

# Christ in the Wilderness

Hermitage Retreat Center

Spring April 2012

Our mission is to provide an environment that is conducive to silence, solitude, prayer and reflection.

## **Silence is a place where lovers meet**

“My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my savior”. Those words can only begin to express how I feel about my “desert experience” even in the mid winter. The desert is a place of silence where lovers meet. That was the totality of my seven day retreat at Christ in the Wilderness. It was all summed up around this mysterious



word “silence”. This was my second retreat at CITW. I couldn’t wait to come back again and even now look forward to the future for my third visit. I shouldn’t say visit because silence is home to me where ever I am at. I cherish it like the next beat of my heart. I also came to pray. Pray for the world, pray for my brothers and sisters who are in torment and pain, for the suffering of the world. God needs more people to pray! Prayer is a call and silence is a call. A call to come deeper into the heart of the Trinity, to hear the heart beat of the Father and listen to what He has to say. You have to be very quiet to hear the heart beat of the Father and the cry of men.

The call of the desert is to come deeper into the heart of the Trinity, deeper into that fire of silence, deeper into the fire of love. I was called to listen and learn. I will share some of what I learned. Jesus is the greatest teacher.

Silence is a place where lovers meet.  
Where my mouth was filled with fine food,  
And divine wine.  
O’ the kisses of your mouth!  
Come to the clefts of the rock.  
Hidden is the manna and  
Sweeter than honey is the wine,  
Choicest of wine for my beloved.

I learned that prayer is silence and love is silent and so is living in the presence of God. In the book Poustinia, Catherine Doherty says, “to hear the voice of the Lord we must know how to listen to HIS silence and above all to learn it ourselves. The spiritual masters know from experience-‘if one does not know how to give a place in his life to recollection and silence it is impossible for him to arrive at a higher degree and be able to pray in public places’. Recollection opens our souls to heaven--but also to other men”.

I felt the Lord telling me “silence offends most people--but I call a few to the vocation of silence. Silence breaks the broken because they have nothing to hold on to. The key to love is silence. It breaks the bonds off people and gives them the living Word to hold on to. It is a flame that burns within them, a fire that ignites the whole world.” I understood that broken and wounded people need many things to hold on to. TV, food, conversation, and a thousand other things. Silence is a scary thing unless you have experienced the beauty. Silence is rare in this world of continued noise and business.

I came into a deeper understanding about sin especially obedience vs. disobedience and how God longs for each one of his children to listen, hear and obey. As I learned about my sins I asked for forgiveness, then I could hear and see sins of others and beg for mercy. After all what else do we have but His mercy which is love. This time of quiet, silence, solitude gave me time to hear and see things I probably wouldn’t have heard if I was at home.

I am grateful to have Christ in the Wilderness as a place of rest and retreat. It is for me a place of healing, freedom and liberation. A time to step back and look deep within myself and deep within the heart of the Trinity and pray for all.

By Cyndi Jarvis

## **Retreatant Jottings...**

As I prepare to leave this blessed place, I give thanks to so many:

Thanks to my God for your wondrous creation and more for your Wondrous, Bountiful, Merciful Love!

Thanks to my father, whose birthday it is today (102 were he still with us—10 years in heaven already). Thank you, Dad, for gifting me with a childhood growing up on a farm--the beginning of love and respect for Mother Earth and all God's creatures.

Thanks to my mother who knew how to live simply so that this experience comes easily.

Thank you to the turkeys flying among the trees one evening, the many deer who displayed their



beauty and grace as they bounded away from me. And a most grateful thanks to those that stopped to "ponder" me as I pondered them, especially my last walk when I was able to capture a pix or 2!!

Thank you to the grey squirrel that stopped a moment with a nut in his mouth to notice me. Thank you to the bunny I surprised in the underbrush. You all "speak" of God's gift of life to me--in your very presence.

Thank you to the gurgling stream, the knobby tree, the whistling wind moving the tree tops to and fro as I was delighted with a bit of snow blowing fiercely around me.

Thank you to the profound Silence of the woods the following day after such fierce wind.

Thank you to the profound, healing silence of this hermitage.

Thank you all who had a part in creating this place of Christ in the Wilderness. Those who had the vision. Those who persevered when it seemed impossible/improbable. Those whose generosity and hard work made it possible

Thank you to Sr. Julia, Frank, the board members, all who continue to maintain and improve it.

Thank you to all who come to this place to listen to their God in the silence, to be healed, to be directed, to be challenged to just give Honor and Glory to our Awesome God! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! Amen!

JS March 2012



## ***In The Wilderness...***

We were blessed with a mild winter and now we have a very early spring. All of the wild flowers and trees were blooming up a storm in March and early April. We are not usually blessed with their beauty until May. Mowing and trimming of course have had to start earlier also.

All seemed to enjoy our spaghetti dinner in Stockton, and the leftovers were snatched up quickly by those who did not make for the dinner. We had the guided retreat over the past weekend and it was a very enjoyable experience. The ladies were wonderful and loved walking the grounds. Our booth at the Women's Health and Lifestyle Fair in the Quads Cities was a great experience again. I had some wonderful help staffing the booth from some of our retreatants. We always love the assistance of our volunteers. A lot can be accomplished with their help.

Over the next couple of months we will be sending out the Memorial Day raffle info as well as the Birdies for Charity information. We hope you will support us through these fundraisers.

For those who are looking for retreat time away, we still have three groups of days open. The summer months on through fall still have plenty of openings. Call to arrange your retreat.

Blessings on the rest of spring, and on your days of early summer! Peace, Sr. Julia

## ***Save the Date:***

December 9, 2012 1:30 PM to 4:00 PM

Christmas Concert and Silent Auction Fundraiser.

Mark your calendar and invite family and friends to join you for a wonderful afternoon of music and fun. Free-will offering will be taken at the concert. Silent auction items will be available to bid on. We will have Mystery gifts to purchase and bakery goods as well as jams, jellies, etc. Looking forward to seeing you then.

## ***Have you ever thought of remembering us?***

- When you are making your will and are thinking about charitable bequests, have you ever thought about including Christ in the Wilderness? This would help us immensely in the future as we might continue our retreat ministry.
- Or you could think of some other form of giving to us, such as a charitable remainder trust or a monthly giving program.
- Our legal title and address are  
Christ in the Wilderness  
7500 S. Randecker Road  
Stockton, IL 61085-8922

We are a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization.