

LAY LEADERSHIP UPDATE

May 2014

VOL IV NO 10



A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

“Groping” when applied to humans, is a word used by Teilhard de Chardin, SJ to describe “discernment.” (See reflection on p. 2, Deepening our Awareness ... Something to Ponder) As we “grope” our way with Christ in addressing the needs of God’s people, here is where you will find us:

The *Praying with St. Ignatius* Retreat. 62 members of St. Basil the Great Parish, Brecksville, completed this Lenten Retreat during the month of April. 10 members of the Leadership Team will meet in early June to prayerfully review their experience as plans are made for future retreats.

Food for the Journey. 18 participants gathered this past month to conclude reflection on spiritual conversion in the life of Francis of Assisi, in the life of Ignatius Loyola and in our own lives. One participant reflected: In this program, we were led “to God and our best selves gently and profoundly. The mix of people bring their wisdom and life experience and become companions for the journey. Thank you for the privilege and opportunity to be present to the Holy Spirit here.”

The Pilgrim Way of Ignatius Loyola. 60+ Members of St. Angela Parish, Fairview Park, gathered to pray together and to hear the witness of **Sue Palmer** who addressed the question, “Is It Possible to Find God in All Things?” The series continues this month when **Valerie Stultz** will address the question, “How Can I Love As God Loves?”

CALLED AND SENT SPIRITUAL FORMATION PROGRAM Module Update

Living Prayer: My Life in God. With a celebration of the “Stations of the Earth,” 35 members of St. Mary Parish, Bedford, completed this Lenten Retreat-in-Daily-Life on April 10th. St. Mary Pastor, Rev. Dan Begin, will host a “reunion supper” on June 12th as plans are made for cultivating the spiritual seeds planted in the hearts of the retreatants.

Ignatian Spirituality: Grounding for Life and Leadership. This module of the Called and Sent Spiritual Formation Program continues this month when 34 members of the Sisters and Associates of the Incarnate Word will gather to continue this six month program. Co-facilitators are **Martha Campbell** and **Matt Roche, SJ**.

Continuing Developments. Leaders of the six modules of this spiritual formation program continue to work on marketing efforts as well as design and development of the final two modules which will be offered in the 2014-15 program year.

COMING THIS MONTH ... IGNATIAN CURRENTS

PROGRAM with
HOWARD GRAY, SJ
Come and Bring a Friend!



SEARCHING FOR GOD THROUGH IMAGINATION AND STORY: LIVING OUT THE IGNATIAN TRADITION

Friday, May 30, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

We Are a People Formed Through Our Stories

This evening’s presentation will focus on two Old Testament biblical narratives (The Book of Jonah and the Book of Ruth) and the parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15). We will discuss these in terms of their narrative structure; that is, what is the story, how is the story presented, and what does it mean for the listener/reader today? Then we will discuss how story becomes the heart of the Exercises of Ignatius Loyola and then how story becomes central to the personal appropriation of revelation in the ongoing spiritual development of people (spiritual direction spiritual guidance, apostolic conversation, etc.) The mode of presentation will be presentation with time for response and questions from the participants. (Coffee and Conversation from 6:30 p.m.)

Saturday Program, May 31, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

**Our Stories Constitute the Celebration of God’s Ongoing
Revelation in Our Lives**

That revelation comes (1) from our own narratives (What are the highlights of my life as I review my life? What sense of personal vocation emerges from appropriating the events of my life? Who am I before God and who is God before me?). That revelation also comes (2) from the world of story that emerges from our culture. We will take time to read a short story (“A Nurses Story) and then use that story to look at the graces abiding in imagination and memory. Grace and memory are two Ignatian components that figure prominently in the Spiritual Exercises and throughout his spiritual tradition. Finally, we will use what we have done together to look at the role of imagination in Christian life.

See registration details on p. 2 of this newsletter.



