

Voice of the Cloud



the newsletter
and program catalog
of

MONS NUBIFER & SANCTVS

2017

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Theoria, Leituorgeia, Diakonia, Koinonia
Contemplation, Liturgy, Service, Communion

Recapturing the vision of God.

Fostering full-contact discipleship in a fragmented world, Mons Nubifer Sanctus is a place set apart for the meticulous study and practice of contemplative Christianity. We emphasize life-long, face-to-face spiritual companionships and mentorships, and a life daily inspired by the vision of God that reaches beyond a Sunday to Sunday obligation. Grounded in the fullness of the ancient faith, our programs are aimed at the realization of truly Christian character, the knowledge of God, and wakefulness to divine love.

We encourage Authenticity and Maturity for the development of Virtue and Clarity.

We seek Reconciliation and Renewal for the realization of Flourishing and Fullness,

Consummated in the love of God.

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Dear Friends of Mons Nubifer Sanctus,

Greetings in the peace of Jesus.

For many months, I have been writing, blogging and speaking about some of the key challenges facing us as a nation. I have been clear that it is the calling of Christians to rise above what I perceive as an emotionally regressive atmosphere, characterized by reactivity, polarization, a herding mentality and political fundamentalism. This regressive wind rouses the bonfires of both liberals and conservatives, Democrats and Republicans, as well as the other small parties and movements that are afoot. With our ears turned to various special interests and radical voices rather than towards one another and a common good, we are finding it more and more difficult even to speak with one another. We appear unable to identify and find common ways forward, unable to address the things that affect most of us the most. We forsake nuanced, intelligent conversations about the issues that confront us for bitterness and passion; for over-simplified, black and white, totalistic thinking. While our media has become more and more an instrument of this

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regression, even family members and Christians are finding it difficult to remain in communion. A friend was just commenting to me about a couple who are on the verge of divorce over differing political views. This sad situation is not only destructive to democracy and the democratic process, but it taxes the resiliency and capacity of local communities and our nation as a whole, betrays the Gospel, and grips our souls with the worst kind of darkness.

When Christians allow themselves to founder in this charged emotional tide, though they believe they are being righteous and standing for God, they, too, are merely drowning with the multitudes. The task of the Christian is to offer to the world another possibility. We must demonstrate another way; we must point the world toward another reality. Christians must rise above the anxieties, terrors and passions that are driving our nation. Our calling as Christians is to put out trust not in the machinations of worldly empire and politics, but in God. Therefore, we must seek to live in and out of a deep and abiding faith, knowing that our true President is the One who is both beginning and end, alpha and omega. He has the victory, and we must enter into his victory and make it our own. Only then can we convey that victory to the world.

I am not advocating acquiescence to injustice and corrupt politics. We must participate in our communities, but we must do so from a place of clarity and peace. If we spent as much time tending to our own hearts as we do monitoring the actions and beliefs of others we will have spent half of our time well! We must take complete responsibility for the state of our own souls. Though sin crouches at our door, we must be its master (Gen 4:7). We will not answer for the other on the final day, but for what we have done, for who and what we are, for the evil that we have nurtured or allowed to fester within us.

Democracy, for the Christian, is the arena in which we must practice, prove and test Christian love. Therefore, we must rise above the climate of our times. We must be different from what the times would have us be. We must manifest to the world the way of Christ, who refused to break communion either with God or with evil men even while both were leading him to a cross.

“We must participate in our communities, but we must do so from a place of clarity and peace. ... We must take complete responsibility for the state of our own souls.”

It is in continually going to the cross of contemplative prayer that we develop this kind of courage. We develop the courage to remain awake and steadfast even when doing so hurts. We find the courage to be still even among the fires of passion; to not merely react. We find the courage to hope in the providence and goodness of God without succumbing to negativity, cynicism and the desire to cower in the face of challenge. In short, we yield our lives to God and join with one another in an illogical leap of faith. Even in difficult times, perhaps especially in difficult times, we must trust. We cannot demonstrate to the world what it means to walk in faith if we ourselves are no different from the anxious world.

I urge you to gather with us in the years to come that we might practice and prove the peace of Christ together, and together form a community devoted to sanity and personal transformation in these regressive times. It is vitally important to keep such an oasis watered and well-tended in our day and age.

Blessings,

Fr. James+

Fr. James' blog posts can be read at www.monsnubifer.org/blog.

News & Happenings

As a nation, we have seen a great deal of unrest and polarization. As it has for many, this has occupied our hearts and minds. We have focused on providing opportunities to discuss the issues that we face, and we have and continue to assert the need to take personal responsibility for the state of our own souls.

In the meantime, the seasons continue their rounds. We have welcomed onto our grounds some 60,000 new guests by taking on two bee colonies. After a strong first season, they are currently waiting out the winter in cluster. We will see how they have fared come springtime.

This year we rolled out a re-designed website. It is responsive and mobile friendly. Though some fine tuning may be in order, it more clearly states our intention to be the locus of a community of faith dedicated to training in the contemplative disciplines, taking personal responsibility for our lives, and sanity. If you have not already done so, we invite you to have a look at: www.monsnubifer.org.

New programs include 6 month and 1 year extended contemplative training courses, and a contemplative training course for recovery from addiction. See www.monsnubifer.org/our-programs for further info.

Another lovely Christmas season was spent here, including our New Year's Eve midnight mass for healing and peace.

As always, we are putting out a call for people who wish to study and serve here on a longer-term basis as an intern or work-scholar. We can house such people for a month or more, and might even consider a full year. While here one would train in the contemplative life, gain an appreciation for rural parish ministry and mission, and help this ministry to thrive by lending a hand in areas of need. If interested please inquire.



CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER: KNOWING GOD IN THE BIBLICAL SENSE

by. Fr. James

Now the man knew his wife Eve, and she conceived and bore Cain ...

Genesis 4:1

Issues in Biblical Translation

When translating any text into another language there are two approaches that one can take.¹ On the one hand, literal translations strive to faithfully and consistently represent, as far as is possible, the source texts. In both Greek and Hebrew, which are the original languages of the Bible, word orderings are often different than they would be in English usage. A truly literal translation of biblical texts, then, would in many ways be incoherent, and certainly strange to our ears. The most literal translations are called *interlinear glosses*. They are a simple, word-for-word translation from the source text.

For an example, an interlinear gloss of John 1:1-3 would read: “In beginning was the Word, and the Word was with the God, and God was the Word. This One was in beginning with the God. All things through him came into and without him came into not even one that came into.” A literal translation such as this starts out familiar enough, but the passage quickly loses a meaningful flow when rendered into English this way.

It is necessary, therefore, to change the order of some words for the sake of flow and comprehension, and even to add a word or two. For example, the RSV has closely translated verse 3 into English as “All things came into being through him ...”,

only changing the word ordering a tad and adding the word “being” for comprehension’s sake.

The other tack that a Bible translation can take is an *idiomatic translation*, which seeks to reproduce the message of the original text (the understanding of which depends, in this case especially, on the interpretation of the translator), but prefers to use colloquialisms and idioms where these do not exist in the original manuscript. Often, such an approach to translation



1 Though there are many options in between the two extremes brought out here. A good overview of the issues at stake in translation can be found here: Mahmud Orudari, “Translation procedures, strategies and methods”. Translation Journal. <http://translationjournal.net/journal/41culture.htm>, (accessed 8/17/16).

winds up replacing the ancient idioms in the original text with new idioms, as we shall see presently. This tends to distort or altogether obliterate nuances of meaning in the text, while also obscuring the thought patterns and associations behind the chosen words. What such a translation does make for is a very contemporary and even hip sounding Bible, but in this process we run the very real risk of obscuring important associations.

Adam Knew His Wife, Eve

The text that we will look at in this regard is Genesis 4:1. The interlinear gloss of this text reads, “And the man (Heb. *adam*) knew Eve his wife and she conceived and bore Cain ...”. The NIV reads, “Adam made love to his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain.” The New Living Translation prefers the more Victorian, “Adam had sexual relations with his wife”. I have to admit to finding this a little amusing. “Sexual relations”? Why bother! Why not just say what the text says, “Adam *knew* his wife”?

Adam and Epistemology

The temptation is to dismiss the Hebrew phrase “Adam knew his wife” as a mere ancient Hebrew euphemism for having “sexual relations”, and so to render it into English according to this assumption. Obviously, Adam’s knowing Eve in this way got her pregnant, so it certainly does entail sex. The important question, however, is whether or not there is some hidden wisdom in this euphemism that needs to be highlighted. Does it mean more than just having sex?

We can ask similar questions regarding what it means to “conceive” as opposed to “become pregnant”,² as well as to “bear” a child as opposed to the mere biological act of giving birth to one. But we will focus here on the word “to know”, and this question leads us to epistemology. Don’t let that word scare you. Epistemology is simply that aspect of philosophical and theological inquiry that has to do with the question of knowledge. How do we come to knowledge of things, especially knowledge of God, and what are the limits of knowledge, especially when talking about knowledge of God?



2 The Greek word here is “*sullambano*”, which can also mean “to seize, grasp, apprehend”, as well as to “come to the aid of”.

Biblical Epistemology: Knowledge as Intimacy

Based on the passage in question from Genesis 4, in biblical terms knowledge is not gained by abstraction, by standing apart from something and studying or dissecting it. Rather, knowledge of something is gained by intimacy, by experience, by partaking of its object and making of it a subject.



This is a very different understanding of knowledge than most of us carry today. To know something in the biblical sense is to be intimate with it. This is made clear in the phrase “Adam knew his wife, Eve”. The Hebrew word used here is *yada*, meaning “to know”. The translators of the Septuagint, the Greek Old Testament (which is the text that the New Testament

writers used and quoted from), also uses here the Greek word “to know”, *ginosko*. Its meanings are many and subtle, including “to comprehend”, “to acknowledge”, “to recognize” and even “to choose”.

The biblical understanding of knowledge, then, is an experiential, direct, intimate way of knowing rather than an abstracted and removed way of knowing. To be faithful to a proper Christian understanding of both knowledge *and* sex we should feel compelled to translate this word correctly as “knew”. Adam did not merely have “sexual relations” with Eve, but he knew her by intimate union, and this union not only sets the standard for human marriage but also typifies the nuptial union of Christ with his Church, and so of God with creation (Rev. 21:3.). Through this one word, Adam’s knowing his wife becomes related to our knowing God. They are not equal, but an association is made.

Intimate Knowledge is Contemplative Knowledge

This understanding of knowledge is very important for grasping the contemplative Christian life, where knowledge of God is sought not through abstract reasoning or academic study, nor through reflection and meditation,



but through intimate union.³ We must show up for this kind of work in a very particular way, not as thinkers but as lovers.

I cannot know my wife by thinking about her. Rather, I know her by spending time with her, by listening to and receiving her, by making love to her, and this making love goes far beyond the bedroom. We make love at the dinner table, when working in the garden together, when running errands, when talking about finances, when fighting, and so on.

I cannot know my wife apart from myself; I must participate in her life in order to know her. To say that I cannot know my wife apart from myself is not narcissistic, for narcissism cannot know anything but itself, and so can really know nothing at all. To say that I cannot know my wife apart from myself does not diminish her; rather, it makes her all the more significant. If I cannot know my wife apart from myself, then the opposite holds true as well: I cannot know myself apart from my wife. She and I are coincidental; we define one another; we call one another into being out of the isolated non-being of sinful self-absorption. And if this is true for my wife and me, how much more so is this true with God!

Contemplative Prayer: The Prayer of Intimate Knowing

The 14th century anonymous writer of *The Cloud of Unknowing* states, “Thought cannot comprehend God. And so, I prefer to abandon all I can know, choosing rather to love him whom I cannot know. Though we cannot know him we can love him. By love he may be touched and embraced, never by thought.”⁴ This “touching and embracing” in love is where knowledge of God is to be had.



