



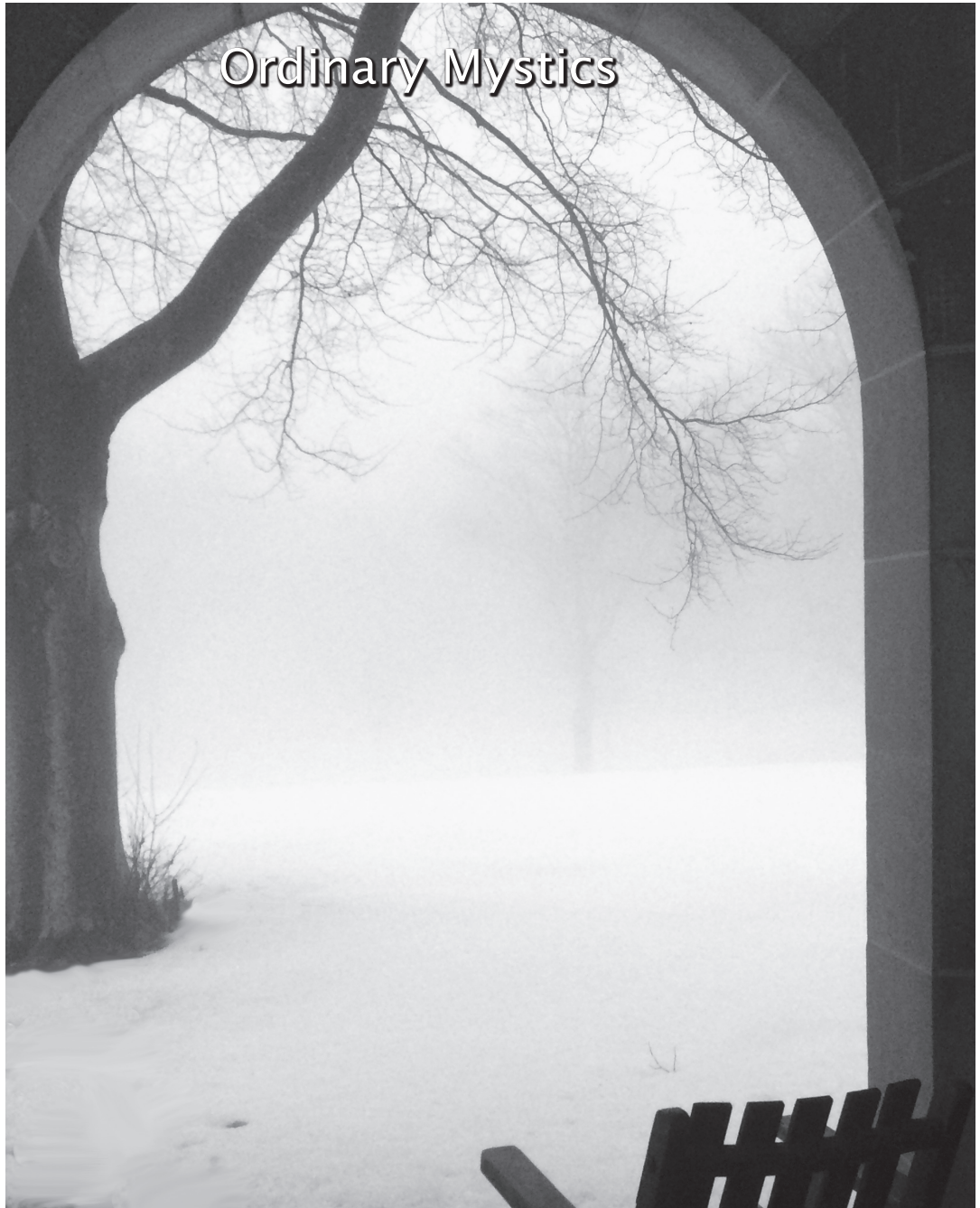
The Anchorage
A Contemplative Ministry
Come away...

