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The View

NEWSLETTER

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The tongue is a small member and yet has great pretensions. Consider how small a fire can set a huge forest ablaze. The tongue is also a fire...setting the entire course of our lives on fire...no human being can tame the tongue. ...With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings who are made in the likeness of God. (James 3:5-6, 8-9)

SPEAKING

Recently I have become more and more aware of how *unaware* I am of how I speak, my tone of voice, my facial expressions, sometimes even my choice of words. It is a great gift to become aware in this way, though a humbling gift. I am realizing how much my tone of voice has contributed to interpersonal disruptions, difficulties, and resentments.

St. Benedict devotes an entire chapter to speech. It's actually titled 'restraint of speech.' Benedict does not prescribe total silence for his monks; rather he urges us to speak only when necessary, and even then to watch carefully over what we say. In her commentary on the Rule, Sr. Joan Chittester writes, "The goal of ...monastic speech is respect for others." She goes on to say, "...when we consume all the space of our worlds with our own sounds and our own truths and our own wisdom and our own ideas, there is no room for anyone else's ideas ...the ability

to listen to one another, to sit silently in the presence of God, to give sober heed, and to ponder is the nucleus of Benedictine spirituality."

Recently Sr. Bernadette and I have been reading and pondering over a book called *Non-Violent Communication*. Written by psychologist Marshall B. Rosenberg, this book sets forth guidelines on how to speak gently, calmly, nonviolently. He lists four components of such communication: first, observing what another is doing or saying instead of evaluating or even worse, judging it. Second, expressing how we/I *feel* about what the other is doing or saying. Third, expressing what needs we have that are connected to these same feelings. And finally, we make a very specific request. This last is a request of what we want from the other person.

At the same time, we

must be able to listen carefully and openly to the others express themselves in this same way: with an observation, an expression of how this makes them feel, what it is they need, and finally their request to me. Although this process may seem cumbersome and stilted at first, as we learn to express ourselves this way, it begins to flow naturally. And, as the author says, we don't always need all four components; it can be adapted to different situations and different styles of speaking. The basic concept, of course, is respect for the other, no matter how different from me. And of course, the willingness to deeply listen to the other, sometimes (often?) for what is unspoken behind the words.

To speak, and to listen, in this way, requires thoughtfulness, reflection, and prior to these, a deep awareness and presence to myself. Needless to say, it's extremely hard to do, especially when

taken by surprise, by the unexpected demand put upon us, by the interruption when our attention is focused on something else! When this happens to me, I am more likely to respond with irritability, with annoyance, with (at the very least) a deep sigh that lets the other know what a nuisance they are! All of which is, in fact, a kind of violence. Sure, not a huge violence. But I often think of how it adds its little bit to the sum total of violence that engulfs our planet. Not to mention that it disrupts, either briefly or for much longer, the relationship and respect between myself and the one who has just borne the brunt of my impatience.

So, how to attempt to practice this non-violent, deeply spiritual and Christian manner of speech? One suggestion might be to first read the book! The book fleshes out this truly spiritual practice with many examples, with lists of emotions and feelings, and with wise guidance. It gives numerous examples of what is evaluative or judgmental speech, and observational speech. As for example: ‘You’re *always* late!’ is very different, and evaluative, as opposed to, ‘you were late yesterday and the day before that,’ which is an observation, and neutral. After saying this, we might then say, ‘I feel disrespected when you are not on time,’ which is what we are feeling. We can then follow that with, ‘I need you to be on time so that we are not late for....(whatever the event might be). And finally, ‘I am asking that you be on time when we

next go somewhere together.’

It’s very important that at the same time we are practicing this open, non-accusative speaking, we also need to deeply listen to what the other person is saying. We need to leave room in our speech — and in our minds and hearts! — for what the other is saying. We need to ‘listen with the ear of the heart,’ with empathy, and with openness.

