

SIX TOES IN ETERNITY

BOOK 6

FULL CIRCLE - 2006-2007

(These journal entries follow the ones compiled in *Face to Face* and in *Heart to Heart*. They begin after I moved into the house of my daughter Carla, her husband, Steve, and the 5 children, Nicholas 16, Alexander 14, Maxi 9, Zacho 6, and Martina 6 months old.

This part of my journal contains quite a number of quotations from Anne – Direction for Our Times. I found these messages consoling and in a “voice” I can easily believe is that of Jesus and saints. If anything about them doesn’t appeal to you just skip them when they appear. It is a teaching in Catholic spirituality to avoid private revelations that seem either false or just annoying. Since no one is required to believe in private revelation even when approved, such as messages of Lourdes and Fatima, we should not risk getting a distaste for spirituality itself because certain alleged messages are repugnant.

This part of my journal also contained many “words in the heart” from Jesus, Mary and Joseph for me. They are personal. I wondered if I should include them since some readers, even if they accept in principle that Jesus can speak in our hearts this way, are still turned off by seeming messages to someone other than themselves. I know when I read such words in the heart to others, sometimes I can direct them to myself in a good way, but sometimes the style upsets me and I think – Jesus would never talk this way. This is phony. However, 200 words into this part of the journal there is an explanation that seems cogent to me. The Holy Spirit seems to tell me that given how neurotic my own self-talk is, and also how much the devil wants to talk me into his interpretation of the events in my life, that it is the strategy of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph to convey these true words into my heart in this manner. So I am including them. Again, if you like the rest of the journaling most of the time, and don’t like these alleged sayings to me of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, just skip over them! Smile.

FULL CIRCLE

January 1, 2006

I have entitled this part of my on-going journals “Full Circle.” The one after *Heart to Heart* I planned to call “At the Gates of Eternity,” but when I moved back with this part of my family in North Carolina, I thought that “Full Circle,” expressed better what was happening to me. I made the decision about moving there quickly and will be trying it for a year, but my sense is it will work long-term. Most of my life, even when living with my husband and children I thought of my primary identity as being a Catholic teacher, writer, speaker. Not because I didn’t love my family dearly, but because, as a convert, Jesus seemed to be the highest and most profound reality – giving the hope without which family life would be temporal instead of eternal.

Now, in my old age (almost 68 – don’t tell me that I am young at heart. I actually feel like 90) the need for the security of family love and the help they can give me (even though Carla and Steve are not yet back in the Church) as I become more and more disabled seems more important to me than reasons for living elsewhere.

I am enjoying helping the family in small ways.

The house includes a large black Persian cat and two grey kittens. They can be found suddenly scooting around all over the rooms or supine occupying my desk. It is delightful to watch them. I think that is a big feature of old age – having time to just watch people or cats. After one or two tries as taking care of the baby, it was decided I was too spacey, so now I just get to watch her with no responsibility. There is that round sweet baby, sometimes crying but mostly enchanted with her large family.

Jo Jo and Richard, Steve’s parents from England, being here for 3 weeks makes our household very much an extended family dwelling. He is a carpenter and she loves to fix things and clean. It all feels so old-fashioned and wholesome – the younger ones doing the work for money and the child-raising, and the older ones helping all day with what is good but not absolutely essential. I do dishes and laundry since Carla, Steve, and Richard are gourmet cooks. In the evenings we watch selected movies or play games.

Dear Jesus, Mary and Joseph, thank you for bringing me here with this decision and help us to overcome all small inevitable conflicts.

There is a conflict on my video-conferencing course in Contemporary Philosophy involving showing a movie about Gandhi. Perhaps some in the department who think this plan is watering things down don’t fully realize how without Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. following his methods, we would not have the wonderful if incomplete, successes of Operation Rescue, non-violently protesting abortion. In any case, after some chagrin I realized I have always taught in a way different from most scholars – more geared to changing the lives of the students as total persons, than going in depth into various theories. I have to accept that my more personalist methods are what have made me the teacher and writer I am and that I can’t simultaneously be a

scholar's scholar in teaching or writing. Oh, my Jesus, keep me from letting the devil drain my energy by making me feel like a martyr whenever anyone in authority doesn't totally affirm me.

(Reading this in 2018, I want to report that I found a name for this way of teaching that fit me and quite a few who studied with me and then taught in the same way over many years. I call it Transformative Catholic Philosophy. You can read about it on goodbooks.media.)

I was very tired between travel and denture woes (still persisting) when giving an out-of-town workshop this month. As usual I was thinking, it's too hard, I have to stop. Jesus, you seemed to say, "these women do so much for me and the kingdom; I want you to do what you can for them with these healing workshops – please accept the crosses that go with ministry to them." When you are too old the arms of the Church will carry you to heaven." I sensed Him kissing my forehead for doing it.

Recently quite a number of the workshops involve places that are neither "conservative" or charismatic but more middle of the road with their own virtues and deficiencies. I think the Holy Spirit is arranging this, possibly because those who remain in the Church are no longer militant dissenters, many of whom have left, but are open to input from any speaker, especially on universal issues such as anger-management.

January 25, 2005

My new pastor was an Episcopal organist who became suddenly disabled in one finger so he couldn't play well any more, and then became a Catholic and eventually a priest at around 50. He is now about 65. He happens to look a lot like Gandolf since he has a long grey beard and noble face. These images came to me about him.

Power

What is it like

with only a man's fingers

to fill a whole Church

with a Great Fugue?

What is it like

with only an anointing,

a vestment and the sacred words

to fill a whole Church

with the presence of God?

And

What will it be like

When the vault of the Church

lifts off to show us Heaven?

Gandolf will know.

January 30, 2006

Today was a funeral Mass. The priest wore a vestment with a tapestry type of pattern including black and white and the altar cloth was white but with big black strips. I thought this was wonderful for including old and new and tapping in that way to the archetype both of solemn black grief and resurrection hope.

During the Mass these images came to me:

Alter Christus

I thought of You, Jesus

first as truth,

then beauty,

then saving love.

Today the priest did the Mass

as if anointing Your

crucified body

and our mystical one, too

so I could see, You,

Jesus, as tenderly

binding my wounds

with Your bloody shroud

and teaching me

“To those who struggle

I am soft,

Won't you be, too?”

January 31, 2006

I have been reading many, many books about different wars. I wondered why I felt the need right now to read such “masculine” books. The thought came to me, “Before I die, I want to have a God's eye view of the whole world.”

February 6, 2006

Fr. Ken came to bless the house. He was wonderful. Very gentle, humorous, appreciative of everyone, and charmingly open about his own defects, etc. Carla's mother-in-law from England, Jo, a revert Catholic loved him. Her husband, a former Episcopal choir boy said afterward, “A priest like that could make people want to turn Catholic!” Carla was her most ardent questing self which, combined with her beauty of person, drew out in me all my deep love for her. Jo said she felt such tranquility come over the house after the blessing. Fr. Ken seemed happy to be among us. Probably he will come back.....oh, oh, oh. Let it be done unto us according to Your will.

February 10, 2005

Joy of getting EWTN series on widows for 2007. My dear friend Anne Lassiter will be the co-host. Jim Ridley of Watershed wrote about this venture:

“We whoop with glee and weep with joy for you two Wonder-widows, O Ronda and Anne, that you will soon at last become as renowned and regaled a celebrity team of apostolic tele-dowagers to the earthly millions as you have long been and ever shall be to the heavenly

multitudes of angelic and saintly fans who are congregating now to cheer you on with avalanches of lavish grace and to chant your praises before the smiling Face of your Beloved, into whose saving embrace you will entice only He knows how many souls just as you have done to this little family of devoted friends who joins with yours our grateful alleluias. Deo Gratias.”

A prayer-poem I wrote for my new pastor to affirm what he is doing:

PRIEST SHORTAGE?

Is Eucharist the easiest?

every single time

you can bring

the eternal-infinite

to every hungry beak.

Sermons?

Bounce for the bored

yet

steady for the scared;

Challenges for the complacent

yet

wisdom for the wobbling.

Ministries?

Loose the Holy Spirit

lavishly let

the laity lead...

- faithful formators
- high-energy Hispanics
- Hmong heroes
- unvanquishable Vincentians
- committed cursillistas
- knowing knights
- surprising speakers

so Father-man gets time

to tryst with his Savior

and even music make!

“With God all things are possible.”

February 17, 2006

I asked Fr. Ken about how people can cope with the terrible pain of vulnerable fear of rejection in connection with the book I am writing on healing of rejection. (This book has finally come out from En Route Books and Media.)

Among other things he said was that those who are overly needy are somewhat selfish only wanting to be ministered to. In the case of some, no one can ever heal them as long as they are in that state.

He thinks what is healing is not just more counsel or contemplative prayer, but also active works to help others.

Continuing with Fr. Ken's thoughts: underlying that extreme neediness is low self-esteem. We create a self-image out of our successes and failures. Such a self-image is always wrong. In forgiveness we discover we are made in God's image, we discover our God-given image and begin to trust. We need to see God forgiving. We don't have to be afraid of ourselves, we are worth more than a flock of sparrows.

God is simple, we are complex.