DEPTH SOUNDINGS

Encouragement, Inspiration and News from The Anchorage

November 2015

Ordinary Mystics



*anchor
deep*

From the west cloister, the Jesuit Center, Wernersville, PA.

“Contemplative Community – an Oxymoron?”

By Catherine Powell

For many years my husband Skeeter has ribbed me about the fact that The Anchorage serves those who long for ample alone time with God in stillness and quiet, and we try to gather these ordinary mystics (our theme for the year) together! What is wrong with this picture? An oxymoron? Maybe... but maybe not.

Yet the word “Community” has been central in my heart for a few years now. So much so, that we have added it to our official subtitle. We are now *The Anchorage: A Contemplative Community for All*.

Our desire to know that there are others out there who are hearing the same call to “Come Away – Anchor Deep” seems to be shared by others as the Desert Day participants continue to increase. We are up to 35 now, with 15 hosting groups. We have heard from many saying it made a huge difference as they may have been the only one in their state, but knowing there were others all over the country honoring God in the same way with stillness and quiet, **“leaving everything, following Jesus into the desert”** gave them a sense of community that was important to them.

We are all ordinary mystics, leading ordinary lives, with errands to run, bills to pay, meals to cook, yet with a heart for God that is central to who we are. And many of us have learned, usually the hard way, that the times of surrender to God are essential for us to become who God is calling us to be. By ‘the hard way’ I mean we flounder when life crowds out that time.

So do we need community? My heartfelt response is YES!

“Only God”

By Kelly Dickerson Strum

When my husband and I received the news that we would likely not be able to conceive biological children in February 2012, the sheer grace of God opened our arms and hearts immediately to adoption. From the beginning, I longed for our children to have mystical birth stories, so that one day I could share with them how God connected us.

Mary’s story spoke deeply to me and it was as if I could hear God saying to my heart that I, too, would “bear” a child not my own – that the Holy Spirit would come upon me and the power of the Most High would overshadow me – and that though my husband and I would not give birth in our bodies to our child, our child/ren would be born from above. Through our connection to the Vine, we would bear the sweetest fruit of our lives.

As this mystical clarity came to me from God, it brought me much peace in the midst of the difficult news that we had received from doctors and yet, even so, I wondered if I had the courage to join with Mary and offer the same response, “I am the Lord’s servant. May it be to me as you have said.” Because many of these thoughts about Mary were occurring to me just prior to the church’s celebration of the Annunciation (March 25), I wondered if God might speak to my husband and me somehow through this particular church calendar date. I had been learning prior to this season of life that God really does speak to each of us in the ways that we listen and I always found myself listening through journaling/dates and the Christian calendar, nature and spiritual friends.

Now, here we are, three and a half years later, and we are the proud parents of a 3-year-old and 7-month-old who are half siblings and both of whom have been in our care since the day they were born! God wrote the most unbelievable birth stories for both Malachi and Kamryn, speaking to us through journaling/dates and the Christian calendar, nature and spiritual friends. What grace – pure gift! I wish I had space to share it all with you but I will close with this...

(continued on p. 4)

(Thanks to Maria for her wisdom over many years, and for her article on page 3. She is a Sister of Saint Joseph from Chestnut Hill, PA and is in her 24th year on the spiritual growth staff at the Jesuit Center, Wernersville, PA, where she directs and teaches in the Training Program for Spiritual Directors in the Ignatian Tradition. Her Masters is from Creighton and her Doctorate is from Lancaster Theological Seminary, where she has also taught. For 14 years Maria has companioned women and men on retreats as they experience God’s revelation through female images and metaphors. Note: She is leading our Lenten Beach Retreat, March 4-7.)



The Anchorage

Vision

A Contemplative Community to encourage all people to a mutual love relationship with God.

Mission

The Anchorage provides a setting in which women and men may come away to be with God, as revealed in Jesus the Christ; and to come to love more deeply, this God who loves us beyond measure. Spiritual direction, “Depth Soundings” (quarterly mailing), Desert Days and a variety of contemplative retreats, are some of the ways we encourage and inspire.