3 A very worthwhile read that explores these two ways of knowing, that of an abstracted and removed knowledge and of an intimate and intuitive knowledge, while highlighting the chilling one-sidedness of our age is Karl Stern’s work, *The Flight from Woman*. Equating rational mastery with the masculine principal, and intuitive, relational knowing with the feminine principal, Stern surveys the development of thought in the West from Descartes forward, bringing to light the awful specter of a culture which denies at best, and actively destroys at worst, everything that is to be equated with the feminine. Much of what defines the “feminist movement”, according to this study, is shown to dishonor the feminine rather than revere and elevate it. Karl Stern, *The Flight from Woman* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1965).

4 William Johnston, ed., *The Cloud of Unknowing and The Book of Privy Counseling*, (New York: Image Books, Doubleday, 1973), 54.

God doesn't want us to be experts about him – in fact, he consistently escapes being pinned down by us mortals (Exod. 3:13-14). God rather wants us to love him (Deut. 6:5) – and this not for his sake, but for ours; for the fulfillment of our deepest nature.



I do not say this as some kind of anti-intellectualism. All of our faculties participate in redemption. This includes our intellects, which need cleansing, direction, exercise and clarity, and which partake in our love for God. Anyone who knows me knows that I am a stickler for accuracy and nuance in theological thought, and the point being made about thought not being able to comprehend God is a part of that accuracy. The fact is that, classically speaking, the true theologian was not the one who could wax eloquent about God and the scriptures, but the one who came to the limits of knowledge, there entering into the Living One beyond knowing. The theologian thus finds rest in God in intimate communion, and comes to the fullest

knowledge of God by reaching the limits of knowledge. Such knowledge is not knowledge *about* God, but *of* God, just as we only gain true knowledge of fire when we are burned by it.

Contemplative prayer is a mode of prayer that puts all thought behind and both reaches out to and receives God in the intent of love alone, there to touch, to embrace, to truly know him in the biblical sense. The contemplative work, which is the work to which all Christians are called (Matt. 11:28), is the work of a lifetime. If I said there were anything easy and quick about it I would be lying. Then again, if I told you there were anything easy and quick about knowing my wife, I would also be lying. Knowing my wife, after all, is a whole lot more involved than having sexual relations with her.

Signs of the Saints

This section features selections from the writings of the saints that address various aspects of the Christian spiritual life and the general topics of the newsletter.

Hesychius of Jerusalem, Writings from the Philokalia On the Prayer of the Heart

It is impossible to live our present life without food and drink. So, too, it is impossible for the soul to attain anything spiritual and pleasing to God, or to be free from inner sin, without guarding of the mind and purity of heart – in other words, without sobriety – no matter how much a man strives to refrain from committing sins ...

... This virtue of attention is called spiritual love of wisdom. Practice it with great sobriety and zealous warmth, with prayer to Jesus, with humility and constancy, with silence of your physical and mental lips, with abstinence in food and drink, withdrawing from all sin. Practice it by following the spiritual path skillfully with good judgment, and with God's help it will reveal to you things you never expected. It will give you knowledge, will enlighten you, will make you wise and will teach you things which formerly your mind could not even receive when you were walking in the obscurity of passions and dark deeds, plunged in the abyss of forgetfulness and confusion of thoughts.

Upcoming Programs

2017

Programs at Mons Nubifer Sanctus are open to everyone who seeks a deeper intimacy with God, regardless of denomination. 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 takes place within our unique training environment designed to embolden us towards these ends, where prayer is central. Each day consists of an early morning period of still prayer, followed by sung morning, noon and evening prayer services. 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 to make our time together possible while practicing the safeguarding of a prayerful heart in daily activity.

Unless otherwise noted, overnight retreats begin with arrival and registration between 4:30 and 5:30 pm on the starting day, and end at 2 pm on the final day. 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. All participants are asked to be present for the duration of the scheduled activities from beginning to end.

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 two hours from Albany and three hours from New York City, and are accessible by Trailways bus line from New York City and points southeast, and from Oneonta and points northwest. Unless otherwise indicated all programs require pre-registration. Most of our programs are offered for a freewill donation according to your ability to give, though you must give something. We suggest \$75/night for a programmed retreat, and \$60/night for a prayer vigil. If you are unable to offer a cash donation work scholarships are available; please inquire. See our website www.monsnubifer.org, or contact us for further information or to register for a program.

