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March 3, 2016

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LCG NEWS! — FALL 2005The values and
practices of the

LCG

PLAN OF

LIFE

~ embrace ~

Prayer

Work

Study

Silence

Solitude

Simplicity

Stability

Service

Once you have had the experience of God's benevolence, you need no longer feel abashed in aspiring to a holier intimacy. Growth in grace brings expansion of confidence. You will love with greater ardor, and knock on the door with greater assurance, in order to gain what you perceive to be still wanting to you. 'The one who knocks will always have the door opened to him.' It is my belief that to a person so disposed, God will not refuse that most intimate kiss of all, a mystery of supreme generosity an ineffable sweetness. (Bernard of Clairvaux)

LCG Retreat 2005

On the weekend of September 16-18, 2005 we held of our annual retreat at the Abbey of Gethsemani. The theme of this year's retreat was "The Retreat about Nothing." Unfortunately, Jon Siegrist of Louisville, the co-planner and coordinator for the retreat, was unable to participate in the retreat, as he sustained injuries in a bike accident a few days prior to the retreat. Jon was remembered in our prayers as he began a period of recuperation at home. Michael Brown of Louisville filled in for Jon and coordinated the retreat weekend with assistance from other members of the Louisville group.

There were many new faces this year in attendance. Following supper on Friday evening, we enjoyed a social time becoming acquainted with fellow Lay Cistercians, candidates, and guests. Jane Endriss of Toledo led us in a silent meditation following Compline.

On Saturday morning Michael Brown presented a talk on a topic of "Nothingness." He reinforced the importance of being Christ-centered in our spiritual practices. (See notes of Michael's comments below.) Later in the day we all enjoyed a pleasant walk and visit to Merton's Hermitage to join Br. Paul Quenon and a visiting group from Louisville. Br. Paul gave a reflective talk on a few aspects of Merton's thought on celebrating nothing. Later Saturday afternoon Michael Brown and Mike Johnson shared their experiences of attending the International Lay Cistercian Meeting held in Clairvaux, France in June 2005. The day concluded with a "Full Moon Celebration" for those who were interested in participating. We gathered on top of St. Joseph's Hill where Ron Bohannon led us in an experience honoring the gift of the Moon with chant, howling, and a Abba prayer (a version of the Our Father). The full moon together with the night mists draping the knobs and valleys created a mystical scene.

On Sunday morning the conference room was packed with retreatants and guests as Fr. Michael and Br. Paul shared their thoughts on "What it means to be Cistercian." A lively discussion followed.

The retreat concluded as usual with group sharing in the Guest Chapel. Everyone was invited to reflect on the retreat weekend and share insights, experiences, etc., of our weekend together. The final event was the Lay Cistercian commitment ritual where three people who completed their period of discernment and formation within the last year made their first commitment as Lay Cistercians of Gethsemani. They were Mary Guilbert, Don Buckingham of Columbus, Ohio and Kevin Kreutzer of Danville, Kentucky Others in attendance made a re-commitment to live the LCG Plan of Life. We also welcome Paul Kimmel as a new Lay Cistercian who was not able to attend the retreat.

([CLICK HERE to see photos of the retreat.](#))

The LCG retreat for 2006 is scheduled the weekend of September 15-17, 2006. Retreat House reservations for LCG members and candidates can be made from March 15 through May 1.

Notes of Michael Brown's Talk on "Nothingness"

Zen is doing what you are doing and being where you are. Sounds simple, right? It is the same with the spiritual life and our monastic practices. The simple things....the basics are often challenging to do on a daily basis. The reality of the spiritual life.....

Two monks were meditating. An older, wiser monk and a young novice. As they were meditating, the young monk kept peeking at the older monk. He did this several times. Finally, the older, wiser monk looked at him and said, "This is it. Nothing else happens.

The contemplative life....how do you do it? The Plan of Life is our guide.

To be a Buddha means to be an "awakened" one. In the Christian tradition, to be a contemplative is to also be an awakened one.

Our spiritual practices are a means to an end. Our focus must be on Christ. Our intention is the inner transformation and conversion that leads us to purity of heart and the Kingdom of God. This is the heart of the teachings of John Cassian.

As an awakened one, we strive for the single minded attentiveness on Christ that slowly peels away the layers of the onion that makes up our false self. Like the Tom Cruise character in the "Last Samurai", we often have too many minds. As Lay Cistercians living in the world, we strive for this single-mindedness that is focused on Christ.

