

Dominican Retreat & Conference Center

1945 Union Street, Niskayuna, New York 12309
(518) 393-4169 www.dslny.org

Solitude on a Busy Highway

The Good News

December 2020



In her letter dated November, 2019, Sister Sue wrote:

In Mark's gospel we hear Jesus say, "Why does this generation ask for a sign?" To which I would like to respond, "So they can find the driveway to the Dominican Retreat and Conference Center, where they will experience peace, serenity, healing and hope."

We asked you to consider making a donation to help offset the cost of replacing signs on the property that were twenty-five years old. We asked and you answered with overwhelming generosity. The new signs were installed this past October and they not only proudly announce our existence but act as a constant reminder of your support as, together, *we work to be signs of God's love in this world.*

We would like to start a *virtual book club* starting in January.

The book we will be reading is [Fly While You Still Have Wings](https://g.co/kgs/XYSXVJ) by Joyce Rupp
(link to the book: <https://g.co/kgs/XYSXVJ>).

We will have Zoom meetings on Wednesday January 6th to discuss how often we might meet. We will have a meeting during the day at 10 AM and in the evening at 7 PM if there is enough interest.

Please register for one of these informational meetings for which there is no cost.
Subsequent meetings would be \$5.



From the Desk of the Administrator:

The scripture passage that we chose for our theme retreats this past year was “Trust in the Lord with all your heart.” *Pv 3:5a*. And as we look back, wasn’t that apropos? Some of you were able to experience your retreat and some were not, but all of us were called to do exactly that – Trust in the Lord with all our heart! I don’t know about you, but some days I was discouraged and frustrated and it was really hard to do that. Other days were filled with hope and possibilities as I learned new ways of doing some old things and tried other things for the first time. Trust was easier on those days. But what is clear to me, is that whatever kind of day I was having - whether I was able to trust easily, or not so well – God never went anywhere. God was always there with me, moving through the challenges and joys of each day.

I realize these challenging times are not over (as we all wish they were). We do not know what life will look like when we come out the other end. I hold onto the words of St. Julian of Norwich who experienced God speaking to her in a vision; “And these words: **YOU WILL NOT BE OVERCOME**, were said very insistently and strongly, for certainty and strength against every tribulation which may come. He did not say: You will not be troubled; you will not be belaboured; you will not be disquieted, but he said: **YOU WILL NOT BE OVERCOME!** God wants us to pay attention to these words, and always to be strong in faithful trust, in well-being and in woe, for he loves us and delights in us, and so he wishes us to love him and delight in him and trust greatly in him and all will be well.”

Thank you – to all of you who donated towards our “**Eventless More Than Just Desserts!**”
To date, you have donated **over \$18,000.**

Thank you – to our **MTJD Committee:**

Joan Thiesen Chairperson
Joan Blando
Sue Cafariella,
Shannon Kelly
Darlene Lisa
Robin Piliere
Kerrie Wolf-Piechota



Thank you – for our “**Sweet Treats**” from:

Bittersweet Candy Co.
Blue Rose Cheesecake and Bake Shop
Cheesecake Factory
Cheryl Steinhorst
Civitello’s Italian Bakery
The Cookie Factory
Dolce & Biscotti Italian Bakery
Elizabeth Renda
J&S Watkins Homebaked Goods
Leah’s Cakery
Oh Goodness Cakes
Stewarts
Sweet Frog
Uncle Sam’s Chocolates
Whiskey Business Bakery

Spiritual Sanctuary

In our last newsletter, we announced the opening of the *Spiritual Sanctuary*, a new program funded by the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation. This is DRCC's effort to strengthen and expand services to meet the spiritual needs of a growing population of Seniors, Persons With Disabilities and 12-Step Program Members.

Our steady progress is improving the access and comfort that our Retreat Center will bring to all who participate in our schedule of programs. We have installed a new sound system in the Conference Room, complete with assistive listening devices and we have added a wireless microphone in the Chapel. We have purchased more recliners for bedrooms for those who prefer these for their sleeping comfort. Our handicap-accessible bathroom will have a push button door opener that will readily accommodate anyone with a mobility impairment. Also, we have acquired a webcam and additional technology to enhance our online presence. Those on Zoom could be so easily heard and seen by all of us onsite, that it was the next best thing to having everyone together!

The grant also provides scholarship funding for registration fees so no one need feel left behind. Simply request scholarship coverage when registering. Grant reporting requires us to ask questions of each participant about their age category and county of residence. Fear not! Individual data is not revealed; we simply report total numbers from age groups and counties per quarter.

