

# Advent Retreat

PRESENTED BY BETSY REDGATE

## “PRESENTS FROM THE PRESENCE”

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2016

In this season of gift-giving,  
 our God cannot be  
 outdone in generosity!  
 Join us as we unwrap the gifts  
 He longs to give us not only  
 during the season of Advent  
 but throughout the New Year!



### UPCOMING EVENTS

#### BREAKING BREAD FOR WOMEN SATURDAY, DECEMBER 3

Join us for Eucharist at 8:00 a.m. Mass followed by a light breakfast and breaking open the morning's Gospel in how it relates to us, our community and the world. We meet in the Parish Center after Mass. All women are invited to participate in the morning of prayer and fellowship that concludes promptly at 10:00 a.m. Contact Diane Canevari at 203-375-8095 or canevarid@sbcglobal.net

All programs will take place at the St. James Parish Center. Please call 203-375-5887 or visit the office to register as early as possible to assure correct ordering of materials and scheduling of appointments for retreat. Please call Betsy Redgate, ext. 102, or email bredgate.stjamesparish@gmail.com for more information on any of these offerings or to register for retreat.

SEE A FACE  
 †  
 LEARN A NAME  
 †  
 SHARE A STORY  
 †  
 LOVE ONE ANOTHER

*Women MINISTRY at ST. JAMES is a gathering of women sharing their stories and faith!  
 Ministry With Women At St. James newsletter is digital. If you are not receiving the newsletter  
 by Constant Contact, please contact the Parish Center to update your email address.*

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# MINISTRY WITH *Women* AT ST. JAMES

A GATHERING OF WOMEN SHARING THEIR STORIES AND FAITH

Dear Sisters in Christ,

As we begin the new season of autumn and transition from the warm days of summer to the cold of winter, we can reflect on the changes of nature and perhaps the changes that we may need to work on in our own lives. Fortunately, we have the Holy Spirit as a helper in our endeavors to become more like Jesus Christ. Margaret Mead, the American anthropologist, once said, “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world: indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” Studies have shown that volunteering has positive benefits on mental health. People who help others feel more socially connected and are not lonely or depressed. Jesus Christ gave us the Beatitudes to help us to help ourselves by helping others. The St. James community of faith gives us many opportunities to participate in acts of kindness and caring. Our journey of faith was not meant to be walked alone, and your sisters in faith are here to help you on your way. Many people who may want to volunteer may feel that they don't have the time or skills. Pray for the discernment that you need to discover your gifts and God will place the right people in your life to guide you. Our women's ministry at St. James is a fellowship of women working to help others as we live the Beatitudes and support each other on our journey. Do consider joining us and being part of the change!

Your Sisters in Christ,  
 Angie DeMello and Mary Tesla

### CHANGE MAKERS – INSPIRED ACTIONS HELP THE WORLD

#### From Natural Awakenings October 2016

*“Ours is not the task of fixing the entire world all at once, but of stretching out to mend the part of the world that is within our reach. Any small, calm thing that one soul can do to help another soul will help immensely. It is not given to us to know which acts, or by whom, will cause the critical mass to tip toward an enduring good,” says Clarissa Pinkola Estes Ph.D. (author and psychoanalyst specializing in post-trauma counsel). Thousands of people each day choose to see a world radiating with hope and light, despite ever-present conflict and strife. Their talents and gifts, alliances and collaborations are inspiring a new story that ripples outward into our communities and beyond. Estes observes, “What is needed for dramatic change is an accumulation of acts; adding, adding to, adding more, continuing. We know it does not take everyone on Earth to bring justice and peace, but only a small, determined group that will not give up during the first, second or hundredth gale.”*

#### Gifts

*1 Corinthians 12*  
 Now there are varieties  
 of gifts,  
 But the same Spirit,  
 And there are varieties  
 of service,  
 But the same Lord...



POSTED BY AMY EKEH

The changing of the seasons means it's time for one of Scott Eagan's poems. For those of you who are new to the blog,

Scott is a member of the Madonna House Community in Combermere, Ontario. He is what you might call a contemplative farmer. Scott shares his poems with me, and I'm so pleased to share them with you. His gentle imagery and heartfelt prose make me feel like I am in Combermere too, living the simple spirituality of Madonna House and basking in the bounty of God's creation.

