

Raven's Bread

Food for Those in Solitude

Volume 16, No. 3

August 2012

Thoughts In Solitude

The hermit life is no different from any other in that there is a healthy need for – and joy in – friendship, though seen from a somewhat different perspective. I see a limited number of people in my hermitage, but my relationship with them, including the sisters and brothers of the Society of St. Francis, is within the context of warm friendship and reciprocal learning from one another.

Friendship with Myself

I was an only child but felt a store of warmth and affection within myself, which sometimes bubbled up in openness and vitality which needed reciprocation. The source of all this was the joy of simply being alive. It was an interior appreciation and friendship with myself which would not remain enclosed and become stagnant. I was basically shy and tentative in reaching out to others, so I would wander down to the sea and act out my friendship towards that mystery which I felt was dwelling within and flowing from earth, sea, and sky, and particularly within the scariness of the caves. Such wanderings imparted not only a deepening appreciation of myself expressed through my senses, but also an enrichment of my inner life as I responded to what I now call the cosmic mystery experienced in the simplicity and immediacy of childhood.

Friendship with Others

During my first decade I was often lonely. But the world of nature, supplemented by the discovery of prose and poetry, enriched my interior life and gave me great delight within myself. Gradually I discovered ways to relate to others and found gifts of communication. But it remained true that solitude was precious. I have a very small circle of intimate friends, and a certain aloneness. This aloneness is God's gift to me, though at the same time it includes an element of human loneliness and yearning.

Friendship with Christ

During my teen years I discovered Christ as my Savior, Friend and Brother. This "conversion" took place in the course of one hour but it remains as real, as precious

and as momentous to me this very day as when I first experienced it. My conversion to Christ gave me needed backbone, for I had moved to where bullying was part of the regime. I got beaten and was scared but I bore witness to Christ and became resilient. My small network of solid friendships became more important and beautiful. I began to share my inner life of spirituality, combining the creation relationships of my first decade with gospel zeal. The physical, intellectual and spiritual elements of friendship run together in a certain wholeness. Friendships with others include animals, the communion of saints and angels, indeed all sentient beings. Such friendship must also involve an ecological vision of Mother Earth. Enjoying this spiritual vision shows me God as its source.

Friendship with the Divine Mystery

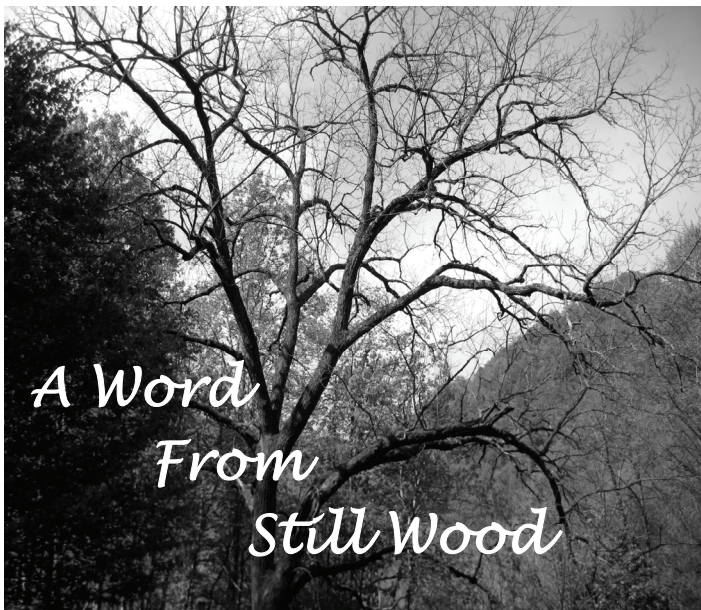
Such friendship means discovering God's presence with increasing wonder, perplexity and profundity as the years go by. There has always been a dimension of mysticism in my spirituality for which the word friendship doesn't seem sufficient to express the mind-blowing reality of union with God in love. Because of the profound depth of this mystery of Love I have felt a call into solitude where I find God in all things and all things in God. I am open and loving to all my friends but I must admit that there is an inner place where I dwell in and with God alone, a place to which I have access only when I am alone. I close with a word from Ramon Lull, the Franciscan mystic whose name I took.

"The lover longed for solitude, and went away to live alone, that he might have the companionship of his Beloved; for amid many people he was lonely."



From: HERMIT FRIENDSHIP
By Brother Ramon, SSF

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It is *high summer* here at Still Wood and our natural enclosure is at its fullest. The only “structure” visible from our deck is Woody Cemetery, across the valley from us. As neighbors go, the residents have always been ideally quiet and peaceful. Still, several years ago, we were shocked by the sudden loss of the huge double oak tree that dominated the entrance, a tree so vibrant we assumed it would outlive us. Upon noticing that it appeared unusually shrubby and low one day, we drove over, and met a horrific sight. The great tree had split down its center in a recent storm and lay dying, its huge branches spread in every direction. We climbed out of our truck and stood in mournful silence, grieving this unanticipated loss.

Have others felt the death of a tree so keenly? Over the years, we had formed a relationship with this one, similar to the one we have with the great Grandfather Walnut that shades our drive. People who cherish solitude tend to be very sensitive to all that lives around them, entering into communion with everything from the birds and flowers to the weather and the seasons. This sensitivity derives from a heightened awareness of the sacred permeating the natural world. At times, the price for this grace can bring discomfort as recently described by a *Raven’s Bread* reader. She writes:

“Last week I went into the village two miles away, and was stopped by a woman who knows me only by sight. She talked

on and on about an insurance claim. After about twenty minutes, I had to excuse myself because I felt so barraged. Yesterday I drove to the supermarket where I was cornered by another woman whom I recognized slightly. This time I was treated to a monologue about all her children and grandchildren. She was so verbally aggressive that I eventually felt faint. Two kind clerks at the register gave me a chair and water. After I recovered my equilibrium, I drove home.

Clearly I have a difficult time with conversations I feel are smokescreens for another reality. I have often been described as radiating an “openness” which now puts me at risk every time I go outside my home. I have been utterly open to the Transcendent for twenty-two years while writing *Images, Old and New*. So now, I am totally maladapted to this culture.”

Reading her letter, Karen thought of her own experience of being unable to “protect myself” from the abrasiveness of the world, whether pushy individuals, electronic entertainments, crowded stores or even family reunions! This is a side effect of living the solitary life. Over time, becoming so accustomed to total openness to the world around us, we lose the “tough skin” that protects most people from feeling invaded. Sometimes we are absorbed into a whole other world and can’t find our own world or self again.

What to do? Try to protect ourselves by becoming “tough”? To what end? The loss of a carefully cultivated openness to the Holy – in order to tolerate a world which offers little joy? We wonder if other readers of *Raven’s Bread* have similar experiences. And what solution, if any, have they devised?

Speaking of appropriate contacts, we wish to inform folks that we have a new email address: pkfredette@frontier.com. Good news to all our readers – Karen’s biography of St. Clare of Assisi, *Clare: Her Light and Her Song* is back in print. It can be purchased via Amazon.com, iUniverse.Inc, or directly from Raven’s Bread – see Bulletin Board. And for those of you still eagerly waiting, yes, Karen is completing the sequel to *Where God Begins to Be!* We hope to have purchase information in the November issue....God willing and the trees don’t fall!

