

# *Dominican Retreat & Conference Center*



1948-2023



*75 years of Caring for the Spirit*

## *The Good News*

*September 2023*

*We have officially begun our 75th Anniversary Year and are busily planning special events and various ways to commemorate this milestone!*



WINDMILL CIRCA 1900

*May the God of MEMORY be with you, filling your mind and your heart with all the good God has done for you. May you ponder with gratitude and wonder all the experiences of your life—those that have empowered you and those that have challenged you to become all that God intends for you at this moment. May you see your life held in the gentle hands of the God who has loved you from the very first. May the God of MEMORY bless you.*

*Maxine Shonk, OP*

### **Remembering the Unforgettable**

**You'll understand, I hope, that I tend to think in the context of music. I remember when I sang my first solo in front of an audience that filled my high school auditorium. The piece was "St. Therese of the Roses", and the music was tricky, a bit out of range for my untrained voice. The anxiety I felt was something quite new to me, and I remember the fear was unforgettable. From that moment on, I avoided performing for crowds as much as I could.**

**However, put me in a church to pray and sing and I am completely at ease. Playing and praying music before the Lord seems to always grow my faith and soothe my soul. Others tell me that they too share this experience of peace and awe when music and prayer offer spiritual depth. How many**

**memorable moments of music have stirred our souls? How many times has the melody surrounded and reminded us of how we are embraced by God's love? How often have we wept, felt pure joy, or sensed God's Real Presence, as we sang the psalms and poems of saintly composers?**

**Listening to the many voices singing in our Dominican chapel with its pleasing acoustics must be a taste of heaven. Perhaps in these unforgettable holy hours, we blend with all the voices who have sung and prayed during the nearly 4,000 weeks of retreats, prayer services and liturgies. The holy ground of this Retreat House contains many memories and so many retreatants have gone "forth in peace" to "do this in memory of Me." Our unforgettable goodness joins all who have gone before us to live on in the memory of God.**

**"O sing to the Lord a new song!" – Psalm 96**

*Mary Anne Brown*





## Thoughts on 75 years of Sowing and Reaping

By Sr. Sue Zemgulis, OP



Seeds are a fragile yet powerful thing – filled with so much potential! Given the right conditions – water, sunlight, temperature - they each grow into a unique creation exponentially exceeding the size of the seed. Think of the acorn and the oak.

Back in the late 1800's, Lucy Eaton Smith cast the seeds of her dreams onto the soil of upstate New York, providing retreat experiences for women which had not previously existed in this country.

Almost 75 years ago, our sisters cast yet more seeds onto the field of this property – providing a place of retreat for thousands, and for a short while offering a residence for elderly women. We know the field of this property prior to our ownership was some type of cultivated land. I have been told by an elderly retreatant that he used to visit or help with the horses on the property. I presume there was a large garden at one time. But in 1948 we chose to sow other seeds – seeds of faith, of hope, of healing, of compassion, of trust, of truth, of self-knowledge, of peace.

Women and men have come for 75 years with a desire for something more – a glimpse of the Divine at work in their lives, a greater awareness that they are a beloved child of God, some much needed rest, a time of stepping away to see more clearly.

These seeds have been nurtured by sisters and lay folk alike through their words, their smiles, their kindness, their laughter and tears, their listening ears and caring hearts, a good meal, a comfortable room, a beautiful piece of land to gaze at and walk upon, a sacred space

in which to be quiet enough to hear the whispers of God.

When I hear Jesus' parable, of the seeds (Mt 13:1-9), I think of both the privilege and the hard work it has been to maintain this field of rich soil for 75 years. I think of all those who I have known personally and worked with in the 47 years that I have been affiliated with this retreat house. I think of the stories I have heard of the early years, and the house on the hill, and the construction of this building. I think of the many retreatants who talk about watching me grow up. I think of the many who have gone to God. I think of the music that has been raised in this chapel and the tears that have been shed in the counseling rooms. I think of the conversations I have had with truly incredible faith filled people and conversations with these amazing women on this mural. And I know that this is but a small fraction of the work of God woven into the fabric of these past 75 years.