Are you looking for a safe haven, a holy place where you can calm your mind, strengthen yourself, and grow your soul? Then come and experience the security and protection that God brings forth as you seek your very own
~ *Spiritual Sanctuary*.

Peace be with you,
Mary Anne



One of our retreatants *Regina Fallock*, wrote this poem while attending the Virtual Retreat Weekend for Women in September ~ *Trust in the Lord with All Your Heart*

Trust

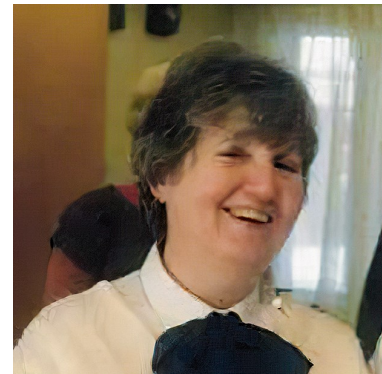
*Who to believe?
What to believe?
Where to find light?
When to overcome darkness?
How to survive winter?*

*Questions on our hearts, answers we do not have.
Darkness in our lives, faith is the light.
Seek and you will find the warmth of the sun.
Look and you shall see the footprints of love.*

*The growth of Spring, the warmth of Summer,
The quiet of Fall, the sleep of Winter.
May we all learn patience, trust and strength,
For God's plan is not done yet.*



*Sr. Mary Hoguet, OP passed onto eternal life
on Nov. 10, 2020.*



Some of you will remember Sr. Mary who was on the staff here at DRCC from 1986-1991.

She will be remembered for her joy and compassion.

May she rest in peace.



“Sign, sign, everywhere a sign”

Yes. Those are the words of the chorus of a song from the 70s. Although much of the song is a bit negative concerning signs, I am drawn to the very end of the song. It goes like this, “Thank you Lord for thinking ‘bout me. I’m alive and doing fine.” This line was a response to a sign which said, “Everybody welcome. Come in.”

During this time of Covid, when we are continually cautioned to keep socially distant, to not hug or make any physical contact, it can be challenging to respond to an invitation to “come in.” As a response, being the resourceful people that we are, we have come up with ways to stay connected through social media and platforms like Zoom. Although it may fall short, it is certainly a bridge until we can give and receive those hugs and hand shakes again.

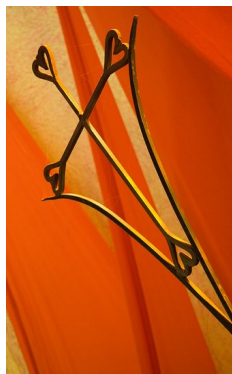
How about with your God? How are we at LOOKING for those signs that God sends us all the time. As, I am writing this, I saw a cardinal. I have heard that can be a sign that someone in heaven is thinking about me. The same I have heard said about finding a penny. So, how good is our “God radar?” Do we keep an eye open or are we dismissive?

I have a dear friend who talks of how her God is sometimes the “God of the 2 by 4.” I personally think of my God as the God of the elbow, frequently giving me a nudge. Many times there are so many nudges that I think I am black and blue! What is your God’s way of getting your attention? Maybe you can ask sometime in your prayer.

The other thing to consider, is how are WE signs for others of God presence and care? Sometimes we may let negative thinking get in the way, by saying to ourselves, “They won’t want to hear from ME.” When is actuality, we are exactly the perfect person to make the effort .

As we move through this Pandemic, which I have referred to as Pandora from time to time, perhaps we can be a bit more intentional in looking for signs. We can also be open to being a sign of God’s love and presence in the world.

Sr. Jude Kapp, RSM



Sung Vespers in the Spirit of Taize

7:00-8:00 on Facebook Live

Find Dominican Retreat and Conference Center and look for the live video.

Thursdays ~ December 17

January 14

February 11

March 11

FREE WILL OFFERING

**The annual Valentine’s evening is not happening this year due to capacity restrictions.
We know that this is enjoyed by many and will return post Covid**

**New Year's Evening of Reflection
Hybrid**

***MOTHER OF GOD
Child of Dreams ... God's Rebellion***

*Spend the night of vigil wrapped in the peace of God
and filled with whisperings of the Spirit
within the whole incarnation event.*

December 31, 2019 7:30 PM -12:30 AM

Presenter: Fr. Lou Sogliuzzo, SJ

In house: Evening only \$25 Virtual Evening only \$20

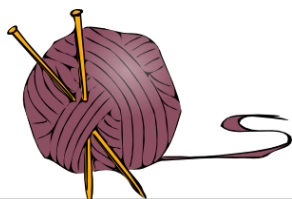
In house: Evening program plus overnight accommodations and breakfast \$50.00/person
(concludes at 10:00 AM).