*With grateful love,
Karen & Paul*

***Raven’s Bread* is a quarterly newsletter (FEB-MAY-AUG-NOV) for hermits and those interested in eremitical life published by Paul and Karen Fredette. This newsletter affirms and supports people living in solitude. It is a collaborative effort, written for and by hermits themselves and is sent by postal mail or by email.**

Please send your written contributions, address changes, and subscription donations to: *Raven’s Bread Ministries*, 18065 NC 209 Hwy, Hot Springs, NC 28743 or via Paypal at our website.*

Our phone number is: 828 622 3750, The annual donation is \$10.00 in the USA or \$12.00 US for readers outside the States. Please send payment in US funds (PayPal can convert foreign currency to US dollars). Any extra donations will be used to subsidize subscriptions for hermits who cannot afford the full cost.

Raven’s Bread derives its name from the experience of the prophet Elijah in 1 Kings 17: 1-6. where a raven sent by God nourished him during his months of solitude at the Wadi Cherith (The Cutting Place).

***Our website is :[Http://www.ravensbreadministries.com](http://www.ravensbreadministries.com) ; email: pkfredette@frontier.com**



Raven's Forum



Rev. Tessa Holland of South Downs, Sussex, UK, writes: Thank you so much for the latest newsletter which arrived this morning. I appreciate the gentle connectedness of travelling companions who do not seek to own, organize or prescribe the way for others – but who allow each to speak from within the silence of God. I look forward to contributing to *Raven's Bread* at some point; for the time being, it feels important to listen to others and be connected in prayer. Briefly, I have a licensed ministry as a contemplative priest which weaves together marriage and family life with silence, solitude, and prayer. We are Quiet Gardeners, opening our home and garden once a month and are companions with "Contemplative Fire", a new, monastic, dispersed community. I also accompany others 1-2-1 and occasionally assist a colleague with services at the local church – tucked away in a farmyard. Currently, I am discerning a call to become more hidden, and in the unknowing, the journey is being blessed.



Russell F. Baldwin from Boston, MA shares: B's response in the May 2012 issue to those looking for a rule or way of life as "frantic" first struck me as rather harsh but as I think of my own experience over many years, s/ he does have a point. One of the great struggles of the solitary life is the ever-gnawing feeling that we are not authentic. Even though we have taken to this life, we still have the need to feel recognized. It's very difficult indeed to be truly hidden and humble. Thus we try to come up with or find a "rule" that alleviates this discomfort. We're human, it happens. We try too hard.



Mary Lou Mooney from Hancock, MI says: This is strictly a fan letter. I've just finished reading Karen's "Where God Begins to Be" for the umpteenth time, and as always, I find more jewels to meditate on. Thank you so much for sharing your experiences for all of us to glean from! You always help me realize I am probably on the right road after all. Of course, that road sure has curves and bumps and obstacles, so learning to trust God in all things has been a challenge – a beautiful one indeed!



Susan Sherwin, Homestead, PA: Just wanted to say thanks for keeping the mailing list confidential. Sounds like the journalistic vultures (watch and prey) have gathered over you!



Ron Haney writes from **St. Joseph's Monastery (aka Joseph Harp Correctional Center)**: First, thank you for

such a great year of publications. Every issue is so different, with the comments and topics you explore and discuss in each time. I look forward to every one! As you said in May, we wish to dwell on who we are and what we are for. And "It is always both/and." So very often we speak outside the Spirit and end up pursuing issues of difference, even prejudice, instead of reconciliation, compassion and mercy as we should, if we say that we "know" Him. Even the items on the Bulletin Board interest me since, in here, we have no access to the internet. I enjoy the different spiritualities presented, although I am entirely content, even blessed, in my Catholic spirituality. All prayer (to me) is to God so I am not threatened by those unlike my own faith. Just as Thomas Merton said, "the slow heart work of seeking God" is no better than anyone else's ministry, even if it is different.