Metaphor

A safe harbor in which to anchor deep in still waters as a respite from the wind and waves; where pilgrims may enjoy prayerful grace, honor the rhythm of Sabbath and open more fully to the mystery of God’s love.

Core Focus

Encouraging contemplative community anchored in our Triune God.

Staff

*Catherine Powell,
Founding Servant Leader*

Servant Leaders

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The Anchorage

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“Our Life: An Entry Way to Mysticism”

By Maria McCoy

What does it mean to be an *Ordinary Mystic*? The following words of Pope Francis given in the General Audience on November 19, 2014 speak of the profound opportunity we have to become *Ordinary Mystics*.

“Some think that sanctity is to close your eyes and to look like a holy icon! No! This is not sanctity! Sanctity is something greater, deeper, which God gives us. Indeed, it is precisely in living with love and offering one’s own Christian witness in everyday affairs that we are called to become saints. And each in the conditions and the state of life in which he or she finds him- or herself...Be a saint by becoming a visible sign of God’s love and presence alongside us. This is it: every state of life leads to holiness, always! In your home, on the street, at work, at church, in that moment and in your state of life, the path to sainthood has been opened. Don’t be discouraged to pursue this path. It is God alone who gives us the grace. The Lord asks only this: that we be in communion with Him and at the service of our brothers and sisters.

“At this point, each one of us can make a little examination of conscience, we can do it right now, each one respond to himself [herself], in silence: how have we responded up to now to the Lord’s call to sanctity? Do I want to become a little better, a little more Christian? This is the path to holiness. When the Lord invites us to become saints, he doesn’t call us to something heavy, sad... quite the contrary! It’s an invitation to share in his joy, to live and to offer with joy every moment of our life, by making it become at the same time a gift of love for the people around us.”

Related to Pope Francis’ message, Evelyn Underhill states that mysticism is union with reality. As we move through the realities of our life and the life of the world, Spirit companions us, lovingly creates us, and draws us into deeper communion with God. So, every moment, encounter, relationship, event becomes a sanctuary for encountering the Holy One and for growing in greater freedom and love.

In addition to life’s realities, we have been blessed with the ability to connect with God through personal, and communal prayer. In these moments of being still, alone and together, we can become more aware of God’s presence in our lives and also more responsive to Spirit’s promptings. Our prayer can also be enhanced by being open to new images of God. For example, many men and women have found greater intimacy and life in their relationship with the Divine through praying with Female Images of God. The following people share their experience.

A woman gives voice to what I saw happening in a number of people. She describes her prayer as follows: *“More than fifteen years ago I began to desire new images of the Holy, since the exclusive male images felt worn out and no longer held life energy for me.”*

As a result of her prayer, another woman shared how her relationship with the Divine Mother affects the way she relates to others and the world: *“With a stronger sense of my own self and my own dignity and worth, I am in a better position to turn outward and offer myself to others. Experiencing God as Mother has allowed me to claim my own identity as mother and really claim a strong, determined, even fierce love for our Church and world. It has shown me that love, which can be fierce and nurturing, does not preclude strength and courage. This is particularly important for standing up to injustice of all sorts.”*

The fruits of praying with female images of God are also seen in the words of this male doctor: *I am more aware of my need to love and to accept myself and to do so less conditionally. My image of the Holy One is growing and changing. I have a greater sense of God’s love and creativity as in birthing and nurturing versus mighty and powerful. It is a new way of seeing God. All ways are of a loving God. But, this shows me a side that to me emphasizes unconditional love.”*

Inviting us to be who we are, allowing us to explore various kinds of prayer, giving us the freedom to make choices for greater love in life’s circumstances, all point to a God who desires to share growing communion with us as we travel life’s journey into the very heart of God.