KNITTING Via Zoom

This informal workshop will provide a weekly opportunity for knitting in community. Pattern, instruction, and support will be provided to make a traditional prayer shawl, however, anyone working on a project is welcome to join. Beginners will learn all the steps in starting to knit, seasoned knitters will learn ways to enhance their work, and add meaning to their knitting time.

Weekly workshops will include time for project problem solving, sharing of knitting stories, and prayer. (Supply list provided.)



Sunday, January 3, 10, 17, 24 2-4 PM

Presenter: Susan Barber Skinner

Cost \$15 each/\$55. for all four

**Choose Your Own Adventure
Writing Retreat**

January 15-17 Via Zoom

Director :

Maggie Whelan, OPA

A time to delve into an adventure of a type of writing
you've never considered or work on a project of your own.

Program begins Friday at 7:45 PM and ends Sunday at 11 AM

Cost: \$75.00

There are as many ways to encounter God as there are people with their many life Experiences.

**Come explore Centering Prayer as our January Path to God
with Sr. Sue Zemgulis, OP**

**Tuesday, January 19, 7-8:30 PM or Wednesday, January 20, 10-11:30 AM
Via Zoom—Cost \$15**

AN AFTERNOON AT THE VIRTUAL SPA

*Are you tired of dealing with the fallout of Covid?
Take time to let yourself be cared for and loved by God...*

**Tuesday, January 26
1:30—4:00 PM Via Zoom
Presenter: Sr. Eleanor Guerin, RSM**

Cost: \$20

WOMEN'S THEME RETREATS

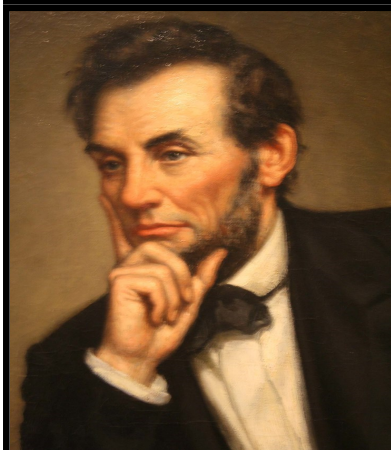
Jesus rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" Mk4:39a

January 29-January 31 ~ Director: Sr. Kitty Hanley, CSJ

February 5– February 7 ~ Director Anita Davidson, OPA

March 26-March 28 ~ Director: Sr. Marilyn Vassallo, CSJ

HYBRID : Cost- In house \$205 (65 and older \$190). Virtual \$75



Virtual Lincoln Lecture

"What if Lincoln had NOT been assassinated?"

Monday, February 8 ~ 7:00-8:30 PM


Presenter: Tom Hoffman

Via Zoom—cost \$15

Silent Retreat for Men & Women—*Sink into the Center*

Program begins Friday at 7:45 PM and ends Wednesday at 1 PM

A \$50 deposit is required.



February 17— 6:20 PM

WEEKEND FOR MEN'S 12 STEP

February 19-21



LENTEN COMPASSION SERIES

Compassion for those who cause Suffering ~ March 9

Director: Sr. Marilyn Vassallo, CSJ

Cost: \$15 per session/\$40 for all three





***"Wherever you go,
I will go..."
Two widows...
One perilous journey...
Boundless love to light the way..."***

Book of Ruth

**4 PART SCRIPTURE SERIES for Women and Men
Wednesdays ~ March 3, 10, 24, 31**

10 –12 AM

**Presenter: Joy Galarneau
\$15 per session/\$55 for all four**

***May you always find
Blue skies above your head,
Shamrocks beneath your feet,
laughter and joy aplenty,
Kindness from all you meet,
Good friends and kin to miss you
If you ever choose to roam,
And a path that's been cleared by
Angels themselves to carry you
Safely home.***

Irish blessing

CELTIC DAY of Reflection

Wednesday, March 17

HYBRID

***The Christian Celtic world sees the mystery of God in everyday
life. Our time together will explore some characteristics of
Celtic Spirituality***

Presenter: Megan Brown, RSM, D. Min.

