

ministryassociates

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SEPTEMBER 2018

Letter to Our Ministry Associates

Upcoming Events

September 14-16: Scripture Retreat w/Sr. Dianne Bergant

September 28-30: Silent Franciscan Living Retreat

October 5-7: Serenity Retreat for Recovering Alcoholics

October 7: Franciscan Life is Living Gospel

October 14-20: Icon Writing Workshop

October 25: Central American Martyrs w/Fr. Tom Lindner (Know Your Faith)

November 9-11: Silent Seasons of Our Lives Silent Theme Retreat (co-sponsored with Wis. Rapids Churches)

November 16-17: Beauty in a Broken World Retreat for Women

December 9: Advent Day of Prayer



The growing season is coming to an end in our kitchen garden. Our Thursday ladies have chopped, grated, sliced, and peeled countless pounds of fresh vegetables that we'll enjoy all year round. They are especially proud to have made 35 jars of pickles. Thank you so much!



LIFE IS FRAGILE

I've been reminded lately of the fragility of life. Life is so delicate, so precious, and so beautiful. But we take it for granted. We get so caught up in everyday worries, always thinking ahead to tomorrow, but tomorrow is not guaranteed. Everything we have in this world could be gone in an instant. We could be gone in an instant. We've all heard of recent tragic events that suddenly took the lives of people in the midst of living—while swimming, boating, biking, or even just talking. We may have been touched personally by such events. These events are unexplainable and heart-breaking. We humans often believe we have some amount of control over our lives. When we have to face the reality of our powerlessness, overwhelming fear invades, leaving us frantically grasping for reasons and answers. But if there's a take away message from a tragedy, it is that you must LIVE and LOVE in the moment.

This summer I lost a friend to cancer, and sitting with her during some of the final moments of her life, she shared her thoughts that when all is said and done, life is about loving and being loved. Nothing else matters. And she was happy that she'd had both; she had loved and she was loved. What else is there? Then she asked me this question, "What if today was your last? What if it was the last day for your loved one? How would you spend it? Who would you call? What would you say? Where would you go?"

I was reminded of something that happened to a friend several years ago. Her son was a senior in high school. The family was going to make a trip "up north" to their cabin for the weekend. The son didn't want to go. He wanted to stay home with his friends. Son and dad had a big fight that ended with dad storming

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Who Was Here

- 12 Private Retreatants
- Knights of Columbus
- Know Your Faith w/Fr. Al Burkhardt
- Priest Support Retreat
- Hmong Leadership Training
- Continuing the Journey of Widowhood
- Sisters of Mary Morning Star
- St. Paul Center Leadership
- St. Clare Day
- WDREF Board Meeting
- Retrouvaille
- Journal-Making Workshop
- Caregivers Workshop
- Holy Rosary Catholic School

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ST. ANTHONY
spiritualitycenter

Update on the Elevator Project

As you know, we've been working hard the past several to secure funding for our much needed elevator. Combining the grants and private donations we have so far raised just over \$60,000. So, were only \$10,000 away from the halfway mark, where we can begin construction of the project. If you haven't given yet, and you'd like to help to replace "Charlie Chair Lift" with "Lula Elevator," visit our website at www.sarcenter.com to learn more about the Elevator Project. Your donations are tax-deductible.

Volunteer Opportunities

Building Committee Secretary: The building committee comprises a number of volunteers who take care of various things around the Center such as providing upkeep and overseeing all aspects of the Center, including rooms and housekeeping spaces, as well as providing for the beauty general needs of the building. The committee meets monthly and is need of a secretary. Duties would include contacting members, sending out monthly agendas, and keeping minutes. If interested in this volunteer position, please contact Barb Ceranski, (715) 574-4896 or barbceranski@gmail.com.

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. Contact us if you would be interested in hearing more about this or other opportunities at the Center. **We are in particular need of hosts for our busy autumn months!**

Music Ministry: Are you blessed by God with the gift of music, vocal or instrumental? If so, please consider volunteering for our music ministry. Occasionally we have retreats where we need someone to lead the music for services or liturgies. This is a great opportunity to share your gifts.

Farewell

Speaking of opportunities, I am bidding farewell to St. Anthony Spirituality Center (at least as an employee). This will be my last newsletter. I know I haven't been here long, but life and family circumstances forced me to make the difficult decision to resign from my position as Ministry Associates Coordinator. I will always treasure the relationships I formed during my brief 9-months here. As I've said from the beginning, St. Anthony's relies on you, the volunteers! You are the lifeblood of this organization. I look forward to occasionally returning as a volunteer and retreatant. Thank you for all you do, and may God bless all of you!

~Marie

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out of the house, saying to his son, "You're a selfish little jerk." When they got home on Sunday, they found their son dead in his bed. He had died of a congenital brain aneurism that they never knew he had. For years my friend's husband tormented himself over the last words he said to his son. What a tragedy! Did his son know his dad loved him? Of course! But, it's a good reminder that words matter.

Maybe it's a function of my age and the awareness that, not only will I not live forever, but my remaining years on Earth are fewer than those that have already passed. My perspective on life has changed, with possibility and opportunity being replaced by sensitivity and inevitability. I hope understanding and compassion have replaced likelihood and achievement as I recognize my mortality. But I can't live the rest of my life in fear either. And I don't.



I found this quote somewhere "In the stillness of reflecting on what God has done and what he can do, he assures us that he is always with us." So we hold on to that. No matter what, God is walking alongside us through the mud and muck, through the desert, through the deep waters toward his promise. God is guiding and protecting us. Sometimes we give in to the fear when we can't see the path ahead, but we can be assured God will ultimately fulfill his promise. It might be hard to give up the illusion of control, but when we do, we understand the reality of God's protection.

So, if you don't already do so, start counting your blessings every single day. Thank God for your life and the lives of those you love. Keep a gratitude journal. I do. At the end of the day, write three things for which you are grateful. Tell the people you love that you love them! Don't assume they know; say it! Treat each goodbye as if it were your last. Don't let the last words you say to someone be hurtful. Smile more; laugh more; live more! Treat each day as if it were your last.

I know it's cliché, but remember the song "Live Like You Were Dying"? Treat tomorrow as a gift (and we don't know if we'll get that gift.) Forget the skydiving and bull riding, but remember these things: love deeper, speak sweeter, and give the forgiveness you've been denying.

Life and love are God's most precious gifts. Tragedies can occur at any time --- it makes me realize, and I hope it makes you realize too, how fragile and precious life really is. ~Marie