And to return to where this essay began, we need to become *aware* of what we are saying and how we are saying it. I am slowly becoming aware of just how I must sound to someone else. It’s taken a lifetime to arrive at this point, I can only hope that in the years ahead, I will learn to listen to others carefully and with openness and empathy, and then to respond, not with violence, however minimal it might seem, but with courtesy, kindness, and most of all, deep respect for the other as someone different from me, and with needs, wants, and heartbreaks of their own.

If we could each learn to control the fire of our tongues, what an amazing gift this would be, especially in a time when it seems as though we are divided as a nation into opposing camps, with no common ground between us. Perhaps if we deeply listened to one another, and spoke out our deepest feelings and needs, we might find we have more common ground than we could ever imagine.

St Elizabeth

Holy Land Pilgrimage

Yes, it is still on! We have had several people sign up and send their deposit—surely a step out in faith, considering the turmoil in the Holy Land, and the increase in the Delta variant of coronavirus! And so we hope and believe that our Contemplative Ecumenical Pilgrimage will happen, next March 1 -10. So please **SAVE THE DATES** and make your plan for this once in a lifetime pilgrimage to walk in Jesus’ footsteps, and pray the Scriptures at the very places where these holy events happened!

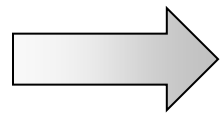
For a brochure and more information, please call

Scott Dow

Transformation Travel

207.798.1919 or email

info@transformationtravel.net





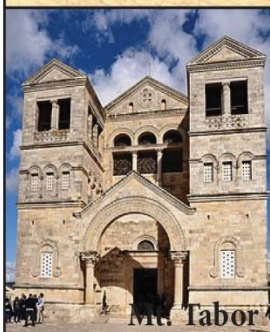
Duc In Altum

ECUMENICAL CONTEMPLATIVE PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOLY LAND

*"A trip with a relaxed and contemplative pace, with time for prayer and reflection,
time to let the reality of Jesus' life sink deep into our hearts, deep into our bones."*

MARCH 1 - 10, 2022

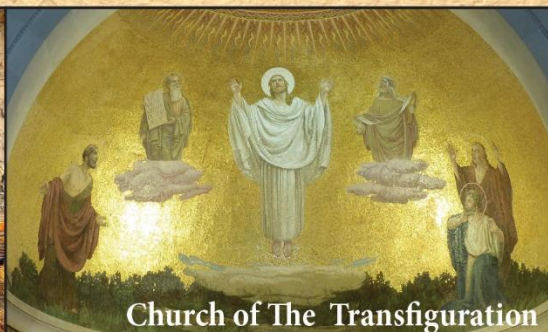
(We're stepping out in faith that this will happen!)



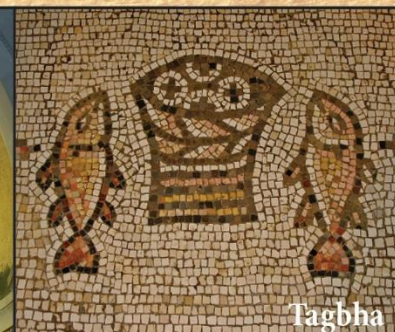
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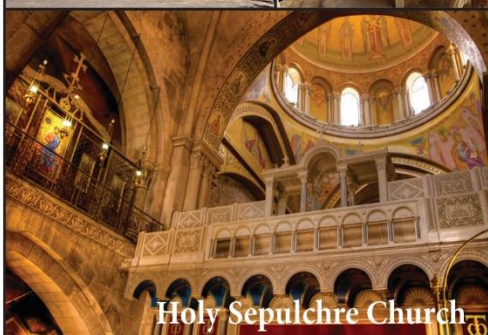
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Church of The Transfiguration



