



Desert House of Prayer

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Dear Desert Companions and Friends,

In a time of national, if not global crisis, marked by deep divisions, intolerance and inability to work together for the common good, we search for stories and myths of people who have changed the world around them with the power of their wisdom, courage and love. We seek spiritual and civil leaders who teach a path of peace in the midst of violence and hatred. How do we meet earth ending challenges with spiritual wisdom, intelligence and imagination to save ourselves and the planet? How do we find the grace and strength to forgive and be reconciled with powerful destructive forces and people who alienate us?

The safe harbor where we can explore the possibility for reconciliation, integration and wholeness is present deep within us in every moment. Jack Kornfeld, storyteller and author, reminds us “that there are a hundred ways to travel the spiritual path and a thousand paths to travel.” No person or ideology can tell us how to live our lives. Jesus offers us wisdom in the Sermon on the Mount and the Beatitudes but leaves us free to accept or reject or wrestle with his wise offerings for our reflection. No one can live our lives for us. We ourselves must learn to live with integrity and wisdom. Jesus and wisdom figures of other traditions teach us to live from what is true within us and to live in relationship with others who live from what is true within themselves. In this dance of relationship with self and others, we encounter integrity and wisdom. The universal wisdom that emerges enables us to discover new possibilities for humanity and the planet.

“If you are what you are meant to be, you will set the world on fire.” *St. Catherine of Siena*

DHOP NEWS

We welcome **Sr. Mary Elizabeth Lawrence, S.C.** as our new **guest coordinator**. Sr. Mary Elizabeth succeeds **Michael Gibson** who retired in June at the close of the retreat year. Sr. Mary Elizabeth, a native of El Paso, Texas, is a member of the **Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill**. Her ministry has primarily been in Arizona. Her education and work experience have enabled her to use her gifts for hospitality, creativity, organizational skills and networking across cultures. She has worked in church settings, most recently **Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish** in Scottsdale, Arizona, to create and coordinate programs and activities with diverse community groups. She has a presence and calmness with people and works well with volunteers. Her gifts, skills and experience are well suited for service to all of our retreat guests as guest coordinator.

Fr. Thomas Picton, DHOP Director. I had an **unexpected health crisis** in June 2019. During a routine colonoscopy, doctors discovered I had a low heart rate of 30 and below! I was a dead man walking and didn't know it. I was diagnosed with Bradycardia and received a heart pacemaker on Pentecost Sunday. I find living at the mercy of technology a liberating and life-giving experience.

Bro. Bill Cloughley, DHOP building czar, supervised many maintenance projects including painting the backroom storage areas of the kitchen and repaving of the roads on the DHOP campus. Bro. Bill also experienced a refreshing vacation with his sister Lil in Kansas City and the wild and beautiful environs of New Mexico and Colorado.

This summer, **Sr. Deb Giles** took some time to be with her community, **Sisters of Notre Dame of the Toledo Province**, and family. Sister celebrated Jubilee anniversaries with members of her Toledo Province and attended meetings with the 4 USA Provinces of the Sisters of Notre Dame in Columbus, OH. They elected leadership for a new single USA province effective July 2020.

Redemptorists of Arizona Community. We wish to welcome **Fr. Anthony Nguyen (Director/Local Superior), Fr. Ed Vella, Fr. Patrick Grile and Fr. James Shea** to the **Redemptorist Renewal Center** across the street from the DHOP. As of September 2019, the **Redemptorists of DHOP and RRC are one community.** RRC and DHOP will remain two operations of **The Redemptorist Society of Arizona.** Other members of the new merged community include **Fr. Denis Ryan and Fr. Peter Connolly. Fr. Tom Picton and Bro. Bill Cloughley** will continue to live and work at DHOP; **Fr. Ricardo Elford** for now will continue to reside in South Tucson and the other Redemptorists will live at RRC while serving the needs of RRC and **Santa Catalina Parish** in Oro Valley.

DHOP has launched a new updated website. It can be found at the same address: www.deserthouseofprayer.org. We wish to thank **Karen Rutherford**, DHOP librarian, IT consultant and webmaster for building the new website with the assistance of **Sr. Deb Giles and Flo Sanfilippo.** We hope you will find the new website interactive, user friendly, fun and full of interesting information about DHOP. Your feedback is welcome since the website is a living tool that we will continue to improve and change with time.

