

SPRING, 2013  
DESERT HOUSE OF PRAYER

*PEACE*

There is a sign upon entering the property of the Desert House of Prayer that reads: “No hunting except for peace.” As we write this letter we are once again reflecting on the meaning of violence in our society as we mourn the consequences of the bombs that exploded during the Boston Marathon. The word that people identify with most after spending a few days at the Desert House of Prayer is *peace*. They discover a deep abiding peace in the desert.

We believe that it is *peace* that speaks to the very heart of the desert. The desert is more than sand and stone. It is also the interior path of the heart. The interior desert is the journey that brings us to the point of being totally in God, of God and for God. It is in God and God alone that we find peace.

The root of violence is fear. Fear is the absence of peace, the absence of being in God, of God and for God. It is peace that enables us to love our enemies and to respond to evil not with more evil, but only with good. This kind of nonresistance to violence is the practice of peace. It is preached by all the great religions of the world. Apart from God, refusing to participate in the dynamics of violence—whether personal or systemic—is a practice many people find impossible to understand and to follow.

Jesus invites us to be perfect as God is perfect, that is, to be whole as God is whole, to live as God lives with integrity with *wholeness*. To follow this truth in our lives leads us to *peace*. Indeed, one who participates in *Divine Integrity*—desiring union with God and awakening to the divine Existence in all beings—learns to turn the other cheek and to live in universal love. For one who lives in the *Divine Presence*, forgiveness, reconciliation, compassion and universal goodwill are spontaneous outpourings of *Divine Consciousness*. Where is evil then? Who is enemy then? Fear passes away and there is only *peace*.

*May the Peace of the Risen Lord be with you!*

**Desert House News**

During the current retreat year we have had an increase of new guests making retreat with us for the first time. The variety of guests continues to grow with people from all faiths - Catholic, Protestant, Evangelical, Jewish, Buddhist, Muslim and the Nones – people who do not identify with any institutional religion. In the midst of this amazing diversity there is a common bond of a deep commitment to silence, solitude, and contemplation as one defines *contemplation*. There is a deep respect for each person’s journey. As guests share their journeys there seems to be a profound longing for what Thomas Merton describes as something “beyond the reach of anything our eyes can see or our minds understand... since nothing that can be seen or heard is God, to find the divine we must enter into silence.” Everyone who comes to Desert House values the silence and solitude. Our mutually shared journeys in silence and solitude form a unity in God and with God and

from God and for God. The unique differences among us do not disappear but are transcended and transformed into the *Divine One*.

### **Other News:**

We have purchased two new computers to replace the old *dinosaurs* to assist Ms. Pauline Anthony with her bookkeeping and Sr. Annemary Miller with cleaning up the library stacks and improving the cataloging of books. We regret that our guests will have to continue to endure the other *dinosaurs* in the lower library to access the internet until we have enough funds to upgrade to newer models.

At the end of June, Sr. Annemary Miller will be leaving the Desert House Staff to pursue ministry elsewhere. We are deeply grateful for her two years of service as purchasing coordinator and librarian. Beyond the efficacy of her work, Sr. Anne will be personally missed as a friend and as a prayerful, thoughtful and caring member of our Desert House Community and Staff. As this letter goes to print no one has yet been named to replace her.

Sr. Marilyn Omieczynski, P.B.V.M. will remain on staff as a spiritual director, massage therapist and coordinator of liturgical worship.

Ms. Carmen Murrieta and Rev. Evy McDonald are new volunteers assisting Michael Gibson our guest master in the office and Sr. Anne in the library. Carmen also volunteers in the bookstore at the Redemptorist Renewal Center. Evy has just moved to Tucson after retiring as a Methodist Pastor of a large inner city parish in Newburgh, New York. We are grateful that Anne Shubitz and Charlene Graham continue faithful service as volunteers in the office.

### **Current Needs**

We need your assistance with some of the following projects:

- . Air Conditioning Units and Roofing of three hermitages (\$8,000 per hermitage)
- . New computer software to upgrade for the library (\$2,100).
- . Painting and miscellaneous repairs of Building #4 a retreat wing (\$4,500)
- . New Linens and Towels (\$1,000.00)

We invite you to consider remembering Desert House of Prayer with a gift in your will. More information about how to do so is available by contacting Rev. Thomas Picton, C.Ss.R. at [deserthop@live.com](mailto:deserthop@live.com). Other gifts can be made to Desert House of Prayer by means of the enclosed envelope or through PayPal on our website [www.deserthouseofprayer.org](http://www.deserthouseofprayer.org).

### **A Final Thought**

Silence and Solitude open us to a higher realm of consciousness, of unity, of strength, of light and wisdom. Our spiritual life is life taken up into the Divine. The darkness of the journey bears fruit in perseverance to spiritual practice. May you find the Light!