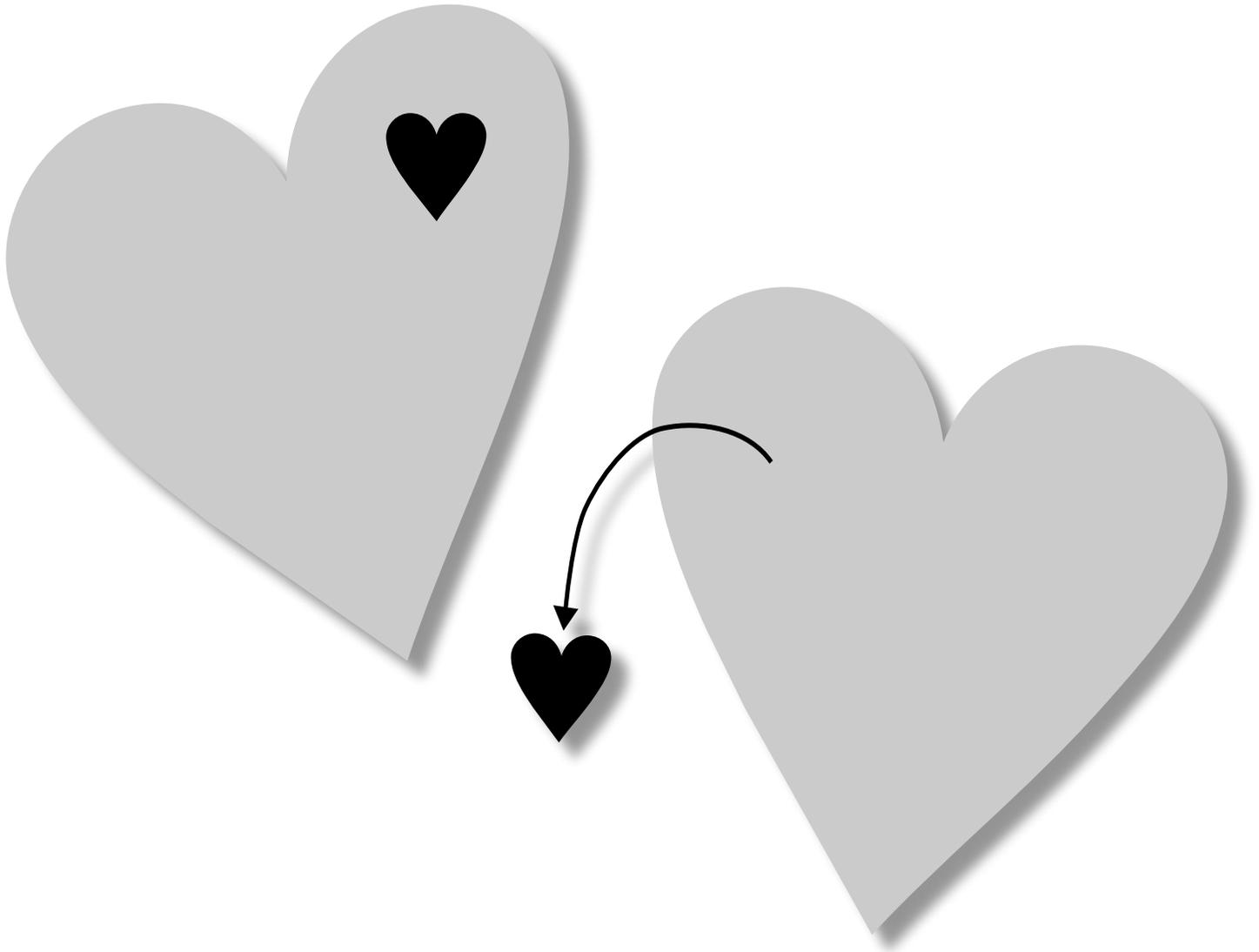




The Anchorage

A Ministry of Spiritual Direction and Contemplative Retreats

August, 2006



Loving God by Believing

DEPTH SOUNDINGS

“Can I Say I Actually Love God?”