+ Friday January 6 – Mass of the Epiphany

Supper following. In the Chapel of the Holy Silence in the Guesthouse.

+ Friday January 27 - Sunday January 29: Introduction to the Theology and Practice of Contemplative Prayer

Dip your feet into the ocean of contemplative practice in the classical Christian tradition. Through an engagement of scripture and patristic and liturgical texts participants gain a solid theological and historical foundation in Christian spirituality, put to work through a guided immersion in contemplative prayer. Learn how contemplative practice touches, deepens and unites all aspects of the Christian life: serving the Liturgy, study, serving others in our livelihoods, and in the Christian moral and ethical life. Learn the essentials of Christian prayer and how prayer can be deepened; 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 maintain prayer in activity and to make activity prayer. Participants have the opportunity to avail themselves of individual spiritual direction and/or the Sacrament of Reconciliation (confession) during this retreat.

+ Saturday February 11 (or stay from the 10th to the 12th): The Bride of Christ: Salvation and the Nuptial Mystery

9:00 am to 1 pm

And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband ... (Revelation 21:2)

This program explores human salvation and the work of Christ from the standpoint of nuptial, or matrimonial, imagery. The nuptial character of salvation hails back to Genesis 1 and its history to the earliest of Old Testament times. Nuptial imagery continues through the writings of the Prophets, finding its fullest Old Testament expression in the Song of Songs. All of this points forward to Christ as the bridegroom of the Church as expressed in the writings of Saint Paul and in Revelation. In fact, the nuptial symbol of the Christ event subsumes even the symbols of sacrifice and atonement, and one cannot fully appreciate the Christian spiritual life without a rounded consideration of this fact.

A brief survey is also made regarding the conjugal character of the mystical experience, and Christian marriage as the sacramental sign of these spiritual realities.

+ Thursday February 23 – Sunday February 26: Priest & Poet Series: Recapturing the Christian Imagination

And God spoke to Israel in a vision at night and said, “Jacob! Jacob!” “Here I am,” he replied. (Genesis 46:2)

Under the influence of the materialism of American secular modernism, a great number of people have lost the capacity for imaginative spiritual vision. As a result, we are unable to apprehend the symbolic, spiritual language of the Church, and many expressions of Christianity have grown dull and wooden. Yet, Christianity in its fullness has served to inspire astounding cultural, artistic, literary, musical, philosophical, moral, esthetical and liturgical/theatrical expressions. Witness how the Christ event and Christian life and teaching has aroused a creative, spiritual response that is as profound as it is beautiful. Explore some of the great cultural achievements that would not have been possible without a grounding in the Church. Through journaling and other forms of art, let the Christian revelation nourish and free your own sense of vision. This series of programs takes place around the feast day of George Herbert, Priest and Poet, on February 26.

+ Thursday March 9 – Sunday March 12: Gregory the Great Prayer Vigil

Begin Lent on the right foot at this prayer vigil culminating on the feast day of Saint Gregory the Great (c. 540 – 604 A.D.). The Prayer Vigil is at the heart of the contemplative training on offer at Mons Nubifer Sanctus. Participants enter into a deep and regenerative silence, spending many hours together each day engaging the practice of still prayer (Christian meditation). This is punctuated by the chanting of the psalms at morning, noon, and evening prayer services, and a daily period of silent work helps us to carry our prayerfulness into everyday activities. All participants have an opportunity to take advantage of the Sacrament of Reconciliation (confession) and/or to receive individual spiritual direction during the program.

+ Friday March 24 - Sunday March 26: Introduction to the Theology and Practice of Contemplative Prayer

See Jan 27 for description.

+ Wednesday April 12 – Sunday April 16: Paschal Triduum Prayer Vigil

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 and the Easter morning mass. See March 9 for further description.

+ Saturday May 6 (or stay from the 5th to the 7th): Until I Rest in Thee: Readings from Saint Augustine

You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you. (Saint Augustine)

Saint Augustine, Bishop of Hippo in Northern Africa from 395 – 430, is one of the most influential theologians in the Western Christian and philosophical traditions. He may also be one of the more misunderstood. Sometimes criticized for his somber views of human limitation, Augustine is yet composer of the line “God loves each of us as if there were only one of us.” Through reading, commentary and discussion this program gives a solid foundation for understanding the life, thought and later influence on Western culture of this prolific, brilliant and sometimes controversial figure.