A small fish was swimming along. He came upon a bigger fish and asked, "Can you tell me where the ocean is?" The bigger fish said, "Are you kidding??? You're in the ocean. It's all around you. In it, we live and breathe and have our being!"

So it is with God. He is like the ocean and we are fish. We spend our entire lives living in his presence. In Him, we live and breathe and have our being!

LCG Advisory Council Met on September 16

The Advisory Council conducted their semi-annual meeting on the afternoon of September 16 prior to the beginning of the LCG retreat. The minutes of this meeting is posted on the LCG website (Members Only page). Highlights of this meeting include the approval of guidelines for state/regional LCG coordinators. Additional coordinators have been identified and will receive more materials from Mike Johnson at the

identified and will receive resource materials from Mike Johnson, as they assume responsibility of coordinating LCG activities in their designated state or region. We will begin a rotation among local LCG communities for the planning and presenting of annual LCG retreats at Gethsemani Abbey. The 2006 retreat will be planned by the Midland/Southeast Michigan-Toledo LCG members. In 2007 the Cincinnati area LCG community will plan the annual retreat. The next LCG Advisory Council meeting is scheduled for April 22, 2006 and will be held in Oxford, Ohio.

Remember Our Candidates in Your Prayers

The following people have entered our year long discernment and formation process using the new formation and mentoring guidelines. They are: John Beach, Richard Beach, Patrick Biggs, Ric Cochran, Steven Craver, Bill Dennehy, Kathleen Ellison, Tom Leonard, Dan McFeely, John Neiheisel, Jill Tessin, and Wallace Myers. Other candidates who are in the final months of their formation are Martha Artis, David Lopez, Amanda Mills, Walter Poe, Molly Randolph, and William Sanders. Please remember all of the candidates in your prayers. May the Lord bless all the candidates and mentors!

LCG Website: "Members Only" Page Opens

The password protected "Members Only Page" is now accessible on the LCG website. This page is only available for LCG members. The Members Only page contains a forum, a member directory, and a LCG Advisory Council section. Many of you should have received an email message containing instructions of how to access the page with a username and password. The webmaster informed us that several email messages were returned as undeliverable. It is important that you keep your email address updated.

Check the LCG website frequently for additions, such as, photo galleries, homilies by Fr. Michael, and resources. Also, please be aware that the new International Lay Cistercian website contains many resources for Lay Cistercians. The address for the website is www.cistercianfamily.org.

A LCG Community Forms in Indianapolis

LCG members Carol Andrejasich and Charla Banner have organized a local LCG community in the Indianapolis area. Carol and Charla have held their first organizing meeting with two candidates for LCG membership, Steve Carver and Dan McFeely. This core group will begin meeting monthly. Carol and Charla will also be LCG coordinators for Indiana and serve as mentors. Welcome to our newest local community in Indianapolis!

Be still and know that I am God.

Resources:

Benedictine Daily Prayer: A Short Breviary

This shorter form of the Liturgy of the Hours was recently published (2005) by Liturgical Press. It is compiled and edited by Maxwell E. Johnson, an Oblate of Saint John's Abbey and the monks of Saint John's Abbey. This book of prayer is "... intended for those with some form of association with or attraction to Benedictine monasticism." This volume is available at a discounted price through Amazon.com.

Suggested Reading:

"Monastic Solitude According to Our Cistercian Tradition" by Miriam Pollard, OCSO and Thomas X. Davis, OCSO, an article included in Cistercian Studies Quarterly, Vol. 40.4 (2005). One of the stated goals of this study on solitude as a monastic observance or practice is "...to express the basic values in such a way that other persons, called to draw from the Cistercian charism in ways that do not include a properly monastic structure of spatial limitation, may embody these values in their own God-given calling...an entire document could be developed in which the principles of our study would be applied to the life of our associates and others who live the Cistercian charism in a lay calling."

REMEMBER THESE DATES!!!

January 8, 2006 — Epiphany Sunday LCG gathering at Gethsemani

April 22, 2006 — LCG Advisory Council meeting in Oxford, Ohio

September 15-17, 2006 — Annual LCG Retreat at Gethsemani Abbey.

ATTENTION !!!

Please keep your contact information up-to-date. Notify us if you change your mail and/or e-mail address.

May They Rest in Peace!

Fr. Flavian Burns, OCSO, former abbot of Gethsemani
James Alig, CLC/LCG member, St. Albans, West Virginia
Fr. James P. Hanley, Diocese of Columbus
(Beloved friend and spiritual director of Mary Guilbert)

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Contact information:

[E-mail: info@laycisterciansofgethsemani.org](mailto:info@laycisterciansofgethsemani.org)

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