
TRANSFIGURATION
HERMITAGE
is a
tax-exempt
non-profit
Catholic institution
within the
Diocese of Portland,
Maine.

The View

NEWSLETTER

Vol. 27 No. 2
June 2022

205 Windsor Neck Road *** Windsor, ME 04363 *** 207-445-8031
www.transfigurationhermitage.org

Many years ago, I was part of an experimental group of women hermits on the grounds of the Camaldolese monks in Big Sur, CA. It was a spectacularly beautiful hermitage, perched on the side of a mountain, 1300 feet up, overlooking the Pacific Ocean. I loved it there, it had just the blend of solitude and community that I sought.

But the women's group was way ahead of its time, and I soon realized that it would not work out. I felt confused, unmoored, lost.

Shortly after I arrived, a Benedictine monk from a different monastery came for a retreat, and then chose to remain. I had read some of his books, and had wanted to meet him, but never thought I would. Now I had the opportunity and so I asked to speak with him.

I didn't know how to begin, so simply said, "I just feel so lost. I thought this was the right place for me, but it clearly is not. I don't know what to do."

Without blinking an eye, without any hesitation he calmly replied, "That's because you're living a spiritual life,

BEING LOST

sister. If you knew exactly where you were going, I'd worry about you."

I don't know if it was his calm. Or his matter-of-fact reply. Whatever it was, it was infinitely reassuring. His very manner, his words, his calm, all conveyed to me: yes, you feel lost. You're right about that. But it's nothing to worry or get upset about. It only means that God's in charge, not you.

I have thought of these words many times over the intervening years. The spiritual journey is a path that leads us by unfamiliar and at times fearful ways. It's a journey that we can't control, and we don't always know what the future holds or where the path is taking us.

But we have a precedent for this. Abraham, our father in faith, was sent by God on a journey. Without a roadmap, without knowing the destination. He was told by God to go to a place "which I *will* show you." And we are often

called to do the same.

I sometimes wonder if that's what has

happened to our world today. First there was the pandemic, when our world suddenly came to a halt back in 2020, and which seems to have forever changed the way we live. Then there was the assault on the Capitol, seemingly shaking our democracy. And now we have a terrible war in Ukraine, with the threat of possible nuclear war. Even our traditional understanding of gender and gender roles is being challenged. And there is also the ever growing threat of climate change.

And so we can feel very lost— as though the earth under our feet is no longer stable. As if our whole world has lost its way, and we along with it. We try to cling to the way things were, but that gets harder and harder to do. What *will be* has not yet opened up. What to do?

In his *Rule*, St Benedict often reminds us that we "are always seen by God in heaven"...and that "the eyes of the Lord are watching the good and the wicked." These sayings

have been often understood to be harsh, judgmental, an incentive to be fearful of God. But perhaps, as I have recently been told, these are meant to remind us of God's attentive presence. St. Benedict is reminding us that God is always present to us. That God is *presence*, always with us, always available, always someone we can turn to for help, guidance, and consolation. This does not give us immediate answers. But when we listen deeply, pay attention, and trust in the ever-present, compassionate, aware gaze of the Lord, we can know that we are not alone. God's Spirit, as promised, is always with us. We do not know the way, but we have a guide always with us; one who does know the way. We merely need to stay attentive.

In the midst of being lost, we are not alone. We have a counselor, the Spirit, to lead and guide us. And we have, as St. Benedict says, the Gospel for our guide. One step, one day at a time. We only need to keep paying attention, to keep checking in, to keep asking: what do I do, right now? We are not lost. We are not alone. We just don't know the future. But we know we are kept safe in the loving presence of God.

Sr Elizabeth

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.

FARMERS MARKET

Since we don't know when we will be able to hold parish bake sales again, and since Sr. Anastasia has been baking the most wonderful artisan breads, we have decided to return to farmers market. And so by the time you read this, Sr Anastasia and/or Sr. Bernadette will be setting up at

**Unity Farmers Market
9 to noon**

Saturdays through fall.

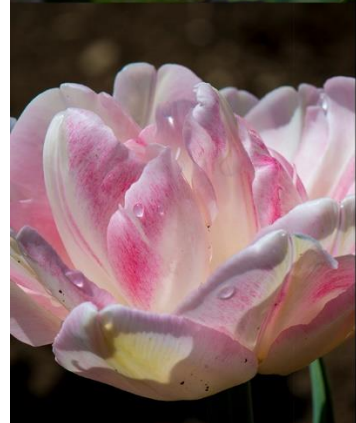
If you live within a reasonable driving distance, please come to try her breads (and our other goodies!) and to support our new endeavor. We'll be bringing **artisan breads, cookies, jams, hot sauce, occasional Asian entrees**, and at least during spring, some **field grown perennial plants**.

Help support our contemplative life, and help support Sr Anastasia and Sr. Bernadette by visiting Unity Farmers Market, at Unity Community Center, School St, Unity. You won't regret it!!!

UNITY FARMERS' MARKET
Starts May 21st, 9-12
Unity Barn Raisers Building
32 School St, Unity, ME

**Artisan bread, Asian entrees,
jams, hot sauce, cookies,
mixed vegetables,
seedlings and more!**

Transfiguration Hermitage
Snakeroot Organic Farm, Curra Farm



~ Centering Prayer ~

a **receptive** method which deepens our relationship with God, the Indwelling Presence.

1. Choose a sacred word or photo.
2. Sit comfortably and silently introduce the sacred word or photo as the symbol of your consent to God's presence and action within.
3. When your thoughts wander, return gently to the sacred word or photo.
4. At the end of prayer, remain in silence for a couple of minutes, easing in gently back to daily life.