+ Friday May 19 - Sunday May 21: Introduction to the Theology and Practice of Contemplative Prayer

See Jan 27 for description.

+ Friday June 2 – Sunday June 4: Lord and Giver of Life: The Holy Spirit in the Life of the Church

A central mystery of the Christian faith is the seeming paradox of God’s triune nature: God is one God in three divine persons. This program explores the persons of the Trinity from both an ontological (what God is) and economic (God’s activity in creation) standpoint with particular emphasis on the person of the Holy Spirit. From

creation to Revelation the dynamic energy of the Holy Spirit works for the salvation of mankind and the sanctification of the world, and this is reflected in his role as consecrator of the Church at Pentecost, as guide of the Church in history, and as both consecrator and guide in the Church's on-going sacramental and spiritual life. Reviewing scripture, patristic texts, and the creeds, our exploration culminates in a reflection regarding the Holy Spirit's work in contemplative prayer. This retreat culminates in the celebration of Pentecost on June 4.

+ Thursday June 22 – Sunday June 25: Nativity of John the Baptist Prayer Vigil

Stir up the prophetic spirit of John the Baptist and enter into the wilderness of contemplative prayer. See March 9 for further description.

+ Friday June 30 – Sunday July 2: Proclaiming Liberty to the Captives: Bondage and Freedom in the Christian Spiritual Tradition

Live as free people, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as God's slaves. (1 Peter 2:16)

Every Independence Day we celebrate the relative freedoms that we enjoy as Americans. In our public discourse we are confronted again and again by the notion, or by varying notions, of freedom. This program ranges through scripture, the Christian spiritual tradition, and various expressions of political theology in order to discern a uniquely Christian understanding of both freedom and bondage. We will then explore how such an understanding might guide not only our personal lives, but our public participation in the democratic process.

+ Wednesday July 19 – Sunday July 23: And God Said: Creativity & Art as Sacrament

The nature of man demands the sacramental. If he's denied the deep and the real, he'll fall for the trivial, even for the ersatz. (David Jones)

God's creative activity is envisioned in Genesis 1 and throughout scripture as a communication and sharing of his life. The human being, made in the divine image, shares this communicative, creative impulse. This program allows artists of all kinds – writers, visual artists, photographers, musicians – a period of time set apart to

work creatively in the context of contemplative practice. Punctuated throughout by many periods of formal silence and presentations on the sacramental nature of art, the program will culminate in a showcase of each participant's work in a public forum on Sunday afternoon. This program will end at 4pm on Sunday.

+ Friday August 4 – Sunday August 6: Transfiguration Prayer Vigil

This prayer vigil ends with a celebration of the feast of the Transfiguration of Our Lord on August 6. See March 9 for further description.

+ Friday August 18 - Sunday August 20: Introduction to the Theology and Practice of Contemplative Prayer

See Jan 27 for description.

+ Thursday October 5 – Sunday October 8: Creation and the Christian Life: Walking the Wilderness in Prayer

This retreat commingles contemplative prayer, day hikes in the Catskill Mountains, and reflections on Genesis 1-11 as it relates to the Christian spiritual life and our relationship with the earth and its Creator. Creation and salvation are unequivocally linked in the biblical narrative. The Bible begins and ends with creation stories and is punctuated throughout with allusions to the narratives of the first few chapters of Genesis, constantly bringing our attention back to God as the font, and so the finale, of all creation. What do the creation stories of Genesis have to tell us about the human's place in the created order, and so about the nature of salvation itself? What is sin and how does it affect creation and our relationship to it? Participants must be able to hike at an intermediate level (elevation gains and rocky trails) for up to 6 miles.

