



Desert House of Prayer

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Dear Desert Companions and Friends,

Sometimes the word *contemplation* scares me. It sounds a bit elitist and esoteric. But in his book *Into the Silent Land*, Martin Laird goes on to assure us “that God is our homeland. And the homing instinct is homed on God. As St. Augustine put it ‘we must fly to our beloved homeland. There the Father is, and there is everything.’”

In letter seven of his letters, St. John of the Cross writes, “Our greatest need is to be silent before this great God... for the only language God hears is the silent language of love.” Silence is essential for human healing and wholeness. Without silence we become “cracked”, broken, split and divided from within. Silence is necessary if we are to become “holy” as God is holy. That is to become integrated, whole, complete. Silence is essential if we are to hear God living within and beyond us. Silence enables us to become conscious of the Living Source within us that heals, integrates and makes whole our “crackedness”, our brokenness, the Living Source that calls home to God’s Self all of our split off selves.

Silence enables us to discover and separate wisdom from folly, false ideals from the truth before us, and shows the way to compassion, wisdom, and awakening to the Divine Source of All Being. Silence teaches us to embody integrity and compassion in our lives and prepares us to touch the world around us through the outward flow of God’s simple love and wisdom within us.

We want to be conscious of God living within us – God in *us* and we in *God* - to have that still center that nothing can disturb. In that way, we are holy as God is Holy.

DHOP NEWS

We wish to thank **Sr. Katherine Ann Smolik, OSB** for her presence as a member of the core community. Sister wore several hats during her time here. We thank her for her services which included – and were not limited to – librarian, grants coordinator, enhancing the environment of the common area and chapel as well as welcoming and attending to our retreat guests. We wish her well as she moves into a new chapter in her life.

We welcome **Karen Rutherford** as our new **part-time librarian** and **computer software systems manager**. Karen who is originally from Atlanta, Georgia, lives in Tucson and contracts as a Technical Writer. Besides her library duties, Karen assists **Michael Gibson** in the front office with tweaking computer software and inputting data.

We continue to work with architect Bob Vint on the **Master Plan** for Desert House. We are close to being able begin **pricing** of the Master Plan projects. The good news is that we do not have to tear down buildings and replace old ones with new ones. We plan to build a **Welcome Center** where the administration and spiritual direction offices will be located. The Master Plan includes major renovations of all of our buildings – roofing, ac/heating, plumbing, electrical including going solar, soundproofing, insulation, windows, bathrooms, furnishings where necessary, etc. Building a new Welcome Center will be the first priority as we gradually phase in all the improvements needed in the other buildings. A **Capital Campaign** will not begin until we are able to **assign dollar numbers** to the Master Plan projects including the new Welcome Center. Delays in pricing the projects continue due to negotiations with Pima County regarding building code upgrades and permits.

Desert House of Prayer received an official visitation from the **Leadership of the Redemptorists-Denver Province**. **Bro Larry Lujan, C.Ss.R.** and **Fr. Anthony Nguyen, C.Ss.R.** presided at a **town hall** meeting with **the DHOP Sunday worshipping community and retreat guests**. The purpose of the meeting was to help the leadership team receive feedback about issues and concerns regarding Desert House’s present and future needs. The visitors also met with the Core Community and offered to meet with any individual who might want to speak to them privately. The feedback from Bro. Larry and Fr. Anthony to the Core Community was positive with a few suggestions for tweaking administration procedures.

OTHER DHOP NEWS

Desert House of Prayer received a **\$10,000 Grant** from the **Koch Foundation, Inc.** for the purchase of liturgical and other items for the retreat house. We just completed fulfilling the reporting requirements for a previous **Koch Grant** for **furnishings for the four DHOP Hermitages/Casitas**. In 1979, **Carl and Paula Koch** established a foundation to fund evangelization activities of the Roman Catholic faith throughout the world. The foundation has identified the contemplative ecumenical/interfaith mission of Desert House of Prayer as an essential dimension of the larger mission of the Church. We want to thank the **Koch Foundation, Inc.** of Gainesville, Florida for their generosity and support of Desert House of Prayer.

DHOP **has placed three ads** for the retreat center in the **National Catholic Reporter**. The ads are expensive, but we decided to try a marketing strategy in a nationally recognized Catholic newspaper to expand awareness of DHOP and attract new guests interested in a contemplative experience in the desert. National Catholic Reporter gave us a free monthly ad as a bonus for doing business with them. If you read the **National Catholic Reporter** look for the **DHOP ad (only in some issues)**.

Recently **Sr. Deb Giles, SND** helped to distribute information about the Desert House of Prayer at the **La Cholla Hills Heath Fair**. Spirituality and meditation practice are recognized as important dimensions of life for one's health and wellbeing. We are grateful to **Janet Genera** for making it possible for DHOP to share a table at the fair.

SPECIAL NEEDS

This summer when DHOP closes in July and first two weeks of August **Bro. Bill Cloughley's priority projects** include paving of some of the roads, painting the exteriors of buildings that still need attention, painting the interior of the dishwasher/storage room and back freezer/food preparation room and, if there is time, taking care of some additional plumbing repairs where fixtures are deteriorating. Keep Bill and his projects in your prayers. Without Bro Bill's vigilance our forty-six years old buildings would be falling down around from the desert climate. Your gifts to DHOP help to cover the cost of much needed maintenance and repair of our structures.

We invite you **to remember Desert House of Prayer in your estate planning**. More information about how to do this is available by contacting Thomas Picton, C.Ss.R. at deserthop@live.com. Other gifts can be made by means of the enclosed envelope or through Pay Pal on the donations page of our website: www.deserthouseofprayer.org.

FINAL THOUGHT

Teilhard de Chardin writes: "We humans cannot see ourselves completely except as part of humanity, humanity as part of life, life as part of the universe. He also wrote: "It is a terrifying thing to have been born: 'I mean, to find oneself, without having willed it, swept irrevocably along on a torrent of fearful energy.'" May we turn the terror into overwhelming joy!

Faithfully,



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