Growing in holiness is not something you can just force. He likes an image from teaching music. The student concentrates on his fingers and then becomes stiff, we need to play with our whole body. So in spirituality we need the whole self, relaxing the body, letting God integrate us. We need to "play" with the whole person and not be divided so there is flow.

Not try to do so much consciously, let God integrate us. Accept limitations of myself and then I can accept more from others and then I will be more compassionate.

We need a balance between thinking "I can do everything" or "I can do nothing."

February 17, 2006

Answer to a letter:

Here is my present thinking about "unbreakable" relationships with non-spouses.

Because we are made for perfect happiness in heaven, our life on earth even when reasonably happily married, will seem unsatisfactory and leave us restless. Relating to a "spiritual friend" or past boyfriend or girlfriend, in a way that doesn't involve the daily boring grind of concrete needs and petty personality conflicts, "who should take out the garbage," etc. creates the illusion of that perfect love we will have in heaven.

We really are relating in such friendships to the deepest lovable self of the other, but that is only part of the person. If married to that same person we would have to deal with all the daily boring and/or conflicting sides of each other which kill or dim the vision of the innermost self of the other.

It is possible that a good Christian friendship could arise but not on the addictive basis of I have to write to him every day and make him into a pseudo-husband figure. You would need to let go of all fantasies - "what if our spouses died in the next

earthquake," etc. etc., and presume you will never be married to each other and develop a friendship of sharing no more "exciting and exalted" than you now have with, say, your best woman friend.

If this seems unbearable it is because you might need a combination of psychological counseling because the urgency is based on some deprivation lack in childhood you are desperately trying to fill, as well as more deep prayer to let God's total perfect love fill your heart each day - using the same time you pour out your heart to your e-beloved to be more with Jesus.

I will pray for you. God bless you, Ronda

February, 2006

A salute to the Mass of Fr. Ken:

In the Eternal Key

Post-Vatican II:

More community,

less beauty?

Sad trade off.

His guardian angel

approached the Throne.

"I have a plan:

Make a musician priest!

"He will do the Mass as Easter- journey,

an a cappella song.

Like in a performance

each word will sound the right note.

“And, without knowing why,
the people will be soothed,
and exalted.”

And God said, “It’s a plan.”

Another, more universal prayer-poem about the priesthood:

Our Priest

Eagerly,

he emerges from his door,

not as if a cuckoo clock figure,

but as if on urgent personal business,

as he is.

Intently,

he speaks to us,

not as if to the distracted ,

but as if we longed to be reached,

as we do.

Tenderly,

he holds up the Eucharist,

not as if the bread were only a symbol,

but as if it were a body frail and broken,

as it was.

Carefully,

his hands enfold the cup,
not as if the wine were only sign,
but as if it was the holy grail,
as it is.

Graciously,
he offers us the Mystery,
not as if a sop to the naïve,
but as if it were pure love,
as it is.

For such a priest there ought to be a flock of helping Sisters,
but since they are endangered species,
we will be his nuns.

I also got linked up to a Lutheran college where they accept some RC teachers. One of them is busy teaching Newman with the obvious good results! They want me to teach part time there and also be part of a prestigious lecture series called Luther/Aquinas -to speak about holiness and the saints! Yipee!

My son-in-law is a movie buff and so we watch odd movies - one is an English series called Cracker about an alcoholic/gambler psychiatrist detective who psyches out criminals of a type I would never understand otherwise - like skin heads. It is a brilliantly acted program. So I am very connected up in a spectator way with "the culture."

March 19, 2006

On a visit to Corpus Christi - Fr. Ralph prayed over me. He prayed for my denture problems and it came out I was able to experience the same sensation as of before, but with no pain. I even like wearing them now. What a grace!

Working on a video intro to Faust the question came up why does Goethe have Faust saved without his repenting? I realized it is probably because Goethe, who was a weak Christian dogmatically, grasped that as dogmatic religion lost its hold an era of sin

would ensue but was wanting to lay out the idea of humanistic altruism, as at the end of Faust's tale, and wanted to show God blessing such altruism as sufficient for salvation.

April 5, 2006

Roy Schoeman said about giving talks and the fatigue and reluctance before and joy during and exhaustion afterwards – it is because the Holy Spirit is going through you with more than you have – like a huge wattage through a small circuit.

April 10, 2006

Feel kind of tired and unexalted – maybe right for Holy Week. Jesus seemed to say that He wants not so much to inspire me now but to gently comfort me – I thought a kind of spiritual second childhood to be rocked in a lullaby of hope.

April 13, 2006

Watched The Passion again on Steve's computer. It was so intimate watching it alone and not in a diffuse space. Felt again such a willingness to sacrifice and suffer in imitation of our dear Jesus. Will make my confession today about being so legalistic about sacrifice vs. generous and holy.

Holy Thursday

Instead of doing the foot washing as a very set ritual as usual with altar boys and deacons and lectors at the altar, Fr. Ken did it after the stripping of the altar and asked anyone who wanted their feet washed to sit at either end of the pews. Then he came down the aisle, assisted by altar servers and slowly made his way up and down the aisles on his knees, moving on his knees between feet, and kissing the feet as he went, very solemnly not smiling! It was wonderful.

April 15, 2006

May 1, 2006

At the airport going to a Charismatic Liason conference I went to confession to one of the participant priests. He said "The Lord tells me He is crazy about you." As a penance he said I should give myself a break!

May 9, 2006

Letter:

I just got back from an interesting experience being a group co-leader at a Great Books Retreat near here with contemporary short readings from Gogol, The Bhagavad-Gita, Rezzori, and Flannery O'Conner - the theme was Order and Chaos.

There were about 70 participants - many of whom are retired people who have been coming for 26 years! One died of cardiac arrest during this weekend. He came from a Ukrainian Jewish family who had become Protestants way back. Among the leaders

and participants were atheist political activists (Jewish and ex-Catholic background), a Mennonite minister acting as a Lutheran minister part-time who doesn't believe in the Divinity of Christ, some strong Lutheran pastors and lay people, 4 Catholics.

Since most of them were intellectuals, I found much resistance in some to any questions that related ideas to trying to grow oneself vs. analyzing the wider scene or the lines of the readings. Others, mostly women, seemed to like a more personalist, existential approach.

During the weekend, I was thinking it was too tiring at my age, when an old (in their late seventies) agnostic Jewish couple approached me during the wine and cheese social. She was a sculptor and he a government contract person. One of their children, now 50, was developmentally disabled. They said this was the insoluble problem of their lives. They thought that had they developed the type of spirituality believing Jews and Catholics have, they might be better able to bear this life-long blow - could I help them find God before they died. I shared as best I could and hope to continue by mail or phone. It touched my heart to be with them and got away from argument and dialogue to this more personal level.

June, 2006

A letter I wrote to a woman who thought God had told her to have an abortion but then wanted His forgiveness afterwards:

"I read your story about your abortion. It was so, so sad. Do you know of the 2 biggest healing ministries to women who had abortions WEBA and Project Rachel. You might look them up to see if you could help with this ministry. They probably have telephone hot lines. I think it comes under how Jesus said to the woman taken in adultery, no one cast a stone and neither will I, go and sin no more. You wouldn't have felt the need for forgiveness if you didn't know it was wrong on some level - but Jesus specializes in forgiveness.

In the Catholic Church we are taught never to do anything that is wrong and that if it seems the only way, it isn't really (as in giving babies for adoption - nowadays adopting parents will pay all expenses plus give generous amounts to the donor mother) we do have to discern, but that is between 2 good things such as - should I help women who had abortions or should I finish my Master's degree. You might want to work at a pro- life clinic...They don't use judgmental harsh people. They ask in the questionnaire for volunteers "have you ever done something seriously wrong and then known God's forgiveness." It would give you such joy to know a baby was saved because of your tremulous witness."

June 4, 2006

On the Eve of Pentecost I went to Hispanic charismatic prayer group meeting since there is no near Anglo one. What energy and power. I thought "the violent bear it away!" They pray so from the heart and the gut. My new theory is that since we Anglos are contracepting and aborting ourselves out of existence, let the Hispanics take the country and may the Catholic Hispanic charismatics one day be the bridge to the Pentecostal Hispanics. And then we'll have a Catholic country!

June 13, 2006

I had a breakthrough on the Grieving book I am writing

Weep alone – you may drown in grief

Do not weep – you may become hardened

Weep with Jesus – you will have comfort and hope

This will be linked up to the idea that the purpose of God allowing the miseries of grieving is to gradually wean us from the world and bind us to Him who is The Way, the Truth and the Life, with each word being important – that the only way through grief is Him, and it is His saving truths and we need to hang onto in faith; and that Life is Him in eternity and hopefully reunion with the beloved ones - Life is a pilgrimage. Our home is not here on earth, but in heaven. Your tears are like a river to sail into the heart of God, etc. etc. etc. (This book, Weeping with Jesus, has been published by Enroute Books and Media. Google them to find it.)

June 20, 2006

Birth of little kittens. Joy of watching them come out. I have them in my room – very archetypal – motherhood, nurturing.

My grandson Nicholas, with his long hair and Jewish face, looks like Jim Carvielez in the Passion– like Jesus – such a joy and grace even if funny.