Bernadette McWhinnie from **Gilgandra, NSW**, offers this: A note of thanks to everyone for their thoughts on Prayer – the Liturgy of the Hours. I found all the letters helpful at this time because prayer-form has been a bit of a stumbling block for me since I began spending my life alone with God and for God. I particularly appreciate Ann of Missouri mentioning the website: *divineoffice.org*. What a fantastic site! I have registered and plan to use it regularly to help me. I have been trying too hard for the last 18 months and am only now settling into a more relaxed form of work and prayer since I have discovered the Liturgy of the Hours. I managed to get hold of a second hand copy of the three books. How to pray/ when to pray/ where to pray – at last some help has come my way and I really appreciate it. My thanks and blessings on you all, especially Karen and Paul, who are our link to one another. By the way, Fr. Ian and Margaret Crooks live in Oberon where I used to live. I knew of them through The Abbey at Jamberoo down south, the Benedictine Sisters wonderful home and retreat center. One day I will get down to Oberon to meet up with them perhaps.



Rosemary Lyons and Heather Gregory, write via **Truro, UK**: We were both delighted to note Karen's trek up the mountain to see the plants in bloom indicating she has made a good recovery from her accident. (*K: she has, thanks!*) I very much appreciated the reflections on the Liturgy of the Hours. Over the years, I too have found and continue to find many riches in the Liturgy even though I am not as faithful as I would like to be in praying the Office. In praying the Hours, I know I am drawn into a union of prayer with the prayer of the Church across time and

Continued on p. 7

Hermits ask... ...and Respond

Discussion Topic for August 2012

We all have a special focus or intentional thrust for our hermit life and prayers. Would you kindly share yours with our readership?

Once again, you have posed a very interesting question. If I were to try to describe a special focus toward which God has led me, it would be forgiveness. Those in prison are quite adept at asking for forgiveness for the wrongs they have done to others, and forgiving those who have wronged them. However, the one person they neglect to forgive is themselves.

For most, forgiveness of others, or seeking forgiveness *from* others, is far easier than forgiving oneself. I counted myself among those withholding “self-forgiveness” for many years. When it comes to forgiving *ourselves* for causing so much pain to those we love, we seem almost masochistic in our desire to hold on to the pain and sorrow. However this is not our Savior’s wish for us.

One of my favorite Scriptures is Romans 8:1, “*There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*” This Scripture spoke volumes to me when I would be psychologically punishing myself for the pain I caused so many, not just my victim’s family, but my parents, my sons, my siblings and other family members who looked up to me. If there is to be no condemnation, then it must include me! We must cleanse ourselves of unforgiving resentment before going to the Father in prayer – this is particularly true when we ourselves are the target of this resentment. During my own struggle with this, a wise man asked me a very poignant series of questions that I now pose to those I counsel: “Have you asked God to forgive you for your actions and sins?” *Yes.* “Do you believe that God has forgiven you?” *Yes.* “Then, who are you to hold back forgiveness from someone that God the Father has already forgiven?”

It may seem simple, but the truth often is. If we truly believe the Father has forgiven us, then we cannot continue to hold resentment/unforgiveness/shame/anger against anyone, especially ourselves.

Bill Wanless
Lexington, OK

COMMUNION with the world has been the red thread in my call, expressed by the two names I have given to the two places I have lived: “Hermitage of the Nations” (in Africa) and “Koinonia” (in Europe). The whole world has its place in my heart, held in my hands, as it were, so that I may offer it to the Father through the Spirit in Jesus. My brother and sister are “myself”. I love them as myself. When I enter into communion with the suffering world, their suffering becomes mine, and mine, theirs. I hear Jesus’ prayer: “Father, may they be one in us, as I am one with you.” I find the ultimate prayer on the icon of St. Silouane the Athonic: “May all the people on earth know you, Father, by the Holy Spirit.” One of the consequences of universal love is to love my enemy. I don’t pray for anything specific for others but trust God knows what we need before we ask. I listen to the daily news so that it may be food for prayer. I focus on the Jesus Prayer all day: “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me and your world.” In solitude, I am never alone. God IS.

