



Voice of the Cloud

The Newsletter of

MONS NUBIFER SANCTVS

October 15, 2014

Feast Day of St. Theresa of Avila, Virgin & Doctor (d. 1582)

Programs at Mons Nubifer Sanctus are aimed at enhancing the appreciation and practice of the Christian life. We emphasize the costliness of Christian discipleship, encouraging spiritual maturity and union with God. You can find out more about Mons Nubifer Sanctus by visiting our website at www.monsnubifer.org.



A Note from Our Founder:

Our world is filled with the most extraordinary beauty; we see it in ourselves, we hear it in a great piece of music, we perceive it in art and culture, we confront it in the faces of our neighbors and in the earth itself. Here in the Catskill Mountains of New York, as the fiery colors of autumn wend their way up the mountainsides, we are particularly confronted with a beauty that is so sharp it aches. Perhaps it is the reminder of the ever-advancing stream of time, the loss of the frivolity and lavishness of summer, or the proximity of another winter which makes autumn's beauty ache. Indeed, this aching itself can be beautiful as it cracks the hard shells of our hearts and allows us to be, once again, sentient and human beings.

There is another side to our world, however; one which hurts us in less tender ways, one which truly confounds us. This is the presence of evil, of nonsensical cruelty and violence, of hardness and bitterness, of smoldering rage, arrogance and depression. While so many senselessly suffer abroad and struggle for their cultural and religious identities, not to mention for sheer survival, we in the West seem to grow increasingly hostile towards innocence, peace, and authenticity. We seem captive to a belligerent media and to the demands of convenience, locked into a progressively dualistic and divided political system where each party's moral integrity is equally confused and compromised, afraid of the collapse of what appears to be an unsustainable system of abundance and personal ease. We may be troubled by environmental and social deterioration, we may desire a feeling of rootedness and community, we may long for simpler times, yet we ourselves are often unable to spend just twenty minutes in stillness and silence, to be at peace with life, and so are cut off from the earth and from one another. Ultimately we are cut off from the very source of all life, who is God, and so from our deepest nature as human beings made in his image and likeness.

Though the brunt of much ill-informed and undeserved¹ denigration in the popular mind, the Christian faith offers a way through these prison walls which keep us so tenaciously barred. Everything about the historic Christian faith and practice² points us

¹ Though, alas, sometimes well-deserved!

² That is: the fullness of the faith as lived and practiced throughout time up to this day. This includes, but is not limited to, the Christian liturgical and

beyond our self-imposed isolation into true communion, into love, which is freedom from self-centered anxiety, the fullest and truest freedom that the human person can know. It is no coincidence that, from the start, the principal liturgical act of the gathered Christian community has been “communion.” It is fashionable today to say that “all things are connected.” But unless we realize this in fact we are merely regurgitating nice words in our continuing brokenness. All things are, in fact, connected only in and through God. God, then, must be our aim.

The heart of the Christian life is prayer, which in its most perfect sense is rapt communion with God. In the depths of this prayer the one who prays and the one who is prayed to are no longer two. To be united to God is to be free of the shackles of isolated individualism, which can only move towards dissolution and death. It is to participate in, and witness to, God’s life which is eternal and boundless. This life is of profound significance and beauty; it is the glory of God which gives beauty to all, and which has come to us in full in the face of a person: Jesus Christ. In the person of Jesus Christ the perfect union of God and humanity has taken place. By uniting ourselves to Christ we ever more deeply participate in this union, and so come to bear it and its resultant peace to the world for the world’s renewal. This is the Christian’s, indeed the human’s, vocation, and the aim of programming at Mons Nubifer Sanctus.

We invite you to browse this newsletter, most especially our upcoming programs, and to take a further step towards reconciliation by becoming involved in the activities of Mons Nubifer Sanctus. If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact us.

May the Peace of Christ Be Always With You,
James Krueger+
Founder and President

sacramental life; the Christian spiritual/mystical life; the present and living witness and unity of all the faithful past, present and yet-to-come; the interdependence of tradition and scripture; the seven Ecumenical Councils; and the Church as a visible, ordered community which one enters through baptism. Within this community the Christian strives to unravel the grip of sin in reciprocal love and an ever-deepening union with Christ.

News:

Mons Nubifer Sanctus is pleased to announce that its programs will be housed at Saint James Church Lake Delaware. Saint James Lake Delaware's facility is an impressive complex of buildings designed by the celebrated architect R. A. Cram. They are constructed of local Catskill bluestone and Indiana limestone in a stately and solid English gothic style. Nestled on the hemlock forested banks of the Little Delaware River in the northwestern Catskill Mountains, and on the New York Trailways bus line from New York City and points north, they provide the perfect setting for contemplative retreats. You can find out more about Saint James Lake Delaware by visiting their website at www.stjameslakedelaware.net. You may also want to look at this article which features the church: www.sedangli.wordpress.com/2013/12/02/churches-worth-seeing-xii/.