People have said that as soon as they turn onto the property, something happens. Some say they feel at home. Some say they can relax. Some say they feel surrounded by prayer. There is a sacredness to this place – a sense of the Holy – because of you and all who have opened their hearts and their lives to receive that seed of God and allowed it to grow.

Seeds are a fragile yet powerful thing – filled with so much potential! God indeed has sown, and wow...just look at what has grown!



## **REMINDER OF SEPTEMBER PROGRAMS & EVENTS**

**Sept. 12, 19, 26 ~ 7-8:30 pm via Zoom**

**Virtual Book Club—*Peace is Every Step* by Tich Nhat Hanh  
Led by Dr. Susan Barber Skinner**

**Sept. 14, 21, 28 ~ 10 am-1 pm (in-house)**

***Making Final Preparations*—praying through those things that no one want to think about...  
With Sr. Sue Zemgulis, OP and invited guest speakers**

**Sept. 15-17**

**Women's Theme Retreat ~ "*Make my Joy Complete*"  
Directed by Anita Davidson, OPA**

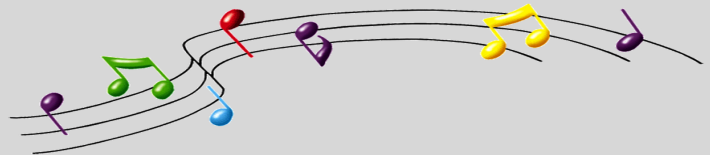
**Sept. 22-24 (In-house at capacity, Zoom spots only available)**

**Women's Theme Retreat ~ "*Make my Joy Complete*"  
Directed by Sr. Marilyn Vassallo, CSJ**

**RUNNING THE RIVER returns once again for a fun-filled musical evening**

**SUNDAY, OCTOBER. 1 ~ 7-9 PM**

**Cost: \$20**



### ***Cultivating a Contemplative Heart***

*This series will explore the beauty of monasticism and desert spirituality for the contemporary seeker. This content encourages us to cultivate contemplative spirituality and a deep prayer life within the context of the everyday. Sessions will cover how monastic and desert values and ways of being help us to live a more integrated, whole, and fulfilling life.*

***Tuesdays: Oct. 3, 10, 17, 24, 31 7-8:30 pm***

***Oct. 3—The Contemplative in a Chaotic World***

***Oct. 10—Silence and Solitude***

***Oct. 17—Time and Space***

***Oct. 24—Presence and Community***

***Oct. 31—Transformation: The Evangelical Counsels for Lay People***

***Presented: Dr. Victoria Walsh (Battell)***

***In-house and via Zoom \$15 per session/\$70 for the entire series***

**The program will use the following text as a base: Joan Chittister, OSB,  
The Monastic Heart: 50 Simple Practices for a Contemplative and Fulfilling Life.**

**While it is not required to purchase the book, having the text to reflect on and use each week will deepen the experience.  
(It is available in the Retreat House Book Shop.)**



## Exploring and Creating: 75 Years of Art in the House

This Program is for those who appreciate art and for our creative friends. Each session will feature a presentation on the art in the house, developed around a specific theme. In addition, participants will have an opportunity to create their own art, with instruction, supplies and support provided.

October 12 ~ *Our Mural and the Saints*

January 11 ~ *Nature*

April 11 ~ *Madonnas*

July (date to be determined) ~ *Crosses*

***Presented by Dr. Susan Barber Skinner***

***In-house 2-4 PM Cost: \$20 per session/\$75 for all four***



### *SWEET HOUR OF PRAYER*



*Autumn is the season for honoring, remembering, changing, thanking, and waiting. The hymns we pray and sing this evening will reflect many of these meaningful moments in our lives. This will be a special time of healing and comfort as you simply enjoy being the Holy One.*

*Come join this sacred hymn sing with MaryAnne and extend the “Sweet” hour of Prayer with refreshments at the end.*

*October 26 ~ 7-8 PM In-house and via Zoom*

*Free will offering for our scholarship fund.*



Speaking of celebrations, October 29<sup>th</sup> marks our **25<sup>th</sup> Annual More Than Just Desserts** event! We look forward to having you join us for delicious food, interesting auction items, and having friends together in the house. And...the More Than Just Desserts online auction is back for a 2<sup>nd</sup> year in a row! Anyone is eligible to bid, whether you attend the event or not. With items exclusive to the online auction, you won't want to miss it. Register ahead of time by visiting <https://auctria.events/MTJD> to receive notifications and preview items. Give us a call for more information on MTJD!

