



The Anchorage:
A Contemplative Community for All

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Come away...

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May 2016

Dear Friends of The Anchorage,

As The Anchorage approaches the end of this fiscal year on June 30th, it seems appropriate that we give you an overview of what has been accomplished over the past 10 months in addition to ongoing monthly spiritual direction. Needless to say, we have been blessed to have had:

- “Come and See,” a free dessert event to introduce friends to this best kept secret in Greenville, SC. We heard experiences of some who have attended our events.
- Three “Praying Scripture” Retreats led by Catherine Powell, at Mepkin Abbey, a Trappist Monastery. During these silent retreats we may honor our prayer with few distractions.
- 18th Annual Beach Retreat, back at The Litchfield Inn, Pawleys Island. Mary Miller led us about Pathways of Grace, with ample time for reflection, both in groups and in solitude.
- Lenten Beach Retreat at St. Christopher’s Conference Center on Seabrook Island, SC, led by Maria McCoy. Using Scripture she led us to pray with female images of God.
- And our Desert Days, on first Fridays of even months, in Buffalo, Chicago, Memphis, Birmingham, Atlanta, DeLand, FL and many towns in SC and NC culminating with a March 31/April 1 Desert Day Series, led by Fr. Stan Gumula, Abbot of Mepkin Abbey. A monk for 57 years, he graced us with teaching of great depth. It was free as a way to say **thank you** to this community for your support over the last 18 years!

None of this would have been possible without the prayers and financial support given by so many loyal, Christian friends. Thank you from the bottom of my heart. As you may remember our budget this year is \$39,400. As of April 20th we have received a total of \$32,500, leaving a shortfall of \$6,900 to come in during May and June.

If you have already given to The Anchorage this fiscal year, thank you again --- and would you consider another donation before June 30th? If you have not yet sent a gift this year, please prayerfully consider doing so. As you can see from the above numbers, we definitely need your help, and all contributions are tax deductible since The Anchorage is a 501(c)(3) organization.

Speaking on behalf of the board members, we do appreciate your interest in, and your devotion to, The Anchorage and its contemplative Christian ministry.

Sincerely in Christ,
Bill Sibley, donor and former Servant Leader (1998-2001)



“Give It Away”

By Catherine Powell

The words above first came to me in prayer months ago. Then again as I was concerned about the shortfall for our Lenten Beach Retreat. It seems my optimism is to blame as I fully expected the 14 needed to sign up, and only 8 did. I could have reduced the number 2 months ahead of the retreat, but sensed that there were men and women God wanted to experience this incredibly graced retreat with Maria McCoy. We are always clear to say “If \$10 is all you can pay, then that is all you pay.” And we honor that commitment – because we don’t want funds to get in the way of what it is God is doing. The words, “give it away” were a comfort as that retreat came out in the red. At least we felt we had been faithful to what God was saying.

Then our April Desert Day came along... Some of the history of the Desert Days for those who do not know began during a Silent Retreat at Mepkin in February, 2015, led by Fr. Gueric, Guestmaster. The week before I had totaled my car when a tire blew on I-85, and I was grateful to be alive and to be in silence for a week for healing. During one of our silent times in the Retreatants’ Chapel, the idea came. I could hardly wait to get to my room to write it down. To encourage Desert Days all over the country on first Fridays, as the monks at Mepkin do. Every other month seemed to be enough, so we decided on first Fridays in even months beginning in August, as our new fiscal year begins in July. It has caught on and now there are over 30 locations, in Buffalo, Chicago, Memphis, Birmingham, as well as many in SC and NC, honoring Desert Days, with The Anchorage, either hosting groups or in solitude. The sense of community has continued to grow! Community may just be our theme for next year.

Shortly thereafter, I felt led by the Holy Spirit to ask Abbot Stan if he might lead a Desert Day for The Anchorage pulling all the folks together from the other locations. To my surprise, because monks rarely do this, Abbot Stan’s main concern was the music at Mepkin since he plays the guitar for the times of prayer. He said it would need to be while Eli, the guest organist for Easter and the octave after Easter, was there. The April Desert Day was April 1, the first Friday after Easter so Eli would be there!

So we began making plans. At first I was concerned that it was April Fool’s Day, but then could not imagine that God would play a joke like that! As we researched locations, caterers and motels, I kept hearing “give it away.” At our Servant Leaders’ (our board of directors) meeting last year I ran it by them. Of course they were concerned with the cost. Then I added that I thought we were not to charge anyone - it was to be free! I had heard God saying “give it away.” We knew we would serve lunch/dessert, rent a place and cover Abbot Stan’s expenses. Pregnant pause. In a few minutes they caught the spirit and agreed with a resounding “yes! – let’s give it away!”

When I gave Abbot Stan a few choices, about how much time he could give us, he surprised me again and said he preferred to offer something short Thursday evening, then Friday daytime (like the usual Desert Days 9:30 – 2:30) and then something short Friday evening, and leave Saturday morning. It was all gift! I had no idea – even up to the last minute I was wondering if I had made it up! May I say it again? Monks rarely do this!

So the receiving of such a huge gift, it was a no-brainer – to “give it away” as a gift to the community that had supported The Anchorage for 18 years, since May, 1998. Some of you remember it. We are so grateful to have served this community as a contemplative presence – offering inspiration and encouragement to “come away – anchor deep.”

Even though we know the contemplative way, the living from a stance of deep prayer and quiet, will never catch on and be the next big bandwagon – we know that those we serve are grateful. Some say God uses The Anchorage as a life line. I know it is for me. And I don’t think our world is going to slow down – do you? Our need for time to breathe, time just to ‘be’ will only grow in the future. Sort of a job security perhaps?

As you can see by the Desert Day Reflections included here, the events made quite an impact. And in case you were wondering why it didn’t rain Thursday night and Friday as forecast? There was a little sprinkle Thursday afternoon and then dry the rest of the time! It was so that we could use the lovely patio outside our space at the Kroc Center downtown – for all 3 events. The food was tasty and plenteous. Best of all Abbot Stan pointed us toward our risen Lord, perhaps only as a monk of over 50 years could do. The theme was Prayer as an Easter People.

It took me more than a week to process all that happened during those short 2 days. Many new friends: church folks from Catholic, Presbyterian, Baptist, non-denominational churches, Church of the Nazarene, Methodist, Lutheran, Episcopalian, and others as well as un-churched folks. All gathered together under the word. My sense was that God was smiling... I sure was. It was a joy to give it away!