At Saint James we will be able to house 8 – 10 participants for overnight retreats, and so have been given the opportunity to begin scheduling the kind of intensive, immersion programs which we envision. You can help us to get a strong start and make the most of this extraordinary opportunity first by your participation, second by your referrals, and third by your contribution. The latter will be used for supplies (bunk beds & prayer benches) and much-needed advertising dollars. Our fundraising goal is \$8,000 by the end of 2014, a quarter of which we have already raised. An online donation can be made by visiting www.monsnubifer.org/donate. You may also send your tax-deductible donation to Mons Nubifer Sanctus, PO Box 568, Pine Hill, NY 12465.



Winter/Spring Programs at Mons Nubifer Sanctus:

Attending Programs At Mons Nubifer Sanctus:

Programs at Mons Nubifer Sanctus are open to all. Each program is aimed at enhancing the appreciation and practice of the Christian life. We emphasize the costliness of Christian discipleship, encouraging spiritual maturity and union with God. Whether of an academic, practical, or spiritual nature, every program is designed to embolden participants towards this end and so is circumscribed by the practice of prayer, both silent and liturgical. Each day consists of an early morning period of still prayer, following by a sung morning, noon and evening prayer service. The day ends with another period of still prayer and the nighttime service called "Compline." The daily schedule also includes a period of silent work, wherein we complete the chores necessary for our time together and practice the safeguarding of a prayerful heart in daily activity.

Overnight retreats begin with arrival and registration between 2 and 4 pm on the starting day, and end at 2 pm on the final day. All participants are asked to be present for the duration of the scheduled activities from beginning to end as each portion of the schedule represents an integral part of the curriculum and is essential to the contemplative formation on offer at Mons Nubifer Sanctus.

We are located at Saint James Church Lake Delaware, 55 Lake Delaware Drive, Delhi, NY 13753, on southbound State Route 28 halfway between Delhi and Andes. We are accessible by Trailways bus line from New York City and points southeast, and from Cooperstown and points northwest. Unless otherwise indicated all programs require pre-registration. Discounts are available to members of Saint James Lake Delaware, and work scholarships are available to all on a limited basis; please inquire. See our website www.monsnubifer.org or contact us for further information or to register for a program.

Up-Coming Programs:

Saturday November 22: Lift up Your Hearts: Understanding Christian Worship

8:30am – 5:00pm. Freewill Offering; includes light breakfast and lunch.

The Eucharist, or mass, has been the principal action of the gathered Church throughout its history. In fact, it is in the Eucharistic assembly that individual believers are constituted as the Church of God, the Body of Christ. In this one-day intensive we will look at the origins of Christian worship in pre-New Testament and New Testament times, and its development through the post-Apostolic period up to our day. We will look at the “institution narratives” in scripture which relate the actions of Jesus and his words at the Last Supper. We will then study various Christian writings throughout the Post-Apostolic and Patristic ages which deal with, or allude to, Eucharistic worship. Participants will come to understand both the development of Christian liturgy as well as its surprising uniformity throughout time. With this as our background we will spend the afternoon walking through the various actions of the mass so that we might better appreciate their profound significance and our interdependent and mutually supporting roles in worship as both clergy and lay people.

Sunday November 30: Open House Event

3:00 – 4:30pm. Free; no registration required.

Mons Nubifer Sanctus and Saint James Church Lake Delaware invite you to join us for an open house. Come and meet us, take a tour of our amazing buildings, learn about our programs and traditions, and let us get to know you. If you have been curious about Saint James or Mons Nubifer Sanctus but are not yet ready to come worship with us on Sunday morning or to sign up for a program, this is the perfect way to feel out the waters. All are welcome.

Friday December 12 – Sunday December 14: Refreshment

Sunday Advent Retreat

\$100; includes lodging and meals.

The Christian season of Advent, like its big sister Lent, is a time of preparation. Fasting, atonement, and prayer have always been the tenor of these preparatory seasons. Refreshment, or “Rose”, Sunday marks the third week in Advent, a time when the fast was

customarily relaxed for a spell. Even the liturgical color is changed from a solemn violet to a buoyant rose for this one day. The incessant demands of modern life leave little room for prayerful reflection and time for true repentance and forgiveness, so we are providing this retreat as a time set apart to discover the refreshment of stillness and silence. Though not as intensive as our prayer vigils, participants can expect to spend significant time in silence and still prayer, punctuated by Advent reflections and opportunities to avail themselves to the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession) and/or to receive individual spiritual direction. We will also welcome guests from the outside and participate in a simple service of Advent Lessons and Carols on Saturday evening with a reception following; see below for details.

