

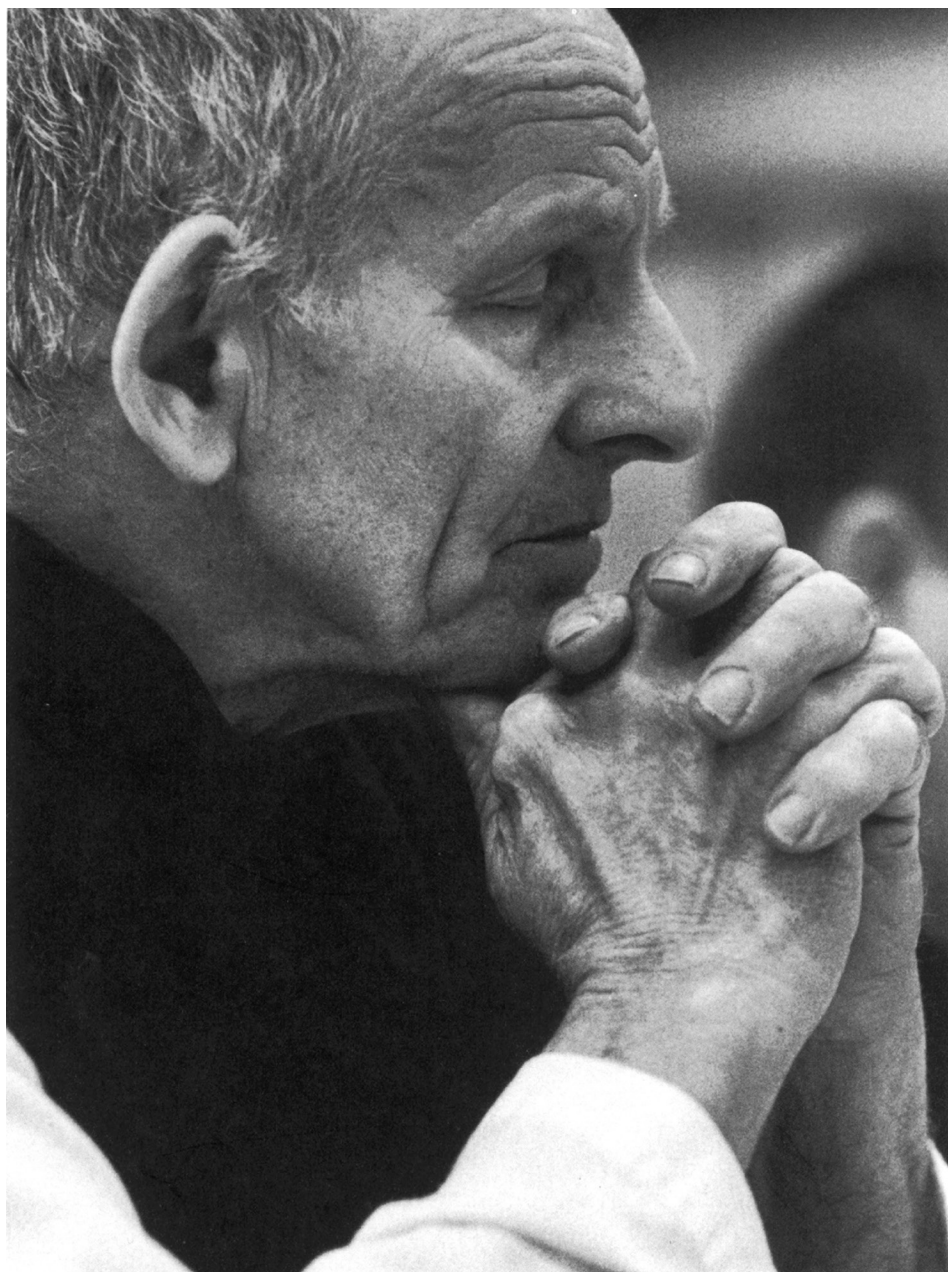


*The Anchorage 20:
A Contemplative Community for All
Come away...*

DEPTH SOUNDINGS

Encouragement, Inspiration and News from The Anchorage

May 2017



Brother Robert, OCSO, a Trappist monk, at prayer, Mepkin Abbey, Moncks Corner, SC. His friendship was a treasure, as we shared books and ideas. When asked about the secret of being a Cistercian all his life, he replied, "That's easy: LOVE!" He lived it.