Bernadette Lecluyse
West Wickam, Kent UK

At the center of my spiritual life is surrender: sweet surrender to the moment, to challenges as well as joy. In facing challenges, I wonder what is the lesson I am to learn. I go into the private sanctuary of my soul where gratitude and reconciliation follow. The grace of surrender and forgiveness includes profound purification. Accepting daily events unconditionally brings great peace. The more I surrender, the more I believe that all is just as it should be and that everything will happen in its right time. Revelation comes in halting steps

but eventually the path becomes clear.

Susan Penny
San Francisco, CA

The concept that captures the focus of my hermit life and prayer is the Grace of the Present Moment or what Buddhists might call mindfulness. This awareness means receiving everything, holding on to nothing. My forest surroundings heighten all my senses in every-changing delight. My interior life becomes more still and quiet in a posture of total receptivity. Attachments fall away, especially to “mind chatter.” I rest in the Infinite Embrace of LOVE. It is rather like sky-diving: if the chute opens, WOW, what a ride! If not, well, faith assures me that something even better awaits me! The Grace of the Present Moment is worthy of my trust.

Sr. Maria Dara
Ava, MO

Most of my prayers tend towards reconciliation. Being incarcerated, you have quite a lot of time to reflect on your life and the events that brought you to this stage in life. There are ample opportunities to offend God here for you need to protect yourself from those wanting harm you. Violence seems your only option. Yet at a point within the last year, I crossed a line. Whereas most pray for reconciliation out of fear of punishment, I seek forgiveness from God out of love, for my sins are against him. He commands me not to sin and when I sin, it is against my Father who loves me. It is through his love for me that he forgives me. I seek reconciliation because I have wronged my Father.

Levi (known by God as John)
Lexington, OK

I am devoted to the Precious Blood of Christ, and belong to the Pious Union of the Precious Blood. It answers my search for meaning and focus, and gives a new definition to adoration and reparation. My covenant with God directs me to adoration – worship of God – in spirit and truth, not just during prayer or liturgy, but throughout my daily life.

Every word and deed is an act of worship united to Christ's act of worship, the Mass. Precious Blood spirituality directs me to make horizontal as well as vertical reparation. I repair the negative, violent, unkind atmosphere I may be in by acting in the opposite way. I also alter my own negative thoughts, words or deeds. Whether I'm alone, or "out and about", I seek to cover my neighborhood with prayer, hoping and trusting God to grace this area and its people.

Sr. June Duval
Fitchburg, MA

In the Eastern Church, it is commonly taught that the monastic life is as close as one can get to the life of angels on earth. It is a life of prayer, devotion and single-minded attention in the service of God. There is also another aspect known as the Adamic state. Only a few, like Sts. Onufrio and Macarius, lived alone in wastelands on berries and nettles in innocent nakedness like Adam. My vocation was tempered by the Rule of St. Benedict which put many of the Eastern austerities after lectio, *ora et labora*. Having lived in community life, as well as parish life, I have been blessed to take up hermit life.

The eremitic life I live fuses the Benedictine forms of daily prayer, study, lectio and simple work with the Eastern spirituality of the Prayer of the Heart and acquisition of the Holy Spirit. (I have totally ruled out being a disciple of St. Onufrio, since I live in the Midwest of the US and winter would not be kind to this Adam!).

I believe, as a monk, that there is universality in the monastic profession that exists beyond the walls of our monasteries, ashrams or hermitages and that connects hermits to one another in a common struggle of purification, obedience and perfection. If there is a true course for ecumenism, the clearest place to find it would be among monastics who can recognize more that is alike with one another than can those folks who run the "front office." My prayer "that we all may be one" does not end at the doors of Christian churches or hearts. I have become convinced that all hearts belong to God, and since I love God, I also ought to love all hearts.

Fr. Kyrill, OSB
Montgomery, IL

The primary prayer focus for me as an oratorian is the perpetual prayer of ADORATION. This intention and attention of Adoration is rendered to God at all times and in all places: silent periods before the Blessed Sacrament; prayer-walking through the fields of my oratory/farm, *Respite*; pushing a cart through Wal-Mart; driving to Church or the city; playing with the pups and kittens...all is adoration.