Saturday December 13: Advent Lessons and Carols

7:00 – 8:00pm; reception following. Freewill offering; no pre-registration required.

In anticipation of the celebration of the mystery of the Incarnation, whereby God has joined himself to the human nature to redeem us from isolation and death into his eternal life, join us for a prayerful and joyous service consisting of readings from scripture interspersed with many of our favorite carols. Tarry for a time afterward in the Parish Hall for some food and fellowship around the warmth of the fire.

Monday December 22 – Thursday December 25: Heart of Christmas Prayer Vigil

\$150, includes lodging and meals.

Enter the heart of Christmas during four days of silence and worship in this short but intensive prayer vigil. These vigils comprise the core of the contemplative training at Mons Nubifer Sanctus. The retreat will crest in the midnight mass of the Nativity of Our Lord in celebration of the mystery of the Incarnation, and conclude with a community Christmas brunch on Christmas Day. See Christmas Program below for details.

Wednesday December 24 & Thursday December 25: Christmas Program

Freewill offering; no pre-registration required, but you must RSVP if you plan to attend meals.

Dec 24: 4:30 pm: Solemn Vespers, 5:30 pm: Light Supper, 8:30 pm: Still Prayer Vigil, 10:30 pm: Mass of the Nativity of Our Lord. **Dec 25:** 8:00 am: Still Prayer Vigil, 9:00 am: Solemn Matins, 10:00 am: Christmas Day Mass, 11:30 am: Community Christmas Brunch. All are welcome.

Wednesday December 31: New Year's Program: Midnight Mass for Healing and Peace

Freewill offering; no pre-registration required unless staying overnight.

Though the Church begins its new year with Advent, the secular holiday of New Year's is a time when we reflect as a culture on the past and make resolutions for the future. Despite these intentions, just about everything about New Year's and our celebrations of it seem to distract us from these intentions. Mons Nubifer Sanctus and Saint James Lake Delaware invite you, then, to enter 2015 with wakefulness and purpose. Not blinding ourselves to the great sufferings of our time but engaging human pain and offering it up to God for healing, this will be the aim of our time together this evening. Let us together pledge to live 2015 in the love of Christ. **9:00pm:** Still Prayer Vigil; **10:30pm:** Break/prepare for mass. **11:00pm:** New Year's Mass, reception following. **Overnight accommodations available on a limited basis, please inquire.**

Thursday January 1 – Tuesday January 6: Epiphany Prayer Vigil

\$200, includes lodging and meals.

The Prayer Vigil is at the heart of the contemplative training on offer at Mons Nubifer Sanctus. Participants will enter into four days of deep silence, spending many hours together each day engaging the practice of still prayer. This will be punctuated by the chanting of the psalms at morning, noon, and evening prayer services, and a daily period of silent work will help us carry our prayerfulness into our everyday activities. All participants will have an opportunity to take advantage of the Sacrament of Reconciliation (confession) and/or to receive individual spiritual direction during the program. The vigil will culminate in the mass of the Epiphany, celebrating the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. You may wish to begin this retreat by attending the New Year's Program, listed above.

Thursday January 22 – Sunday January 25: Guard What Has Been Entrusted to You: Surveying the Interdependence of Scripture and Tradition in the Historic Christian Faith.

\$150, includes lodging and meals.

But as for you, man of God, shun all this; aim at righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. . . . O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you. 1 Timothy 6:11-20.

According to a report of the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life there are an estimated 41,000 different Christian denominations worldwide. These can range from worldwide communions to single churches run by lone-ranger pastors. The exceedingly great number is due, largely, to the latter rather than the former. All scripture reading requires interpretation, and there can potentially be as many different interpretations as there are individual readers. The “deposit of faith” entrusted to subsequent generations of Christians by the Apostles and, indeed, by Jesus himself, included a tradition of interpretation. In other words, a tradition of teaching shaped how scripture was read and understood. A perfect example of this comes to light when one considers that the Book of Isaiah is treasured by both Christians and Hebrews, yet each group derives a very different meaning from the text. For the Christian Isaiah speaks of Christ. The New Testament writings themselves grew out of a living tradition rather than the other way around, and they themselves interpret the Old Testament in a very particular way. In this program, then, we will look at the uniquely Christian tradition of scriptural interpretation, the development of the New Testament canon, and from these backgrounds will explore the necessity for both scripture and tradition in the Christian life and their interdependence from the beginning. This retreat is in celebration of the Feasts of Saint Timothy and the Conversion of Saint Paul on the 24th and the 25th respectively.