*anchor
deep*

“Largest Community EVER”

By Catherine Powell

For our last issue on the theme of Community, I knew I wanted it to be on prayer as a way of community, yet it wasn't until I started playing with the idea, that I realized, the community of prayer is most likely the largest community ever. Think about it. When you and I take a moment to pray, even in our prayer closet, totally alone, we step into an ongoing community that is always praying. Let me flesh this out a bit.

An awareness that has grown in me since 2002 when I started taking retreatants to Mepkin Abbey, a Trappist Monastery in the low country, is the awareness of the ongoing nature of prayer in that place. It brings to mind a question asked by Dr. Merwyn Johnson, my Systematic Theology professor in seminary. He asked the class, “Is prayer a work? Or is work a prayer?” These monks are living prayer. Our ‘cover boy’ Br. Robert, who would have laughed at that title, lived a life so deeply rooted in prayer and it showed in his eyes. Matter of fact, it shows in the eyes of most all the monks there when you take time to notice.

There are Trappist monasteries all over the world, and other orders too, cloistered or not, who pray throughout the day, even rising at night to pray in the dark. There could not be an hour ever without prayer. And that doesn't even count the rest of us. This community of pray-ers is huge.

Then add in the “host of witnesses” as mentioned in Hebrews 12 on the back, those who have gone before us, and the entire heavenly host praying ceaselessly for our world, and praising God. Boggles the mind! We can know **we are never alone when we pray**, and even when we are not praying, because someone is always praying with and for us! Alleluia!

“Koinonia”

By Kelly Dickerson Strum

I have become profoundly aware of the impact of **experiencing authentic community**. First as a daughter, then as a school counselor and pastor and next as a wife and adoptive mother. To have a genuine encounter of fellowship/communion (*koinonia*) with other human beings, with nature is to touch God. It is our fundamental design. God designed us so that there would be an energy, a flow between you and me and the trees – and that in this flow of community, we would be changed because we would be touched by God.

As a young adult, I watched my dad who struggled with depression stemming from childhood issues, flourish when embraced by people who loved him for exactly the person he was. It was his best medicine. As a school counselor, I watched children with self-esteem issues, struggling to fit in become full of joy once they found acceptance in a friendship group – no more behavior problems, no more falling grades. As a co-pastor, I observed the power of radical hospitality... when welcoming the stranger, “the least of these” blessed the church as much as it did the individual(s) welcomed. *Community is a life force*.

So, here is my fear. We don't always do community well. Where does this leave those who are never welcomed, always treated as less than? Does this leave them also feeling excluding from God's embrace? So now, in these days as an adoptive mom of preschool-age transracial children, I am wondering and already praying about what their struggles will be – where and with whom will they find their most authentic experiences of community?

I wholeheartedly agree with Richard Rohr in his latest book The Divine Dance: **“the greatest dis-ease facing humanity right now is our profound and painful sense of disconnection.”** This is why for years I have deeply respected the work of *Metanoia* in North Charleston (www.pushingforward.org) who does community so well. But long before *Metanoia*, in my formative years, I watched my dad and mom labor compassionately as a US probation officer and a special education teacher to love and build family with those whom society often discards.

(Continued on page 4)



The Anchorage

Vision

A Contemplative Community to encourage all people in a mutual love relationship with God.