One new form of Adoration that arose several years ago is what I term *The Desert Song Adoration*. In this Ignatian type prayer experience, I am called to just sit beside My Lord and God, Jesus, after He has been baptized in the Jordan River, and driven by the Holy Spirit into the Desert. I simply sit beside Him and witness His grappling with His humanity (*Bread*) and His Divinity (*Word*). I see Him ward off Satan with His integration of his two natures. "Man does not live by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of God." In adoration of The Word made flesh, I tranquilly move into His person and silently pray there... just being IN Him as quietly and gently as possible...and "seeing" from His shared example how to balance in my own life being bread (*my humanity*) and word (*my spirituality*). Thus I silently Adore and sing with Him *The Desert Song*.

Yes, we never pray alone. We belong to those who pray for those who don't...for the weary, the wounded, the indifferent, the fearful, we pray. For those who won't pray, can't pray, are afraid to pray ... we pray. While this may seem a form of Reparation, for me this is the highest form of Adoration. May all our prayers rise like incense before our Lord and God.

Mary Jean Wethington
Aurora, IN

Adoration, gratitude, joy. They have never seemed to be what I have chosen. They have always seemed to have been given as gifts. They are as spontaneous as though God has a sense of humor for, until a few years ago, I had mild depression for decades.

Frances Robinson
Albuquerque, NM

The word Adoration is very dear to heart. For years I have been drawn deeper into prayer on my knees before the Exposed Blessed Sacrament. With the Liturgy of the Hours, my work of prayer is multifaceted. It is a work of God (opus Dei). In Adoration, He does most of the work. As someone said to me, if you sit in the sun, you don't see its effects until later but it is affecting you. I literally bask in God's rays and love for me and the world. Like St. Theresa of Lisieux, I have literally become "love in the heart of the church". The work is hidden, underground but vital to the Church.

Jean Smith
Ayshire, Scotland

Even before the merciful God delivered me from my purgatory in the 9-5 working world, I was always moved to pray for suffering people. After retirement, I often prayed for working people, especially those who had difficult or dangerous jobs, or who were unhappy at work. On 3-4-12, after Communion at Mass, I believe I received a call to make sacrifices and pray for priests, so that is my main focus now. I do continue to give thanks always for God's goodness and blessings.

Susan Sherwin
Homestead, PA

**Discussion Topic for November
2012**

In "*Word from Still Wood*" this issue, we raise the question of how solitaries protect and maintain their openness to the Holy when having to interact with the "world." Would you share your experience &/or insights?

Please submit by Oct. 1, 2012.
(Limit to 300 words)

BULLETIN#####
#####**BOARD**

**New Community of Solitaries and Retreat Center
in Northern California**

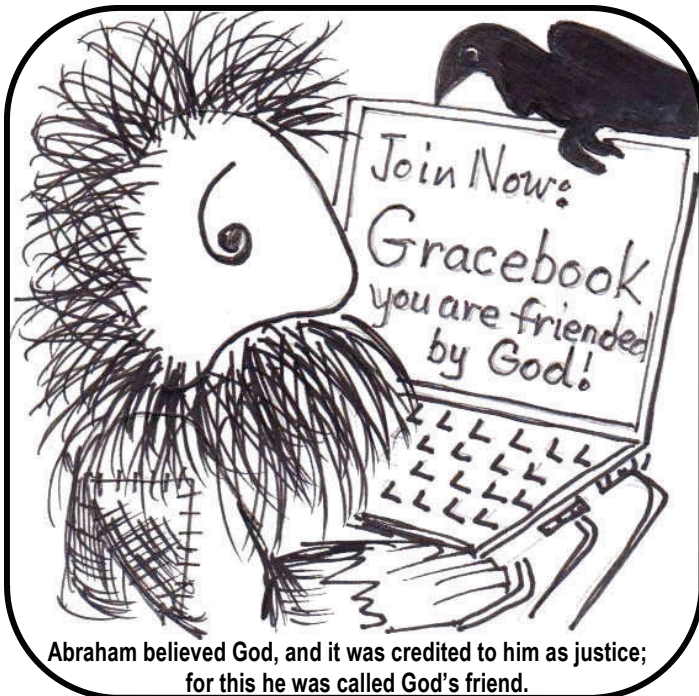
We have started a monastery without walls,
a place of retreat for guests of all traditions.

