



Monastic Musings

Living in and Practicing the Presence of God

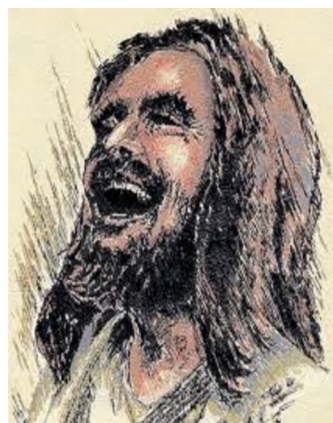
Spring/Summer 2023

Welcome to a “New World”!

by: Right Reverend Barb Martzall

Welcome to our newsletter. Here in the USA, the government has decided to “end the COVID pandemic” precautions! Fortunately here in Massachusetts, the number of infections are slowly dropping each week. I do not expect that we shall ever hit zero percent infection rate, but I can hope that the COVID will start to be more like the Flu! Time will tell how things are going to go for all of us. We here at the hermitage have been very lucky not to have had any Covid infections during the last 3 years! We have done everything we could to keep ourselves healthy. Hopefully all of you have been able to remain healthy also. We know there have been many who have been affected by the virus either having it or family/friends having it. Please continue to be watchful and safe! Hopefully we have all learned how to survive within a health pandemic!

The last couple of months, Mother Myrella and I have been allowing ourselves a little more freedom from masks when we go outside of the hermitage. It is wonderful to be able to see peoples’ full faces again! In the process I am finding that I am having more interactions with people around me. In those interactions, even if it is just a smile, I find myself feeling more positive. Even others have taken the time to respond to interactions. I love to see smiles suddenly show up on another person's face. The bantering back and forth about the most mundane things has become the norm again. It leads to helping those around you in whatever small measure.



Yes the world has become a place of total uncertainty. One never knows from moment to moment what is going to happen. What was normal yesterday is no longer normal or even allowed. For whatever reason, so many people are just trampling all over everyone else to “make themselves” important. So sad actually. I want to see the joy return to people’s lives and hear the happiness in their voices. Little things such as returning the recycle bin to the neighbor’s front stoop can cause the neighbor to see that you care about people and things around you. The “thank you” that you share with the waitress/waiter can make their day and yours too!

There is a picture of Jesus that both I and Mother Myrella have always liked. It is known as the “Laughing Jesus”. That is how I want others to see me – the

laughing schema-archimandrite who cares what you are going through. I may not be able to solve your problem, but I can at least share some positivity with you to hopefully make you feel a little better. In the process together we can possibly solve the problem. The world has become way too negative and dark. I want to find a way to lift up those around me so that there is more joy in life again. So that instead of tearing people down we all learn how to build people up so that they feel in control of their lives again. No more pushing your personal ideas on a person or group but listen to what they are saying and see if there is a way you can fit in and help make it even more "fun". We all have had to live the last 3 years under some really difficult ways. Now we need to learn how to come back into the communities we live in and be more loving and helpful to those around us! Time to create a new loving norm for everyone to enjoy!

Personally, I am looking forward to the nice sunny and warm days where I can get out and enjoy more of the world! Sure things around me are changing and not necessarily in a way that makes me happy. But...I know that change is all part of life and I just have to find a way to fit into that process. Some things that are changing I am not sure how they can be replaced. Some of it means I just have to be patient and see how things are going to shake out. And I have to be willing to ask questions to see what the future holds. For example: our one large shopping mall will be closing, we are told, come July. That means where do I do the shopping I used to do there? Unfortunately most of the stores for shopping are located an hours drive away from me once the mall closes. Mail Order? Hum, that only works if you know exactly how a brand fits on you. Shoes are not really possible through mail order for my feet. Time will tell. And maybe the stores might be able to tell me what their plans are in moving out of the mall. But then that is all part of change and sometimes it is "painful"!

