

Trinitas is an Ignatian community of lay people
engaged creatively with the world

TRINITAS NEWSLETTER

Volume 2010

Fall/Winter Issue

Celebration



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UPCOMING EVENTS:

Review of Life: We meet at 10:00 a.m. on the second Monday of each month, alternately in Ventura and Sylmar.

Art Exhibits: Collages by Laetrice Cardone will be shown in July at our gallery, and Nancy Snooks will show her *Illuminations* in March.

Celtic Art & Spirituality Workshop: Mary Ann will give a workshop in conjunction with Nancy's show on Saturday, March 13, 2011 at the studio & gallery.

Trinitas Annual Corporation & Board Meeting will be held on Thursday, February 10, 2011 in Ventura.

Newsletter Deadline is May 1.

Art & Spirituality and Getting Acquainted with Trinitas meetings are available by arrangement.

For information on the Trinitas Communities, please contact:

Our website:
trinitascommunity.org

For Ventura & Santa Barbara counties and the Valley, call Mary Ann or Nancy at (805) 659-4158.

For Los Angeles, Santa Maria, and San Luis Obispo, contact Carol at (805) 481-2025.

For Spanish and the Orange Diocese, contact Dolores at (714) 836-8011.

ABOUT THE NEWSLETTER

The English-language edition of the Trinitas Newsletter is published twice a year in June and December. The deadline for submissions for the Spring/Summer issue is May 1. The theme will be **Trinitas' Future**. Articles, poems, book reviews related to the theme are welcome. Community news and events will also be published.

Credits:

The Cover Art is by Nancy Snooks, and the art on page 7 is from Helen Siegl, [Block Prints for Sundays Cycles A+B+C](#), Pueblo Publishing Co.

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

those who are ill or recovering, especially Virginia Clancy, Sue Martin, Jose Martinez; the unemployed, homeless, and for vocations to the Trinitas Communities.

ABOUT TRINITAS

Trinitas is a community of lay people who live according to the spirituality of St. Ignatius of Loyola by seeking God through a life of contemplation in action. We do this in a distinctive way by discerning how God is calling us to give our gifts in the service of bringing his kingdom to come in this world. On March 16, 1995, the Ventura Community was recognized as an Association of the Faithful in the Los Angeles Archdiocese. Since then, a community has started in the Diocese of Orange. A community is being hoped, worked, and prayed for in the San Luis Obispo area. Guided by our gospel commitment to poverty, chastity, obedience, and work for the Kingdom, we live a life of daily participation in the Eucharist, prayer, examen, and service. Catholic in origin, we welcome all active Christian men and women in harmony with Catholicism, married or single, to explore membership.

Trinitas, Inc. is a non-profit 501 (c) (3) corporation in California.

CELEBRATION

In this issue, we consider *celebration*. Carol's emphasis is the communal, ritual, and liturgical connotations of *celebration*, while Mary's perspective is based in the celebration of marriage and family life, symbolized in the metaphor of *feasting*. Mary Ann shares some thoughts on a spirituality of *celebration*.

CELEBRATION: CONSOLATION RITUALIZED by Carol Cowgill

Celebrations are communal events - ritual reaffirmations of the experiences that have forged a group's identity. I might try to "celebrate" my birthday alone, even ritualize it by some action significant to me, such as going to a spa or examining my priorities with a view to the future. But unless I am joined by the people to whom I belong, who sing *Happy Birthday* and eat some cake (the ritual), celebration doesn't happen. Celebration is thus not something self-evident, and I find myself in this essay wrestling with the issue and raising questions for myself.

American individualism makes communal social identity tenuous. We all observe the 4th of July, but few take care to ritualize the values of freedom and justice that it represents; mostly we are content with picnics and fireworks. Thanksgiving dinner is a ritual, but the foundational event, awareness of and gratitude for God's providence, is often vague to nonexistent. Christmas, too, is rapidly losing its religious significance, and is becoming childish pre-occupation marked by the duty to give gifts that in the December 26th exchange ritual, will be negated by the recipients' greed. Probably the only true national celebration left is the Superbowl. But even this superficial celebration degenerates into celebrity and excess. We need to move beyond celebrity to recover the great ideas, the great vision of Christ. Then we will be able to celebrate.

