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Desert House of Prayer

Spring 2017

FROM CHAOS TO NEW LIFE

Perhaps more than at any previous time, many of us feel anxious and uncertain and deeply troubled about our nation, the world and the future of humanity. Christine Valters Painter, a spiritual writer living in Ireland, reminds us that our hearts are fed in **silence**. When faced with a sense of chaos, from within and from without, we become restless, seeking to make sense of it all. We keep hoping to gain some insight into what is happening around us and within us from reflections, conversations, the printed and spoken word, the media, etc. In an article ***The Unraveling Towards Love*** Painter goes on to say, “our desire for more and more information often signifies a desire for control. We live under the illusion that knowing every detail about something will help us to understand the course of events.” She suggests, and I agree, that the heart comes to understanding **“in the womb of silence.”** Silence calls us to the center of consciousness. In this state of profound awareness, we listen, tend and wait. Together, connected in quiet solitude we will find what nourishes, sustains and gives life to us and the world around us.

DHOP NEWS

This year, so far, is our fifth busiest year in twelve years. The number of registered retreat guests has been down. We are not sure of the reason. It may be just a cycle we are in with this being an election year full of “anxious” surprises! We are happy to report that February of 2018 is already booked to 93.4% of capacity! We continue to get new people who discover DHOP and who seem to appreciate our commitment to silence, solitude, and an inclusive respect for spiritual practice. The people who come keep blessing us with their presence, gifts, and witness to the tremendous gift of grace unfolding in their lives.

Through the years, we have had to periodically raise the stipend for a night’s stay at DHOP. The Denver Province subsidizes each guest’s stay by 3%. The national average cost of a one-night stay in a bed & breakfast is \$129.00, single occupancy, with breakfast being the only meal served. While we are doing our best to keep costs reasonable at DHOP we may have to occasionally increase our rates to keep pace with rising expenses for food, salaries, and maintenance. We are grateful for the generous outpouring of gifts from our guests that help us to keep things running as smoothly and efficiently as possible.

We recently received a generous grant from the **Chrysalis Foundation**. The grant will be used to help diminish the ordinary maintenance costs for the 2017 summer projects. We just completed using the funds of a grant from the **Koch Foundation** specifically designated for upgrades in the library including transferring old audio tapes to CD.

Fr. David Louch will be leaving DHOP to return to Canada at the end of May. Fr. David’s visa will expire at the beginning of June. The complication of renewing the visa just for the month of June is prohibitive to the point of being impractical. We will miss Fr. David and his service to DHOP for the last four years. His commitment to a contemplative path, and his thoughtful homilies, administration of the library, skill in spiritual direction and personal sacrifice, counsel, and dedication have been an extraordinary blessing and gift to DHOP.

Fr. Tom Picton will be giving the annual preached retreat at the motherhouse of the **Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament** in Victoria, Texas, March 12 -20, and giving a three-day retreat on the Spirituality of Community to the **Rivendell Community** on Bowen Island (Vancouver), British Columbia, Canada June 1-4. The Rivendell Community is an ecumenical community dedicated to spiritual practice similar in spirit to DHOP. Lastly, he will give a preached retreat to the **Brothers of the Sacred Heart** in New Orleans in mid-June.

DHOP NEEDS

When DHOP closes at the end of June 2017 for maintenance and repairs, **Bro. Bill Cloughley's** list of projects include painting the interior of the kitchen and dining room. The AC units in the kitchen/dining area as well as in the library are old units. We are hoping we can keep them serviced and running for a few more years! We are still dreaming about putting AC/heating units in Joseph and Paul hermitages. This project will also require that their roofs be replaced when the existing water pumps are removed. This year we had a guest cancellation because there was no AC available. The estimate for installing new AC/heating units and replacing the roofs is \$25,000. Although this project has been on the DHOP agenda for five years, it keeps being pushed back to other emergencies. A section of road on the DHOP property was paved in the summer of 2015. Paving the remainder of the road is still a priority especially since the monsoons and desert heat take a destructive toll on the road each year. ***We share some of these needs with you to let you know how your gifts are being used primarily for the infrastructure of DHOP. We thank you for your generous support.***

The income we receive from retreat guests covers only a portion of our ongoing operating expenses. We invite you to remember Desert House of Prayer with a gift in your estate planning. For information about how to do so, contact Fr. Tom Picton at **deserthop@live.com**. Other gifts can be made by means of the enclosed envelope or through PayPal on the donation page of our website:

www.deserthouseofprayer.org.

Final Thought

The more we become clear about our places of wounding, the more we become free from our unconscious impulses. Roshi/Fr. Gregory Myers, C.Ss.R., describes it this way in *Listen to the Desert*:

The task, then, is not to avoid what makes me fearful, ashamed, or angry, or to entertain it, or even to act the emotions out. . . The task is to attend to them, acknowledge them, give them their full and rightful place in the community of the self.

May your spiritual practice enable you to embrace both the joy and sorrow of human existence. It will set you free.



Rev. Thomas Picton, C.Ss.R., Desert House of Prayer Director