Focus on Formation

Recently I've been in an upheaval with both the other sisters here. With only three of us in the hermitage, interpersonal clashes can be intense. I felt so upset, cornered, and stuck that I've been isolating myself in my room. My therapist convinced me to speak up, regardless of how the others took it, and I spoke to the prioress about my woundedness. She simply sat and listened attentively, not interjecting or justifying. That silence and active listening is the most compassionate thing she could ever have done for my wounded self.

In a world where silence is deemed awkward, silence can be a form of hospitality. A hospitality for others and ourselves to be who we are, to become ourselves—as God intended—giving space for the Spirit. In my conversation with the prioress, what struck me most was her stance of staying composed, supportive, non-defensive, non judgmental, providing space for me to unload my burden. Perhaps that's why it's called radical hospitality. It's against the usual understanding that we need to retaliate, or try to fix whatever is the problem. And it takes courage, strength, and groundedness in God to stay silent amidst another's distress and outbursts.

The Liturgy of the Hours always begins with, "O Lord, open my lips and my mouth shall proclaim your praise." Paradoxically, sometimes *not* opening our lips,

not speaking, is the preferred way of praise. Perhaps with silence, the Spirit opens our hearts to hear what is actually needed, as opposed to what we have on our agenda.

In my time of darkness, whenever I sigh before Him, there is only silence. Not the silence of an eerie void, but the silence of understanding, of empathy, of being *with*. A silence of something that's unutterable by any human language. Silence can speak what is unspoken. Silence can open what is seemingly closed. Silence can open us to a new reality, even if through great upheaval. Silence can help transform us into who God created us to be.

*Sr. Anastasia
Scholastica*

RETREATS

Our lovely, quiet retreat house is open all summer and fall for personal, private retreats: for time to relax and renew, rest and recover, walk our trails, pray in the chapel or outdoors, or in your room. We offer four private rooms, a full kitchen with all you need for breakfast and snacks. Lunch and supper are brought to you, homemade by our two fabulous cooks, Sr Bernadette & Sr Anastasia. At present we have limited AC, in two rooms, and also fans. We hope to have full AC by July.

All this for a nominal offering of \$60/person/night.

We do require a one night deposit to reserve your room.

To register or FMI call 207.445.8031, ext 201.

Or email

th.retreats@gmail.com



IN KIND

BENEFACTORS AND VOLUNTEERS

Thanks to **Alan Baughcum**, purchase of Zoom for groups, stamps from **Gunner Wood & Barbara Gawle**, books from **Page Eastman & Barbara Gawle**.

And a **HUGE THANK YOU** to all the wonderful **Augusta & Gardiner Knights of Columbus** who generously gave up their time on Holy Saturday to rake and shovel up all the snowplow debris—of which there was plenty! It was an overwhelming task, we couldn't have managed it by ourselves. Special thanks to **Gil Ouellette**, the District Deputy, who organized the project.

Thanks also to **Quality Copy** for discounted printing and to **Peggy Powis** for her impeccable layout skills!

WISH LIST

Our Sr Anastasia has been taking graduate courses online from St. John's School of theology, Collegeville, MN. She has just completed *Discernment in Prayer* and *Psalms* — and finished with A and A- grades! She hopes to take two more courses this summer, but our education fund is running low. Can you help? If so, be sure to write 'education fund' on your check. And thank you!

BENEFACTORS

FEBRUARY-APRIL

Anonymous (3)
Glenn Angell,
 mem Jim Dailey
Louise Allen
 mem Raymond Allen
Claire Gallagan Andrews
Robert & Mary Arell
Beverly Bartosiak
Eleanor Bilodeau
Nancy A Boyd
 mem Brenda Bronson
Richard Brodesky
Linda Buttrick
 honor Bob Fuller
David Casavant
Arline & Richard Caron
Phil & Mary Carthage
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Marie Charette
Nancy Charette
 honor Marie Charette
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 mem George Cyr &
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Julie Dupont
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Peter Felt
Jeanne Foti
Nick & Joanne Furnaratto
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 & Falanga family
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 mem Fr John Dougher
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Claudette & Phil Michaud
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 mem William C Moskosky Jr
James Murphy
 mem Aunt Mary
Cynthia Murray-Beliveau
Austine M O'Connor

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Arthur Quinn
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 & Normand Lajoie
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Mariellen Whelan
Ann Thurber
Patricia Turner
Judy Watson
Mike Will
Susan Wittenbrink
 mem Toni Smith
Rachel Woo

Our heartfelt thanks to all of you who have so generously responded to our needs! Please let us know if we've forgotten your name, or if we've misspelled it! And special thanks to those of you who gave, not once, but several times over!



---CLIP AND SAVE---

WHAT'S COOKIN' WITH SR.B

Mango Pudding **10 - 1/3C servings**

Best served with whipped cream or ice cream.

Can be made with oat milk for a non-dairy version.

INGREDIENTS

2-3 Mangoes
 (2C 1/4" dice)
2C Milk
1/2 C Sugar
Cornstarch
Juice of 1/2 Lemon
Pinch Salt

1. Peel and chop mangoes.
2. Heat 1.5 C milk, 1/2C sugar, salt and mangoes until bubbling.
3. Remove from heat and mix in blender until smooth. Return to the heat until bubbling again.
4. Mix 1/2C milk with 1/4C cornstarch and pour into bubbling mixture. Stir very well until the mixture thickens.
5. Add the juice of 1/2 lemon and mix well. Pour into molds, cool and refrigerate.



---CLIP AND SAVE---