How then, to refocus Christian celebration? In religious terms, celebration is used in Ignatius' sense: the experience of God with us. The creed is a central to us as a community: that a creative God wants to be one of us so that we can become like him in all things - Jesus being both model and mediator in the process; that living in the Spirit of Jesus and the Father creates a community of love and hope. Our 4000 years of ongoing experience of these realities, have liturgical celebrations focus on these events. Holy Week, Pentecost, Christmas, Epiphany - these are at the heart of who we are. As a Church we have solemn liturgies at these times, solemn rituals of baptism and confirmation, of entry into these mysteries, solemn returns to the moments in which God most deeply touches us. The more contemplative among us get it.

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But many do not. Perhaps it is time to return December 25 to the Druids and reclaim January 6, which is still the great celebration of the eastern Churches. But even then, unless we get deeply in touch with the urgency of Christ's mission to the whole world, unless it forms us as a community, we will not be able to develop significant rituals. Holy Week has not been emptied of meaning, but is in fact, not celebrated by many Catholics; there is a greater attendance at Sunday Mass than at the Triduum, for example. A group

will not celebrate what is not meaningful. In the Spiritual Exercises, Ignatius understood that this is where we need to start: to help people experience the paschal mystery personally, re-enter it consciously, and give expression to it in ways that go far beyond a few banners and Easter lilies. Fasting can be a celebration, as can Easter dinner. As can an intensive Lenten conversion process. Forget the pagan spring festivals - they are meaningless, even to the children for whom they are intended. But once we move beyond the eggs, marshmallow peeps and lilies, where do we go? If in fact Easter feels like a let-down after Holy week, and we ritualize this by reverting to our pre-Lenten bad habits, what have we celebrated? What rituals would truly give meaning to our community identity in the paschal mystery? Where is the upbeat? How might we gather to celebrate?

How does this apply specifically to us? Month after month, the review of life is our entry into and extension of the deepest consolation of the members. However, lack of proximity, smallness of numbers within the Trinitas community may effectively preclude the ritual that shapes celebration. We affirm that the central mysteries of our Trinitas identity are living the Trinitarian life, engaging Christ's mission to bring the kingdom of God and choosing St. Ignatius and Mary of the Visitation as our role models. How might we recall these mysteries together? What form of interaction could express and affirm how we encounter God in them? That is, what might be the shape of our celebration? I don't know. At present, we are only two communities and the Orange community has not begun to address our lack of celebration. Consolation is there, but not the ritual. Since without celebration, our sense of solidarity will weaken and the consolation will not become communal. This is a worry.

I have no answer but the questions keep arising.

CELEBRATION: LINGERING OVER DESSERT

by Mary Hubbard

We have been unintentional eaters, too involved with busyness to dawdle over a life necessity. Cal and I had much to do and went about our schedules with intensity. As single parents (he of one; me of five), there was time for wasting. And then we met...

First there were the "getting to know you" popular restaurants of varying ethnic persuasion. Then as the relationship became more intense, there was the conscious seeking of the romantic; atmosphere became important, particularly since there was not much of it in either house. Our entertainment budgets has suddenly expanded to include a "fudge" factor. We mentally catalogued our favorite meals, attempting to treat each other. Romantic feelings became heightened proportionally to the number of cocktails, the wine accompaniment and after dinner drinks. And then we married, combining our six children, aged five through eighteen and my recently widowed mother. By necessity the meals became budgeted for, ordered, and timed. Routine nutrition required staples, bulk and balance, with allowance for uninvited teenage guests. Subsequently there were many birthdays, graduations and eventually engagements and marriage. We now have a roster of gala dinners, festive and fun, always including the celebrant's

favorite foods. We were very fortunate to have found a lovely and large house, enticingly discounted after an earthquake. The grandchildren began to arrive and achieve. Christmas dinner now included twenty-four family members. There was no thought of moving this important annual get-together. Many of the adult children lived in smaller houses, condos or had established homes in distant cities. We switched from china to paper plates; from one table to three and from chopped to bagged salad. No one seemed to mind or notice. The grandchildren played Santa and the great-grandchild put the Infant into the creche.