We wish to thank **Flo Sanfilippo** for **eight years of loving service to DHOP** as IT consultant and webmaster. Flo also helped to keep our guest and donor lists up to date. She always had fresh ideas about how to improve our computer software to make it more efficient and user friendly. We will miss her passionate enthusiasm for cyberspace and its rich possibilities for contemplative experience.

DHOP Master Plan

Mr. Robert Vint Architect and Vint Associates continue to work with us to complete the **DHOP Master Plan** for building a new **Welcome Center** and improving all DHOP buildings and facilities. DHOP is 45 years old and the infrastructure is in serious need of upgrades and improvements which will include among other things: new roofs, ac/heating units, new bathrooms, insulation, windows, doors, handicapped friendly pathways, solar energy installation and other environmentally friendly upgrades. There is much that is needed to bring all facets of DHOP facilities up to code: plumbing, electrical, parking, adequate storage, handicapped accessibility, office space, etc. **Bob Vint** is a **restoration architect** who is helping us to improve what we have to make all aspects of our facilities secure, safe and environmentally friendly. We are still working with **Pima County** to secure all of the code updates that will be required. It has been a slow and deliberative process. **The priority is to improve the existing buildings and bring them up to code. The Welcome Center is on the wish list.**

Capital Campaign

Master Plans require Capital Campaigns! Improvements to buildings and facilities require money. We have been warned that **Desert House of Prayer** may be a **difficult development challenge.**

DHOP does not fit into familiar institutional religion templates. While we are a **House of Prayer**, a **spiritual center**, rooted in the **Roman Catholic Christian contemplative/mystical tradition**, we are a ministry of the **Redemptorists Fathers and Brothers of North America and the Denver Province.** DHOP offers hospitality to men and women of all faiths, Christian and Non-Christian. We believe that all men and women in serious pursuit of a spiritual path will find a warm welcome at DHOP. We believe that all spiritual seekers, regardless of their beliefs and traditions, who pray and meditate together in silence give witness to inclusion, unity and union.

St. Augustine would courageously put it in his **Retractions**: “For what is now the Christian religion existed even among the ancients and was not lacking from the beginning of the human race.” At DHOP, we believe that we find God simultaneously in ourselves and in all aspects of the world beyond us. We believe that divine consciousness, a deeper awareness of the imminent and the transcendent, cannot be achieved alone but in a reciprocal, relational experience with men and women of all faiths, with those unaffiliated with a specific denomination (nones) as well as with persons of every race, ethnicity, sex, gender identity and sexual orientation.

The Capital Campaign would like to raise 5 million dollars. Not a penny will be spent on the Master Plan that is not raised in the Capital Campaign. If the Capital Campaign raises more money than the Master Plan requires, the remaining funds will be put into a Trust Fund for DHOP and only the interest will be used for the future needs of DHOP.

Current Needs

Until we initiate a **Capital Campaign** for the **Master Plan**, we still need assistance with the ordinary operations of DHOP. Our **operating budget** is just under **\$300,000** a year. We receive **ten percent** of the operating budget from the **Redemptorist-Denver Province**, **ten percent** from the **newsletter** and less than **five percent** from foundations, **45 percent** from **fees**, and **30 percent** from additional gifts of retreat guests, desert companions, friends and benefactors of DHOP. **Your continued support from the newsletter is an essential lifeline** that is much appreciated. Your generosity enables us but to do what is necessary to offer simple comfortable accommodations to all who come regardless of their financial means.

Current needs include a new AC unit for the library and a new computer for the guest coordinator office.

If you know someone **blessed with wealth** who values prayer, meditation, silence, and solitude **invite them to browse our website, come make a retreat at DHOP, and consider the needs of our Capital Campaign.**

A Lasting Gift. A will represents a person’s final wishes and intentions. After providing for your loved ones, **please consider one final gift to DHOP.** If you are interested and have questions you can contact me about a bequest to DHOP.

One Final Thought

We become wiser when we are open and enquiring about other spiritual traditions beyond what is familiar to our own experience. We become more aware of what we have in common and what is needed for the common good. We become aware of our interdependencies. We no longer seek our security behind walls of exclusion. We learn that by reaching out beyond familiar boundaries we become stronger. Our true identity emerges not from fear of the other but from the inherent wholeness of our common humanity in God’s expanding cosmos.

Faithfully,



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