+ Friday October 20 – Sunday October 22: Contemplative Prayer for Caregivers and Helping Professionals

This program introduces the theology and practice of contemplative prayer while focusing our reflections specifically on how contemplative practice prepares and strengthens us for service to others. In the midst of contemplation one encounters the deep suffering inherent in this

life, a life marked by sin and existential separation from God. Through the courageous, honest and simple engagement of this suffering we are opened to greater love and patience for others. At the same time, contemplative practice helps us to establish discernment and clear boundaries, and so to free our service from manipulation and coercion. You need not be an active caregiver or in a helping profession to attend. This retreat is offered in honor of Saint Luke the Evangelist and Physician whose feast day is October 18.

+ Tuesday October 31 – Thursday November 2: All Saints Prayer Vigil

This brief prayer vigil will culminate with an evening mass in celebration of All Saints Day on Wednesday the 1st. The program ends mid-morning on Thursday the 2nd. See March 9 for further description.

+ Friday November 10 – Sunday November 12: The Passions & Suffering in the Christian Spiritual Tradition

... do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct ... (1 Peter 1:14)

In this program we will explore the nuanced ways in which emotion, desire and suffering are understood and dealt with in the Christian spiritual tradition. We will look at how the terms “passion” and “suffering” are used in scripture, how they were understood in the Hellenic philosophical traditions in which Christianity took root, and how they were adopted and adapted by the early Christian writers. We will then explore a central and shocking claim of Christianity, that of a God who suffers. How is a Christian to understand and work with strong emotion, desire and suffering? How do we understand their place in human life, and their role in the Christian spiritual life?

+ Friday December 1 - Sunday December 3: Introduction to the Theology and Practice of Contemplative Prayer

See Jan 27 for description.

+ Friday December 15 – Sunday December 17: Advent Prayer Vigil

Prepare ye the way of the Lord! See March 9 for further description.

+ Thursday December 21 – Monday December 25: Heart of Christmas

Prayer Vigil

Enter the heart of Christmas during four days of silence and worship. The Prayer Vigil comprises the core of the contemplative training at Mons Nubifer Sanctus. This retreat crests in the midnight mass of the Nativity of Our Lord in celebration of the mystery of the Incarnation and concludes with a Christmas dinner on Christmas Day. See Christmas Program below for details.

+ Sunday December 24 & Sunday December 25: Christmas Program

No pre-registration required unless you plan to attend supper on Christmas Eve and/or to stay overnight.

Dec 24: 4:30 pm: Solemn Vespers, 5:30 pm: Light Supper, 8:00 pm: Still Prayer Vigil (two 35 minute periods), 10:30 pm: Mass of the Nativity of Our Lord, reception following. Dec 25: 10:00 am: Christmas Day Mass, 1:30 pm: Christmas Dinner. All are welcome.

+ Friday December 29 – Monday January 1: New Year's Prayer Vigil

Enter 2018 with wakefulness and purpose while continuing the celebrations of the Christmas season. This prayer vigil culminates in the New Year's Eve Midnight Mass for Healing and Peace, see below for details. See March 9 for further description.

+ Sunday December 31 – Monday January 1, 2019: New Year's Program: Midnight Mass for Healing and Peace

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 our purpose. Mons Nubifer Sanctus invites you to enter 2018 with wakefulness and purpose. Let us together pledge to live 2018 in the love of Christ. 6:00 pm: supper; 7:30 pm: mass rehearsal; 9:00 pm: Still Prayer Vigil; 10:15 pm: Break/prepare for mass. 11:00 pm: New Year's Mass, reception and New Year's toast following. Come for all or part. Overnight accommodations available, please inquire. This program ends Monday January 1 after a 10:00 am New Year's brunch.

MONS NUBIFER & SANCTVS

Besides the scheduled retreats & classes listed in this catalog, we also offer the following:

- + Personal Individual Retreats
- + Group/Parish Retreats
- + 3 Month Extended Contemplative Training
- + 1 Year Extended Contemplative Training
- + Contemplative Training for Recovery from Addiction
- + Lifelong Membership in the Christian Order of the Cloud

Please see www.monsnubifer.org/our-programs for further information.

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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 two hours from Albany and three hours from New York City, and are accessible by Trailways bus line from New York City and points southeast, and from Oneonta and points northwest.