Mission

The Anchorage provides a setting for women and men to come away and be with God, as revealed in Jesus the Christ; and to come to love more deeply, this God who loves us beyond measure. Spiritual direction, “Depth Soundings” (quarterly mailing), Desert Days and a variety of contemplative retreats, are some of the ways we encourage and inspire.

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.

Core Focus

Encouraging contemplative community anchored in our Triune God.

Servant Leaders

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Jason Loscuito, Chair
Juan Ortiz
Starla Revels
Angela Sudermann
Holland Webb

Other Support

Susan Leaphart, Volunteer Coord.
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Catherine Powell,
Founding Servant Leader

The Anchorage

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“My Story, Our Story, The Story”

The Rt. Rev. Porter Taylor (leading our August retreat**)

Years ago I was flying somewhere sitting next to a woman in her early twenties. I travelled so much as a bishop that I usually avoided conversations on airplanes, especially because I didn't want to hear anyone's confession or opinions about what's wrong with the Church. I was reading my novel when I felt a tug on my shirt sleeve.

“You're connected to the church, right?” When I admitted that I was ordained, the woman leaned towards me and asked, “The Bible. Is it true?”

She was asking the right question, but she didn't want to know if Lazarus was really dead or if the Red Sea really parted. She wanted to know if the Bible was true in my life. She wanted to know what difference the Biblical story had made for me, a believer, in how I lived. She wanted to hear my story.

What ails us today as a society is that we lack a coherent story that binds us together and binds us to the saints who have gone before as well as those who come after us. We are trapped in our small bubble of meaning and wonder why we feel disconnected.

On the plane I didn't talk about archeology or if the Dead Sea Scrolls proved the truth of sacred scripture. I told this young woman how I had come back to the Church after leaving in my twenties and why. I told her my story.

We live in a disconnected world: a world where individuals have their personal story and groups have a collective story but few are anchored to a living mythic story that binds them together and binds them to the past and the future. At best small groups get a sense of identity from allegiances to political parties or sports teams or special interests. “I'm a gardener or a Tar Heel or an Independent.” However, groups tend to fortify their identity by criticizing other groups. It's not enough to be a Tar Heel; I must demonize everyone associated with Duke.

What is missing is the mythic story. The death and resurrection of Jesus binds us together and connects us to the saints. We know “it's all true” because we are living the story.

Our calling, therefore, as Christians is to remember and to proclaim who we are by telling our story. We cannot understand the Biblical story until we connect it to our living story. It's not enough to know about the exile of the Israelites until I talk about being lost myself. Before I can know what it means to experience the wonder of the Transfiguration, I must speak of my sense of wonder in my life. I don't know what the crucifixion means until I tell a story of my own suffering. When we tell our stories to one another, the never-ending story comes alive.

William Stringfellow, the Christian writer said, “What makes us Christians is that we believe the story is now.” That belief comes as we discover we are living the Biblical story in our own lives and that discovery comes by speaking it to one another. We don't just need to know what Jesus did; we need to know what Jesus is doing in us and around us and through us.

Our retreats are geared for this exploration. They center around the belief that we all have stories to tell and that this telling is how we learn and share the faith. People don't want to know what we can tell them about Jesus; they want to know how we have lived that faith in our lives. They want to know “Is it true?” and the answer is our story.

(Thanks to **Porter Taylor** for this article and for **our August 11-13 retreat**, with his son Arthur. **Porter** is the retired bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Western North Carolina. He holds a Ph. D. in Theology and Literature from Emory University and has been offering retreats for over twenty years. In 2015, he devoted a sabbatical to studying story telling as a vehicle to spread the Good News. This fall he will join the faculty of the Wake Forest University School of Divinity. His son **Arthur** is a psychologist with the Georgia Regional Hospital in Atlanta and teaches graduate classes in forensic and spiritual issues in therapy. He holds a Ph. D. in Psychology from New York University. A therapy focus is seeking to address bigger questions that often go with periods of emotional and spiritual anguish.)