DEEPENING OUR AWARENESS - SOMETHING TO PONDER

LEADERSHIP AS A PROCESS OF 'GROPING'
Adapted from an Essay by Donna Geernaert SC*

God, who made the world and all that is in it ... gives to all life and breath and everything else. ... We are to seek God, yes to grope for God and perhaps eventually to find God.

Acts 17: 24-27

Teilhard de Chardin describes the evolution of life advancing through a process of "groping." It is a process, he says, of directed chance, "pervading everything so as to try everything, and trying everything so as to find everything." (Pierre Teilhard de Chardin *The Phenomenon of Man*, trans., Bernard Wall. New York, Harper & Row 1965, p. 110) Like the roots or shoots on a growing plant, an evolving species gropes, feels its way forward, seeking openings/possibilities for new life. Trial and error contribute to the evolutionary process as environmental obstacles stimulate creative responses which eventually give rise to new life forms.

While "groping" may not be a particularly inspiring term to apply to the exercise of leadership which appears to imply decision and action, it does seem quite consistent with [my experience as a leader.]

In my experience, leadership is an organic process - not so much a matter of strategic planning as of reading the signs of the times and seeking the best way forward among multiple possibilities. In accord with the law of complexity-consciousness, evolution proceeds through groping towards ever more conscious awareness and greater freedom. It's an often messy process but is always directed toward an open future. This highlights the leadership role of bearing witness to hope in the promissory vision of a God who makes all things new. Groping (perhaps better known as discernment), directed by hope, consistently seeks growth and life.

[What is my experience of "groping for God"? Where do we as a community of leaders find hope? Where do we grope for growth and life? How is discernment grounding our leadership choices?]

*Donna Geernaert, SC serves as congregational leader of the Sisters of Charity-Halifax, Canada. This reflection is taken from *The Occasional Papers: The Leadership Conference of Women Religious - Religious Life within the Cosmic Story*. Winter 2014.

LEADERSHIP ... A PROCESS OF 'GROPING'

Leadership is an organic process - a reading the signs of the times and seeking the best way forward among multiple possibilities.

-Donna Geernaert, SC

NURTURING THE CALL

Leading Contemplative Group Retreats Based on the
Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius Loyola
A Pilot Program Facilitated by
Martha Campbell and Joan Nuth

Taking place during the month of May, this program will be offered to a small group of Ignatian Spirituality Institute graduates. Once the pilot is completed, the program will be open to a broader group of interested participants.

IGNATIAN CURRENTS ... SOME DETAILS

SEARCHING FOR GOD THROUGH IMAGINATION AND STORY:
LIVING OUT THE IGNATIAN TRADITION

Presented by Howard Gray, SJ

OPEN TO ALL - MORE DETAILS TO FOLLOW

Friday, May 30th

We Are a People Formed Through Our Stories

7:00 - 9:00 p.m. (Coffee at 6:30 p.m.)

Saturday, May 31th

Our Stories Constitute the Celebration of God's Ongoing
Revelation in Our Lives

9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (Coffee at 8:30 a.m.)

Program Options

Friday Evening Only: \$25.00

Saturday including lunch: \$50.00

Friday Evening and Saturday including lunch: \$65.00

Friday Evening and Saturday including lunch + overnight
accommodations including breakfast: \$98.00

Although the programs can be taken separately, it is encouraged that you participate in both the Friday and Saturday programs to receive the full benefit of the experience.

To Register: Contact Barbara Leggott at jrhcleve@att.net OR
(440) 884-9300 OR register online: www.jrh-cleveland.org

AT RIVER'S EDGE ...

RENEWING THE FACE OF THE EARTH: THE INSIGHTS OF
TEILHARD DE CHARDIN ON THE EUCHARIST, COMPASSION
AND SUFFERING

Presented by Louis Savary.

Friday, May 16th: 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

Saturday, May 17th: 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Learn more and register at www.RiversEdgeCleveland.com

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