

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

TRINITAS NEWSLETTER

Volume 2012

Spring/Summer Issue

Pilgrimage



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UPCOMING EVENTS:

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

Art Exhibits:

Watercolors by Michael Grahek of Trinitas will be on exhibit and for sale at our gallery, *Dei Gloria*, June 3, 9, 16, and 23 from 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. on October 6 & 7 from 11-5.

Don't miss the **Art Festival** at **Holy Spirit Retreat Center** on October 6 & 7 from 11-5,

During Advent, 2012, there will be a Trinitas group show of the O Antiphons.

Artists' Workshops:

Artists' Workshops will continue at *Dei Gloria* monthly on 4th Tuesdays from 9:30-3:00. These are free opportunities for artists to share their skills in various media. Space is limited, so call ahead.

Trinitas Annual Corporation & Board Meeting

will be held on Friday, August 3, 2012. in Ventura.

Newsletter Deadline is Nov. 1 for the Fall/Winter 2013 issue.

The New Spiritual Exercises

group continues to meet on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays in Ventura.

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 theme will be **Contemplation in Action**. Articles, poems, book reviews related to the theme are welcome. Community news and events will also be published.

Credits:

Cover photo, *The Pilgrim*, is by Lynn Dempsey of our friend Roxie Ray, used with her permission. Photos on back page are by Nancy Snooks.

PLEASE PRAY FOR:
the sick, especially Ann Marie Wennink, Nicole Sanko, Michael Snooks;

the soul of Sue Martin and the consolation of her family, the unemployed, the homeless, the exploited, and those effected by disasters, and for vocations to Trinitas.

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.

ON DIVESTING FOR THE JOURNEY

by Mary Hubbard

In the New Year, Cal and I had impulsively resolved to give away ten items a month. Here it was March, and we were already twenty behind. We armed ourselves with large plastic bags and went to work. We deliberated painfully over articles of clothing that brought back memories. We leaped with excitement at old treasures in the back of the closet, and discovered that neither one of us really liked the brown dishes...how had we accumulated fourteen place settings? Gradually, a whisper of spirit in our cleansing process was recognizable. What was it we were really letting go of?

For years, when directing women's retreats, I had fervently talked about *letting go*...of power, property and prestige. I was given skeptical looks, when I talked about letting go of our children, that traumatic loosening which seems to fracture us when we understand its necessity. For all of us, these relinquishments were major, difficult, and some even impossible, but the times and efforts were graced. But now, with the *big stuff* laid aside, what of the remainder, the residue. We have learned that one can take very little on a pilgrimage. Matthew 6:17 advises us to *anoint our heads and wash our faces*. Jesus pretty much tells us to haul it all away and instead watch flowers grow and birds fly. We know what happened to the guy with the silos.

There is that whole other section of garage: the one with the papers, programs and yes, parentheticals. So much of our working lives. With the advent of digitalization much of the plans, documents and research have become obsolete. Graduate research for our numerous degrees is outdated. Many of my retreats were outlined during *first half of life* spirituality. We had happily/sadly left many of the programs we directed in competent hands of younger, more attuned coworkers.

The parentheticals persist: *but perhaps we'll need it for...; do people really understand that...; what if the children/grandchildren want...* We become distracted from the task at hand, ignoring the final "p" on the pilgrimage...the people, the fellow pilgrims, the promising students...so many souls touched, influenced, taught and loved. An *Aha* moment. We realize we have to put down the measuring instruments..place them on the very top of this tangible pile, a fitting crown.

T. S. Eliot describes the Magi after they had seen the Infant Jesus and their disconcerting arrival home from their pilgrimage:

*We returned to our places, these Kingdoms,
But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation,
With an alien people clutching their gods.*

What of that *old dispensation*? We need to attach our spiritual leaf blower to rid ourselves of judgmentalism, righteousness, provincialism, exclusionary practices and the building of our own little kingdom. Our old god had limited powers which we supplemented by worrying, planning and controlling. Now we recognized that our new space was filled by the *bigness* of God. In that older time, we had clutched and protected by rejection, squeezed out the Spirit; now the call was to loosen, include, and to soul breathe.