by Cathie Powell

Since our theme for “Depth Soundings” this year, beginning with this our first issue, is “Loving God,” it seems fitting, before we get too far, to do some groundwork - ask the question – “Can we really love God?” When asked about the first and greatest commandment, Jesus replied, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind and with all your strength.” (Mark 12:30) Do we at times hurry past that one, to get on to the second commandment – to love your neighbor, because that one we can understand? Even though we don’t do it well, at least we have an inkling what being loving to a neighbor is. But what about loving God?

I’ve been in conversations about this, and often they end with a consensus that we really can’t love God well. In our finiteness, we’re just not able. Well, don’t give up - there is hope!

At our January Beach Retreat, Sister Caroline Smith, Ph. D, asked us all to get in touch with our deepest desires. Later on she suggested to us, that if we kept going deep enough we would find our desire for God. That really rang true for me then and seems even truer today. We were created by God for God. Or as Julian of Norwich says, “by love for love.” God created us perfectly to be in a love relationship with the very Creator of the universe.

God, in God’s great mercy and blessing, created us, in our finiteness, with the capacity to love God. Wisdom figures over the ages have said it in many different ways, “Our hearts are restless until we rest in God.” (Augustine) “We are created with a God-shaped vacuum that only God can fill.” (Pascal)

So the challenge may not be to try to figure out how to love God from square one, but to realize, to make real, that we already do - however small our love might be compared to God’s love for us. We can know it is there! God created us that way! It may be only a cooling ember, but it longs to be fanned into flame.

The adventure of faith is that God is always revealing more of who God is – and more of who I am – who you are. And we both, God and I, God and you – long for the same thing – this love relationship that is unique. No two relationships with God are the same – which is very freeing. I am called to be my true self in relationship with the Truth, and God meets our deepest need for intimacy that no human can meet.

Despite all the things we buy or all the places we go, nothing meets our deepest need – except God. Our economy is consumer-driven; built on us believing otherwise! Advertising experts bombard us daily, sometimes hourly, telling us all the things we need so that we will be happy, or successful, or beautiful, or young, or healthy, etc. If we can only learn to tune them out and trust our deepest wisdom – which tells us that the thrill of the new things is gone in a flash, while the experience of God’s presence lasts forever.

So the point of this article is more than an invitation to love God. It is to remind you that you already do! It is not a new concept! It is hidden in your very heart – and you know it in your deepest knowing. The point of this article is to encourage you - to challenge you – to believe it! I think that is the first step – and the biggest step – toward loving God: believing that we already do! No more of this “It’s not possible because we are finite and God is infinite.” If the first and greatest commandment given to us is impossible for us – what kind of God is that? Don’t expect me to explain it – but somehow we are invited right into God’s heart – our very small heart in God’s very big heart. And in turn, God comes to live in our hearts – yes – the Creator of the universe, comes to live in our very own little hearts. That’s what the picture on the front is to convey. A mutual love relationship. It is God’s design. We love because God first loved us – and by God’s grace we return that love, however small.

“The biggest step toward loving God: believing that we already do!”



The Anchorage

Vision:

For all people everywhere to see God more clearly, love God more dearly and follow God more nearly. For when just one person moves toward living out of that graced space, there is a ripple effect which is our best hope for the healing of our world. The Anchorage wants to contribute to that hope.

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, through spiritual direction and contemplative retreats, this God who loves us beyond measure.

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.

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“For the Love of God”

by Dick McCormack

I was remarking recently to a friend how often we heard the expression “for the love of god” growing up. Most often it was in the context of catching us “in the act” of some mischief or alarming activity.

Today, with lots of faith journey now under my belt, “For the Love of God” has begun to take on a whole new meaning. In fact, the phrase has been gnawing at me for the last month or two.