Contact: info@SilentStay.com
Tel: 707 474 4833
Email: Bruce@silenstay.com
Bruce & Ruth Davis
3570 Cantelow Road
Vacaville, CA 95688

I am looking for information and descriptions of
places of solitude available for a hermitage in the
United States. I am particularly interested in
mountain regions or wild areas where nature is
preserved. Here in the Alps, I find it is too noisy
and non-Christian.

Contact: Marie Virginite (Anne Vors)
Email: marie.virg@orange.fr
Tel: -- 04 92 83 81 68

Wood B. Hermit



Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as justice;
for this he was called God's friend.

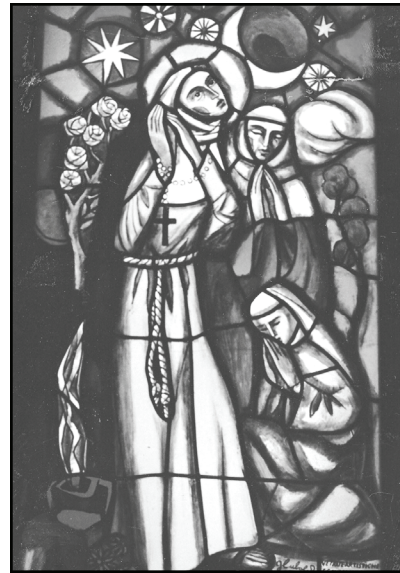
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Hermits Up Front and Personal

I am living in a rustic three-room cabin with a loft. The main room has three doors, a fireplace and a ladder to the loft which is blocked off with a piece of Styrofoam insulation above the bed. One night last winter, I slept fitfully because of sounds like a small animal running back and forth overhead. Often it is a small mouse or squirrel but this night it is LOUD! It sounds like a herd of elephants running around and rolling something back and forth across the floor. I start banging on the walls hoping to scare it. No luck. The noise gets louder. I get a broom and start banging on the ceiling. It gets quiet for awhile and then the noise starts up again – even louder. So I go back to banging on the ceiling with the broom. Then I hear the critter starting to chew on the Styrofoam that separates the bedroom and loft. Now remember, this is almost right over my bed. I bang on the Styrofoam, still hoping to scare it. The chewing, however, gets more frantic. I jump out of bed at this point, feeling a bit nervous. Very shortly, a critter comes jumping out of the loft onto the ladder!

Thinking quickly, I grab my coat (and the phone), close off all the doors to the bedroom and go into the kitchen to sit, wait, and think. I can see this little critter (I'm not sure what it is at this point but it's smaller than a squirrel and larger than a mouse.) It's running all over the place, looking for a way to get out. So I get dressed – winter coat, hat, boots, and gloves – grab a flashlight and walk around the house to the side door off the bedroom. By the way, did I mention that it's 4:00 o'clock in the morning and 30 degrees below zero outside? Anyway, I open the outside door and wait for the critter to see its escape route and run outside. And that is exactly what it does. I'm feeling very brave and proud of myself.

