

“Abide in Me”

By Catherine Powell

This issue, our fourth of four with the theme, “Sit Here with Me” is being put together during holy week and it adds a deeper dimension to the invitation. Recall the request of Jesus to his closest disciples as he prayed at Gethsemane? “Sit here while I pray... Remain here and keep awake... Pray that you might not come into the time of trial.” (Mk. 14:32, 34, 38)

At the most difficult time of his life, as he honestly struggled asking God to let this cup pass, Jesus was thinking of others, not himself. The main reason he wanted his disciples to pray – was that they might not be tempted.

It was the same on the cross, he was always thinking of others, asking John to take care of his mother, and asking God to forgive those who were killing him. And of course his decision at Gethsemane, “not my will but yours” kept him throughout the events of the next day. To me it is truly more than we can comprehend.

During our “holy week prep” directed retreats at Mepkin, it is not unusual to give retreatants this passage for their prayer. Often, they are aware that they most likely would ALSO have fallen asleep, but they know their heart’s desire is to stay awake! And the beauty is that this desire carries over to their everyday lives when they return home: to stay awake with Christ, to be more aware of his presence, to sit with him. It seems a strong invitation to each of us, to come for rest, and stay, abide,

“come and stay”

“Sit Here with Me”

By Ward Bursley

Anyone who knows me will tell you that I have a hard time sitting still. My wife has told me for years that I do not know how to relax. I try to never waste a moment; always knowing that there is something I “should” be doing. With God’s help, I have learned over the last two years that my concern over what I “should” be doing is merely an indicator of my inner fear and my lack of trust in Jesus, the One Who truly loves me and wants me to be at rest with Him.

“It takes God’s grace to sit quietly”

There are those things that I should be doing and I was created to do good works. I learned the hard way that God wants me to leave room for God to work and my job had become an idol to me. My pastor encouraged us to pray for God to show us our sin and I was foolish enough to do it. When I prayed that prayer, though I worked in a very stressful industry, my job became even more stressful; I was spending 70-80 hours a week at work, unable to sleep more than a few hours a night, appetite gone, ability to concentrate strained at best, and I thought I was going crazy, losing my competence, etc. God showed me that I was living as if I were the all powerful one, as if my performance and paycheck were my provision, not God. Finally, when I was completely exhausted, depressed, and burned out, God opened a door for me to retire. God removed my job and I began to learn about rest, especially resting in God in all things.

Shortly after my retirement I learned about the monastic guest program at Mepkin Abbey. I believed God wanted me there, to rest, work and worship with the monks. I enjoyed their love and hospitality in June 2012. When I first arrived, I was shocked at how difficult it was to be still. I worked hard to adjust to the monk schedule and I was nearly always in a hurry to the next event. One morning, while trying to follow the lectio divina process, God spoke to me, almost audibly, saying, “Stop it! It’s not about getting the process “right!” I want you to spend time with me. So, stop squirming around and sit here quietly on my lap.” I learned to slow down, to literally stop, smell and enjoy the flowers, watch the birds, and feel the breeze. After a month I was finally able to be still sitting on a bench for an hour with God, watching the Cooper River flow and rejoicing in the ancient oak trees, the Spanish moss, the bird songs, and the scampering squirrels. While I sat there I was not berating myself about a Bible passage I “should” be reading or some task I “should” be doing. It takes God’s grace to sit quietly with Him.

(Ward’s bio on p. 3 at bottom)



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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The Anchorage

*P. O. Box 9091
Greenville, SC 29604
(864) 232-LOVE (5683)
www.theanchorage.org*

A DIALOGUE – God ... the Noisy Contemplative ... and that Nagging Invitation: “Sit here with me”

By Steve Doughty

(AUTHOR'S NOTE: ANY SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE NOISY CONTEMPLATIVE (N.C.) IN THIS DIALOGUE AND THE AUTHOR ARE, WELL, PRETTY MUCH ON TARGET.)

GOD (CARINGLY): COME. SIT HERE WITH ME.

N.C.: REALLY? JUST SIT?! HEY. I'M A NOISY CONTEMPLATIVE. GREAT TERM! I LOVE IT. I EVEN LEARNED IT FROM ONE OF YOUR CERTIFIED SPIRITUAL DIRECTORS YEARS AGO. THIS IS HOW YOU MADE ME: METABOLISM – SKY-SCRAPING; LOVE OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY – THE SAME; FIDGETING NEEDS – THE SAME; THOUGHT PATTERNS – BOUNCY AND SOME PEOPLE FIND THAT DELIGHTFUL. YOU WOULDN'T WANT ME TO CHANGE ALL THAT, WOULD YOU?

GOD: NO. I DON'T WANT YOU TO CHANGE ALL THAT. I JUST WANT YOU TO EXPAND. (PAUSE ... AND THEN AGAIN, CARINGLY) SIT HERE WITH ME.

N.C.: LOOK, AS A NOISY CONTEMPLATIVE I HAVE TO BE ACTIVE AND I AM A CONTEMPLATIVE! I'M AWARE, ALERT, WATCHING. CAN'T I JUST TAKE CARE OF EVERYTHING WHILE JOGGING ON THE TREADMILL, PADDLING THE KAYAK, OR EVEN PLUGGING AWAY AT THIS PIECE OF WRITING I'M TRYING TO GET OFF? ISN'T THAT ENOUGH?

GOD: JOG. PADDLE. WRITE. GOOD! YOU'VE GOT TO! BUT ALSO, SIT HERE WITH ME.

N.C.: AND DO WHAT?

GOD: SIT HERE WITH ME. NOTHING ELSE.

N.C.: HOW MANY TIMES A MONTH?

GOD: TWICE A DAY.

N.C.: THAT'S UNREASONABLE.