Each Eastertime we head for the desert to rest, to laugh, to evaluate our progress on our holy pilgrimage. Why is it so much easier in the desert? Lawrence Kushner has written: *In the wilderness your possessions cannot surround you. Your preconceptions cannot protect you. Your logic cannot promise*

you the future. Your guilt can no longer place you safely in the past. You are left alone each day with an immediacy that astonishes, chastens and exults. You see the world as if for the first time.

Now the call is to nakedness, wrinkled and scarred certainly, totally unprotected but...light-footed, clean-hearted, brimming with joy.

ON PILGRIMAGE **by Mary Ann Wixted**

Many years ago I had the privilege of hearing Dorothy Day speak at my high school and she has been one of my heroines ever since. Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin founded the Catholic Worker, which provides homes for the poor and marginalized, worked for peace and justice, and published their monthly newspaper in advocacy of these causes, *The Catholic Worker*. In this paper, DD wrote a regular column, "On Pilgrimage," a title I have borrowed for this article. In *The Duty of Delight*, her diaries, and in her collected letters, *All the Way to Heaven*, she quotes from many saints and writers, among them St. Ignatius Loyola, and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, SJ, with whom she was of like mind in many ways.

Like de Chardin, DD was about bringing God's kingdom to come in the here and now from the time of her conversion to her death at age 83 in 1980. Her life was a long, radiant, spiritual pilgrimage, but not without its challenges. In her diaries she quoted Teilhard de Chardin, "Man is the crown of God's creation; not the static center of the world, as was long believed, but the axis and point of evolution, which is far more beautiful." She follows this quote with her own thought, "Evolution is no blind Darwinian form but the constant creativity of God. The peak of all is God's greatest activity, Christ's presence, the principle of universal vitality." Beauty, she believed with Dostoevsky, will save the world. But like radiance, without contrasting darkness, beauty is imperceptible.

Since January, we have been making the Spiritual Exercises using Savary's *The New Spiritual Exercises*, in the setting of Teilhard de Chardin's evolutionary spirituality. This has been and continues to be a spiritual pilgrimage for each of us. We are challenged to make the Christ Project, bringing the kingdom to come, the center and purpose of our lives. We in Trinitas, make a commitment to *work for the kingdom*. This work begins in our own hearts, where we struggle to discern and to be Christ's presence in this world. To the end of her life, her diaries reveal that DD struggled with this selfsame project. She was certain of her calling, but had her human day-to-day challenges as we do, living as she did with the human realities of a Catholic Worker House. She tried to live a balanced life, and learned the wisdom of withdrawing from time-to-time into solitude in a cottage at the beach, of making retreats, of taking time away (weeks and months) from the Catholic Worker to help her daughter, Tamar and Tamar's children, to nurse Tamar's father Forster's wife when she was dying, to be with her sister, to visit and enjoy meals with friends. She traveled extensively, usually by bus although in later years by plane, on speaking engagements and to

visit Catholic Worker houses. As she aged, she learned to step back and to delegate the editorship of *The Catholic Worker* and other responsibilities. She was a lover of God and his people, especially the poorest and most difficult; she was a mother/ grandmother/sister; and she was a founder and leader and very likely a saint who was always very authentically her unique self.

While most of us do not live such extraordinary or influential lives, we are all called to evolve spiritually as she did, for Dorothy Day never stopped in her pilgrimage. From that inner space with God, flow the inspiration and energy for our creative work in the world. Each of us is on a unique pilgrimage during which this God works in us, even in darkness, to grow us into the unique flower he had in mind when he planted the seed of our being in this life. It is a paradox that what appears to be destruction can be the creation of something new. From the seed of my life, planted in the depths of darkness and watered by grace will grow a sturdy and lovely plant which will blossom only as I emerge into eternal life. Faith in God's ongoing work of creation makes it possible for me to live through the challenges of aging.

