

Living with Grace and Passion

A Seasonal Newsletter from Peggy Patenaude
Autumn 2010

Coming Up

Fall Mini-Retreat Series

October 20: Autumn Reflections
November 17: Blessings in Abundance
December 15: Love Is the Answer
10:00AM - 12:30PM
Sacred Hearts Retreat Center
Wareham, MA

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### My One Wild and Precious Life Women's Retreat

October 29 - 31  
La Salette Retreat Center,  
Attleboro, MA

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My One Wild and Precious Life Women's Retreat

January 28 - 30, 2011
Miramar Retreat Center,
Duxbury, MA

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### Keeping Your Love Alive Couples Retreat

February 12, 2011  
Falmouth, MA

### For information & registration:

Contact Peggy at (508) 548-9149 or  
[timeoutretreats@comcast.net](mailto:timeoutretreats@comcast.net)

### One Light Service

On October 24 Peggy will be the  
guest speaker for the 10AM  
Sunday Service at  
One Light: A Center for Spiritual  
Transformation, W. Yarmouth.  
[www.peaceoncapecod.org](http://www.peaceoncapecod.org)

For Peggy's complete calendar  
and program descriptions visit  
[www.timeoutretreats.com](http://www.timeoutretreats.com).

## Peg's Ponderings: True Beauty

A group of truly beautiful women came together over Labor Day weekend for a retreat in Racine, Wisconsin. They were not super models with perfectly sculpted bodies. They were not powerful business executives in expensive suits and high heels. They were women in recovery from prostitution, alcohol and drugs, gathered for a Sophia's Circle Retreat facilitated by Edwina Gateley and me.

On Friday evening, the retreat opened with a "check-in," where, one by one, each of the 14 women described how her life was going. Their stories left me speechless. I witnessed tremendous strength in spite of ongoing struggle. I was awed at how their joy and laughter co-existed with their pain and sadness. I was inspired by their faith and trust in God despite the brutality these women had experienced. I began to feel a deep respect and compassion for these women. I saw them as my sisters.

The heaviness of the check-in gradually diminished over the weekend. Raw pain was soothed by the love and support they gave to each other. God's unconditional love enabled them to re-claim their worth and dignity. Recognizing who they truly are, Daughters of the Great One, they celebrated their identity, and we all broke bread, sang and danced.

"I always felt like I'm not enough," one of the women said. "The retreat replenished my resolve and I truly believe God's grace is sufficient. I'm more than enough and God wants me to dance!" Another said, "It was an honor and a privilege to be part of such a wonderful group of women. I was ashamed of my past and this is the only place I felt comfortable talking and learning to forgive myself. Thank you for allowing me to be a part of something so magical."

The retreat was a graced experience for me as well. I saw that true beauty showed itself in the authenticity of these women, in their honesty and vulnerability, in their will to survive, in their compassion for each other and their courage to change. One woman, recovering from 33 years of prostitution, told us why she had shaved her head. "I wanted to see if true beauty comes from the inside-out," she said. True beauty most certainly does come from within and it abounded in Racine on a September weekend that I shall never forget.



## Passing It On

*Sophia's Circle*, a non-profit organization, co-founded by Edwina Gateley, supports marginalized women of all races, creeds and economic backgrounds who carry wounds inflicted by violence and prostitution. Many have been homeless and battered. Many were sexually abused as young girls. Through the generosity of donors, annual retreats and other forms of outreach enable these women to find healing, hope and strength. To learn more about Sophia's Circle and/or to make a donation to this worthy cause, visit Edwina's website: [www.edwinagateley.com](http://www.edwinagateley.com).

### *I Hear a Seed Growing* by Edwina Gateley ~ 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition

The seeds of Sophia's Circle were sown on the streets of Chicago in the early 80's as Edwina Gateley ministered to women in prostitution. In *I Hear a Seed Growing* the true story of one woman's compassion for her scorned and abused sisters truly comes to life. You meet real prostitutes, johns, addicts and pimps. The story might make the reader uncomfortable, but one cannot be untouched by Edwina's faithfulness to helping women break free of the bondage of violence and self-loathing to discover they are loved and beautiful in God's eyes. The journal of Edwina's nine month hermitage experience, which led her to this challenging ministry, is also included in the text.

### *Being All That You Can Be...In Your Diversity: An Afternoon with Sarah Doherty* Sunday, October 24, 2010 from 1:30PM to 3:30PM

A Taunton, MA, native, Sarah Doherty travels again to Cape Cod from her home in Vancouver, B.C. to share her compelling story of becoming an amputee at 13 and going on to be an occupational therapist, a mother of three, the first one-legged woman to climb Mt. McKinley and a co-inventor of SideStix ([www.sidestix.com](http://www.sidestix.com)). Sarah looks forward to "sharing the importance of understanding *your story*, how your story shapes *what you do best*, and how *your community* plays a critical role in connecting the two." The presentation will be held at One Light in West Yarmouth. Contact Kevin York at 508-428-6248 or [on-cape@comcast.net](mailto:on-cape@comcast.net).

## Recent Events **Sophia's Circle Retreat**

### **Siena Center, Racine, WI, September 3 – 6, 2010**

More testimony: "The retreat gave me back my real and authentic life." "There is no place in the world that I can escape to and totally be myself around women who have fought the same struggles that I have and have survived the cruel, cruel world of prostitution. Thank you so much for caring and providing this great opportunity for us."



### **Fall Mini-Retreat Series, Sacred Hearts Retreat Center Wareham, MA, September 15, 2010**

On a beautiful autumn morning, I facilitated *Come to the Quiet*, the first of four fall sessions at this lovely location by the bay. Together we explored the gifts of silence and solitude.



### **Embracing the Heart of Compassion One Light, W. Yarmouth, MA, September 25, 2010**

Joyce Rupp (second to left) led 145 women and men in an amazing day of reflection, sharing and ritual. We were blessed to have this acclaimed author and speaker share her experiences, stories, humor and insight with us.



### **Keeping Your Love Alive Couples Retreat St. Mary's Church, Jefferson, MA, October 2, 2010**

Once again, I had the privilege of guiding couples in a day focused on their most significant relationship. Referring to the retreat as a "tune-up," one participant said, "It re-affirmed the things that are important to me in our relationship."



## A Little Soul Food



*One summer night, out on a flat headland, all but surrounded by the waters of the bay, the horizons were remote and distant rims on the edge of space. Millions of stars blazed in darkness, and on the far shore a few lights burned in cottages. Otherwise there was no reminder of human life. My companion and I were alone with the stars: the misty river of the Milky Way flowing across the sky, the patterns of the constellations standing out bright and clear, a blazing planet low on the horizon. It occurred to me that if this were a sight that could be seen only once in a century, this little headland would be thronged with spectators. But it can be seen many scores of nights in any year, and so the lights burned in the cottages and the inhabitants probably gave not a thought to the beauty overhead and because they could see it almost any night, perhaps they never will.*

~Rachel Carson

*In nature, nothing is perfect and everything is perfect. Trees can be contorted, bent in weird ways, and they're still beautiful.*

~ Alice Walker

*Everything has beauty, but not everyone sees it.*

~Confucius