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***Two Announcements from the Ohio Orthodox Catholic Church
by: Archbishop Charles Smith, OSF and the Synod of Bishops***



Archbishop Charles E. Smith, O.S.F. with the Synod of Bishops announces that Father Angie Richardson, has been duly elected to become the second bishop of Ohio Diocese for the Ohio Orthodox Catholic Church.

Father Angie has served as a priest for Our Lady of Peace Cathedral. A date for her consecration as bishop has not yet been set. Father Angie has the support of her fellow clergy and members of the faithful as she prepares.

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Father Angie will be the second female bishop of the Ohio Orthodox Catholic Church. Schema-Archimandrite (Bishop) Barbara Martzall of Massachusetts being the first.

Father Angie has been married for 32 years to her husband, mother to two adult children and loving grandmother.

AXIOS, AXIOS AXIOS

The Ohio Orthodox Catholic Church with the approval of the Synod of Bishops will celebrate the ordination of a new priest, for a resident of Mansfield Ohio — on Sunday, June 4th, 2023, on the feast of the Holy Trinity. The Rev. Gary Proietti will be ordained to the royal priesthood for service to God and the Church. Archbishop Charles E. Smith, O.S.F. will celebrate the Mass in Mansfield Ohio. Rev. Gary is the devoted husband to the Rev. Dr. Faith Proietti.

During the liturgical ordination rite, the archbishop will lay his hands on Rev. Gary Proietti, invoking the authority given by Christ to the apostles to make new priests. The Mass, which begins at 12 Noon will be held at the First Presbyterian of Galion.

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***Quick Intro of Our New Bishop-Elect
by: Right Reverend Barb Martzall***

It is with great pleasure that I can introduce you to Fr. Angela Richardson our newest Bishop-elect!

Now don't get a bent out of shape thinking I missed typed Angela's title. Here in Ohio Orthodox Catholic Church we allow for the priests to elect to use either Father, Mother or Reverend as their priestly title. Angela elected Father! Archbishop Charles asked her why she chose this title and really her explanation was right on point! The title of Mother is used by abbess of a female religious community. When a female priest uses the title of Mother many people immediately think that the female priest is the abbess and not a priest. So Angie chose to use Father! Personally I am very proud of her choice. As you can see, Angie is a person of evaluation and deep thought of situations! Just the type of person you want as a Bishop!

I remember when Fr. Angie talked to Archbishop Charles about becoming a deacon. He called me to get my opinion. One statement that will always stand out about that conversation was: "I (+Charles) think she would make a great Deacon for the church. But what will we do about music as Angie plays the organ for us!" I laughed and told him that God would provide. Then I told him that I thought Angie would make a very good Deacon for the Cathedral! So she began her journey! And yes, God did fulfill the needs for music over the years!

When I met Angie in 2010 (during my Consecration to the Episcopate weekend) she was our organist for Our Lady of Peace Cathedral. I found her very personable, warm and helpful as it was the first time I was at the Our Lady of Peace Cathedral. She has moved through the clergy ranks over the last 13 years. She continues to be a leader within the Cathedral.

So join me in welcoming Fr. Angie as she prepares for her new position within the Jurisdiction and the Cathedral!



In Her Own Words
by: The Bishop-Elect Angie Richardson

“Hello! I’m Father Angela Richardson from Our Lady of Peace parish. Most people call me Fr. Angie. I have always known I was to serve others from the time I was very small. I remember telling my mom at the age of 5 I was going to be a nurse. At the age of 20, I accomplished this goal. So, for the last 38 years I have served as a nurse, most of that service was to the veterans in my community. My calling to the priesthood was not quite as smooth.



I was raised, confirmed, and married in the Roman Catholic Church. I raised my daughter and son in that church. However, I never felt quite at peace in the Roman church. Approximately, 12 years ago, a friend encouraged me to come to Our Lady of Peace for Mass. She knew of my struggles to fit into the mold.

Once I walked through those doors, I immediately felt I was home, I was accepted, and I was wanted even with all my flaws.