When we began our New Spiritual Exercises group in January, my hope was for the grace to grow into the elderly person whom God has in mind. We recently saw the film, *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel*, in which one of the characters refuses to adjust to her new circumstances and closets herself escaping into her reading, while her husband and others of the group, bravely strive to become inculturated. She refuses the native food, and the company of the others, and in isolating herself, she reveals herself to be an embittered, self-centered woman. By our choices, we make ourselves into the elders we become. You and I can choose whom we will grow or devolve into, and it's never too soon to begin examining our choices. Louis Savary calls it *inviting complexity into our lives*. Dorothy Day, and other wise and holy people who have gone before us knew this and lived it on their pilgrim way. Let us join them in trusting that God, the divine gardener, knows the flowers he is tending, and cooperate in our ongoing spiritual evolution.

THREE BRIEF NOTES ON A PILGRIM HEART

by Carol Cowgill

The pilgrim travels toward the fullness of the kingdom, the glory of God's reign. But in a world often at odds with God, we may feel frustrated, powerless. The pilgrim is a person who looks for the where of God's reign, the *otherwhere*. But as the Ignatian pilgrims we know that we are in the where and not the otherwhere. The trick is to make the spiritual pilgrimage, the interior movement into the imperfectly known, to find God's will and power in operation. The Ignatian pilgrimage is a journey into the depths. To find God everywhere, even in the heart of darkness.

Why, then, did Ignatius so frequently identify himself as a poor pilgrim? Ignatius found God in a rich way: by actually walking, and walking poor, in Jesus' footsteps; by imagination, by the movements of God's Spirit in him. His imagination needed stimulating by seeing and touching places: he needed geography. Moreover, he came from a culture that understood Jesus's way was a going to the holy otherwhere in poverty and total dependance on God. Ignatius knew that the Father had given him to Jesus as a companion. When he went the Holy Land, it was because he wanted to know Jesus physically. In an era of exploration, his soul needed an earthly geography. What better than the geography of

Jesus? Then, when the first Jesuits wanted to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and were prevented by circumstances, they shifted their otherwhere to the office of the Pope. Willy-nilly, the decision led them into a truly alien land, since in those days Rome was not exactly a shining vision of God's reign on earth. The CCC points out that we experience ourselves as exiles, far from the Lord, waiting for the full coming of the reign of God (769). When the Jesuits found themselves exiles, they experienced Jesus and his reign wherever they went. And they did go.

The pilgrim's heart is with the Lord in all things. The pilgrim's heart continues to search. And the pilgrim's heart hits the road. There is a relationship between being a pilgrim and being a missionary, Sent by God, from God, we join Christ in making the Father and his Spirit present and visible. Hitting the road is the pilgrim equivalent of finding God everywhere. I work with missionaries, preparing them to go to the holy lands of Cameroon, Tanzania, Peru. We in Trinitas are called to go as pilgrims to the holy lands of Santa Ana, Ventura, San Luis. So we are willing to leave our narrow comforts, not walk 200 miles to Santiago de Compostela or Guadalupe, but to speed by car toward Christ who embraces the heart of darkness and waits to put us to work.

VENTURA VIEWS

by Nancy Snooks

Our journey the last few months has had its ups and downs, mountains/hills, valleys and plains. In January we began our journey through the New Spiritual Exercises. Every two or three weeks, the group meets at our Ventura home, to share our reflections, pray together, and support each other on this journey. The "we" on this trip are Bob Blough, Leatrice Cardone, Lowaine Robison, Ann Marie Wennink, Mary Ann and me.

Early in February, Ann Marie began to feel ill. Not only was she making the Exercises with us but she has been a valuable participant in our monthly Artists' Workshops at Dei Gloria Studio & Gallery, both of which she has had to put on hold while she battles a rare cancer. Please keep her and her husband, Jan, in your prayers. Also in February, a member of the Spiritual Directors group which met here, Sue Martin, died after an extended battle with cancer. She will be greatly missed but her desire that contemplative prayer be learned and practiced in her local church will live on in her memory. Nicole Sanko, Karen Moran's daughter, recently finished cancer treatment in Scottsdale and was recovered enough to vacation in Hawaii with her husband, Karen and Ish. On still another side of cancer, I have been discharged by my oncologist as cancer-free after seven years.