### *~Binge Reading the Gospel of Mark~*

One day – an entire Gospel? Yes! Join us for a communal reading of the Gospel of Mark: Our day will begin with a brief introduction to the ancient and enduring text that we are about to read, and then we will dive right in! Mid-way through our reading we will take a break to digest what we have heard and experienced so far, as well as to enjoy a delicious lunch. After lunch we will pick up where we left off, reading and reflecting upon the remainder of Mark's Gospel. Though gatherings of this kind are timeless gifts, this particular opportunity is timely as many Christian communities are preparing to spend a year reading episodes from the Gospel of Mark as part of their liturgical lectionary cycle. You don't want to miss this opportunity!

In-house only Wednesday, November 1, 2023 ~ 10am-3pm (includes lunch)

Guided by Dr. Joy Galarneau Cost : \$30



## Stretching Body & Soul YOGA SERIES with Mary DeTuris Poust

**Thursdays, November 2, 9, 16 10 am—Noon followed by lunch**

Yoga is known for its physical and mental health benefits, but often overlooked is the deep spiritual growth and abiding inner peace that often accompanies this practice. Westerners have long associated yoga with the familiar physical poses, but the true practice of yoga — as it was originally intended — is much broader, encompassing spiritual themes and practices that dovetail beautifully with our Catholic faith. This series will include a one-hour gentle yoga class suitable for both beginners and experienced yogis alike, as well as a related talk about the ways we can use this body practice to nourish our hearts and souls. The program will conclude with lunch. (Bring an exercise mat or beach towel.)

Cost: \$25 per session/\$70 for all three



### MEN'S Theme Retreat Nov. 3-5

*"Make my joy complete." Paul's encouraging words to the Philippians is our focus for the year. Paul goes on to explain by adding, "being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind." Ph 2:2 Paul is not asking us to be clones of one another, but to have the heart and mind and soul of Jesus—to look at each other and the world through Jesus' eyes and to live as Jesus has taught. For Jesus, that meant surrendering his earthly life. For us, we may have to surrender judgements, resentments and differences in order to experience a joy that surpasses all understanding.*

*Come join us as we respond to a call to be a more joyful people.*

*Directed by Fr. Jim McBurney, OSA*

*Cost: In-house \$225 (65+\$210)/Virtual \$90*

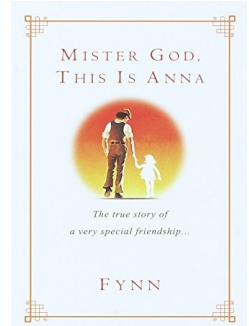
The Virtual Book Club Selection for November is  
Mr. God This is Anna by Fynn

Tuesdays ~ 10 –11:30 am    Nov. 7 - Introduction-Chapter 3  
Nov. 14 - Chapters 4-7  
Nov. 21 - Chapters 8-11

Led by Barbara Lang, OPA via Zoom

Cost: \$15/\$40 for three

(Book is available in our Bookshop)



### Interfaith Program: Lecture given by Professor Susannah Heschel

We live in an interfaith era, a remarkable moment, given two thousand years of tensions between Christians and Jews. What has brought us to this moment? This lecture—"The Faith of Others: Tracing the Complexities of Interreligious Dialogue"- will trace the emergence of Jewish Christian interest in each other's faith as it unfolded in nineteenth-century Europe and the new theological directions nurtured by *Nostra Aetate*, issued by the Second Vatican Council in 1965. Professor Heschel will discuss those directions and consider the ways in which Rabbi Heschel understood interfaith dialogue in religious terms.

**Sunday, October 15 ~ 2-4pm**  
**At Congregation Agudat Achim, 2117 Union Street**  
**Free; RSVP not necessary**



## *THE LITURGICAL YEAR: The Spiraling Adventure of the Spiritual Life*

In this series we will journey together through the liturgical year in order to experience together “the spiraling adventure of spiritual life” as Joan Chittister so beautifully and aptly describes the cyclical seasons of faith that comprise the Christian calendar.

