

Christ in the Wilderness

Hermitage Retreat Center

Winter January 2012

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

Retreatant Jottings...

First time visit to CITW, and second retreat center visit overall. I give thanks to the Sister of St. Joseph for making this wonderful place available and to Sr. Julia, Frank and others who tend it so beautifully.

Unseasonably warm temps (mid 40s) allowed me to spend approx 5 hrs today enjoying the outdoors: hiking, reading, and more hiking.

Each retreat has its own character and flavor. I've learned not to "schedule" too much, for usually an inner-voice guides me what I need to do next, whether it's going for a hike, reading, writing, praying, etc.



The theme of this retreat turned out to be "compassion," beginning with myself for "just as water reflects the face, so too, does one heart reflect another." Therefore compassion, like charity, must begin at home

and that means with oneself, before one can truly give to others.

Blessings to all who read this.

Written by Glenn

I am leaving tomorrow and I realize I am just beginning to allow myself to "Be" with God. I want to share some of my "experience" here in hopes that you will open yourself to what Our Lord has in store for you.

As I watch the deer at the bird feeder in the early a.m. and early p.m.. I watch how they seem so afraid of every little sound and movement. As I watch them, I don't dare make a move and barely breathe. I want them to stay and enjoy

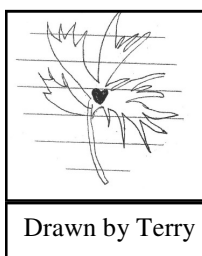
the bird seed and our time of peace together. What are they so afraid of I wonder? They remind me of me.

Constantly fearful of what might appear, what is around the corner or the unknown. I'm hyper vigilant like they are. What am I so

afraid of??? So, God begins to show me that all I need is Him and when I focus only on Him my fears and worries disappear. It begins by me locking myself out of the hermitage this morning. Thank God I was dressed with a coat and the CITW map. I started to panic...then told myself I'll be ok—go to the main house and Sr. Julia will give me a key. Of course I get there and she is gone. She'll be back in an hour. Not so bad. I realize God is being so gentle with His "lesson" on trusting Him. He tells me that I have everything I need because I am with Him. I feel a peace come over me and spend the next few hours walking along the paths and sitting in contemplation. Why do I always feel the need to over prepare, to make sure I have my "stuff," to anticipate all my needs and end up over packing, or buying too many groceries for my stay here? My life is like the deer...constantly watching out for danger. God showed me this a.m. that when I keep my eyes & heart on Him, I have all that I need and my fears subside. Thank you my Lord.



I also want to share with you a gift the Lord gave me this afternoon. I was about to sit down at the chair/table down the path from the gazebo. It was sunny and around 60. Beautiful! It was close to the 3 p.m. hour. The hour of Great



Drawn by Terry

Mercy and I was preparing for prayer time. The chair was filled with dry leaves and sticks and I swept them away to sit down. One leaf was stuck in the chair so I pulled it out and put it on the table. I began praying and opened my eyes, noticing the leaf. This was a dried oak leaf. Imbedded in the leaf was a Heart! It appeared to be like a dried bit of fruit. But it was in the clear shape of a

heart and a reddish brown color. It was so clear and beautiful. Where did it come from? I knew with all my heart and soul that this came from God. His Love was imbedded everywhere in all things, in all—and He needed to show how true this is. That little heart imbedded on that dried leaf was breath taking! I knew it was God showing me his Love. I almost had ignored that leaf, as if it was just another dried up leaf in this wilderness area. I almost overlooked God—I almost didn't pay attention to the fact that God is in all that we experience--He's in the details.

While you are here, I pray that you pay attention to every little detail God places before you. This is your time with Him, to spend completely with him. He will use everything to show you He loves you. Will you pay attention and give Him your all?

May God increase His Love in your life—Blessings,
Written by Terry

In The Wilderness...

This past fall and early winter were relatively mild, but the winter snow arrived about two weeks ago. Fortunately, it has been coming in smaller amounts at a time, so it has been manageable. The snow covered hills are beautiful and the retreatants have been enjoying their time

trekking through the snow. There are still many days available for retreat in the next few months, so give me a call to set up your retreat time. For those who are looking ahead to the warmer months, don't wait too long to schedule your retreat time. We have some hermitages reserved already.

With the summer storms, we had a lot of soil wash away from the creek banks. In order to prevent further erosion and to protect the pathways from washing out, we have done some erosion control work. Since the fall and early winter were mild, we were able to accomplish some of this work on the north half of the creek. We replaced the dirt and covered landscape fabric with RR5 rock. This should prevent further erosion when the heavy rains of spring and summer come. More work will be done when the ground thaws and the temperature rises.



The first weekend in March we will have a booth to advertise our retreat ministry at the Women's Health and Lifestyle Fair in the Quad Cities. If you live in that area, come by and say "Hello." And bring your friends to tell them about Christ in the wilderness.

Enclosed with this newsletter is a letter from our Board Chairperson, inviting you to share your talents with Christ in the Wilderness in whatever capacity works for you. Contact me if you want to explore some possible opportunities.

Enjoy the last months of winter and hopefully spring will roll around in a timely fashion. God bless you and may you be safe in all that you do. Peace, Sr. Julia

Save the Date:

On December 9, 2012, from 1:30 to 4 pm, Christ in the Wilderness will be having a Christmas Concert & Silent Auction Fundraiser. Strings of Faith will be presenting a Christmas Concert for which a free-will offering will be accepted. Enjoy refreshments and visit with others as you browse the auction items to make a bid. We will also have a bake sale and mystery gifts that can be purchased. The doors will open at 1:30 with the concert at 2 pm. Mark your calendars, so you can join us for this enjoyable event.



Spaghetti and Meatball Dinner Fundraiser

For those of you who live near enough to Stockton, you may want to join us on Feb. 29, 2012 from 4-7 pm for Spaghetti and Meatballs. The cost is \$6 in advance or \$6.50 at the door. Children 5 and under eat free and 6-12 years are \$4 per person.



Contact Sr. Julia for tickets or for more information. 815-947-2476 or citw@dishmail.net

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.