

Living with Grace and Passion

A Seasonal Newsletter from Peggy Patenaude
Autumn 2007

Coming Up

Peggy will lead the following two retreats at Genesis Spiritual Life Center in Westfield, MA:

**Keeping Your Love Alive:
A Couples Retreat**
Saturday, October 27, 2007
9:00 AM to 5:30 PM
&

**My One Wild and Precious Life:
A Women's Retreat**
Friday, May 2, 7:30 PM to
Sunday, May 4, 2008, 1:00 PM

For information & registration:
E-Mail: genesis@genesiscenter.us
Website: www.genesiscenter.us
Phone: 413-562-3627

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### "Finding the Gold"

Sunday, December 23  
Peggy will be the guest speaker for the 10 AM Service at One Light: A Center for Spiritual Transformation, W. Yarmouth.  
[www.peaceoncapecod.org](http://www.peaceoncapecod.org)

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**Keeping Your Love Alive:
A Couples Retreat**
Sunday, February 10, 2008
Falmouth, MA
Details to be announced

The Couples Refresher:
A Follow-up to "Keeping Your Love Alive"
Contact Peggy for more information at 508-548-9149
timeoutretreats@comcast.net

www.timeoutretreats.com

Peg's Ponderings: An Autumn Lesson

God, protect me from your followers read the bumper sticker on the truck passing by me. Well, if that isn't something to ponder, I mused....and I have. Though I suspect the author was making a statement about religious dogmatism and fanaticism, it got me thinking about my own spirituality and faith.

My favorite definition of spirituality, attributed to Lawrence Kushner, is *Spirituality is where you meet God and what you do about it*. Far from being dogmatic, this simple description implies two things: The Divine can be discovered anywhere and what happens as a consequence is up to each individual. We alone are responsible for how we live out a relationship with God.

Adult spirituality allows room for diversity and creativity. Old ways may not work for the adult seeker. If faith means having a relationship with God, then are we not invited to live that relationship with as much integrity as possible? "Spirituality consists not in becoming more and more responsible in the fulfillment of a duty, but becoming more and more faithful in a love relationship." (Dyckman & Carroll, *Inviting the Mystic, Supporting the Prophet*)

Unlike the followers the bumper sticker referred to, people of faith are open and humble, knowing they don't have all the answers. Theologian Avery Dulles says, "Many people do not come to faith because they ask too few questions, not too many. When the mind is too full of its own certitudes, it has no room for God." Even Mother Teresa struggled with the unknown. A true seeker embraces mystery, thus making space for a Power greater than oneself.

The autumn landscape reminds us that everything changes. What once was lush is becoming bare. Just as leaves gracefully let go of their hold to branches, we too are invited to surrender to the process of life itself, trusting that the One who loves us beyond imagination will be faithful to us. Faith does not imply certitude, but it does guarantee all will be well.

M.L. Haskins wrote: *I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year: "Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown." And he replied: "Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God. That shall be to you better than a light and safer than a known way."* That's spirituality. Let go. Trust God



A Little Soul Food

A Faith Story

The fields were parched and brown; the crops lay wilting from thirst. Local ministers called for an hour of prayer on the town square, asking everyone to bring an object of faith for inspiration. The towns people filled the square with anxious faces and hopeful hearts, a variety of objects clutched in prayerful hands – holy books, crosses, rosaries. When the hour ended, as if on magical command, a soft rain began to fall. Cheers swept the crowd as they held their treasured objects high in gratitude and praise. One faith symbol seemed to overshadow all the others: a nine year old child had brought *an umbrella*.

Author unknown, but given to me by an inmate at Plymouth County Correctional Facility



“We don’t lose faith because we struggle. We struggle because we lose faith.”

Karon Phillips Goodman



Passing It On

Left to Tell: Discovering God Amidst the Rwandan Holocaust

by Immaculee Ilibagiza

Immaculee’s personal account of surviving the atrocities of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda is living proof in the power of faith. Her story is compelling; her ability to forgive is extraordinary; her courage and determination unwavering. *Left to Tell* is one of the most moving and inspiring pieces of literature that I have ever read.

Raising Faith-Filled Kids: Ordinary Opportunities to Nurture Spirituality at Home

by Tom McGrath

If searching for ways to help your children grow in faith, *Raising Faith-Filled Kids* just might be what you are looking for. McGrath uses anecdotes and practical examples to bring home the fact that spirituality is about ordinary life. Though written from a Catholic perspective, any parent, whatever the religious tradition, could find this easy-read quite helpful.

Two well-known speakers and prolific authors whom I respect greatly will be giving conferences in Massachusetts in the coming months. Without hesitation, I highly recommend hearing these authentic and deeply spiritual women.

Joyce Rupp, OSM will give the morning keynote address “Seeing with the Inner Eye” at *Gather Us In 2007: A Conference for Women*, November 3rd in Worcester. Well-grounded and delightful, Joyce has an uncanny gift of making spirituality real and connecting it to our daily experiences. For more information and a complete schedule of speakers and events, visit www.worcestercommissionforwomen.org.

Edwina Gateley will lead a day of spirituality on Cape Cod at One Light: A Center for Spiritual Transformation in West Yarmouth on June 7, 2008. “Breaking All Our Teacup Talk of God” promises to be a day like no other! With her humor, her passion and her art of storytelling, participants will be spellbound by Edwina’s personal spiritual journey. Visit my website www.timeoutretreats.com to see a full description of the day.

Recent Events

Catechists Evening of Reflection at St. John’s Church in Attleboro September 26, 2007



More than sixty catechists gathered to prepare for their task of nurturing children in faith at St. John’s Parish. It was a great pleasure to facilitate an evening with so many enthusiastic volunteers.

Eleven women strong crossed the Bourne Bridge to spend a day of reflection on their mid-life journey. One retreatant summed up her experience as follows, “The day offered me an opportunity to share with my closest friends our faith and belief in the power of God in our lives.”

Women’s Retreat in Falmouth: “Come to the Water”, October 17, 2007