June 25, 2006

Joy of swimming in the pool in my daughter's house in North Carolina. Looking at the pine trees I am remembering that my first conscious experience of finding something beautiful in nature was seeing an umbrella pine in Central Park, NYC.

July 1, 2006

I started working on *Called by Name: Following a Personal Spirituality* – full of buoyant energy – Contents: God's Way, No Way (when we're stuck); My Way, Their Way (witness stories of admired others), Your Way (guides for readers to search out their own), Our Way, Home Free (not that we've arrived, but that we know our quicksand and our life-line) This little book was never published but is available at Enroute Books and Media, as a free down-load. Click on free downloads to read it.

Then the next day a sense – this could really be my last book – make it short and sweet and be released from the pressure. Scary. What would fill the gap?

This morning I awoke with this poem in my head – maybe a poet is being born out of the womb of prose?

The poem is based on Carla, my daughter, being away at a family reunion. We couldn't all fit in the car with seat belt laws so I agreed to stay home with Nicholas and Max and the cats and the new litter.

This poem might sound angry but is really about how choleric melancholics like myself, need sanguines desperately. Maybe the key to my marriage as well?

COMPLEMENTARITY

Hostage of their joie de vivre

we angry drones work off our debt.

End of day, laid back

our little feet paw the air

Then settle under our melancholy shell...

dream of early retirement.

We awaken to the radiance

of our queens and princesses

drawing us back to service.

July 1, 2006 from Direction for Our Times – locutions to Anne:

Jesus

Be at peace, little children of God. I am with you. Do not think that you are orphans, abandoned to a world which lacks God's love. I seek to bring love into the world in a continuous stream. How My little apostles delight Me with their willingness to allow Me to use them for this purpose. I work without pause in each soul that welcomes Me. You may be asleep, or at rest in another

way, and I am busy at work in your soul, preparing great gifts for your brothers and sisters who do not know Me. I am tireless. I am determined. I am forming many saints who will move up the mountain of holiness with speed in order to serve Me more completely. Do you wish to be one of these saints? Of course you do. We will work together, you and I, to move you more fully into My will. How I guard My little apostles. How I surround them with My protection. I watch your life closely so that every experience you have will benefit your soul. My little ones experience pain and carry wounds. This should not frighten you. I do not judge you for your pain. I look at your pain and remember My pain and I am compassionate. Your pain will not separate you from Me. Again I say, have no fear, I am working in your soul to bring My kingdom to earth through you. I will see to everything. Trust your Jesus and you will be at peace.

July 1, 2006

After working on the No Way chapter of *Called by Name* and remembering all those tremendous mystical graces, Jesus seemed to prepare me for a big intervention by prayer of quiet during my prayer-time and then when I hit the bed. He seemed to be telling me that He is trying to trap me into talking to Him in depth all day instead of being so busy being a writer of books I plan. He seemed to say that He was lonely – very few want to talk to Him. Have I gone back to thinking He is a carpenter and not the most interesting person in the whole world ever? I asked Him whether on earth He smelled like sweat and burlap and He smiled. I had feelings of tremulous hope that the gap if I stop writing will be filled by Him.

Jesus: Ronda, I love reality – the cats, the wood of the house, water, trees. I want to work through your literary side, Ronda, not just the analytic side. That's why I have you surrounded by poets. I like old women, Teresa of Avila, Mother Angelica, Mother Teresa of Calcutta.

I awoke with the simple thought that Jesus is asking, as it were, "May I borrow your pen?"

July 2, 2006

Saw Superman Returns. Delighted at how they made him more like Christ – tortured, wounded side, the world does need a savior, almost dead, resurrected, ascended.

Jesus: Do not fear. It will all be all right. be very small. Fly close to my breast like Lois Lane with Superman.

July 3, 2006

We have a pool. I love to swim. The parents didn't have much time to teach the littler kids to swim, so I bribed them with treats or cash if they would swim across the pool even though they were afraid to. It only took a little while and then they were having a ball swimming for hours in the pool in play.

I thought that is how the Holy Spirit feels when He coaches us to grow and we actually cooperate finally.

July 4, 2006

I confessed all the vanity about my books through the years.

Jesus: Let me hold you still and just look out and see, as if I were holding you in front of Me so you see what I see. I am dissolving you into Me!

Me: Transforming union?

Jesus: See the shine of the wood on the chair at your desk. I knew you would love that shine and that trees could become chairs. You like to see solids shine with light.

Me: Because you are a carpenter's son?

Jesus: The light shineth in the darkness... You have been sating your hunger for beauty through the poetry of Scripture all these years.

Me: (Feeling doubt about whether I am making all this up – I think): which pathos is greater: out of love for Love to believe I am loved or out of fear of being fatuous to reject even Love?

As I type these notes up from last night I feel touched. Why wouldn't my Jesus want to bring me new life in my old age through words?

July 6, 2006

As if confirming this new dialogue of Jesus and myself, Pope Benedict's Wednesday audience was about St. John the Apostle and how he represents Jesus being our close friend and in silence revealing himself.

I asked Jesus about Henry Fonda and Jane Fonda and Kirk Douglas and their attractive but tragic personalities in so many ways. (I am reading an autobiography of Jane Fonda).

Jesus: See how terrible it is to try to live without Me. I love(d) them very much and wanted them to find Me.

July 7, 2006

Help me to help all those in family or Lenoir Rhyne College I meet who don't know Your personal love yet. Help me to accept the sacrifice of reaching out to people many of whom won't want to hear.

July 7, 2006

Reading an Amy Tan novel.

Me: Why do I like it so much?

Jesus: She reminds you of your mother, full of interesting feelings and thoughts. I want you to understand that I loved your mother with all her flaws and she is with Me and she awaits you and understands you now. I want you to understand her. She suffered very much.

I felt kind of numb hearing these words in my heart. I think it is always hard for us to really, really, understand God's love for those we have had lots of difficulty with. I need to ponder this locution. Maybe write my mother a dialogue,

Dear Nonna (Italian for grandmother which we all called my mother after she became such a happy grandmother)

Are you glad I argued and witnessed so much that you finally became a Catholic?

Nonna: Yes.

Me: I was so disappointed that you became a dissenting Catholic.

Nonna: I know.

Me: I wanted us to become closer because you became a Catholic.

Nonna: It was too much of a stretch because of my guilt. I wasn't loved unconditionally as a child the way you were. I was neglected and ignored. So I didn't have the cushion of love that makes repentance easier.

Me: I didn't know how to overcome the conflicts between us except by dutiful love which you scorned so.

Nonna: I was desperate – the great loves I had in the last part of my life was that of your twins and your sister, Carla. So those were the bonds I focused on since you and I were at such an impasse.

Me: Where are you now?

Nonna: I am in purgatory awaiting your full forgiveness.

Me: I am still serving you dutifully by praying for your soul, but I will ask for the grace to forgive from the heart. I am grateful for all you gave me of so much love as a child that I have so much more strength than so many, as a resilient person, teacher, speaker, writer.

Nonna: We will be happy together in heaven one day?

Me: Yes?

July 8, 2006

Blaka, who did the article in the local newspaper about the Aging workshop, picked up on something I said about living simply and giving to the poor. She wanted to do a feature on this. I was afraid it could seem like the right hand knowing what the left was doing and alienate everyone as a slur. I insisted she include how others help the poor hands on, which I don't and helping the family counts, too. etc. She said I could see the article first and I will let Fr. Ken see it too. Praying about it You seemingly said:

Jesus: Mother Teresa became well known because someone noticed and was inspired. Don't be afraid to be hated – "a prophet is not honored in his own town."

Me: I guess if one person becomes more simple and generous it's worth the resistance? Fr. Ken thought it would be okay – he says he preaches that our luxuries belong to the poor also.

The mother cat was missing for 9 hours. I felt awful. It was I who let her out the front door to frolic a bit – and she came back a hundred times before now. Finally Steve whistled and she seemed to emerge from under the house – perhaps she had found wild cat nip since she seemed so groggy and numbed out.

I offered the Mass for her return and prayed to St. Francis and St. Martin de Porres. Thank you.

July 9, 2006

Thinking about the transforming union that is considered by scholars to be the last stage of the spiritual life.

Mary seems to be telling me to look into the eyes of Jesus whenever I feel anxious.

I read a wonderful passage in Garrigou-Lagrange quoting from St. Thomas, that just as an object falls more swiftly as it reaches its goal, so toward the end of our lives our love becomes more intense as we get closer to heaven.

Concerning something that happened that made me feel insecure, Jesus seemed to want to tell me that there is no security on earth. "When the earth shakes for you, hold My hand more tightly. Pray my name over and over, Jesus, I trust in you."

July 10, 2006

Fr. Ken came over and we watched Ninth Configuration – Blatty's great movie. This time round I saw one of themes as being how God uses the devil as a kind of shock treatment to show us how bad it really gets if we thwart His way.

Fr. Ken, so in the center every moment at the parish, seems to like to relax and let others take over on social visits. During the night the Holy Spirit seemed to give me the lines of this reflection:

Not an ordinary guest,

My priest is always a priest.

He cannot not bless or pardon.

Out of toxic waste

He plucks flowers

And then we wonder

That we smell so sweet.