Later I call my neighbor and explain my situation. He says if it came in by accident, it's not something to worry about. It probably won't come back. But just in case, he comes over with a humane trap so I can catch it live. We put peanut butter on a cracker in the trap for it and leave it in the loft. I feel secure enough that night to go to bed and fall asleep. All of a sudden, I hear a noise about 11:30pm. This little guy has bypassed the peanut butter and cracker, avoided the trap, and is coming down the same way he came down last night. Only this time it's more aggressive, chewing and kicking, it is pushing the insulation with all its might. As I look up I can see its little feet coming through the edge, then its head. And then it squashes its body up and BAM! It's through! And BAM! I'm out of bed, coat on, door open and am waiting and waiting ... only he DOESN'T LEAVE and it is still 30 degrees below zero. (To be continued)

Marion Foot, Perth, ONT

Raven's Forum Continued from p. 3

space, uniting me with all the others around the world who are praying the Office, and with all who have prayed the Office before me and will pray it after me. Also special for me is the fact that the psalms are prayers that were prayed by Christ.



Sue Gomez shares this from **Denver, CO**: On the topic of the May issue, I would say that when my husband died in 1994, I forced myself to read the Office of Readings every morning because for awhile I had no desire to pray and also lacked the presence of mind to do so. Eventually I was able to pray again. I am also thankful that I now feel as though **Raven's Bread** readers are friends...a silent, unseen prayer community.



Joe Graumans, White Fox, SK, Canada sent this inquiry: A year ago I completed a questionnaire for Brian Campbell's study. As a retired sociology lecturer (University of Saskatchewan) I am looking forward to reading about his study. I have not seen any information about his work in **RB** and am looking forward to it. (*Joe, so are we!*) Your word "New Life" spoke to me in May. I live on the edge of the boreal forest and this is always the

most beautiful time of the year. After a long and cold winter season, "new life" explodes – new leaves, flowers all over the place, birds and song... a new green world filled with promise.



Roch Levesque salutes us from **Montreal, Canada**: To my new Friends and travelling companions: Shalom! For the last few months I have had the pleasure of reading this heart-warming publication. What a discovery it has been to realize that large numbers of individuals are all searching for that Morning Star. A Morning Star is shining in the soul and heart of every seeker. Just to know the existence of that link between all of us gives credence to the fact that, even though we are spread all over the world, we are, nonetheless, in spiritual communion with each other through this simple but enlightened newsletter. I am a sixty-six year old man who is very thankful to a loving God for the life he has given me. I've lived alone all of my life, but my alone-ness is filled with the gracious Presence of the One who knows the very conscience of everyone. Let us count on his compassionate heart. He's a faithful Friend. Thank you to all for being present to the Presence.



BOOK NOTES AND REVIEWS



A LONG RETREAT: In Search of a Religious Life by Andres Krivak.

Krivak takes the reader on his spiritual pilgrimage with an open, honest, tempered heart. His quiet lyricism comes from his own poetic nature. We walk with him, akin to Merton, as he sifts through his desires, joins the Jesuits, takes us on an intimate inner journey seen through their eyes, explores Eastern forms of Catholic Christianity, travels to Haiti, Russia and Slovenia as part of his formation, and faces love. This story has the quiet contemplation of solitude—though not a hermit, Krivak portrays very well the same spiritual currents a solitary must pass through on his/her journey.

324pp. Hard Cover. 2008, Farrar, Straus & Giroux, ISBN-13 978-0-374-16606-9 Order through Amazon.com

By *Raven's Bread* Readers:

JOURNEY INTO GOD (*Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*) by St. Bonaventure.

Trans. by Josef Raischl, OFS & Andre' Cirino, OFM.

This translation of what is considered by some to be St. Bonaventure's greatest masterpiece brings the reader to the threshold of contemplation in a smoother and easier-to-follow rendering than some previous translations. It is not a word-for-word translation. That said, it does follow The Classics of Western Spirituality translation by Ewert Cousins very closely, helping to clarify some of the more difficult passages in the previous translation. The verse format, as well as the serene color photographs, lends itself very nicely to the practice of lectio divina.

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