Shortly after becoming a member of Our Lady of Peace, a small voice said ‘I want you’ as I was driving home from church. I resisted the call for over a year. Finally, I said yes to becoming a deacon. Fast forward a couple of years, I felt something was again missing. It was like wanting a hot fudge sundae and getting an ice cream bar. Both had ice cream and chocolate but not the same. So, I studied to be a priest.

In November 2019, I was ordained to the priesthood. I am content in that role. I finally felt I was where God placed me and am doing the work He wants me to do.

This past March, the parish elected to elevate me to be the bishop. I do not desire to be elevated nor do I feel worthy to lead. I am reminded that at every step of my journey, I have said ‘no’ to God. He waited and eventually I came around to do His will. For this reason, I have taken the motto ‘Not my will, but yours be done’ from Luke 22:42.

If you need to contact me, please e-mail me at fr.angelarichardson@gmail.com. May God bless you always.”



Lifting the Melancholy from your Heart
By Rev. Mother Myrella LeClair

My dear friends, has the melancholy lifted from your heart? With all of the devastation and violence that has occurred this year, it is easy for us to forget that God still loves each one of us and continues to forgive our lack of belief and faith.



No matter what is happening in this world, **God is still present.** He is still here to lift us beyond the spiritual and psychological pain we may feel and to bring us into the safety of His unending encompassing Light and Love. In our time and space, we often see and/or dwell only on the heartbreak and misery surrounding us rather than the loving Light that embraces us and forgives us our

lack of Faith! We can choose to turn away from the heartbreak and to turn toward the Light!

Although we seem to be locked into a vicious cycle of negativity, we must ask ourselves: who or what is causing these unsettling feelings?. Peace does appear to be elusive. Mother Nature also appears to be as unsettled as we are. Hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, and wildfires have taken over, but Nature will replenish and rejuvenate itself because Nature is also God's child. Nature however knows when to let go and let God heal the destruction. Nature also knows to trust in God.

We humans for the most part have not yet fully given ourselves to God to seek what His will is for us. Instead, we dwell in despair. We tend to forget that we are all equal before God. So, stand before Him and ask Him to remove all despair from your heart, mind, and spirit. There is no reason to feel helpless or hopeless when you allow God's will to work in and through you!

It is important to remember that when you begin to despair or start feeling sorry for yourself to take immediate action and get back on the pathway to peace by seeking God's Light, Love and Forgiveness. Let us be grateful for what God has given us, and pray to God for healing, for compassion for all of us and for all of His creation.

The choice is ours: we can choose to let go of the darkness and see only God's healing and loving Light surrounding all of the universe. As we let go of our anger and despair and hopelessness and turn toward the Light, we are surrounded by God's Love and Healing. Be willing to live in gratefulness to God. Know that you are blessed and surrounded in God's Light even when you cannot see the Light– now and for eternity!

Peace be with you!

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Relationship of Pentecost and Shavuot *by: Archbishop Charles Smith, OSF*

When we think of Pentecost, we think only of a "Christian Holiday". However, "*Shavuot*" (also known as the Feast of Weeks), is a Jewish holiday that commemorates the giving of the Torah (the Jewish sacred texts, like, but not the same as our Old Testament) to Moses on Mount Sinai. There is a similarity between *Shavuot* and Pentecost in terms of their themes and significance, but they are not the same.

Pentecost marks the descent of the Holy Spirit on the disciples of Jesus and the birth of the Christian Church, while *Shavuot* is associated with the receiving of the Torah by the Jewish people. The receiving of the "Law" and how they should live their lives. Both events are considered significant moments of revelation and the establishment of a covenant between God and the respective religious communities.

Pentecost is observed on the seventh Sunday after Easter, which falls approximately 50 days after Easter Sunday. Therefore, the date of Pentecost varies each year but typically occurs between May and June in the Gregorian calendar.

Shavuot is observed on the sixth day of the Hebrew month of Sivan, which usually falls in late May or early June in the Gregorian calendar. *Shavuot* is celebrated exactly 50 days after the second day of Passover, and thus it is also referred to as the Festival of Weeks.

