pray for the big things and forget to give thanks for the ordinary." Yet the ordinary may really be the most special and extraordinary.

Something (someone, really) for which I am most grateful is all of you wonderful volunteers. Maybe you are doing ordinary things like stuffing envelopes, vacuuming floors, peeling potatoes, or staining shelves. These seemingly small ordinary things are treasures to us. You and the "small things" you do are the heart and soul of St. Anthony's. You allow us to fulfill our mission of "welcoming all seeking healing, hope and transformation through deeper connection with God, self, others, and Creation." I look forward to meeting you over the coming weeks and months. If there is anything you need from me or that I can do for you, please feel free to call or email me, or just stop by and say hello.

~Marie Fleisner



Focus on Love

This year Lent begins on Valentine's Day. You probably already know that this year Ash Wednesday is Wednesday, February 14. Are you wondering how to have a romantic celebration

on a day of prayer and fasting? We've solved that problem for you with our Evening for Lovers on Sunday, February 11 from 6-8:30 p.m. This special evening includes a delicious candlelit dinner and a time of reflection and story as we celebrate what is wonderful about marriage. Presenters will be Drs. Noelle & Keith Marks. They will speak about **"His Needs, Her Needs: Enhancing a Strong Marriage."** Cost is just \$55 per couple. Call us or register on our website.

Volunteer Opportunities

Eucharistic Adoration: Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is available Monday through Friday at 1:00 p.m., with benediction most days at 2:00 p.m. We invite you to become one of our regular adorers. Sign up for one day a week or even just one day a month.

Hospitality Ministry: Couples and/or individuals who would enjoy spending an occasional weekend at the Center to host retreat groups. Stairs and the ability to lift up to 15 lbs. are involved. Lodging and meals are provided. Weekday and evening opportunities are also available. Those interested in hosting can choose a weekend to "shadow" an experienced host to see if it would be the right fit for you. If you would be interested in hearing more about this or other opportunities at the Center.

Housekeeping Ministry: Volunteers are needed on Monday mornings to vacuum, dust, and straighten bedrooms and conference rooms. We also have an occasional need for a "flip team" - one who comes in on Sunday afternoons to clean rooms as one group is leaving and another coming in. Join us and enjoy the fellowship and friendship!!

To volunteer for any of these, or to learn other ways you can volunteer your time and talents, please contact Marie.

Did you know... Hundreds of volunteer hours are donated to the Center to keep it running and reduce our costs.



In 2017, over 100 volunteers gave more than 13,150 hours. (That's nearly seven full-time employees!)

May God return their blessings!

My Spiritual Journey

by Barbara Studener, OFS, former resident

It started in January of 2016 when I received an invitation to come live at St. Anthony Spirituality Center. I didn't realize it at the time but God planted the seed into my soul to come live at the Center. In September of 2016, I answered God's call and filled out the application. In October of 2016 God's call was answered. I was accepted as a resident.

From October 2016 to December 2016 there were many details to take care of before moving. I owned a house that I had to figure out what to do with for the year that I would be living away. I had a full time job that I had to quit, and I had two dogs and three cats that I had to find homes for. All these things weighed heavily upon my mind until I released them and gave them over to God. Once I turned all the details over to God answers came. My boss of 15 years was happy for me that I was going to take a spiritual journey. Renters were interested in renting my house, and I was able to find homes for all my animals.

In the middle of January 2017, I moved in, and I could feel all the troubles of the world fade away. The Center became a place of peace for me. When I took time to visit my family they all noticed right away how much calmer I was. During the year at St. Anthony's, my relationship with God blossomed. Being surrounded by God's beautiful creation, all the wonderful artwork, and all the various duties I had... my relationship with God was strengthened.

Now, in January of 2018, I can go back out into the world with a renewed sense of who I am in relation to God's creation. As a Secular Franciscan, I am now able to go from Gospel to life and life to Gospel through my opportunity to attend daily Mass, morning and evening prayer and Exposition and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament Monday through Friday. I am so grateful to St. Anthony's for the invitation to answer God's call to conversion and renewal.



Come Pray With Us

You are always welcome to join us for our times of prayer in the Main Chapel:

Mass is celebrated Monday through Friday at 11:30 a.m.

Morning Prayer at 9:00 a.m., **Evening Prayer** at 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday

Call ahead to check for schedule changes.