“It doesn’t matter why you come to me. It only matters that you come to me.”

I don’t know how it is for you. But ... I often wrestle with the once childhood, now adult questions of ... who am I? Who is God? What is my relationship to God? What does God want of me? How do I know God is real and available to impact my life? The questions go on in an almost endless clatter. But, because they do persist and persist, they demand thought and response, and yes, prayer (conversation with God) as well.

When life seems to be the pits, these questions seem to be loudest and most demanding. We want to know how this God can be all loving, all caring, all merciful, all everything if these are the circumstances I must endure. What is the meaning of this suffering, real pain and sometimes, total despair with no apparent answer or way out?

In the course of living these issues in my own life and witnessing the struggles of others, I have prayed for insight. In recent years, I turned to listening more for God in the silent prayer of my heart. I have read the writings of recognized mystics who have traveled the journey before us. I have listened more closely to my own experiences, looking for God’s message.

The answer that has emerged is consistent. “Be still and know that I am your God.” “I simply want you to be with me, resting in my love.” “I love you more than any experience of love that you could manage there in your life.” “I simply want for you to love me as I love and embrace you.”

“If life is the pits for you and there is genuine suffering, please know that I am calling you to BE IN love with me. I know because of your nature that your preferences for me come as a result of the “contrasts” in your life. Isn’t it true that you are most often driven to me in prayer and petition to the degree that your circumstances are undesirable? For me, it doesn’t matter why you come to me. It only matters that you come to me. And that you know and experience my unqualified love. I want nothing more for you than to BE IN LOVE with me continuously for I am ALWAYS IN LOVE with you. I promise peace and joy in your life if you will simply live your life for the sake of my love. Nothing else matters. Nothing else will provide the completeness, the rest and the joy.”

Obviously, these are my words and impressions that I have carried away from my relationship moments of reflection in silence. I also believe that this is a message that goes beyond simply me. I believe through the experience of God’s total love that we are called to live for the sake of God’s love. There is no other reason for our being then to achieve union in love of God here ... now ... moment by moment. My experience teaches me continuously that this is truth and the ultimate reality.

Now ... when I hear “For the love of God,” I hear this as a reminder that we are to live and experience this expression versus living a life of behavior that is anything BUT IN God’s love. My wish then for myself as well as each of you is that we simply live a life in all things “for the love of God.”

(Thanks to Dick McCormack for this article and for his participation with The Anchorage. He is part owner of an international consulting company and active at Prince of Peace. He has served as Chair of The Anchorage Directors.)

“Give a Gift of Care to a Caregiver?”

We all know folks who provide care for others, either professionally or as a volunteer, friend or family member. Prayerfully consider taking someone to our Caregiver Luncheon (9/21) for delicious food, a lovely view and time to soak in the truth that God sees and appreciates each little sip of cold water given.



Upcoming Events

July, 2006 – June, 2007

Thurs., Sept. 21st 12 – 1:30
Caregiver Luncheon:
Finding Calm in the Chaos”
at the Commerce Club, with
Peggy Dulaney

Mon., Sept. 25th 9:30 – 3:30
“Clergy Retreat: Listening
with a Hearing Heart” with
Molly Wilkes

Fri., Oct. 7th 9:30 – 3:30
“Sailing Retreat: Floating on
the River of the Spirit” on
Lake Norman, NC with Norma
Lefler

Fri., Nov. 10th 9:30 – 3:30
“Fall Quiet Day: Spirituality
of Imperfection (12 Steps
and Our Journey Home)”
with David Tiede Hottinger

Thurs., Nov. 30th 7– 9:30 pm
“Making Room in the
Inn (X): A Nativity Scene
Advent” with Cathie Powell

Mon., Dec. 4th 9 – 3:30
“Clergy Retreat: Sabbath”
with Jim Caprell

1st & 3rd Thurs. am & pm
Jan. 4th - Feb. 15th
“Book Study, The Impact
of God: Soundings from St.
John of the Cross” by Iain
Matthew, with Cathie Powell