He witnesses

'be not afraid'

And the waters

Of our indignation

Recede.

July 12, 2006

A friend is in trouble – a sort of panic. I am going to just give it to You instead of trying to “fix” him.

Jesus: Always think I love that one you are worried about so much more than you can. Offer to Me for him the pain that comes because you cannot help as much as you want to.

July 13, 2006

Relevant Radio show – interview about my conversion – with potential to reach 26,000,000– of course that is just potential not actual listeners. I have a mixture of pride and skepticism – my background is so different, who can relate?

Jesus: The Holy Spirit uses these witness stories. Look how you are reached by Scott Hahn and Mother Angelica even though they are so different in every way from you. What moves people is that witness stories show My love – how personal My love is.

July 13, 2006

Zacko's 7th birthday. A chance to be very tender to him.

I was thinking he would be so happy – he had painful stomach cramps and digestive problems and was half the day lying sick and quiet (very unlike him) so he looked holy – but he revived and loved his presents and loved being the center of attention.

Did the Relevant Radio. It went very well. It felt anointed, strong, and there were questions that could elicit important responses. It's a call in show. Chuck Neff was a fine interviewer – supportive and affirming. The staff liked what I said and wants to do others with me. I recommended a bunch of friends for interviews.

I finished the Amy Tan book. There is a climax scene where the American tourists and the Burmese tribe have an ecstatic mystical experience based on their old pagan rituals. It disgusted me since it was not our Catholic faith.

Jesus: Love is the bridge. When you see space between you and others of alien beliefs don't think of them as enemies but see where I have laid down a bridge.

July 15, 2006

I can see where You had a bridge there for me with the woman at the pregnancy care center in Hickory – who seemed to be a strict firm Protestant. I was so happy she was against contraception on the basis it encourages sex outside of marriage and she teaches abstinence.

A Jewish convert friend was very upset about a report that Pope Benedict condemned Israel's bombing of Lebanon seeing his words as anti-Semitic. She doesn't want to go to her usual daily Mass where the priest is likely to say something anti-Israel.

I wrote her: I realize I have quite mixed feelings - on the one hand I would die for Israel if it would help, and not for the United States unless against an enemy such as Hitler or Stalin - on the other hand I am ashamed of the US and Israel because of abortion - we have killed more babies in the US and Israel than any Arabs have killed our troops or Israelis, after all, and I have zilch trust in news reports about anything. It is certainly just as likely some news rep is misrepresenting Pope Benedict as not. I hope so. (Later I saw he was aware of injustices of terrorism against Israelis but was just responding to the reprisal issue.)

July 15, 2006

There was a visitor here, a poet friend of Carla. Carla spent hours trying to convince her of her beauty and power in spite of her low self-esteem issues. I thought she was being a sort of poet-therapist like a dance-therapist. I thought she did it just the way Diana, her twin in California does with her friends.

I went to visit an old friend, Juli Loesch Wiley, who I hadn't seen in 20 years in Tennessee. She used to run around the country doing Operation Rescue and talks. She has a wonderful word-mongering tongue like talking to peace activists about how abortion is nuking the baby out of the womb. She had a great take on immigration in relation to abortion: Since Roe v. Wade we have had

50 million abortions – a third of a generation who could have been entry workers – so we need immigrants for our demographic gap and we should thank God every day they are hispanic mainly Catholics vs. Muslim, possibly terrorists, as found in Europe.

I was amazed at how this couple I visited are helping the old father (92 years old) – she hardly able to walk from rheumatic heart, diabetes, knee problems, with her father holding onto her back to get around. She also adopted a Russian baby. She is walking the walk of pro-life big time.

July 18, 2006

The boys left for California to be with their father for the rest of the summer. It seems like their ghosts are here. I miss their unique personalities. I feel lesser, even though I love the quiet in the house.

Jesus: See, you need the otherness of males around. It helps you to be more than your mind; to be a grandmother.

I am reading Trocchi *Cain's Book* about drug addicts.

Jesus: Feel the pathos. Desperate for happiness and no hope because they don't have Me.

July 19, 2006 off to ETWN – why do You want me to go off and share?

Jesus: Heaven is not a solo but a symphony.

I am thinking that I should give myself time to observe and drink in all the good You want me to see. This is a preparation for heaven.

Jesus: Don't try to resolve so many things. Let Me dissolve some of them.

July 20 EWTN

In an off moment I was sitting in the lobby of the studio looking at TV sets with the various programs being shown in Spanish language countries, and other English speaking countries. They now have a wonderful mix with great speakers, Masses, music, classical Christian art – many of my favorites. EWTN has become a repository of all the treasures of the Church, and overflowing with it. How wonderful.

Jesus: Remember Mother Angelica's motto: If you want God to do the miraculous you have to be willing to do the ridiculous.

Me: Yes, Jesus I do believe you have used and will use all my work for the kingdom and that I should just do what You seem to want me to do, without trying to figure out if it will work or not.

I visited some dear old friends: Rebecca and Richard Geraghty. Becky is slowly becoming more disabled from side effects of diabetes. She feels awful that she is mostly sitting in a chair. It seemed to me that she was an icon of the heart for her husband

who lives so much in his head and that would be enough even if she couldn't do all the many things for him she likes to do that demand more mobility.

July 22, 2006 Feast of St. Mary Magdalene – my patron baptismal saint

I had expected that some in the parish would be offended by the newspaper article about simplicity of life to give more to the poor. Sure enough someone drew a mustache and beard on my face in the article that was put up on the parish bulletin board. I laughed when I saw it. We are supposed to rejoice when we are persecuted. I never can. But in this case it is easy since it is such a small little sign of rejection.

Jesus: Good. That is nothing to what I got preaching about the lilies of the fields.

July 23, 2006

Last night I went to the Hispanic charismatic prayer meeting at our parish. Full of very young people clapping and moving about – these usually so inward sometimes stolid looking folk. When I saw in the Psalm for this morning about rejoicing in the Lord I thought, they are doing it. I think it is so easy for me because it is a throwback to the Jewish worship tradition with dancing and swaying. I wish everyone would like it as much and feel so freed by it, but I suppose for those who only associate motion with popular dancing, it is hard even to want to try.

We talk a lot in my house with my daughter, Carla, who is an identical twin of Diana, of her need to try to cajole her husband into twin-like togetherness with her, into loving to do just what she loves. I think I have the same misplaced urgency about trying to get everyone to love what I love.

Jesus: In my house, many mansions.

July 23, 2006

I am wanting to keep one of the kittens for myself. But ambivalent.

Jesus: It is natural to want to touch what is soft and to love animals. It is my gift. Take the kitten. I am responding to your whim.

Me: Tears. Like in the musical Cabaret the old gal sings "A pineapple for me, for me,"....

Full circle back to my love of little cats as a teen-ager?

I was reading Annie Proulx's Wyoming Stories. One is about homosexual sex in two men.

Jesus: I want you to understand this more so you can "Hate the sin, love the sinner."

July 24, 2005

Carla says she now prays in constant gratitude – for everything wonderful in her life – beauty, coolness of the pool, hotness of the sun, the family. What a wonderful change from years back thinking she was an agnostic. I like knowing she is praying in gratitude. A bond: I do that, too.

July 25, 2006

Inertia. I don't even want to do what I love to do such as prepare talks.

Jesus: Don't make decisions about that. Just accept it as a cross for now.

I watched an anti-war movie called *Syriana* with a complicated plot about mid-East politics and US strategies. I felt discouraged wondering how such types could be reached.

Jesus: I come to them in various ways to save them. When I lived on earth I was surrounded by the evils of the Romans but I preached more about the evils within the seemingly good people.

July 26, 2006

I am working on a Catholic/Lutheran Adult Ed. Workshop on Pope Benedict's Encyclical

- here are some notes:

Reading the Encyclical over again I notice how it coincides with what Jesus is telling me, that He wants me to see the world and others as He sees them as in this paragraph of Benedict XVI (*Deus Caritas Est* #17) Gradually His will becomes my will "The love-story between God and man consists in the very fact that this communion of will increases in a communion of thought and sentiment, and thus our will and God's will increasingly coincide. God's will is no longer for me an alien will, something imposed on me from without by the commandments, but it is now my own will...Then self-abandonment to God increases and God becomes our joy. (Psalm 72)"

Went to bed with fear about teaching at the Lutheran college.

Jesus: Don't worry about how many will like you. There are some I can reach through you. I promise. Look for the bridges.

I was praying the rosary quietly and almost asleep when it felt as if my body became lighter, as if my soul was leaving it.

Jesus: I am giving you foretastes of heaven to encourage you. A vacation from your worries?

This was a state of blissful release from the body, like coming into the center of Being. It seemed as if my soul was being knit with the souls of all those I love. This deep bliss lasted for a few hours. I came out of it the next morning feeling a little frightened. Would He put me in a trance?

Jesus, you have brought me to these beautiful states before without any more extreme graces, so I should not be afraid. Also, just I guess anything out of the ordinary slightly frightens us, even if it is blissful.

Why Lenoir/Rhyme – Lutherans? I asked again about my part time job teaching at this college.

Jesus: Look how desperate I am if I have to send out a de-fanged lioness to them?