Enjoy this season's window made with words, a glimpse into Scott's beautiful, prayerful world.

## Still

*In the small hours of the morning  
on the pillow of night's awakening  
all is still, all suspended.*

*The singing lake loons quieted  
forest's leaves forgetting to shed dewy tears  
all the world so beautifully still.*

*As I poke my head outside my little tent  
a gracious gift covers me  
a transient thin treasure.*

*Just to breathe it in and let it go,  
breathe it in again...  
- creations prayer - can it be absorbed?*

*And the day begins."*

— SCOTT EAGAN

## Beatitude

**BLESSED ARE THEY WHO ARE MEEK AND HUMBLE,  
FOR THEY WILL INHERIT THE EARTH.**

Several years ago I traveled to Israel, and the focus of the trip was "breaking open the Beatitudes." Trying to live by the Beatitudes is no simple task, although I am convinced that this is exactly what Jesus intended for us to do. It requires us to go beyond the Ten Commandments. It demands that we accept each other with love and forgiveness. This is not an easy task for me.

It was incredible to walk in the hills of Galilee, where Jesus walked, and finally arrive in Jerusalem, the City of Light. This city holds both hope for a future of peace and despair for the slow process of reconciliation. The heart of the Beatitudes can be found here. Forgive your brother and sister when they hurt you and offer them peace and love.

The second Beatitude is about being meek and humble. A humble person becomes meek, or becomes gentle and kind, and exhibits a docility of spirit, even in the face of difficulty and hardship. A person that is meek is one that exhibits self-control.

St. Augustine advises us to be meek in the face of the Lord, and not resist but be obedient to him. Obedience and submission to the will of God are certainly not in vogue these days, but they will bring one peace in this world and in the next. In the Bible, the meek are those who have a spirit of gentleness and self-control; they are free from malice and a condescending spirit. The meek do not exploit and oppress others; they are not given to vengeance and they are not violent, and they do not try to seize power for their own ends.

A REFLECTION BY MARY TESLA

*"Forgive your brother and sister  
when they hurt you and  
offer them peace and love."*

They have emulated the nature of Jesus in their lives and learned from him. This does not mean that they are weak or ineffective in life. They may be gentle and humble, but they can and do champion the needs of the weak and the oppressed.

## RICHARD ROHR'S *Daily Meditation*

NATURE: WEEK 1

CREATED TO LOVE

Thursday, November 10, 2016

In the fourth century, St. Augustine (354-430), an official Doctor of the Church (meaning his teaching is considered reliable), said, "The church consists in the state of communion of the whole world." Wherever we are connected, in a right relationship—you might say "in love"—there is the Christ, there is the authentic "body of God" revealed. This body is more a living organism than any formal organization.

Non-human creation is invariably obedient to its destiny. Animals and plants seem to excitedly take their small place in the "circle of life," in the balance of nature, in the dance of complete interdependence. It is only we humans who have resisted our place in "the one great act of giving birth" (see Romans 8:22), even though we had the most powerful role!

Jesus clearly taught that if we seek first God's kingdom and the universal law of love ("love God and love one another," Matthew 22:37-40), all the rest would take care of itself (see Matthew 6:33). We would no longer blatantly defy the laws of nature but seek to live in harmony and sustainability with Earth and all her creatures. This radical lifestyle demands a sense of inherent dignity that is granted by God and not an off-and-on dignity determined by egocentric humans.

When we get the "who" right and realize that who I am is love, then we will do what we came to do: Love God and love all that this God has created. I firmly believe that grace is inherent to creation and not an occasional additive, and that God and goodness—not Armageddon—have both the first and final word, which we call divine creation and final resurrection.

### THE PROMISE

*The promise here is that they will possess the land. But possessing the land signified much more than a possession; it signified a sense of place, security, an inheritance from God.*

*In the Sermon on the Mount, the blessings listed by Jesus will tell people just how righteous they must be to enter the kingdom, and what that righteous life should look like for citizens of the kingdom. These qualities give a picture of the character of the true people of God, those who are a part of his kingdom and have the full blessings of the kingdom to look forward to. Taken together they give the picture of the perfect disciple of Christ who is the heir of the promises.*