***9:45-2:30 (lunch included)
Cost: In house \$30/Virtual \$20***

Complete this **REGISTRATION FORM** and include with deposit (\$50.00 non-refundable for Weekend Registration)
To save time and postage, Credit Card Reservations can be faxed (518-393-4525) phoned in (518-393-4169)

Name: _____ Address: _____

City/St/Zip _____ Phone (h) _____ (w) _____ (c) _____

E-mail _____ Diet/room need _____

Please register me for the following Program: _____ Date _____

Deposit: \$ _____ Check #: _____ Coupon _____

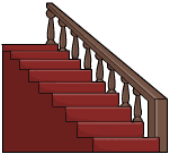
Credit Card: M/C Visa Discover # _____ Exp. _____

Print name as it appears on card for clarification

Code: _____

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STEP 9

Made direct amends to such people whenever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

The work of Step 8 completed- I now undertake the action required of me in Step 9 – **making direct amends**.

This is not something I can rush into. I need to spend time in thought and prayer, inviting my Higher Power to direct the process for me. Because of my impulsive nature, I realize that I need a trusted companion with whom I can also share, someone who can assist me in this step of my journey, especially with those difficult amends which I could easily rationalize away due to the hurt done to me.

And so begins the journey through Step 9. There are a couple of people I know I will never see again, but who deserve an amends because of the hurt I caused them. I write each of them a letter, in which I share, as best I can, what happened and why. I offer my amends for the hurt caused, seeking forgiveness. The letters are put into the mail **without expectation** of any return correspondence.

This is very important for me because I know that done with expectation I will only set myself up for failure and more resentment. I make these amends for my personal healing. How the other person responds is not my concern.

For others, I begin a process of face-to-face amends. I set up appointments with some, others, I call on the phone, some are immediate, others will take more time.

As I undertake the process, I begin to experience a new-felt freedom because I know that I am redeeming myself of my past transgressions. And there are still those no longer alive. I sit and write each of them a “no send” letter in which I share my amends and my regrets that things could not have been different. I read these letters to my trusted companion so that I may face the consequences of my behavior and own up to the fact that these amends involve changing the patterns of behavior that caused the hurt in the first place. I burn these letters in a ritual – so that the smoke of these amends, like incense, reach them in heaven.

As I go through the process of making amends, I feel the sense of shame diminishing, I am able to let go of guilt, and I feel an increased sense of self-esteem, self-respect and self-worth. This is sheer gift from my Higher Power, the by-product of taking seriously the humble work of Step 9.

The final amends that I make are to myself because through these hurtful behaviors I estranged myself from significant people in my life, alienated myself from relationship with my Higher Power, and lost the beauty of my own soul.

PRAYER

Higher Power, I pray for the grace that I need to make each of the amends that I need to make. Grant me both the willingness to do so and the courage to follow through with absolute honesty. Give me the guidance I need – first, what to say to each person, and second, good judgement in timing so that I may accomplish that which is asked of me in this Step. Help me to confront the fears that I feel – especially the fear of rejection, that I may not hold back anything that would compromise the freedom that you most desire for me. Amen.

SPIRITUAL GROUNDWORK

Take a block of time to review your list of amends to be made. Using each name as a litany, ask your Higher Power to fill each person you have harmed with blessing, healing and goodness. After you have spent time doing this, invite your Higher Power to show you the path needed for each amends that you need to make.

If you find yourself stuck on any name, bring that name to your Higher Power for more healing and blessing, until you feel safe enough and comfortable enough to become willing to make that particular amends, knowing that you do not do it alone, but with the strength of your Higher Power.

Reproduced by permission from Sister Judith A. Terrameo, OSF, Pathway to Peace and Inner Freedom: Reflections on the Twelve Steps (Allegany, NY: The Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, 2018).

12 STEP AFTERNOON

Addiction: A physical disease with a mental & spiritual solution

Saturday, January 23, 1:30-3:30 PM

Via ZOOM cost - \$20

Directed by Margaret Maniaci, a Licensed Clinical Addiction Counselor retired after 33 years in the field.



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Dominican Spiritual Life Center
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**And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped
in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.
And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the
heavenly host praising God.
“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward all.”**
Luke 2:12 -2:14

We wish you and yours a joyous Christmas and a peaceful New Year!

\$5.00 Coupon

Present this coupon to receive
\$5.00 off a **day** or **evening** program at:
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\$10.00 Coupon

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