I thought maybe this humor, my style, was proof that this was not Jesus but me, however, later I thought of St. Thomas More and the jokes about his beard just before being guillotined. High humor as sign of grace.

Later the Holy Spirit suggested I put the whole Lenoir Ryne College mission under the guidance of Mother Mary – asking her to show me what her eyes see. I suggested to Fr. Ken that I might invoke St. Charles Borromeo – counter-reformation doctor of the Church – see myself as a missionary from our parish. He said he could give me a missionaries blessing just before I start. Lovely.

July 28, 2006

I went to our one hour adoration prayer – I hadn't been because it is an inconvenient hour. Immediately went into prayer of quiet. Fr. Ken solemnly processed down the Church aisles with the monstrance blessing us, but without a word. It was so solemn. I thought it was for healing but unlike at big conferences where charismatic priests do this with lots of excitement, this was a quiet way. I noticed that my gums didn't hurt during this, even though I had the dentures on. Spoke on the phone to Fr. Leo Celano, my former Norbertine spiritual director in California, and he alluded to how God can just take away pain. He cited an example of how when he was doing Operation Rescue there was a photo afterwards shown in court of a policeman with his fingers in Fr. Leo's nostrils dragging him to the police car. He felt nothing at the time and didn't even remember but his nose was badly bruised and bleeding afterwards. He said God can lift you above the rain into the sky above the clouds when He wishes.

I saw a movie Tsotsi about a young South African black thief and murderer who gradually becomes compassionate from taking care of a tiny baby found in the car he had stolen. It seemed contrived to some degree but then I thought of you, Jesus, and the conversion of "good" thief, who was surely a murderer as well as a thief, if his punishment was crucifixion.

Jesus: I see the heart of a man, like an X-ray. Do not fear. Movies can be like X-rays. Without the contrast of the violence that is real, everything, even religion could seem sentimental.

I have been reading of the Grimke Sisters – wonderful speakers for anti-slavery, themselves being refugees in the North from a slaveholding family in the South. They had tremendous courage and oratorical ability since they were the first women speakers ever on platforms normally reserved for men.

Jesus seemed to want me to take courage from them as a woman speaker, showing me how disarming a woman speaker can be just because there is so much skepticism about them – still there today in a lesser form.

Jesus told me about the rest that He promises to the heavily burdened:

“It is not a rest of Stoic detachment. In your turbulence, I want to stretch you toward My heart so that I can pour My love in and then you will trust me more and therefore be more serene. Let me!”

July 31, 2006

Jesus seemed to ask me: What are you running away from with all this reading and film-seeing?

Me: Fear?

Jesus: Come to me. That is why I have to slow you down. Nothing is more important now than your peace, so take time to sit at My feet and let me give it to you.

Me: Yes. Trying to breathe in the holy Name, Jesus, frequently, especially when that anxious feeling comes.

Jesus is telling me to be very still inside – wordless. As I am falling asleep, not even the rosary, but just the name of Jesus. To practice “death.” Death to my word-monger analytic self.

I didn’t interpret this as meaning I am necessarily literally going to die soon, or that I can’t think any more, but just to have a truly quiet time in my prayer once more.

Fear

Frantic cat

Wanting home

Stretched to the max

Across the screen door

Claws holding you fast

Turn around

And see your master

Close behind,

Ready to carry you inside!

Frantic human

Wanting home

Stretched to the max

Across the earth

Hands holding you fast

Turn around

And see your Lord

Close behind,

Ready to carry you to eternity!

August 4, 2006

Getting ready for talks on Deus Caritas Est ecumenical Adult Bible Study with Catholics and Lutherans, I thought, of course, Mary is our patron for ecumenism for she loves all the Christians for loving her Son and surely wants for them all He wants to give them!

From Anne the locutionary/visionary of Direction for Our Times

August 1, 2006

Jesus:

I send My apostles the grace necessary for a calm spirit. With this calm spirit, My followers will bring heavenly calm to a restless world that trembles with unease. Live your commitment to time spent in silent prayer and I will place these heavenly graces in your soul. Others will identify these graces in you because these gifts are contrary to the gifts offered by the world. This is another way that My apostles stand out. Do not spend a great deal of time discussing events in the world. Long discussions do not benefit the situation. Spend instead a great deal of time praying for the situation in the world. This will benefit the situation, along with those around you, and your own little priceless soul, which becomes more and more beautiful through prayer and silence. I want each apostle to understand that I have not abandoned this world. Consider this carefully. I am Jesus. I am God. I have not abandoned this world. Do not be afraid. I say this, dearest apostles, firmly. I do not want My apostles to be afraid or to communicate fear to others. Bring your fears to Me and bring My peace to others. This is your call, your divine task. Accept this call as seriously as you accept My love for you and your love for Me. Our reciprocal love is natural and right, holy and blessed.

My peace in your soul is also natural and right, holy and blessed. Apostles, be disciplined in those actions that bring you peace and be equally disciplined in avoiding those things that cause you upset. Your Jesus seeks to comfort many. Very often, I will do this through you.

I did a talk on Pope Benedict's first encyclical at an ecumenical effort with Catholics and Protestants. I was anxious about it, because I don't know if Lutherans would like me.

The Lutherans were very nice and friendly. It went very well. Immediately a Catholic man noticed my large crucifix and said he used to wear one but now keeps it in his pocket. He withdrew it and put it around his neck. Another Catholic was feeling low and it seemed my talk gave him fresh élan – he went to confession afterwards.

Jesus: Did you see that I had built bridges? The man who put on his crucifix, the French woman, the Lutheran speaker who opened up and who you will now know better when he is your colleague at Lenoir/Rhyne. See!

August 6, 2006

Finished reading Juli Loesch Wiley's journal book. I am in such awe of her courage dealing with terrible temptations many singles go through, succumbing but letting grace bounce her back, and her great courage in the Pro-Life Rescue movement. Wonderful ending of her finally finding true love.

I finished reading an Anne Perry novel – Angels in the Gloom. It is about World War I in Britain. The hero is an army chaplain, wounded and exhausted from a heroic time in the trenches in Belgium. There is a moment when they really think it is more probable than not that Germany will win. The question keeps coming up, how could it be worth it for young men to die in horrible circumstances of bloody horror. The Anglican chaplain is busy encouraging the women of his home town where he is brought to recover from his wounds before going back into the trenches. He does beautifully in his sensitive ministry until the end of the book where the author has him admit that he doesn't know for sure about God's love but he is absolutely sure that Jesus' teachings are the only ones that make life or death worth anything. So, presumably, it comes down to that eighteen year old's should die terrible deaths out of national sentiment, not with faith that God will reward their sacrifice, but only a wish. I was so disappointed. It points up Benedict's thought in the Encyclical Deus Caritas Est, that Jesus is not an ideal but a Person who loves us.

An analogy came to mind – suppose a king promised that if you fought for him you would live in his castle as sons and daughters or as a bride. But then after you made the sacrifice, told you, no I just wanted you as soldiers – go and die in the ditch, you can't live in my castle.

For Jesus to promise us eternal life if there is none, just as a goad to do good on earth is so cruel. Only He could make such a promise, but if it is just a false one, then it is like a scam, and He is not the Son of God but only an idealist.

August 7, 2006

I saw for the first time, Fr. Paul Griesgraber say his Mass. He is a late vocation man I greatly urged on to try to become a priest. He seemed like an eagle priest. He celebrates it out of the deep contemplative, St. John the Evangelist side of his personality, not the charismatic side.

Advice from him for me: when a father tries to get his baby to sleep, he first relaxes her and then she can sleep. So when we are anxious, we need to pray to let God relax us and go into a sort of sleep state of grace before trying to do things that usually make us anxious.

I was visiting Diana, my daughter, in Redondo Beach, California, who left the sacraments when she was fifteen. She came with me to daily Mass –saying it was just to be loving to me. But she began looking for a sign maybe to return herself – she was looking to see if anyone would be friendly after the Mass. Instead of a parishioner being friendly, an alcoholic beggar came by outside the Church and said, apropos of nothing “if I hadn’t fornicated but had married in the Church I wouldn’t be in the state I am now in.” That seemed like a fantastic sign that Jesus wanted Diana to get married in the Church. She decided to have her marriage, which was not in the Church, con-validated in the Church as a sign of her desire to have her marriage to Pete be a total commitment.

I was thinking about old, old, age.

Jesus: They are living icons of the death of pride.

Yes! I should look forward to that instead of dreading it.

August 18, 2006

Talking to Jesus about addictions:

Jesus: If someone is good and close to Me, but is still unbalanced he needs therapy, but if someone is a big sinner who is unbalanced it is because sin makes you crazy and so do destructive addictions. Such people need Me first of all; not your psychological advice. When they come into My orbit, rejoice in hope.

Jesus: I will let you be tired so that you rest by prayer. Drown in Me. This anxiety is your thorn in the flesh for this time in your life. Gently bring it to Me and say your trust prayers.

I was thinking of telling my twin-sister who will come tomorrow for a visit, about my different twin theories and that Jesus is my twin, Jesus seemed to suggest: how about quadruplets: Jesus, Mary, Joseph and Ronda.