Since both Pentecost and *Shavuot* are linked to the concept of "weeks" (Pentecost means "fiftieth" in Greek), they often occur around the same time, although the specific dates can vary from year to year due to differences between the Gregorian and Hebrew calendars. I find this very interesting for this reason. As our Jewish sisters and brothers celebrate receiving the 'Torah' or the Law. The 'Torah' contains a total of 613 commandments, which are often referred to as "*mitzvot*." We celebrate receiving the Holy Spirit, which we claim to be the birth of our Christian Faith.

Jesus gave us two New Commandments during the Last Supper, which took place on the night before his crucifixion. The specific text can be found in the Gospel of John, Chapter 13, verses 34-35:

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this, all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

Jesus emphasized the importance of love and instructed his followers to love one another as he had loved them. This teaching is often referred to as the "New Commandment" to distinguish it from the commandments given in the Old Testament. It highlights the principle of selfless and unconditional love as a defining characteristic of Jesus' disciples.



The similarities between Pentecost and *Shavuot* are important to us as Christians because the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Torah) and the writings of the early prophets gave understanding to our early church fathers for developing the doctrines of our Christian faith through the teachings of Jesus the Christ. Our Old Testament (based on the Torah) is neither outdated nor unimportant. If we do not understand the journey of our forefathers and our forefathers in faith, we can never be prepared for our mission ahead of us. While the words of Jesus the Christ are of utmost importance to us as Christians, those words give us better understanding of the Laws handed down to us from Moses.

I believe it is important for us to have a clear understanding of other religious perspectives. Not as much to compare ourselves with other religions but to better understand the convictions that we hold as true for us. If we allow the Holy Spirit to work through us, and to find the common ground that we have, then religious prejudice will dissolve.

I personally have a Cherokee heritage; I also belong to and attend a reformed synagogue here in Cincinnati. While this may be confusing to some, I find that each of my spiritualities compliments and supports each other. My Christian faith to me without question is most important. But understanding how my ancestors, my grandmothers and grandfathers of the Cherokee Nation lived, and their spiritual beliefs strengthens my faith. To study the Torah with my Jewish sisters and brothers and to celebrate *Shabbat* and the High Holy days brings me closer and to newer understanding of whom my God, the Creator, is and my relationship with the Creator.

“*Mitákuye Oyás’iŋ*” is a phrase in the Lakota language and culture that loosely translates to “we are all related” or “all my relatives.” It is used by Lakota and non-Lakota alike and has been appropriated as an all-encompassing idea of inclusiveness. Although this phrase may have never been known by any of my ancestors, it has become my daily mantra.

During this Pentecost season may we pray for the wisdom of the Holy Spirit to enlighten and inflame our hearts and our understanding that will bring us closer to all of God's creation. Saint Paul writes In Galatians 3:28 "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

Here in the Ohio Orthodox Catholic Church, we strive to better understand the teachings of Jesus and how to incorporate them in our personal lives, our work lives, church and community. By opening our doors and our hearts to those who come to us may we never lose sight that all are created in God's image and welcomed them as we would welcome the Creator.

It is during this Pentecost season that I wish to announce to all the faithful, to all our friends that on April the 16th 2025, which will be the end of my 25th year as your Archbishop, that I will be retiring. While there is sadness in retiring and in stepping down, there is joy in ensuring that the Ohio Orthodox Catholic Church has a chance to live on and to grow with new leadership.

I wish to thank all of you for the wonderful years that you have supported me and our ministry for the Ohio Orthodox Catholic Church. Those who are current members, for the past members and for all the people who have supported us through the years I am eternally grateful. During the next 18 – 19 months I look forward to your continued support, prayers, and most of all your love.

My Blessing to you and your loved ones during this Pentecost.

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All writings are the views of the author(s) on a particular subject and are meant to challenge your thinking so as to help you grow in your spiritual walk with God.