Thursday February 12 – Sunday February 15: Saint Valentine’s Day Couple’s Retreat

\$200/couple, includes lodging and meals.

Do not refuse one another except perhaps by agreement for a season, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come

together again, lest Satan tempt you through lack of self-control. 1 Corinthians 7:5.

Ready for a spiritual romance? During this retreat you and your loved one will have the opportunity to spend significant time together in silence and prayer. This will be interspersed with discussions about living the Christian life, especially a contemplative life, as a couple, helping you to find strategies and practical ways to bring your relationship closer to God and God more deeply into your relationship. The retreat will include a romantic fireside dinner, shared with other folks from the broader community, on Saturday night.

Thursday February 19 – Sunday February 22: Lenten Prayer Vigil

\$150, includes lodging and meals.

The Prayer Vigil is at the heart of the contemplative training on offer at Mons Nubifer Sanctus. Participants will enter into two whole days of deep silence, spending many hours together each day engaging the practice of still prayer. This will be punctuated by the chanting of the psalms at morning, noon, and evening prayer services, and a daily period of silent work will help us carry our prayerfulness into our everyday activities. All participants will have an opportunity to take advantage of the Sacrament of Reconciliation (confession) and/or to receive individual spiritual direction during the program.

Thursday February 26 – Sunday March 1: Priest and Poet: A Writer's Retreat

\$200, includes lodging and meals. Taught by award winning author and poet Marly Youmans.

This retreat is offered in celebration of the feast day of George Herbert, Priest and Poet, on the 26th. Details TBA.

Thursday March 12 – Sunday March 15: Introduction to the Theology and Practice of Contemplative Christianity

\$150, includes lodging and meals.

Contemplative Christianity is not to be opposed to “active” or “social” Christianity. If contemplation is to be Christian it must reach out into the world, and if social engagement is to be Christian it must always and ever point the world towards union with God. The word ‘contemplation’ derives from the Latin *contemplatio*: ‘to

behold' or 'to gaze upon.' The intent of contemplative Christian practice, then, is to move beyond discursive and imaginative forms of meditation and prayer into a simple, restful, intuitive, and intimate gaze upon God. Before this can be achieved the Christian disciple must first deal with all of the sinful habits of mind and heart which divide the soul, and distract it from integration and intimacy with God. The contemplative disciplines are designed to foster this process of deep inner healing and to help to cultivate the unity of intent – which the early church writers identified as “purity of heart” – by and in which we experience union with Christ, and so with the Father in the Spirit.

If our prayer vigils seem like too much too soon, take the opportunity to dip your feet into the ocean of contemplative practice at this retreat. Participants will gain a solid theological and historical foundation in contemplative Christian practice, as well as some practical knowledge. Learn how to pray deeply; how to chant the daily prayer offices in morning, noon and evening prayer services; how the Christian sacramental and communal life supports and deepens contemplative practice, and how to practice contemplative activity. Participants will have the opportunity to avail themselves to individual spiritual direction and/or the Sacrament of Reconciliation (confession) during this retreat.

Wednesday April 1 – Sunday April 5: Paschal Triduum Prayer Vigil

\$200, includes lodging and meals.

Come celebrate the most important mystery of the Christian faith with focus and intention. Immerse yourself in the poignant liturgies of the Three Holy Days through which one loves, suffers, dies, and rises again in triumph in union with Christ, culminating in the stirring and lovely Easter Vigil service.

The Prayer Vigil is at the heart of the contemplative training on offer at Mons Nubifer Sanctus. Participants will enter into four whole days of deep silence, spending many hours together each day engaging the practice of still prayer. This will be punctuated by the chanting of the psalms at morning, noon, and evening prayer services, and a daily period of silent work will help us carry our prayerfulness into our everyday activities. All participants will have an opportunity to take advantage of the Sacrament of Reconciliation (confession) and/or to receive individual spiritual direction during

the program. Or attend all or part of our Easter Program, described below.

Easter Program

Freewill offering; no pre-registration required.

Details TBA.

Saturday April 25: Putting Forth a Word: Addressing Common Criticisms of the Christian Faith in the Light of Historic Christianity

Freewill Offering, includes light breakfast and lunch.

Details TBA.

Friday May 8 – Sunday May 10: I Will Go to the Altar of God: A Retreat for Altar Guild Members, Altar Guild Wannabes, and the Clergy who Oversee Them.

Details TBA.

Thursday May 21 – Sunday May 24: Pentecost Prayer Vigil

Details TBA.

Thursday June 11 – Friday June 14: The Holy Trinity: Why the Doctrine Matters for the Christian Life

In celebration of Saint Basil the Great's Feast day on June 14.

Details TBA.



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