If to be a saint is to have nothing but love in one’s heart, that equals nothing but Jesus and everyone He loves, which equals everyone.

August 21, 2006

I think that where a child has even one parent modeling authority matched by understanding of the child's personality, then that child is less wary of authority and more eager to obey so as to earn love. I usually, theological considerations to the side, act as if I can earn God's love by obedience. Possibly the child whose authority did not understand him or her is likely to feel "to heck with authority, I will be my own authority," and therefore have trouble with Church authority even when it is legitimate.

When I went to Lenoir Rhyne College in North Carolina to begin teaching part-time courses, I was delighted to see a huge wooden rosary hanging on the wall of the little student chapel and even flyers about how to pray the rosary. It is very friendly there.

A Catholic faculty member, when I told him I was planning to offer as penance all difficulties about this new little job for the sins of Catholics that Luther revolted against, said that he once did all the things necessary to get a big indulgence which he then applied ironically to Luther's soul! That would be "burning coals" since Luther was such a hater of indulgences.

August 22, 2006

I was more relaxed with my sister on this visit than before. We had a tiff early on about Church practices but then my daughter Carla insisted that it was because we hadn't really accepted our major differences, wanting so much to be twin-alike – or, as I put it, we think twins should be clones. My sister suggested we pray together about it, and then I thought we needed to forgive each other for being disappointed. Our family was so alienated and she is the only one in the world left with our background, so it is especially painful that we cannot agree about our refuge: The Church.

Jesus: Focus on your twin's virtues: delicacy, appreciation, sensibility, yearning, loyalty to her husband, Arthur, a woman without guil, like Nathaniel.

Me: Yes. Thank you, God, for my sister.

August 23, 2006

My sister Carla did a wonderful demonstration of sacred dance. An 86 year old Knight of Columbus looked luminous with joy to be following the steps. Fr. Ken loved it.

August 30, 2006

My daughter, Carla, had a friend visiting, a poet-horseman, Dave. About relating to him, Jesus seemed to say: I am bringing you to many different people to be a woman of more seasons, to walk on My bridges.

August 31, 2006

St. Columban in the Office of Readings: "Let us seek the fountain of light and life and the living water by despising what we see, by leaving the world, and by dwelling in the highest heavens. Let us seek these things like rational and shrewd fish may we drink the living water which wells up to eternal life."

Just as fish don't know land but do lift their heads out of water – so we don't know heaven but can lift our heads!

This message to the locutionary Anne, Direction for Our Times, seems so much to confirm what Jesus is doing with me now!

September 1, 2006

Jesus

A deep peace settles upon those who serve the Lord. This interior peace, heaven's presence, connects each apostle to their Saviour. I work in each soul without interruption if that soul welcomes Me. Around the apostle, circumstances change. Others come and go in their life and perhaps there is suffering or persecution. My presence remains a constant, though, comforting, consoling, and directing. The connection between heaven and each apostolic servant is the avenue through which I return to the world. How heaven delights in each commitment. During this time many look to their Saviour with a certainty that I am calling out to them. Each apostle hears My call. You have heard My call. Consider today what your Jesus is asking of you. Consider how I am asking you to serve today. Dearest apostle, I must insist that you spend time in silence contemplating My will. I must insist upon this because I require your service in whatever way I have willed for you during this time. If you give Me your full attention for a period of time each day, I can instruct you and prompt you. Also, I can give you a very important heavenly attribute and that is the peace that I need you to possess. You must possess this for your own comfort, of course, but you must also possess this peace so that it flows through you into the world. Your world does not have peace. My peace has been rejected by your world. You, My beloved apostles, reject the world's discord and accept My peace. That is why you are so important to Me. I am your Beloved One. You feel My presence, do you not? Truly, I am with you. Dear apostle, I want to be with everyone in this way. Will you help Me? I know that you will. Spend time with Me in silence each day and I will provide you with everything you need and everything the world requires.

In another connection:

Jesus: Look to see what rattled you. You will see that I am directing you away from situations that will take away peace. You can reach people through your talks and the books but I want you to do that slowly and without haste and tension and false deadlines. See you are more peaceful at Lenoir Rynne College with lots of free time around the classes. Start at home by putting your time with Me first.

Yes, I want Your peace.

There was a talent show at the parish to raise money for Krystal who was in a nearly fatal car accident. I loved all the fun in the show and the willingness to do crazy things. I felt proud to be an American because of this good kind of zany American spirit.

There was a wonderful response to *Taming the Lion Within* on Relevant Radio – man writing on e-mail that for 52 years he has been hoping for such insights and felt peaceful already.

Jesus: Pause and taken in this joy of My using you these ways. Go with the fruit. I long to have my people at peace. To do more in teachings on anger, first you must be more at peace.

September 11, 2006

Feeling bad about Word Among us turn down of Weeping with Jesus about grieving.

Jesus: Let go of everything and respond to what comes along.

Hilarious but upsetting incident – I was following another driver to get to a destination – she got lost and I got lost following her; she found me, but then made a sudden turn and lost me again. Thinking the whole trip would only take about 10 minutes I failed to look for a restroom. An hour later stuck in an area with no gas stations I wound up in the cemetery of a large Lutheran Church making cell phone calls about directions. I thought of “relieving nature” on the grounds of the cemetery but then thought that even though there were no cars in the lot, someone could come out of the Church and there I would be, a Catholic, disgracing the grounds of my “separated brethren.” Finally I decided to use a plastic bag in the car I had been using for dirty Kleenex. Realized after awhile, that I had missed the bag and done it on the mat in the back of the car. Ugh! Fear of horrible smell. Sense of shame.

Finally I just laughed and laughed and the next day found a cheap gadget in the camping department of K-Mart that serves this purpose called a portable urinal.

I described the incident to my parish Anger-group in relation to controlling my anger at the unhelpful lack of direction of woman who I was following. They laughed and laughed over it.

September 13, 2006

The college students at Lenior-Ryne like *Voyage to Insight*, my own text, being used in the class. This feels wonderful. I now feel almost certain it will work to teach there.

Thinking of Brecht(?) who had a poem that was something like

When I was young I hated everybody.

Then when I was older I liked good people.

Now I am old and I respect everyone just because they are human beings in pain.

September 14, 2006

Somehow this time it is too much. On the way to a weekend retreat I was giving, by air with terrible overbooking and other glitches, so it took me 24 hours to get from New Mexico back to Charlotte, N.C. I became convinced that I must really give up

these exhausting trips – go to the ones I have scheduled – last one August, 2007 EWTN Widow Series and then stop. I asked Jesus “Do you accept my resignation?”

Jesus: Dearest one, you have served me so well as a speaker and writer. I know the cost. I am giving you more of the gift of counsel and these other openings as teacher at Lenoir-Rhyne and radio and TV. Just sink into my arms and let me carry you through the remaining talks.

I realize that part of it is Recovery technique is to see that realistically I can’t change the airlines or the places I go to be good for me with all my physical problems. It is more realistic to stop going.

Fr. Ken thinks that doing radio shows instead could be good because conferences are preaching to the choir and radio reaches many others.

At Pecos touching to meet Gilbert – a Mexican American man who had seizures since youth and back pains. 60 years of trust, and then healed at 63.

I called my sister, Carla. I realize her voice is soothing to me. She was the strong one when I was little and I find her a motherly voice in her concern for my problems now.

September 21, 2006

Prayers for 24th Sunday “Bring us to the dignity which distinguishes the poor in spirit.” I never noticed this line before. I have no dignity because I am too rich in spirit or longing with spiritual gluttony to grab everything I can in this life?

September 22, 2006

I am reading a painful book about the Vietnam War that Steve gave me to read. Jesus, I am wondering what you want me to learn from it. How can we ever know what is right if we don’t have the right information?

Jesus: When you read such books I want you to understand better, to have a compassionate heart for everyone. Are you an army general? Of course you don’t have the information. You don’t have to know; you have to pray and love.

Someone says that discussions between people with different premises are like chasing cats around a tree.

For example - a first question is:

Do all of us agree that Satan and his legions are real entities vs. symbols of human states?

A second question is:

Assuming we agree about Satan which is unlikely, would it be correct that when Hitler made a pact with the devil several times that he chose to be demonized?

A third question is:

Why is it odd that Jews in Israel, descendants of the victims of Hitler's demonic racism, whose ancestors did not leave Germany because they couldn't believe that Hitler's demonic plans were real, and then became victims, would now, hearing daily proclamations by Islamic leaders that all Jews should be destroyed, not think they need to protect themselves?

Such Islamic leaders don't sound like delightful Sufi mystics to me.

A fourth question is:

When a military purposely stations its artillery in civilian homes (Lebanon) or puts grenades in baby's diapers and sends them toward the troops of the enemy (as it is said was done in Vietnam by the Cong) are these neutral civilian targets?

Fifth question is:

Does the devil have any part in pre-marital sex leading IN PART since 1973 to 50 million abortions in the U.S.?

This doesn't mean that the rabbi isn't right that we need to love the enemy as Gandhi and St. Francis did, but such advice coming from someone who alludes to some of the realities I mention above would sound more real to me. I am teaching Letter to Birmingham Jail next week and usually teach Gandhi. These men knew personally what injustice to themselves was - so their urgings of non-violent resistance are more powerful. Are there American Jews being urged by rabbis to go to Lebanon in the cross-fire and practice non-violent resistance? I'm not being sarcastic. I would be thrilled to hear it was so.