**“to offer with
joy every
moment of
our life”**



Upcoming Events

Friday, Dec. 4, 9:30 – 2:30

Desert Day “Leaving everything, following Christ into the desert.” We have 4 in this area. Check map on website – may be one in your area? Fee: \$30 (\$20 if BYO lunch)

2016

Mon. – Fri., Jan. 18 – 22, 4-day Praying Scripture Retreat

using the Ignatian method of entering into scripture with the imagination, companioned by a spiritual director in daily meetings, and joining the Trappist monks for prayer. The grounds are beautiful at **Mepkin Abbey, Moncks Corner**. Fee: \$350 \$10 Deposit (Dec. 26) Led by Catherine Powell

Fri. – Sun., Jan. 29-31, Annual Beach Retreat, “Pathways of Grace,”

affirming our value and dignity in the eyes of our loving God. Location: The Litchfield Inn, Pawleys, Island, SC. Fee: \$350 \$10 Deposit (Dec. 26) Led by Mary Miller

Sun. – Mon., Jan. 31 – Feb. 1,

(stay over one more day for) **“Monastery of the Heart”** living contemplatively midst everyday life. Fee: \$180. Led by Mary Miller

Fri. – Sun., Mar. 4 – 6, Lenten Beach Retreat, “Growing in Prayer with Female Images of God”

See article at left Location: St. Christopher’s, John’s Island, SC Fee: \$350 (\$10) deposit (Jan. 29) Led by Maria McCoy

Sun. – Mon. Mar. 6 – 7,

(Stay over one more day for) We will have the opportunity for personal and communal prayer as we reflect on God’s Spirit moving in our hearts through the weekend retreat.

Fee: \$195. Led by Maria McCoy

4-day Mon. – Fri, 3-day Fri – Mon, or 7-day Mon. - Mon., June 13-20, Praying Scripture retreat.

(same as Mepkin above)

Mepkin Abbey, Moncks Corner

Fee: 4-\$350, 3- \$300 or 7-\$600 \$10 deposit (May 9)

Led by Catherine Powell

Mon.-Fri., Oct. 3 -7, Mepkin

**If \$10 is all you can pay,
then that’s all you pay!**



The Anchorage

A Contemplative Ministry

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*And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased." And the Spirit immediately drove him (Jesus) into the wilderness (desert).
Mark 1: 11-12*

"Only God" *(Continued from p. 2)*

When our firstborn was a few months over 2 years old, we received a surprise phone call on February 25 from our adoption attorney asking us if we would be ready for a very special little baby, Malachi's half-sister, who was to be born in about a month! We were shocked and scared to say the least and our first answer was no, followed with a desperate prayer to God to change our minds and give us a 2nd chance if our 2nd birth story was being written.

God did just this. On March 4, we received the 2nd phone call about this same baby who another family had already stepped forward to adopt (long story!) and yet, we were being asked to consider adopting this baby again. Our YES was big because God's Presence was all over this and our fear was just wiped away! We realized later that God changed our "no" to a "yes" about adopting Malachi's sister on Malachi's formal adoption day... March 4! And guess what? Our Kamryn was born on March 25! Only God. Only God. Thank you, Mary, that you taught and are teaching me to simply be open and receptive – how it has blessed and continues to bless our lives. We are learning to pay attention to the stories being written by our God everywhere in the everyday and ordinary.

(Thanks to Kelly for this article and for her support of The Anchorage over many years. She and her husband, Dave are the proud parents of Malachi and Kamryn. Prior to Malachi's adoption, Kelly was a co-pastor at Eau Claire Baptist Church in Columbia. She is a 2008 graduate of Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary and a member of Kathwood Baptist Church. Ordained to the gospel ministry in 2007, Kelly feels God's calling in this particular season to be at home where there is so much to learn about God and self!)

Financial Status as of October 31, 2015 (Fiscal Year is July 15 – June 16)

Total gifts budgeted	\$ 13,250
Total received	\$ 3,210
Amount needed	\$ 10,040
Total income budgeted	\$ 39,400
Total received	\$ 10,490
Amount needed	\$ 28,910

***Praising God for YOU,
our donors and participants!***

Gifts for Printing

Thanks for your fantastic response last year to our request for funds to print "Depth Soundings" for those who prefer/require a printed copy. Thank you for your generosity!

All gifts are fully tax-deductible.



*Malachi
and
Kamryn,
October,
2015*