At Ann Marie's suggestion and inspiration, our present project at our Artists' Workshops is the seven "O" Antiphons, which we are working on both jointly and individually. Mary and Cal Hubbard, and Michael Grahek are working in their own homes, and we hope that as she recovers Ann Marie will also be up to contributing her work. Our hope and plan is to exhibit these pieces at Dei Gloria during Advent. During Lent (February/March), we showed an exhibit of *The Way of the Cross*, the work of 14 CIVA (Christians in the Visual Arts) artists, including me. Our current show at Dei Gloria on the Sunday afternoons of June, is an exhibit of the watercolors of Michael Grahek, who is a new member of the Trinitas Community in the San Luis Obispo diocese. After making the Spiritual Exercises with Carol, he asked to become a member

and we are delighted to show his work. If you would like to view my work online, go to <http://www.flickr.com/photos/nancysnooksart/sets>.

Since November, inspired by a family member's risky pregnancy, Mary Ann has been crocheting and giving away prayer shawls. They have also been given to those who are bereaved, facing surgery, or ill with cancer, AIDs, Parkinson's, heart disease, and so on. So far, she has prayed her way through eighteen shawls. It is a ministry of compassion and comforting in which I join her in prayer and support.

Since November, Mary Ann has been crocheting and giving away prayer shawls, eighteen in all to date. They have been given to those who are bereaved, facing surgery, or suffering illnesses. It is a ministry of prayer, compassion, and comforting in which I join her in prayer and support.

In March, Leatrice, Mary Ann and I went to the Skirball Cultural Center in Los Angeles, to see *Women Hold Up Half the Sky*, an interactive exhibit on the abuse and trafficking of women and children. It is a well-presented and very moving exhibit which I highly recommend to you. Although it has left Los Angeles, it is scheduled to be shown in Cincinnati, Ohio at the Freedom Center. (Sorry no info yet on line on the dates.)

Ongoing, we continue to meet for our community Reviews of Life with Cal and Mary Hubbard. Their example and insights inspire us to "pick up our pace" and keep on our pilgrimage together. While Cal has had some health concerns, her and Mary keep up with family events, like grandchildren graduating, regular travel, outreach projects and all. Mary has enabled others to take over some of her work at Holy Spirit Retreat Center, where she continues to offer retreats. Now she is putting her creativity into parish work. She and pastor emeritus Msgr. Amy will be offering a series of sessions for seniors based on Joan Chittester's, *The Gift of Years*. Our support of the Kateri Tekakwith Education Fund and of Sondra Cecilia Lopez Cojtl specifically also continues. Sondra wrote to tell us that she has passed from 7th into 8th grade. The education program as she describes it sounds excellent. Her favorite subject is natural science/biology. If you are inspired to support the education of indigenous women in Guatemala, contact Kay Sweeney at kaysweeney@hotmail.com.

NEWS FROM THE SLO LANE

by Carol Cowgill

Four persons completed the 19th annotation Exercises in Nipomo, so I'm beginning to advertise the availability of the Exercises, beginning in September. (If you're interested, call me at 805 481 2025.) We are sponsoring a do-it-yourself commuter retreat, *Hurt, Healing, and Wholeness*, from June 23-29, at the Phoenix Ranch, Arroyo Grande. About ten people will meet daily from 9-5. Sorry, but registration is already closed. I'm retiring from administering the St. Joseph catechumenate and commuting to LA for the Lay Mission Helpers: I will spend my energy on the Exercises and biblical studies. The friends of Trinitas want to begin a more intensive practical application of spirituality, so we are in the process of deciding on a format for the monthly meetings. Mike Grahek, our candidate, is beginning studies to develop skills in the spiritual counseling of elders. He is an artist and will be having a show of his watercolors at the Trinitas gallery, *Dei Gloria*, during June. We will have a quiet celebration of the feast of the Trinity: I will renew my promises at the vigil Mass. I just talked to Sr. Fara Impastato, an old friend of Trintias, who wants to be remembered to everyone.

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