September 23, 2006

I am working on the Aquinas/Luther talk. It seems okay, but not quite my way. I am still anxious about it.

Jesus: Be humble. It is natural that you feel anxious since it is not your usual audience. (The audience is mostly Lutheran ministers) Try to picture that I really will be there trying to enter into those present by means of the words I have given you. Just as I have made bridges at the college, so here you will find bridges. Offer to me those anxieties, much of which are from pride; that you fear seeming inadequate. Forgive those in the past who didn't understand your way. I have used them in a different way. You don't have to please everyone; just Me.

Joy to finally finish the Aquinas lecture for better or worse. I was alone in the chapel of our Church. I have never been alone in the chapel. I was staring at a little statue of Joseph or maybe St. Christopher carrying the child Jesus. I thought that the priest carries an even smaller form of Him, the Eucharist.

September 26, 2006

Finally back, after a transition, to a regular prayer schedule. Jesus says: I have relieved you of many projects so you can put being close to me and following me first. And now I am giving you peace in prayer to encourage you. Otherwise you will always be harried and jumpy. I want you to be peaceful.

September 27, 2006

A priest in Hickory said in a sermon that we should never go out to our ministries as if it is just “I am going” but always “we (Jesus and I) are going.”

Wonderful. I will start thinking this way immediately.

October 1, 2006 message from Jesus given to Anne a lay apostle:

My children, I am with you. Your God, your Creator, speaks this message in so many ways. In every daybreak you must hear My voice saying, 'I am with you.' When tempted toward despair because of crosses and hardships, you must hear My whisper saying, 'I am with you.' When you look at the work you must do and find it overwhelming, allow me to move you gently into it with perfect assurance that 'I am with you.' Dearest apostles, so brave, I am with you. I do not tell you that you will be overcome. I do not tell you that you have been given work that is impossible for you to complete. Those messages do not come from Me. Instead, I tell you that you will persevere and ultimately triumph. Our mission of mercy does not falter, even though the steps of my little apostles sometimes falter. This mission pushes through the world with a steadiness that defies all attempts against it. My apostles experience fear at times. This is not a problem for Me or this mission. Fear is to be expected. Bring your fear to Me and explain to Me exactly what threatens you. If you do this, I can remove your fear. I will convince you that in My presence, with My power everything is possible. You have an expectation of your little boat crashing against the rocks. I will never allow this. If I am steering the boat that is your work, you will be carried safely. Push on into each day with courage, understanding that while you may not be able, I am able. You may lack courage, but I have courage. You sometimes walk in darkness, but I have the light with which to see exactly where your footsteps are taking you. Dear apostles, it is a time for hard work, yes, but a time for great glory, also. Rejoice. I am with you.

Oct. 11, 2013

Jesus: Come to me, raging lioness! what is this tempest in a tea pot? Fight with the demons here, because they are everywhere. Are you yielding to what Kierkegaard described as despair of possibility – that whenever things are rough you want to flee to a fantasy place?

Oct. 6, 2012 in New Jersey doing a Conference

Jesus says: Dear Ronda, I am drawing you out and in. I want you to stop doing anything you don't have to do. Stop pushing so you can spend much more time close to My heart, so that everything you do will be focused and have even more power to change hearts and minds. I will use prayer of quiet to draw you in. Don't resist, please.

Scott Hahn: God doesn't have employees but daughters and sons – therefore more time in prayer vs. ministry work.

At New Jersey talks for priests making this workshop-retreat, Scott Hahn interprets Jesus saying that “greater works than this will you do,” and “what is harder to forgive sins or say get up and walk” as about Eucharist and Reconciliation!

Mark Twain: history doesn't repeat itself but it rhymes.

Jesus: Hold on tight to Me in anxiety. Nada te turbe...Solo Deus....

Oct. 10, 2006

I am rattled by different frustrating situations. Fear Lenoir Rhyne College won't work for me.

Jesus: Of course you are jerked out of peace when a lot of happenings which you don't want come along and you feel frightened.

All the more reason to flee to Me and trust and I will send you help; sometimes through others, Fr. Ken, family, friends, often unexpectedly. Now just open yourself to me by quietly praying My Holy Name and then I can tell you more.

See I give you prayer and quiet and it was interrupted but it was back when you returned. I am faithful. Trust Me.

Stay at Lenoir Rhyne College as long as you can, unless I give you something else with teaching. You have to teach. Now relax – be carefree.

Oct. 13, 2006

Why am I so jumpy?

Jesus: I have made you to be a very sensitive and relational person, like most women.

Accept the pluses and minuses of your nature and keep offering the jumpiness for your deepest intentions – the family, students, but also come to Me and stay with Me in prayer until I can quiet you.

Oct. 14, 2006

My daughter, Diana, had a good talk with the priest at her parish about getting her marriage blessed. I have been offering endless prayers and crosses for this. Thank you Jesus, thank you, Jesus, thank you, Jesus. Thank you Mary and Joseph, guardian angels, St. Diana, St. Helena, St. Peter.

I was kvetching (Yiddish word for complaining) about hard times with spacey or just inefficient conference organizers and someone paid me \$1000 for a talk when I had asked for only \$500! She said that the committee thought I deserved more! I felt ashamed at being so critical.

(Typically I don't charge any fee for local parish talks, because I consider that the Eucharist is of infinite value compared to my talks! But when it is out of town with tiresome travel, I do accept a fee.)

Oct. 15, 2006

Dear St. Teresa of Avila, on your feast day, help me to be holy. Help me really believe that "solo Dio basta" as you wrote – God alone is enough.

St. Teresa: We know you and love you. Listen little one, stop torturing yourself with worry and self-deprecation. Please, like me, let yourself sink into the arms of beautiful Jesus. Be a bride, not a fuss-pot. Now!

Jesus: I want to take you; not to ravish you but to pacify you. I want to pull you into My world, instead of the fretful world of your mind.

After this came a wonderful prayer of quiet in the chapel. Jesus said, see you need this peace I am filling you with, like a dry arid land needs the rain.

Yes, thank you, Jesus.

An analogy: Suppose parents satisfied every whim of a child so he or she never wanted to leave; it wouldn't be good; so we are prepared for heaven by foretastes and weanings.

Oct. 16, 2006

Sense of goodness of helping the family in small ways through this difficult time of Martina, the baby, up at night, etc. Being also, in spite of my jumpiness, a steadying person for the boys.

Jesus: Try not to evaluate things every minute, but instead trust. Where there is so much love, I am there.

Reading Lily's (nickname of Alice Von Hildebrand) *By Grief Refined*. Don't be jealous of Lily. She had her own crosses, you didn't have and she reaches different people and she loves you so much.

October 17, 2006

Dearest Lily,

First, how delighted I am to see *The Heart* will be re-published.

I am rereading *By Grief Refined* for a widow series I am doing on EWTN. I was so moved by the nobility of the way you express things. This time I noticed what you said about evolving thoughts of a widow about her spouse when the marriage was less than ideal. There are many healings for me living with this daughter. I cannot help but see all the good things Martin gave to the

children that I couldn't give such as his joie de vivre and ability to take great joy in loved ones even when doing very poorly physically. Carla has all sorts of ailments with pain, cysts, lungs, etc.

When you wrote about using the time before reunion in heaven to become more the person your husband and God wanted you to be, I was struck by how I am actually more the way he wanted me to be than when we were together. They say that the bereaved one tries to replace the missing one by being more like him. So, I am a little more relaxed and enjoying of the pleasures of life vs. being too much only thinking about mission.

I hope you will pray for this EWTN venture. It is my first series. I think you would have done it better, but they have asked me and I must try to do what the Holy Spirit would want. Possibly there are as many widows out there like me with troubled marriages who will identify with those problems.

There were so many conflicts in our marriage that I have trouble thinking of the reunion someday with him in heaven, even though I pray a lot for him and all the family souls in purgatory.

October 18, 2006

Aquinas/Luther Lecture

So many graces at the conference. A parish woman from Franciscan University of Steubenville who lives here prayed over me in a charismatic way just before I went on. A Pentecostal in the motel commended me for dressing as they do, long dress, and long hair! Lara Miller came running in from an auto accident where she was in the ER but bounded out once her wound was dressed to get to hear me! I saw that God used my weakness, because in my neediness for quick bonding I did reach out and bond quickly with so many of the people there. Jesus seems to say – trust, let me celebrate with you all these graces. And again, I was so envious of the beautiful style of Regis Martin and Amy Schiffrin, but many in the audience liked the change to my very colloquial style.

Jesus: Different gifts. The Holy Spirit leads some to want to be saints because of the beauty of their vision, but they are lead through you to the concreteness of the struggle in everyday life.

Some notes about the other talks:

Pastor Amy Schiffrin is a liturgist and she sung parts of her talk to illustrate points about how hymns carry holiness. Here are some of the points I want to remember:

In the elusiveness of sound, the hidden god is not exposed as an object for display, for sound...reveals without sight...In the human voice, the Divine voice sounds...sung into His sounding, the community that simultaneously listens for His voice as it proclaims His voice experiences the holiness that belongs to God alone...leading into entering into the sounds beyond human experience of the angel's at God's throne.

