

PACEM in TERRIS

P E A C E O N E A R T H

Going into the desert

Have you been in the desert lately? Was it a *land* of desert, the desert space in *your heart* --or-- maybe a *desert time of life*? Do memories remain or stir in your heart when you think about your desert-time?

Woods have been described as “lively, dark and deep.” Deserts might be described as “quiet, vast and mysterious.” Our experience in the desert is always unique. The quiet of the desert can mean peace; or the aloneness can become loneliness. The vastness of the desert can invite us into the excitement of adventure - or the fear of being lost. We do know for certain, somewhere in the quiet, vastness and the mystery of the desert - treasures await us.

Jesus went to the desert. For a moment, imagine the “world” that Jesus lived in. He lived by the light of the sun, heard mostly natural sounds, enjoyed simple food, and had no paper, pencils, periodicals or libraries. Communication

was talking to people, no e-mail or cell phones, and transportation was either on foot or donkey. Jesus lived a quiet life and yet Scripture tells us He often went off to a lonely place to pray, and listen to His Father!



The hermitage is a desert; a place of silence and solitude where God invites His people to come and be immersed into the mystery of His great love. God knows we live in a noisy, fast-paced society where we race to keep up with our responsibilities and relationships. He gave us a prescription! Our Lord Jesus said,

“Come unto me all you who labor and are burdened and I will give you rest” (Mt 11:28) - rest for body, soul and spirit.

Our friend, Catherine Doherty, author of *Poustinia*, writes these encouraging words for all of us: “Deserts, silence and solitude are not necessarily places but states of mind and heart. These deserts can be found in the midst of the city and in our everyday lives. We need only to look for them and realize our tremendous need for them. They will be small solitudes, little deserts, tiny pools of silence, but the experience they will bring, if we are disposed to enter them, may be as exultant and as holy as the one God himself entered. For it is God who makes solitudes, deserts and silence holy.” ♦

*“In the wilderness
prepare the way
of the Lord,
make straight
in the desert a highway
for our God.”
Isaiah 40:3*

Just a note . . .

For many of us the desert is a lifeless, desolate, and lonely place, where the sun bakes the soil to a form of crust. We do not wish to venture there. We may go through it but to stay would be unbearable. Nor would we explore it unprepared without provisions and water.

Much of our experiences at Pacem resemble going to the desert, and many who come experience this desert. Our hearts are parched, our lives are drained of purpose and we are lonely. With provisions and water supplied, we enter the desert, but not like the desert we know.

The woods are full of animals, and the trees spring with life. The prairie shoots out its flowers in response to the heat of the sun. We are renewed, our senses filled with the miracle of nature. Our hearts are renewed and bloom with the touch of God's love.

Alain

St. Anthony of the Desert

Anthony was born in Lower Egypt in 251 to wealthy land-owner parents. When he was about 18 years old, his parents died leaving him to care for his unmarried sister. At the age of 34, he decided to follow the words of Jesus, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasures in heaven; and come, follow Me."

Taking these words quite literally, Anthony gave away some of the family estate to his neighbors, sold the remaining property, donated the funds thus raised to the poor, placed his sister with a group of Christian virgins, and himself became the disciple of a local hermit.

Anthony is notable for being

one of the first ascetics to attempt living in the desert completely cut off from civilization. His lifestyle was remarkably harsher than his predecessors.

Anthony himself did not organize or create a monastery, but a community grew up around him based on his exam-



Summer Chores



Alain Marin in his "other office" hauling brush and wood cut from fallen trees.



Karen Bendix offering her extender to anyone who wants to help as she paints ceilings.

ple of living an ascetic and isolated life.

According to Athanasius, the devil fought St Anthony by afflicting him with many temptations which he overcame by the power of prayer.

In 338, he was summoned by Athanasius of Alexandria to help refute the teachings of Arius. St. Anthony lived for 105 years. The Church celebrates his life on January 17.

A Near Miss

As Lori and I were anxiously anticipating our visit to the Grand Canyon, it never occurred to us that the Canyon was in the desert. What we did know was that we were flying to Phoenix and then driving through the desert to get to the Grand Canyon. While preparing for the drive Lori brought her knitting and a book to read, assuming there would be no scenery. I was prepared to see a lot of sand and a whole lot of nothingness.

Once we left Phoenix the desert unfolded a beauty that overtook both of us. Everywhere we looked we saw another beautiful scene. We had no idea how wonderful the trip would be. It was dark before we arrived at the Canyon. We were like two little kids anxious to just get a peek, disappointed that we had to wait until morning.

Arriving at the Canyon in the morning, we couldn't park the car fast enough. Approaching the edge of the Canyon, the beauty again unfolded before our eyes. It was stunning, with breathtaking views in all directions. We stood there in awe without a word, absorbing all our surroundings, experiencing God's creation and feeling His presence in a way that neither of us had ever before. Then words of praise and thanksgiving came flooding from us.