And then the unexpected occurred. Cal and I have become old in years. We had hardly noticed. Our days are project-oriented, vital, energized, artistic, and even holy. The meals are simple now, small, and low-fat, compatible with heart and kidney health.

But for the first time we really understand about dessert. How wonderful and surprising to be given these extra, sweet days. Lingering and savoring have deeper meaning now. We taste these precious, halcyon years that are undeservedly rich, fruit-filled and unique. We realize we have been "filled with good things." Our small table is heaped with startling rewards. Sometimes we just sit and look as thankfulness wells up within us. Gratitude has become the ultimate sauce for continued joy.

CELEBRATION: A SPIRITUALITY

by Mary Ann Wixted

Spirituality is about how we relate our everyday experience to our relationship with God. Some do this in a Franciscan way with the emphasis on poverty; Ignatian spirituality seeks to find God in all things. Ours is an Ignatian spirituality with a strong focus on the Trinity. At the heart of the Trinity, there must be an everlasting celebration of the love and total self-giving for and to each. As I have thought about this profound truth, I have realized that if God dwells in me, and I in him, then I too am a participant in this ongoing celebration, right here, right now. There is always a reason to celebrate in the context of a spirituality of celebration, built on faith and a grateful heart.

Celebrations usually involve gathering with those we love for an occasion, with food, music and dancing, special clothing. However, it does not require a special occasion for me to celebrate, rather I am called to grateful celebration of everyday life. This does not dilute the meaning of celebration.

When someone dies, we celebrate the life of that person, recalling gratefully that person's gift in our lives, so celebration does not preclude sad or challenging events and times. And we celebrate in anticipation our reunion with that person in the *Communion of Saints*, when in the end times we are all, living and dead, caught up in the clouds together in an eternal dance of love. Why wait to begin this dance when we can learn the steps now? If you have ever watched *Dancing with the Stars*, as I do as one long fascinated by dance, you know how hard the amateurs work to learn the steps and routines in order to perform and compete each week. (My childhood idol was that colorful figure, Carmen Miranda, who sang and danced in such exotic dress: I was especially taken with her hat piled high with fruit.) Each day, I can don my imaginary hat and begin the dance of the day with a little humor. It takes a certain self-forgetfulness to celebrate with dance, both actually and metaphorically.

Celebrating in its many forms can be challenging and growthful, and it is a way of finding God in all things.. Being alive is enough reason for me to celebrate in small ways. If I am able, I participate in the celebration of the Mass, and nourish my soul with the Body and Blood of Jesus. When I cannot, I am satisfied to do Ti Chih in the garden, and sit silently in meditative prayer. Most days are ordinary, but I can prepare a meal to share, work on a painting, water the garden, in a spirit of simple celebration. I can be aware of and wear liturgical colors on special feasts; blue for Mary, red for martyrs, violet for Advent and Lent, white and gold for Christmas, Easter and Pentecost. A single flower in a vase, or a candle on the table adds to a celebratory atmosphere in the house.

Sometimes there is effort involved and I stumble or miss a step in the dance. Sometimes there is a real sorrow confronting me in my own growing physical frailty or that of those I love. I don't honestly feel like celebrating at those times, but in faith and gratitude, I can celebrate the life I (we) are gifted with today. Hopefully, we are blessed with good doctors, medications, and treatments and the caring of those who love us.

In October, I was part of a family celebration in the Chicago area and in November my brother Joe and wife Sondra were with us for a week to celebrate Thanksgiving. My visit there and my life here inspired the celebratory poem on the back cover of this issue.

NEWS FROM ORANGE

Our situation is both joyful and challenging. Both Esperanza and Dolores are thrilled by the arrival of a new grandchild. Esperanza has had a long bout with ill health, but has finally been able to get back into the Latino Ignatian Team (ELI). Dolores has been very busy coordinating the ELI team. Their project of the moment is *Desafio*. A nine-month biweekly experience of the Spiritual Exercises. She has a group of 20 who began the process in September and are still hanging in. She will be giving a weekend Advent retreat in December. These programs are part of the Loyola Institute for Spirituality in Orange. The challenge of all this is that her husband Jose's health is steadily deteriorating. Pray for the family. Mark your calendar and start saving: the Spanish-language retreat will be held July 30-August 6, 2011. The 2010 retreat was an Ignatian take on the *Anima Christi*, conducted by Carol. It was held at the Mission House in south L.A., and was very fruitful for the 10 participants. Thanks for your prayers.

NEWS FROM THE SLO LANE

The main summer event was the retreat, which was peaceful and consoling. At the end of August the RCIA in Nipomo began: we have 10 candidates; 4 in English, 6 in Spanish. The growth in the number of Latinos is very encouraging, for many are farm workers who have had no opportunity for any religious education. I am trying to train leaders to take over when I retire (I'm no spring chicken); happily, there are 3 with potential. For the first time since I moved here no one is making the Exercises; so I will advertise for next year. Anyone who wants to make them (and can meet weekly) should call for an interview at your convenience, before the end of May (805 481-2025). I will give the new group of Lay Mission Helpers candidates a week's retreat in February and a course in Mission Spirituality in April. I am cutting down on my involvement with LMH, as my bum knee is beginning to make the long drive to L.A. difficult. Still, I would rather die with my boots on. Teresa Cossios has completed the translation of *Happy the Single-Hearted* into Spanish. I'm editing it now and hope to publish it next year. If you want multiple copies of either language edition, let me

know so that I can order enough. Otherwise, the book can be obtained from amazon.com. The Trinitas inquirers are still inquiring - and still no takers. Our monthly meetings are based on *The Jesuit Guide to (Almost) Everything* by James Martin, S.J. It is a very good introduction to Ignatian spirituality.

VENTURA VIEWS by Nancy Snooks

The first decade of the new millennium is coming quickly to a close, and we are already celebrating the new church year. Looking back over the first decade of this new millennium from the point of view of *celebration*, what are the memories that have brought us joy? I'll start with the most recent and work back in time.

Mary Ann's art show in our gallery was a success! She showed her *Cloud Series* and various journal-sized pieces done on retreats over the years. On November 13, she gave a small but well-received workshop on *Visual Journaling*.

In October, along with Mary and Cal Hubbard, we participated in the annual art festival at Holy Spirit Retreat Center in Encino, where Cal sold one of his watercolors for a very good price. We made cards for this fundraiser of two of Mary Ann's *Cloud Series* paintings and three of my new *Celtic Illuminations*, which I'll be showing at our gallery in March. These cards are available for purchase, as are last year's *Christmas Greetings*.

Mary Ann visited her family in Chicago in October, and in November her brother Joe and sister-in-law Sondra celebrated Thanksgiving here with us.

In August I went with Eloise Tavares and Greg Foster to Borrego Springs in the desert west of the Salton Sea. We were blessed with surprisingly mild weather that day, the highlight of which was seeing wild mountain goats. The night sky was also beautiful and the history of the area fascinating.

The spiritual directors' group continues to meet at our house monthly, without the much-missed presence of Pastor Mary Ann Fiene who has retired and moved north near her sister. The format still includes peer supervision as needed, but is also enriched by various presentations.

Over the summer we held our board of directors meeting with Lynn Dempsey, and we continue to meet monthly for review of life with Cal and Mary.

We have a lot to celebrate!

Here and There

For clouds boiling over mountain tops
a shower of sparrows, falling, falling
and rising, riding the chill wind
celebrate
give thanks!

For family, friends, and feasting
lovers newly engaged
gifts of flowers
laughter and tears
bright gold birch and blazing red maple leaves
against a blue, blue sky
and cornfield stubble there
green fields here
thunder, lightning, and swift dark rolling clouds
and a gentle rain
celebrate
give thanks!

For art museums
"el" rides there
art shows and workshops
and walks along the ocean here
celebrate
give thanks!

Here and there, babies and small children in
halloween wear, parading and pageanting
one small God-Child in a manger
my cousin with her walker
grown frail
for those taking first steps
for all of us old-growing
celebrate
give thanks,
give thanks,
give thanks!

**We celebrate your association with and support for Trinitas,
and wish you a grand Christmas celebration and a blessed 2011**

The Trinitas Communities

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