



The Anchorage
A Contemplative Ministry
Come away...

DEPTH SOUNDINGS

Encouragement, Inspiration and News from The Anchorage

February 2015

Intimacy with God



*From inside St. Michael's Shrine, Tarpon Springs, FL.
It is unique in that Jesus and the lamb are looking at each other.*

In my 20+ years of offering spiritual direction to men and women, clergy and laity, I have noticed that those who have intimate encounters with God are more in touch with our Triune God as **Jesus the Christ**. Experiencing God as Father, God as Spirit and even God as Mother all resonate and have been of tremendous value in my own life, so I'm not saying that way is less true somehow.

What I am saying, is that of all the ways God could have encouraged a more intimate relationship with God, becoming one of us, becoming human, God, in Jesus the Christ, gave us a person, with a body, hands, a face, a smile and eyes that look into ours. Only God could have thought of that! Is Jesus inviting you to "Seek his face" as the Psalmist does in Psalm 27?



*anchor
deep*

“All About God’s Love – Part I”

By Catherine Powell

For our new Depth Soundings readers, you need to know that we often stay with the same theme for all four quarterly issues and this is the third issue of this year’s theme, “Intimacy with God.” This theme may say best what The Anchorage is about as we provide space for folks to be still, both within and without, in order to be aware of God, especially how much we are loved by God. And then to let God’s love fill us to overflowing, so that it flows back to God in gratitude: “Intimacy with God.” You are invited to let these articles/pictures show you God’s love. What shows us love better than Jesus, God in the flesh, who became one of us?

“Love Unlike Any Other”

By Fil Anderson

Occasionally, it’s good for me to stop and reflect on an unanticipated encounter I had on a crowded beach several years ago. It was one of those walks to nowhere, with nothing particularly on my mind. After rambling for quite some time, I noticed a young, darkly tanned boy playing in the shallow surf. I would guess by his size he was about nine years old. With his back turned, he appeared to be having the time of his life. As I stood and watched, still twenty or thirty yards away, he suddenly turned and our eyes met. It was a magical moment. As I looked deeper into his eyes, I could see that he had Down syndrome. At that moment, his precious face burst into a smile and he began to scream what might have been the name of the person he apparently mistook me to be. Suddenly, with our eyes still locked on each other’s, he began running toward me with his arms opened wide. And me? I panicked! But without time to sort out how to best respond, I knelt down and opened my arms as he ran into them. With his arms now wrapped tightly around my neck, he began to kiss me wildly. After what felt like forever, he loosened his grip, tilted his head back, and with his blue eyes riveted on mine, his face burst again into a smile. I will remember that moment all the days of my life.

By now, there was a lady with a terribly worried expression standing beside us. She tried to apologize and I tried to explain that all was well.

***We are dearly loved,
completely forgiven
and forever free***

Moments later I was once again walking alone down the crowded beach. For the next several days, I couldn’t get far from that experience in my mind. Still, I was not certain why or how this incident had so impacted my life.

Finally, a few evenings later, sitting alone on our front porch, I believe God spoke to me. “Fil, I’d love to tell you why that experience has such a grip on you. That little boy was a picture of my wild and reckless love for you. The way he looked into your eyes is the way I have always looked at you. That beaming smile on his face is how you make me smile. The way he wildly screamed with glee is how I feel about you. The way he held you in that tight embrace is like mine. The way he kissed you only begins to express the love that is in my heart for you. My love is unlike any other. Nothing you ever do or ever fail to do will cause me to love you any more or any less.”

Even now, as I write about that improbable encounter, my eyes are flooded with tears. I haven’t been the same since, nor will I ever again be the same. I’ve been forever changed by the relentless and tender love of God, who’s very fond of me!

Years later, I’m utterly convinced that until the unlimited, unbridled and unrelenting love of God takes root in our life, until God’s relentless pursuit of us captures our imagination, until our head knowledge of God settles into our heart through pure grace, nothing really changes. Yet, when that transformation does slowly occur our deepest awareness of our self is that we are dearly loved, completely forgiven and forever free.