GOD: I APOLOGIZE. I WANT THIS FOR YOU TOO MUCH AND SPED THINGS UP. START SLOWLY. 5 MINUTES A DAY. YOU WON'T BELIEVE THIS, BUT IF YOU OPEN YOURSELF, YOU'LL DEVELOP A VERY GOOD ADDICTION AND WILL DISCOVER SITTING TIME YOU NEVER THOUGHT YOU HAD. YOU WON'T BELIEVE THIS EITHER, BUT YOU'LL FIND THAT ALL THOSE WONDERFUL OTHER THINGS YOU DO WILL SHINE BRIGHTER AND HOLD MORE MEANING. YOU WILL DISCOVER TOO THAT THE HARD THINGS WITHIN YOU, THE THINGS YOU NEGLECT WITH ALL YOUR BUSINESS, LIKE THE PAIN, THE HURT, THE WONDERING, THESE WILL BE TOUCHED WITH LIGHT AND HEALING. BUT ALL THIS YOU WILL NEED TO FIND OUT FOR YOURSELF.

(AUTHOR'S NOTE: AT THIS POINT THE NOISY CONTEMPLATIVE GRUMBLED AND HEADED OUT FOR A BRISK WALK, AND THEN, OVER MANY YEARS, DISCOVERED EVERYTHING GOD SAID IN THAT LAST PARAGRAPH WAS TRUE.)

(Thanks to Steve Doughty for this article and for his involvement with The Anchorage. A minister of the Presbyterian Church (USA), he finds much joy in musing, writing, hiking, and the ministry of spiritual direction. He and his wife Jean are active in the Support Circles ministry of the Triune Mercy Center, Greenville, SC, a faith-based program of close accompaniment for persons seeking to move out of homelessness and poverty.)

(Thanks to Ward Bursley for this article and for his involvement with The Anchorage. He is a husband of 41+ years, father of 3 grown daughters, grandfather of two boys, a girl, and one on the way. He is a Ruling Elder at Shannon Forest Presbyterian Church. Ward is a native of Charlotte and graduate of West Point. He and his wife have enjoyed living in the Greenville area for nearly 20 years.)



Upcoming Events

2014

Mon. – Fri., August 25-29
Mepkin Abbey 4-day Directed Retreat using the Ignatian method of entering into scripture with the imagination, meeting daily with the director, joining the monks for prayer. The brand new retreat space is fantastic! Led by Catherine Powell

Mon. – Fri., October 13-17
Mepkin Abbey 4-day Directed Retreat. Same description as above. Led by Catherine Powell

2015

Fri. – Sun., January 23-25,
Annual Beach Retreat (XVIII). Theme “The Spirit Speaks in Us” We will focus on Romans 8:26 -27, seeing that the desire to live more contemplatively is the work of the Spirit in our time. The retreat will give priority to the role of silence in our lives, cultivating an openness to taking time, space to listen to the Spirit within in our daily lives and an exploration of forms of prayer that are meditative or contemplative.

“the desire to live more contemplatively is the work of the Spirit”

As always we will honor silence between evening prayer and morning prayer and provide ample time to reflect with God and each other. Led by Sr. Caroline Smith

Sun. – Mon., January 25-26,
“Praying the Hours” at the Beach. During this silent retreat that follows the beach retreat, we observe the monastic ‘hours’ of the day beginning with Vespers Sunday evening and ending Monday noon. Led by Catherine Powell

Fees, locations, deposit due dates and more events will be in the August “Depth Soundings.” We no longer create an annual booklet; we provide info in “Depth Soundings” instead. Details are posted online as soon as the newsletter is posted.

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



The Anchorage

A Contemplative Ministry

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Greenville, SC 29604

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*“As the Father has loved me, so I have
loved you; abide in my love. I have
said these things to you so that my
joy maybe in you, and your joy may
be complete.”
Jesus in John 15:9,11*

Thanks for our February Friend Raiser

The joy of this season is heightened for us because of God’s faithfulness in The Anchorage pledgers. Thank you to our Table Sponsors whose donations paid for the entire event, beginning to end, so that all pledges go directly toward providing quiet space for men and women to “Come away - anchor deep.” We are very clear that **“If all you can pay is \$10 then that is all you pay.”** Your gifts pay for scholarships, as well as other expenses, especially communicating our events. Also helping our bottom line for the event were **Kelee, our musicians**, and **Earle Street Baptist Church**. Neither of them charged us!! All grace and kindness.

Table Sponsors

- The Balanced Body Shoppe: Massage Therapy
- Bradshaw, Gordon & Clinkscales: CPA
- Bennett’s Frames and Art Gallery
- David’s Table: Loving Young People with Disabilities for Christ’s Sake
- Independence National Bank
- Oriental Medicine Associates
- Pelham Links Family and Cosmetic Dentistry

THANK YOU!!

Please consider using their services as often as possible!!!

Thanks too to Madeline Blackwell for our decorations. Peggy Dulaney provided our programs and almost anything else! She coordinated the food, the music, the servers and clean up. It was a full team effort, THANKS!



The west cloister at The Jesuit Center, Wernersville, PA.

Financial Status as of April 30, 2014 (Fiscal Year is July 13 – June 14)

Total gifts budgeted	\$ 12,450
Total received	\$ 13,517
Amount needed	OVER
Total income budgeted	\$ 29,500
Total received	\$ 27,152
Amount needed	\$ 2,348

Praising God for you, our awesome donors and participants!

Friend Raiser \$\$ Update

Almost \$13,000 was pledged so we are able to cover expenses for the next fiscal year, 2014-2015.

THANK YOU!

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.

Please prayerfully consider it again?

Donate Online

You may donate online using PayPal. PayPal takes credit cards and is a safe way to give.

All gifts are fully tax-deductible.