Fri., Jan. 5th 9:30 – 12 noon
Epiphany Retreat: Honoring
the Light” with Cathie Powell

Fri. – Sun., Jan. 26th – 28th
“Beach Retreat: Mary
Magdalene” Litchfield Beach,
with Sister Caroline Smith

Sun. – Tues., Jan. 28th – 30th
“Praying the Hours” at the
beach, with Cathie Powell

Fri. – Sun., Feb. 23rd-25th
“The Lord’s Prayer in Jesus’
Language” with Theresa
Horton

Mon., Mar. 5th 9:30 – 3:30
“Clergy Day” with Jeff Rogers



The Anchorage

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**“Lord, I believe;
Help my unbelief!”**
Mark 9:24

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“Loving Jesus for Who He Is”

By *Laura Ellen Truelove*

It blesses me to know that Jesus had friends with whom He could fellowship – have a meal, tell stories, laugh and just relax. The Gospels tell poignant stories of Jesus going to Bethany where He enjoyed fellowship with His friends, Lazarus, Martha and Mary.

Each of His friends was different and loved Him in a different way. Lazarus seems to be a beginner, still weeping for his sins and amending his life. Martha was busy and preoccupied with working hard to serve Jesus and others. Mary was a friend who rested in His presence and listened to Him. She knew Him intimately enough to give Him a precious gift that ministered deeply to Him – as when she anointed Him with costly oil.



Creek at The Anchorage

About a forty-minute drive from my home in Mt. Pleasant, there is a monastery called Our Lady of Mepkin Abbey where a contemplative order of Trappist monks live and pray seven times a day while supporting their life of prayer through hard physical labor on an egg farm. In early April through an Anchorage-sponsored retreat, I had an opportunity to pray and experience sitting at the feet of Jesus with the monks who live there, as well as the other guests on retreat. That experience forever changed my life by opening a door into a house I never knew existed where sitting at the feet of Jesus with open hearts is communal and ongoing.

I've been back to that house often. In fact, I've just returned from a visit to Mepkin Abbey. It is always hard to leave.

Praying with the monks allows my heart to open deeply to Jesus. It also encourages me to walk deeper in the spirit and to spend more time sitting at the feet of Jesus, enjoying His presence, listening to Him, becoming more intimately acquainted with His prayers.

Don't we all want to walk in more intimacy with our Lord? Don't we want to simply love Him for who He is? Just as our sister, Mary of Bethany, brought precious oil to Jesus at just the perfect time, I pray that we, too, will be yielded vessels sitting at His feet, discerning His heart, and bearing gifts that please Him. May we too, give Him gifts that cost us something that minister to His heart.

(Thanks to Laura Ellen Truelove for this article and for her participation with The Anchorage. She is a former CEO of the SC Literacy Association and now describes herself as a contemplative prayer in Mt. Pleasant, SC)

Financial Status as of July 31, 2006

(Fiscal year is

July, '06 - June, '07)

Gifts Budgeted	\$24,500
Gifts Received	\$ 2,956
Balance	\$21,544
Total Budget	\$52,250
Total Received	\$ 4,174
Balance	\$48,076

THANK YOU, DONORS!

We are off to a good start, and we are grateful! We lost \$3000 last year, and you have given us hope for survival. Many non-profits didn't survive the year and I ache for them.

Thank you for listening for God's leading as you support The Anchorage and others.

We intentionally keep our fees low and doable, and anyone can participate in any event by paying just \$10, if that is all they can afford. If God is calling you to "come away" then come! Money is never a reason not to attend any event – and bring a friend!

We need your donor support now more than ever to cover the shortfall in these difficult times!

NEW WEBSITE IS UP!

You are invited to visit our **NEW** website. We hope you like it. Let us hear from you. Try the "Contemplative Coffee Break."