(Thanks to Fil Anderson for this article, for his Anchorage involvement and for his friendship over many years. He serves Journey Resources as an engaging author (Running on Empty, Breaking the Rules), retreat leader, speaker and a Shalem formed spiritual guide after many years of training leaders with Young Life. He lives in Greensboro, NC with his wife Lucie.)



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, where we know we are loved, 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 contemplative retreats, book studies, and spiritual direction 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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“Intimacy Has No Walls”

By Betty Kay Hudson

Looking back over my life (I'm 67 now), I see God's sweet smile beckoning me to a deeper relationship. But for the first 50 years my response was lackluster. God did not give up on me. A new assistant came to work closely with me. For the first time, I saw someone who really knew God. From somewhere within her a deep, unshakable peace spread to those around her. And a woven thread of bliss and joy accompanied that peace. I saw God in her. From that moment on, I knew there was more to God than the glimpses I had experienced.

I set out to seek assurance and intimacy like Cynthia possessed. Encouraged, I began reading the Bible and praying. One day I heard a taped sermon, “If you want to hear from God, then you must listen.” So simple, so profound, so hard for me to do! I sat alone trying to quiet my mind, but after two weeks, I felt no closer. During the third week, my mind cleared. I was aware of a presence, not from without, but from within. The following weeks were joyous as I rushed home from work to sit with God.

I retired that year and spent long hours in God's presence. Journal entries and short stories flowed. I devoured the Bible for one year, refusing to read anything else, and a fog lifted. The Bible made sense! After that year was over, I still gloried in my close times with God. However, my companionable times did not bring peace. I sensed God calling for a change, and I didn't want to change. I felt safe and cocooned in my prayer room with these life-giving moments, did not want anyone to interfere, especially God.

But interfere God did, making it clear that I had studied enough, read enough, knew enough to now go share the Good News! I argued. God was firm. As I ventured out, I found myself surprisingly changed. Gone was the timid person and in her place was this bold woman I hardly recognized. Some days I still argued with God about not being ready to go out into the world to share the Good News. Surely God had someone more qualified. But in my listening I understood that God wanted ME. God saw worth and value in me. I was God's beloved child. And I could not have been more surprised! The God of the universe calling me, communicating with me, really loving me! It still undoes me to think of it.

Today my cocooning times are more quality than quantity. But daily God provides simple loving moments. Walking out of the hospital on a heartbreaking visit with a friend, I pass a window just in time to glimpse the radiant rays of treasure trove gold and red in the sunset. As I run out the door with my breakfast in hand, I glance out the window to see a flock of geese run across the water and rise to the sky heading south. My heart skips a beat each time. I stand under a tree at the funeral of a dear friend when the leaves of that tree come into clear focus as if calling me. Each leaf appears alive as it speaks of unity, oneness, and eternity.

“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.”

(John 15:4-5)

So today, I do my abiding along the way; in a prayer, in a song on the radio, in early morning meditations, a walk to the pond, visiting in the hospital, or having coffee with a friend. Intimacy has no walls. You know enough, go share.

(Thanks to Betty Kay Hudson for this article and for her involvement with The Anchorage over many years. She is a beloved child of God. She also has a husband, two children, and 4 and 1/2 grandchildren. She served the local school system for 30 years as a school media specialist. Four years ago. She answered God's call to the United Methodist Church as a local pastor. She loves to travel, attend and lead spiritual retreats, and knit. You might find her sitting by the pond behind her house meditating on God's creation.)



Upcoming Events

2015

Thurs. Feb. 19, Mar. 5 & 19 9:30 – 11:30 am Contemplative Lenten Book Study, using *Let Your Life Speak* by Parker Palmer. Please plan to attend all 3 sessions. Fee: \$45, \$10 deposit due Feb. 11. Gower Estates, Greenville, SC. Led by Stephen Clyborne

Tues. Mar. 10 – Wed. Mar. 18 8-Day Ignatian Retreat, at the Jesuit Center, Wernersville, PA. The extensive grounds, beautiful church and holy quiet provide longed for space for prayer with Scripture, as designed by Ignatius of Loyola 500 years ago. All retreatants have a single room, with good food for 8 nights. The process is the same as described in the April retreat below. Fee: \$640 includes daily spiritual direction. \$10 Deposit due Feb. 19. Led by Catherine Powell

