



The Dove

**Newsletter of the
Association of
Christian
Therapists- Region 21
October 2009**

Harvest Gathering

Last Sunday we gathered in the garden of Georgie Rodiger's home in Altadena.

The garden was beautifully decorated with bright orange and brown, reminding us of the harvest colors and autumn. As we ate lunch and shared our lives with each other, we realized again how precious are moments spent with Christ-centered people. What a blessing to have Barbara Ryan join us

for our monthly ACT Gathering! Thank you, Tim, for bringing

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Barbara along. Barbara is one of ACT's founders, and is cherished by the entire ACT community. Despite a long period of ill health, Barbara still shines with the radiance of devotion to her Beloved Lord. She shared a few thoughts during the discussion and later during the evening Mass. We were edified by her insights, born of so many years of commitment to the Word. We continue to pray for a full recovery for Barbara.

Georgie led a teaching and discussion reflecting on Eugene Peterson's book about Job and the value of suffering. Our American culture particularly focuses on "fixing", denying and raging against suffering. As helping professionals we are

ministering to those who suffer. We want and are to tempted to give advice, to help, to fix, to say just the right thing, and we struggle to make sense of unmerited suffering. The Scripture is filled with examples, the paramount example is Jesus' unmerited suffering. It is too easy for us to say, "Yes, but there was a purpose there. It was God's will." Yet, we are faced with questions and doubt at times and need God's grace and a ministering prayer community to encourage and strengthen us when suffering seems so pointless and ruthless. Job argued with God. He asked why. He wanted to know if his good works and law-abiding life meant anything to God. Yet, through all his sufferings, loss of all possessions, family and friends, he never rejected His God. Job knew God to be central in his life.

Here is the inestimable value of suffering: to wait, to allow God to sustain and speak. When God spoke to Job at the end of the story, He reminded him of the relationship, the mystery of God being in control: creating, renewing in His way and His time. The gathering continued with small group discussion and prayer and time for quiet reflection as well. Father Alan Phillips celebrated Mass and after dinner, as we returned home

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we prayed for each other as we continue our journey, our relationship with our God and each other.

Thank You

Sister Margaret Devlin asked that we publish her note in "The Dove":
"I really want to extend my heartfelt thanks to you for putting together the 50th Celebration for me.

I deeply appreciate your thoughtfulness and caring enough to do that. I feel that it was a healing and growth experience for me.

May God bless you in His own special way."

Gratefully,
Sister Margaret Devlin

Next ACT Gathering
The Saints on
Our Journeys

November 1

A flyer with full information was sent this week. Please refer to it for details.

RSVP 626-792-3062

Sharings

Thank you to those members who have submitted poems and reflections for publication in "The Dove."

Here are submissions for this issue:

In the Quiet of a Garden

God has painted our gardens with colors wonderful to see

The trees, the grass, and vegetables and the flowers that be.

The rain comes down to enhance the rich earth And to give our sustenance its new and fresh birth.

As the tiny green tendrils peep out of the ground

What wonderful miracles each day

we have found.

If we have any doubt, Dear Lord,

just where You may be We will sit in a quiet garden and there we will see.

by Jean Loberg

It's dawn,
I sit silently on the ship's bow
contemplating the endless sea,
and think of You,
the eternally moving foundation under me,
terrifyingly strong,
hypnotically beautiful untameable,

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a support offering no promises
except eternal horizons

luring me to draw
closer.

I try and capture life
one beautiful scene
and then another.
But You've called me
to live life
without holding moments
captive.
The creation
You have offered me
is fluid,
and You bid me immerse
myself
while my fears cause me
to stand aside
and grab handfuls.
Forgive me
for living
so timidly.
By Dr. Shirley Cox

Let us continue to pray
for each other.
"I call upon you, God,
for you will answer me;
bend
your ear and hear my
prayer. Guard me as
the pupil of your eye;
hide me in the shadow
of your wings."
(Ps. 16:6,8,)