You are welcome to join us for any and all of the following evenings, which will take place in-house on Thursdays from 6-8:30 pm with dinner at 6pm followed by immersive and interactive programming from 7-8:30 pm.

Nov. 16 - *Introducing the year that gives meaning to every other year*

Nov. 30 - *Advent*

Dec. 14 - *Christmas*

Feb. 1 - *Lent*

Mar. 14 - *Holy Week*

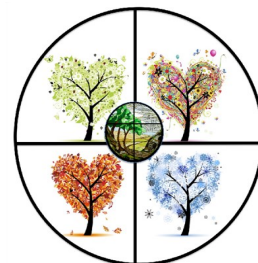
Apr. 25 - *Easter and Pentecost*

May 16 - *Ordinary Time*

Jun 13 - *Marian Feasts and the Sanctoral Cycle*

Presenters: Joy Galarneau & Joyce Solimini

Cost: \$25 per session/\$175 for all



### Good Grief and Practical Ways to Journey through the Holidays

Tuesday, November 15 from 10 am-Noon  
(followed by lunch)

No doubt about it. After someone you love dies, the holidays are never the same. One's grief is triggered by traditions, events, songs, movies, and it is liable to show up when we least expect it. You are not alone. This will be a morning to meet others and discover some healthy ways to cope and keep our loved one's memory alive during the holiday season.

Please consider bringing a memento of your loved one (a photo, a special token etc.)

Facilitated by MaryAnne Brown & Don Brooks  
Cost: \$25

### Saints Preserve Us! Relishing Relics

We hope you will join us for this special, sacred evening. We will learn about the history of relics, their use and misuse. We will provide a unique opportunity to pray together in the presence of many sacred relics of saints brought into the chapel by our Franciscan and Dominican communities. Relics of saints that will be present include: Maria Goretti, Thomas Aquinas, Rose of Lima, Augustine, Catherine of Siena, Alphonsus Liguori, Martin de Porres, Teresa of Avila, Francis of Assisi, Anthony of Padua, Marguerite Bourgeois and others.

In-house Wednesday, November 8 ~ 7-9 PM

Presenters: Fr. Dan Dwyer, OFM & Sr. Sue Zemgulis, OP  
Cost \$15

### Heart & Soul Quest ~ *Rekindling the Light Within*

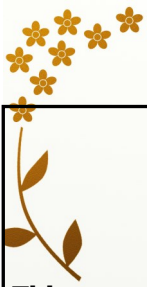
A retreat for women with Sr. Susan Zemgulis, OP November 17-19

*We each carry a spark of the divine within us. Sometimes, in the activities and decisions of our day to day lives, we lose sight of that gift—which is our very self. Come join with others as we open the eyes of our hearts to that divine spark within us and within everyone and everything around us.*

*In-House \$225 (65+\$210)/Virtual \$90*



**Happy Thanksgiving from the DRCC Staff!**  
**May your day be filled with all those things that make for wonderful memories!**



# 12 Step Programs

## WOMEN'S RETREAT

### *The Journey Within: A Vision Quest through the Twelve Steps* October 13—15

This retreat offers a unique approach to personal growth and transformation by integrating the spiritual principles of the Twelve Steps with the concept of a vision quest. Retreatants will embark on an inner journey of self-discovery, healing, and empowerment, drawing inspiration from the wisdom of the 12 Steps and the ancient tradition of the vision quest.

**Session I: *Introduction to the Vision Quest: Honor, Embrace, Surrender* (Steps 1, 2, and 3)**

**Session II: *Sharing our Truth and Embracing Change* (Steps 4,5,6)**

**Session III: *Inner Alchemy, Healing and Reconciliation* (Steps 7, 8, 9)**

**Session IV: *Self-Awareness, Spiritual Connection and Service* (Steps 10, 11, and 12)**

Participants will find the traditional elements of a DRCC Twelve Step retreat along with expanded opportunities for creativity including work with mandalas and vision boards. Retreatants will emerge with a renewed sense of purpose, direction, and connection.