Thursday, April 9, 9:30 – 3:30 Spring Quiet Day: Merton's Quiet Place Within. We will honor God's presence within us using Merton's writings, celebrating his birth 100 years ago. Quiet inside and out, at the peak of the azaleas! Fee: \$30, \$10 deposit due Mar. 29 Gower Estates, Greenville SC. Led by Catherine Powell

Mon. – Fri., Apr. 20 – 24 Mepkin Abbey 4-day Ignatian Directed Retreat using the Ignatian method of entering into scripture with the imagination, meeting daily with the director, joining the monks for prayer. Fee: \$350, \$10 deposit due Mar. 29. Led by Catherine Powell

July 13 – 17, 17-20, Mepkin Abbey 4 and 3-day Directed Retreats OR July 13 – 20, 7-day Directed Retreat (See April above) Fee: 3-day, \$300, 7-day, \$650 \$10 deposit due June 28. Led by Catherine Powell

Sept. 14 – 18, Mepkin Abbey 4-day directed retreat. (See above) Fee: \$350, \$10 deposit due Aug. 20. Led by Catherine Powell

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



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*“O Lord, I am not proud; I have no haughty looks,
I do not occupy myself with great matters,
or with things that are too marvelous for me.
But I have calmed and quieted my soul,
like a weaned child with its mother;
my soul is quieted within me.”
Psalm 131:1,2*

“All About God’s Love – Part II”

By Catherine Powell

Our Servant Leaders and I have come up with an idea for our annual Friend Raiser that we think you will like! Ignatius of Loyola, when he wrote his 30-day Spiritual Exercises in the 16th century, wrote notes called annotations. He realized that not everyone could be away for 30-days, so his 19th annotation suggested an “At Home Retreat” to be done over the course of 30 weeks. The Anchorage has offered this over the years as a way to pray Scripture.

We are borrowing this idea and encouraging you **NOT to go out** to our Friend Raiser, this February! Instead, may we suggest a way for you to spend the two hours you would have spent at our friend raiser?

One of the best things about this new approach is that ALL OF YOU can take part, even our faithful donors who live in California!

Whatever best leads you to become more aware of God, **start there**. You may want to sing or play music (“How Great Thou Art”); you may want to read a favorite Scripture passage (Rom. 8:38,39); or walk in nature. Notice when you become aware of God, **behold God beholding you in love**. Yes, God is aware of you all the time, and now you are aware of God – in love. Perhaps a greater intimacy than if you had come to our event with many people in the room? If so, we have accomplished what we set out to do!

If you would like to continue in this graced space, may I suggest the process of Praying Scripture called Lectio Divina? Those who receive our newsletter by USPS, have received a Lectio Divina bookmark. Ps. 131, found on this page, is one Scripture choice for prayer. As God leads you, ask God to show you whatever it is God wants you to see. Do it together! Afterwards, take a moment to record your experience of God’s love, your intimacy with God. Lastly, express your gratitude for God’s love. And when you sense God calling you to **come away, anchor deep**, you may visit our website for our contemplative coffee break. Or you might come to a book study or retreat?

This At Home event “All About God’s Love” is our annual Friend Raiser for Feb. 2015- 2016, so **please prayerfully ponder** what **pledge** God would have you make. Any amount one time, monthly, quarterly. We know these days are financially tough for many, and if that is your situation know we care and pray for you. But we sense God wants this ministry to continue, and **your help makes a difference!**

Financial Status as of January 31, 2015 (Fiscal Year is July 14 – June 15)

Total gifts budgeted	\$ 16,620
Total received	\$ 6,513
Amount needed	\$10,107
Total income budgeted	\$ 33,480
Total received	\$ 13,781
Amount needed	\$19,699

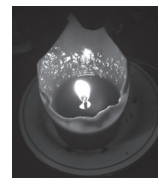
Praising God for you, our awesome donors and participants!

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. Of course it is an ongoing need as we send out 4 issues a year. Thank you for your generosity for others!

All gifts are fully tax-deductible.

You may want to create your own space for



Intimacy with God