What an awesome God we have. Our time for the next few days was spent with equally breathtaking views and experiences.

Lori and I were reflecting on



Breathtaking view at the Grand Canyon

our experience recently. We both agreed that God wanted to show us the beauty of the desert and how awesome our time there can be with Him. The perspective God has given us is something we could easily have missed had we preoccupied ourselves on the drive to the Canyon. We are anxiously awaiting our next trip to the desert whether it is to the Grand Canyon or to the hermitage. It should prove to be equally stunning and breathtaking.



Joe and Lori Leis celebrate 35 years of marriage by going to the desert.

Hermit Notes

"Last night was a beautiful night looking out thru the window relaxing on the rocking chair. The lightning lighting up the sky and trees below . . . As my eyes watched it seemed like brief flashes of creation out of the source in which it came . . . "

"Thank you for the gift of provision of daily sustenance, beautiful facilities, the sharing of God's wonderful creation by protecting it from development.

In this sanctuary, I've come to know once again in an ever deeper way that ' I am my Beloved's and He is mine'."

"My time here with God has been very intimate. It hasn't been so much the words He's spoken to me; it's the time He's spent with me. I can feel His presence in the solitude and silence here."

"The love of our glorious Lord rests in this place through His Spirit and His children. His love restores and refreshes and so I am. All glory to God!"

"I can't tell you what a blessing it is to spend time with the Lord at Pacem. Each time has been unique and exactly what I needed for the next phase of my journey with Him. May you all be blessed as you bless others in this special way!"

"What a difference recharged batteries make!!! The first night I thought the flashlight was dim but didn't actually realize how dim it was—that the flashlight even needed recharged batteries— until I put in the newly recharged batteries. What a difference a recharged battery makes!!!! Kind of like a Pacem experience!"

Pacem Profiles

Pacem has said goodbye to one long time staff member and welcomed two new part-time staff.

Ann Marie Croteau, on staff for 8 years, reluctantly resigned in mid-June, in part due to rising gas prices. We miss her story-telling, her laugh and most of all her care for our guests – from orienting them, to preparing the hermitages, to umm-good bread baking!

Mary Schmidt, from Isanti, will assist us with hermitage preparation and housekeeping. Teresa Lauseng, also from Isanti, is helping with office work in addition to hermitage care and housekeeping.



Welcome
Teresa Lauseng (top)
and Mary Schmidt!



Dear Friends,

Blessings to all of you!

You know the desert of the hermitage is one of my favorite subjects! I searched eighty years of memories that could be related to desert time and have chosen to share one dramatic and life changing event. It was being sixteen and facing death for the first time, totally unprepared. Searching for peace and consolation led me into a desert time.

It all started when World War II began in 1941. Everyone's life changed. In 1944, as a High School junior, two classmate friends, young patriotic men, turned seventeen and joined the army. Three months later they were killed. That encounter with death was a dark and painful mystery.

My mind and heart were deserts. All I knew for sure was I had to find God--to tell me about life and death and why I was born. God heard my cry and gently led me through that painful desert into his love and mercy. The Holy Spirit plowed up my soul, planted the truths that brought me to Jesus and my baptism into the Catholic Church. The desert changed my life and I left laden with the precious gifts of Faith, Hope and Love! Amen!

Glory to God!

Shirley Wanchena



"Another Muffin please . . . ?"

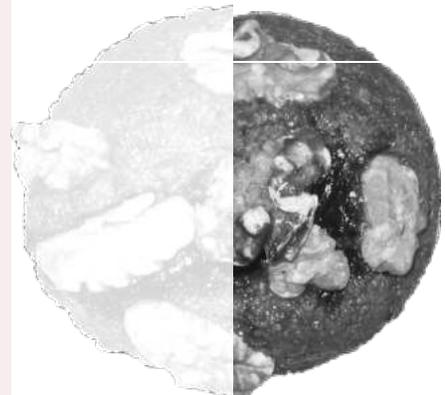
This is the most popular request from our hermitage mailboxes. We delight in the enjoyment our Pacem muffins bring! Like our hermits we need to put our flag up and request "Could we have a "muffin" of a different sort?"

This past July most of you received a letter informing you that Pacem had received an incredible \$20,000 matching grant. Many of you have responded generously with contributions and congratulations on our 20th anniversary. Whatever amount you have given receives our heartfelt gratitude. We pray that God richly blesses you.

Thank you, thank you to all!

We decided to show you the progress we've made-\$9500 has been donated towards the \$20,000 matching grant! (This means your contributions of \$9500 is now \$19,000 for Pacem!).

We are almost half-way toward the goal. Can you help us get a "whole" muffin? -



"Bless us, O Lord . . ."