This retreat was developed over several months by Margaret Maniaci and Susan Barber Skinner. Susan will direct the retreat.  
**Cost: In-house \$225 (65+\$210)/Virtual \$90**

### *The Next 90 Days: A three part series on Planning and Coping as the Year Ends*

Whether surrounded by family or alone, whether feeling overwhelmed or underwhelmed, people tend to question and take stock in the fall. This series will focus on navigating through the last 90 days of the year in a way that leverages what you've learned in recovery with an opportunity to acquire new skills for planning and coping through the holidays and into the new year.

October 25 ~ *explore the challenges of the holiday season*

November 29 ~ *learn how to fill the skills gaps identified in the first session and develop a plan for the development of new skills*

December 27 ~ *an opportunity to set intentions for the new year*

*Led by Dr. Susan Barber Skinner ~ 7-8:30 via Zoom Cost: \$15*

### Evening of Gratitude

November 7, 6:00 - 9:30 PM In-House & Zoom

We will begin with dinner then adjourn to the Conference Room for a panel presentation. Panelists from several 12 Step programs will each speak, followed by the opportunity for sharing.

We will conclude with a combined meeting for participants in all 12 Step programs.

Led by Dr. Susan Barber Skinner      Cost: \$25/\$15

PEACE IN RECOVERY SERIES continues to look at each step focusing on how it can be used to make peace: in our daily lives, our homes, and our communities.

Oct. 4 ~ Step 10: *Peace in Daily Vigilance*

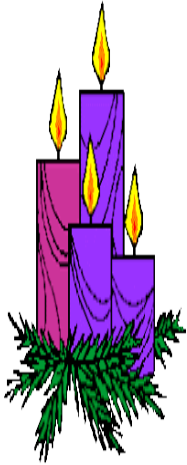
Nov. 1 ~ Step 11: *Peace through Spiritual Growth*

Dec. 6 ~ Step 12: *Peace in Action*

Led by Dr. Susan Barber Skinner  
7-8:30 pm via Zoom ~ Cost: \$15 per session







**ADVENT SILENT RETREAT**  
December 1-3

**Waiting in Holy Darkness**

*This retreat will be an opportunity to reflect on the meaning of Advent as a time of waiting and waiting as a spiritual discipline. We will explore the question of "Who is waiting for whom?"*

*The retreat will be silent and will be an opportunity for reflection during the sometimes chaotic preparations for the holiday.*

*Facilitated by Sr. Joan Scanlon, OP  
Cost: In-house \$225 (65+ \$210)/Virtual \$90*

***You are invited to:  
Advent Wreath Lighting via Zoom***

*Hosted by the Galarneau-Braungard Family:  
Joy, John & daughter Georgie*

*Sundays, December 3, 10, 17, and Saturday  
December 23 ~ 7-7:30 PM*

*We welcome you to join us as we light the  
candles of hope, peace, joy, and love.*

*We will share prayer and reflection as we  
journey together through this holy season of  
waiting. All ages welcome!*

*Free will offering*

**ADVENT SCRIPTURE STUDY:**

***JOHN THE BAPTIST***

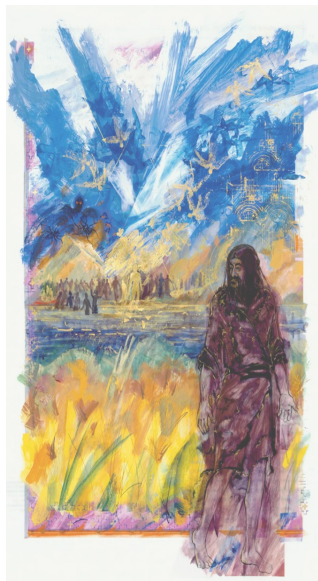
***AN ADVENT JOURNEY INTO THE NEW  
TESTAMENT***

Apocalyptic preacher? Ethical reformer?  
Witness to Christ? What do we *really* know  
about the first-century Jewish prophet who is  
mentioned over 90 times in the New Testament,  
and who will come to be remembered as John the  
Baptist? Join us as we dive into the Christian  
Scriptures and beyond in order to uncover the  
portrait(s) of John buried there...and to  
contemplate these treasures in light of our own  
journeys of faith.