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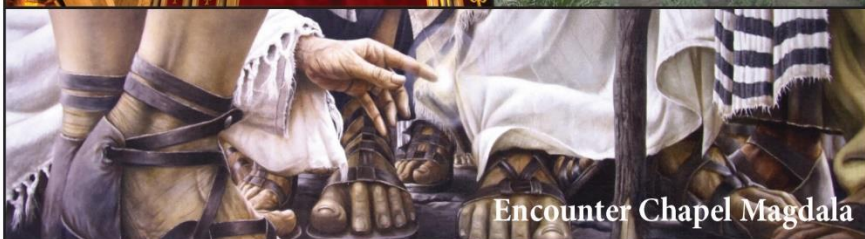
Holy Sepulchre Church



Church of All Nations



Sea of Galilee Boat



Encounter Chapel Magdala

FMI

Rev. Scott Dow, DMin

(207) 798-1919

info@transformationtravel.net

RETREATS AVAILABLE

We have been blessed with numerous people coming for private retreats this year; for time to relax, rest, pray, sit in the chapel or walk our prayer trail and outdoor Stations of the Cross trail. Autumn may be the best time for a retreat - especially if you like to walk or sit outdoors: the weather is cooler, the bugs have gone, and the foliage is lovely. St. Moira's retreat house has four charming single rooms, a reading room, and a full kitchen, stocked with coffee, teas, snacks, and all you need for breakfast. We bring you the other meals, all homecooked by Sr. Bernadette or Sr. Anastasia—and they are wonderful cooks! All this for a nominal \$60/person/night—we do require a one night deposit per person to reserve your room.

To register, or FMI

please call

207.445.8031

or

e-mail

th.retreats@gmail.com.

.....CLIP AND SAVE.....

Spicy Fresh Green Beans with Tomato & Tofu *from Sr. BERNADETTE'S KITCHEN*

INGREDIENTS

½ lb green beans, sliced diagonally in 1 inch pieces
1 lb. firm tofu, cut into 1 inch squares
2 tomatoes, sliced or cut up
1 onion, chopped
3-4 cloves garlic, diced
1 inch ginger root, chopped or grated
1 tsp. allspice
2 Tbsp. curry powder
Pinch salt

DIRECTIONS

Pan fry tofu in a saucepan and let it sit on paper towel to drain off oil.
Put a wok or saucepan on medium heat with some oil. Saute the onion, garlic & ginger until soft and then throw in the beans, add salt to taste, allspice, curry and stirfry until cooked, then add in tofu, and tomatoes to the cooked beans and mix for about 3 minutes. Then serve over rice.

.....CLIP AND SAVE.....



*Christmas Is Coming!
Save Room for Fruitcake!*
and cookies, hot sauce,
jams and our famous
Herbes des Landes
Order Early
207-445-8031
www.transfigurationhermitage.org/shop
for a selection of gifts
and goodies

Focus on Formation

Being Human

“Benedictine spirituality sets a standard of ... care, conversation and respect — the things that make a human being human.” (quoted from *The Rule of Benedict: A spirituality of the 21st Century* by Joan Chittister). This subject came up during our recent Oblates meeting, and I was deeply moved by this sentence ‘make a human being human.’ Being human...

Angela, one of our Oblates, mentioned that Mother Teresa of Calcutta would go through the slums in India to collect the most neglected, those rejected by society due to (infectious) illness or other factors, living on the streets, malnourished, dying, abandoned, unseen. Most of them no longer feel human. But Mother Teresa’s touch and gentle embrace during their final hours gave them a sense of dignity, a sense of being *human*.

We humans are created as social beings. Being cut off from human interaction, conversation, touch can make us feel lonely, isolated, and depressed. That’s why the COVID outbreak was so hard on lots of people, especially the ones estranged from society. As human beings, we have this innate desire to connect to others, to have relationships and be together. That’s why the second most important commandment is “Love thy neighbor as yourself”. Love thy neighbor but first love thy self so that we can love thy neighbor.

Extending on our Oblates concerns, I would like to invite everybody who reads this to remember those to whom we haven’t talked for a long time, especially those who are living alone, estranged, or falling ill. To pray for them and whenever possible to reach out and catch up. A simple “Hello, how are you doing?” can do miracles. *This* is the miracle of our time.

*Sr. Anastasia
Scholastica*

Wishes Fulfilled!

In the spring newsletter we spoke of the need to start an education fund to help pay for Sr. Anastasia’s graduate courses in theology and spirituality. Many people responded so generously that not only were we able to pay for her two summer courses, but also one course each semester, both this fall and next spring! We thank you so much for your incredible generosity! Sr. Anastasia, and those still to come, represent the future of the Hermitage; and these courses are so very necessary for continuing formation, that she, and all who come, may live this life of solitude and prayer in a healthy and wise manner, and be a gift and a light to all who come here for retreat, for spiritual direction, and for workshops.

TRANSFIGURATION HERMITAGE

needs your generosity and support

for continued growth.

Please use the enclosed envelope

or visit our online shop at

www.transfigurationhermitage.org

We also are building an endowment fund for future growth. Please consider remembering us in your bequests, legacies, trusts, transfers, gifts.

Education Fund Benefactors:

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Mary Alice McLean
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I need to add that Sr. Anastasia received an ‘A’ for her course in Christian Prayer—despite having never written a research paper before, and one in her second language, English. And in Gregorian Chant she received a 92! Not bad for her very first attempt.

BENEFACTORS

May – July

Anonymous (2)
Margaret Alexander
Louise Allen
Glenn Angell
Tim & Keri Aramini
 mem Julio Aramini
Helen King Atalleh
Francina Bardsley
Beverly Bartosiak
Alan Baughcum
Elinor Bilodeau
Rev Bette Bond
Richard Brodesky
Ruth Calderwood
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Nancy Charette
 mem Donald Charette
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Rita Crowley
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 mem Brooks Joseph Dufour
Avery Dunn
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Mary Fitts
Nick & Joanne Furnaratto
Linda Gagne
 mem Joyce Gagne
Barbara Gawle
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Robert & Rachel Henry
Carol Hommick
 mem Hommick family
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Pauline Johnstone
Peggy Johnston
Marjorie Knuuti
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 mem Michael A Frill
 & Fr Tom Walsh, OFM Conv
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Lucinda Long
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Joseph Morelli
Rev. Frank Morin
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Alison & Jeff Otto
Fr. Brent Otto, SJ
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 Women's Club
Timothy Packey
Ken & Pat Parker
Norman Pomerleau
Art Quinn
Carol Rice Dempsey
Gloria & Renaldo Raquiza
Shannon Robbins
Linda Roden
 mem Tony Newell
Kevin & Elizabeth Rung
Jane Russo
Connie Ryan
 honor Jean Ryan
Joanne Ryan
 mem Esther DiBenedetto
Molly Santry
 mem grandparents
Molly Santry
 mem M&M Allen F Riley
Robert Scott
 honor St. Joseph
Roger Sirois
 mem Patrick & Elizabeth
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Ardis Sitar
Martin Spahn
 mem Philip Spahn
Rev. Paul Stefanko
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Judy Watson
 mem Evan Lawn
E. Joanne Whitehead

Gabrielle Wicklow
 mem Helen Maffei
Michael S. Will
 mem Ed
Pauline Williams
Judith Young

Thank you one and all, for your incredible generosity! In this time of pandemic, without bake sales, we would not be here if not for your generous help. And, as always, please let us know if we forgot you, or if we misspelled your name!

In Kind/Volunteers

We are grateful for all those who give us material goods and those who so wonderfully volunteer! We thank **Sue Kenny** for gifts of food and household items, **Bob Lamothe** for putting up blinds, and other handyman help, **Gunner Wood** who keeps us supplied with unique stamps, **Quality Printing** for discounting all of our printing needs, and last but not least, **Peggy Powis** for doing her marvelous job of layout for this newsletter. Thank you, one and all, we are so very grateful to each one of you for all your generous help!