Upcoming Events

*Fridays, June 2, August 4, 9:30-2:30 Desert Days

“Leaving everything, following Christ into the desert.”

Fee: \$30 (\$20 if BYO lunch)

Led by: Catherine Powell

*Tuesdays, June 20, Sept. 19, 7-8:30pm Desert Evenings,

Same purpose as Desert Days, just in the evening.

Fee: \$10 Led by Catherine Powell

Fri., July 21 – Mon., July 24, 3-day Praying Scripture

Retreat Using the Ignatian

method of entering into scripture with the imagination, companioned by a spiritual director in daily meetings, and joining the Trappist monks for prayer. The grounds are beautiful at **Mepkin Abbey, Moncks Corner, SC**

Fee: \$300 led by Catherine Powell

Aug. 11-13, “My Story, Our Story, The Story”

Human beings make meaning through stories. Jesus answers questions with stories because narrative or metaphor is the primary way to articulate our deepest faith. To share our faith is to tell our story – around such themes as wonder, surrender, resurrection and forgiveness.

** SEE ARTICLE TO LEFT**

Montreat Conference Center, NC

Fee: \$395

Led by Porter and Arthur Taylor

Mon – Mon, Nov. 13-20 or Mon. – Fri., Nov. 13-17, or Fri. – Mon. Nov. 17-20. Praying

Scripture Retreat. Make a 3-, 4- or 7-day retreat using the format above (see July 21-24) at **Mepkin Abbey.**

These retreats coincide with the annual **Crèche Festival** at Mepkin.

Fee: \$300, \$350 or \$600

Led by Catherine Powell

Unless otherwise noted, events are held at Gower Estates, Greenville.

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



The Anchorage 20

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Community for All

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“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.” Hebrews 12:1,2

“Koinonia” *(Continued from page 2)*

Now, in this midseason of our lives, with these examples set before us and God as our guiding Light, my husband and I humbly accept the call to intentional community development work. We are excited to announce the birth of *Koinonia of Columbia, Inc* in partnership with Eau Claire Baptist Church! *Koinonia* envisions a networking of compassionate people connected through our foundational beliefs that all people are created in the image of God and that we are called to live and work toward the common good for all. We are a movement of people who seek to be a racially reconciling, healing Presence in the Eau Claire community.

We write to ask you for your prayers as our hearts listen closely each day to our God and our neighbors. We wish to thank the Servant Leaders of *The Anchorage* who have committed to be our sister non-profit in prayer, for we know that the kind of social justice that we long for – the kind that transforms us, our communities comes only from God. Because in the words of Desmond Tutu, it is “God’s Dream.” To learn more about who we are, we would love for you to visit us at www.koinoniaofcolumbia.org!

(Thanks to Kelly for this article and her friendship and support over many years. Kelly and her husband, Dave are the proud parents of Malachi (4) and Kamryn (2). Prior to Malachi’s adoption, Kelly was a co-pastor at Eau Claire Baptist Church in Columbia. Ordained to the gospel ministry in 2007, Kelly is a graduate of Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary. In the midst of this particular season of life in which Kelly has felt God’s calling to be at home with her children, she and Dave have also answered God’s call to community development work and racial reconciliation through her Servant Leader position of their emerging non-profit, Koinonia of Columbia, Inc. in partnership with Eau Claire Baptist Church.)

Financial Status as of April 22, 2017 (Fiscal Year is July 16 – June 17)

Total gifts budgeted	\$ 30,100*
Total received	\$ 20,353
Amount needed	\$ 9,747

Total income budgeted	\$ 52,730*
Total received	\$ 36,660
Amount needed	\$ 16,070

*Revised budget to reflect April 28 Friend/Fund Raiser income and expense.

***Praising God for YOU,
our donors and participants!***

***Also “Like” us on FaceBook
and share with your friends.***

In May 1998 The Anchorage was founded to offer contemplative retreats and spiritual direction. Beginning this month, we will celebrate 20 years of ministry all year long!