Facilitated by Dr. Joy Galarneau

Tuesdays—December 5, 12, 19 ~ 10am-Noon  
via Zoom

\$20 per session/\$55 for three



**ADVENT  
LECTIO DIVINA**

Tuesdays—December 5, 12, 19  
7-8:30 pm via Zoom

Presented by  
Sr. Sue Zemgulis, OP  
with scripture passages that  
correspond to the  
Advent Scripture Study

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

In honor of our 75th Anniversary, we will begin a new  
Christmas Season Tradition....  
DRCC will be sponsoring a Tree in the *Festival of Trees*  
at the Schenectady County Historical Society.

The Festival runs from Saturday, December 2 through  
December 23, daily 10am - 5pm

Please try to stop by the Society, located at  
32 Washington Avenue, to see Our Tree among the  
lovely display.



***Join us and the DRCC choir as we  
usher in the season at our annual***

***CHRISTMAS CONCERT***

***December 17 ~ 2 - 4 pm***

***In-house and via Zoom***





### **Registration Form for ANY Program:**

Please fill out what applies to you & the program you are attending and mail with your payment to:

**Dominican Retreat & Conference Center  
1945 Union St., Niskayuna, NY 12309**

Mrs. Ms.  
Name Other \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/ST/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (h) \_\_\_\_\_

(w) \_\_\_\_\_ (c) \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

(Email is necessary for virtual retreat)

Name of Program \_\_\_\_\_

Check one: \_\_\_ in-house or \_\_\_ virtual

Retreat Date/s \_\_\_\_\_

Promoter \_\_\_\_\_

Diet Needs \_\_\_\_\_

Special/Room Requests \_\_\_\_\_

Deposit: \_\_\_\_\_ coupon

Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Check # \_\_\_\_\_

**N.B.** There is a \$20.00 fee for returned checks.

Credit Card \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# \_\_\_\_\_

*Please print name as it appears on card  
for authorization.*

*Credit Card Reservations may also be made via  
website ([www.dslcny.org](http://www.dslcny.org)) or phone (518-393-4169).*

### **For Grant purposes:**

Age: Under 65 65/+

Veteran? YES NO

What county do you live in (if in NY) ?

(Office Use Only)

BK \_\_\_\_\_ DB \_\_\_\_\_ CONF. \_\_\_\_\_ List \_\_\_\_\_

### **Virtual Centering Prayer via Zoom**

For those who simply want to pray with the Group. It will include a brief reading and a 20 minute sit.

7-7:30 pm Wednesday nights:  
Oct. 11, Nov. 15, Dec. 20  
Suggested Offering \$5.



### **Sung Vespers in the Spirit of Taizé**

7-8pm ~ Thursdays:

Sept. 21, Oct. 19, Nov. 2, Dec. 7

Presented by Sr. Sue Zemgulis, OP

In-house & via Zoom

**Pause for Peace...**A brief monthly  
pause to pray for peace in our world, in  
our communities and in our hearts.

7-7:15 pm Tuesdays ~ Sept. 26, Oct. 24, Nov. 21, Dec. 26

Presented by Dominican Sisters via Facebook Live



### **75th Anniversary Merchandise Form**

**Dominican Retreat & Conference Center  
1945 Union St., Niskayuna, NY 12309**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/ST/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ (circle: h / w / c)

Email \_\_\_\_\_

# of items	Item	Price	Cost
	Apron	\$ 25	
	Journal	\$ 5	
	Magnet	\$ 5	
	Pen	\$ 1	
	Mug	\$10	
	Tote bag	\$ 15	
	Short Sleeve T-shirt Circle: S, M, L, XX, XXX	\$ 20	
	Long Sleeve T-shirt Circle: S, M, L, XX, XXX	\$ 25	
	Shipping		
	TOTAL		

Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Check # \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Card \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Or Current Resident**

*Place label here*

**75TH Anniversary commemorative items—available in the Retreat House or by mail.**



**\$5.00 Coupon**

Present this coupon to receive \$5.00 off  
 a day or evening program at:  
**Dominican Retreat & Conference  
 Center**  
 Niskayuna, NY

*The Good News*  
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 1945 Union St, Niskayuna, NY 12309  
 518-393-4169  
 dslcnny@nybiz.rr.com (email)  
 www.dslcnny.org

**\$10.00 Coupon**

Present this coupon to receive \$10.00  
 off a weekend program at:  
**Dominican Retreat & Conference  
 Center**  
 Niskayuna, NY