The sound comes in to us closer than the words, like a baby's cry. I related this to tongues or people praying the Latin Mass without knowing the meaning of everything.

The assembly's voices are the sacramental material in which God's glory/holiness is sounded. This happens in a different way when many sing together. (Ronda: another reason not to be a loner Christian?)

Regis Martin What is in common of Catholics and Protestants is the basic human hunger for God, for salvation; the sheer vertigo of the creature ordained by God to an end, a finality, he cannot obtain on his own." It is not a self-help thing, Not our charm, intelligence or even virtue can save us: only God.

Fr. Patrick Henry Reardon – a married orthodox priest, talked about how our strengths can be our doom. Especially type A personalities put the crusade, the work, the projects, above love, as did St. Paul before his conversion.

October 21, 2006

Letter to my sister, Carla.

The Luther/Aquinas conference was just extraordinary. The Lutheran pastors, and other people there loved my talk and me. I felt very loved by Dr. Yoder - the head of the department who you met.

It was enormously interesting to me. I've never met any women pastors - you meet them all the time. (My sister teaches at Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley). I was all prepared not to like Amy but she is wonderful. We bonded instantly because of her relationship to you. She has friends in Asheville, a couple, Lutheran pastors who just became Catholics and the woman is an iconographer. (This couple was Ruth and Richard Ballard. Because of Amy, who I never saw again, I became great friends with these two and we wrote the book together *What the Saints Say About Heaven*. Many Lutheran pastors are moving either toward Rome or Constantinople (Orthodox). I know there is plenty of movement the other way also. One of the participants was a Lutheran pastor who was previously a Jesuit brother.

Amy talked to me a lot about how your classes in healing through dance brought deep healing to her - a dance where you called out the names of your demons - she called out the names of the males who abused her as a kid.

In a peculiar way I feel close to Protestant women pastors - I know 3 of them now - because they are Christian women leaders, and so like me in that regard. It is very surprising to me that I am, as it were, entering more into your ecumenical world at this time of my life.

So, the success of this talk makes me feel much surer that it will work at this college for me and I don't need to keep doing out of town talks - I only have 3 left! I am doing more locally – my workshop on aging at a retirement village and a witness story at a parish in Newton, N.C.

Love and prayers, Ronda

Dear Jesus: thank you, thank you, thank you for this wonderful conference. You must be smiling at how frightened I was needlessly since you prepared so many wonderful surprises for me.

October 22, 2006

Dear Richard (The English grandfather of Martina, Carla's youngest child)

It feels strange having JoJo (the grandmother) here and not you! I miss your wry sense of humor and gentle loving way of looking upon our crazy family.

JoJo wouldn't say what was wrong but only that you were feeling very low. I thought you might not mind my sharing a few tidbits of my ideas about this from one who struggles with low feelings a lot.

Because you are a carpenter, a tool image comes to mind. You can't do certain jobs without the proper tools, right? The ideas and characteristics that got us through life in the early years or mid-years don't always work so well for the older years. A Christian psychologist maintains that older people bemoan the fact that they can't do as much and therefore feel useless, but that is not the job, and high energy and skills are not the tools.

What is the task, then? I think it is preparing for eternity by growth in love - such as asking myself not how much did I do today, but did I smile at someone who looked lonely even though he or she was not an attractive person for me, or did I manage to thank God for some trait of my dead husband, and think of him gratefully, that I overlooked when he was alive, etc. All this can be done from "the rocking chair." Especially I think God wants to purify my memories by showing me the good images in slow motion so I can savor the meaning uninterrupted by workaholic task-orientation jobs!

Of course, if I were you, I'd be wanting to hedge my bets by going to Church (he is a lapsed Anglican) even if I had negative memories in the past. When my son committed suicide, my husband, who had converted from atheism at age 60 but only went to Church on Sundays, realized that only in Church did he get any hope, so contre coeur he started coming with me to daily Mass. It gave him some peace and hope for his son which he couldn't dredge up out of his own strength.

Suppose it is not only biology, but God's plan in old-age, to draw weakened little creatures to wish He existed and to try relating to Him even though they were full of doubts and "allergies" to Church?

I'll try not to bring this up again, but I felt impelled to write it even if you delete before you even hit this paragraph.

Love and prayers, Ronda

From Anne, Direction for Our Times

October, 2006

Blessed Mother

“Little children, you are all safe in my Immaculate Heart. I am your mother. In a special way I protect you during this time. I shield you from influences that would lead you away from your path to my Son. You must cooperate with me so that I can protect you even more. Often a mother has information that her children do not need to know. A wise mother shares the information only when it is necessary to help her children identify danger. I am that way. I am sharing information now because I want you to know where the danger to your spirituality lies. It is good to listen to your mother because she seeks only what is good for you. I know that my Son’s beloved apostles understand this and this is why I bring this information to you, asking you to spread it further for me.

Children, our enemy wishes to draw many souls into a Godless void. This is being done in a manner that is underhanded. If a person was asked directly to reject God permanently, most would refuse. People would not want to permanently remove a chance to be with God, even if their faith is terribly weak and they never serve God at all. The enemy is not forthright, however, and souls are being deceived. You know this to a degree. I intend to advise you of a specific manner of conducting yourself so that I can protect you completely. In my Immaculate Heart you will find joy and peace. In my Immaculate Heart you will find comfort and gentle correction. I am your mother and I will help you.

Jesus: All will be well. Your concern at this time should be to advance in holiness and you will only advance if you remain small. Be at peace in everything because grace is more powerful than any bitter plans of the enemy. I am asking you to concentrate on your own movement to Me. For each apostle who gives Me their pride, I give the world My majesty, the majesty of Jesus Christ, your Returning King.”

Oct. 24, 2006 We had a visit of Fr. Ken who spent a lot of time playing games with the kids – sweet, cozy.

Jesus: See I am making you more relaxed so that you don’t get so rattled by trivia, so you can enjoy the people you love without needing so much to control them, be more of a background grandmother instead of the boss.

Oct. 25, 2006

I read Coleen McCollough: *The Touch*.

Jesus: You see without Me all they have is churning emotions and disillusion. Hopeless ‘No Exit.’ Lumen Christi, Deo Gratias.

I remembered how in JPII’s Letter to Artists, he claims that even dark writing can serve God by showing how much we need redemption.

I got into lots of anger.

Jesus: A set back. Don’t be alarmed. I am using all this as a test for your teaching on anger. You were angry, but you did not sin by harsh judgments. Just breathe in My peace by saying “Jesus, I trust in you.”

I realized that it is average with a setback to think all ones work on anger is for nothing. Instead I need to just humbly admit that I slipped back. I should work through each incident seeing the fear vs. romantic ideas of having become a totally perfect person. Ask Jesus to forgive the power plays, threats. Come to Him humbly and ask help not to be so angry.

For instance, about the heating problems in the house, it is average for me to experience cold as coldness and feel it as symbolic. Let me say, instead, we will try to fix the system. Jesus, Your heart is my real warmth. No one dies of a little cold, I don't need to work it up.

Dear Mary, Immaculate Heart, help me to do this right, for my sake and theirs.

Oct. 29, 2006

I played the CCC kiddie video about Fatima and felt moved myself.

Jesus: You prayed to My mother's Immaculate Heart for the family and there was much softening of hearts - yours and others. That is what I want for you. There will always be differences, but you don't have to be angry. The anger is coming out of fear.

Yes. I will try to just open myself to grace instead of being so anxious and angry.

Letter from my daughter, Carla, to the husband and son of a dear friend who shot herself after years of torment from manic-depression (I am keeping this in here even though I don't agree with everything Carla writes about suicide because it contains many other deep truths.)

Sajid and Josh:

There is much to say that it is hard to convey over the telephone and amidst the wild storms of grief. I will put in this thread what I am wanting to say when you two are able to have ears again: it does come, it does happen, the numbness and finally the way through to acceptance, please, please believe me.

It is so very odd to begin by saying that I know you both far better than you will know me. You were a huge part of my friend's life and she spoke.

Some things:

1. I have lost another very close friend to a gunshot and I can tell you for certain that the future will hold some comfort for you there. This is a way of making a Final answer; you will not be tormented with any thought of a changed mind or a hope for some saving recovery. Sandi very much wanted to go; she was sure that she did.

2. I have a very large and clumsy offering for you. I rarely purge my inbox, you see, and so I have some 273 emails from Sandi to give you one day, three-months' worth. These vary from the short and sweet to the long and self-recriminatory. Some of them will be very painful for you to read. I will not touch these emails in any way because I know that you will want the whole truth, especially you, Josh. This is not the time for it, but rest assured that I will print every one of them and save them for you in waiting on your desire. They are yours as much as mine.

3. I will not tire of speaking about Sandi. She was a very dear friend and since our one "real" week of contact came close to the end of her life, we mainly had a relationship soul-to-soul - the sort in which much is revealed. I know Sandi. What I know of Sandi is also yours, whenever you choose to take it.

4. PLEASE both of you believe me: along with yourselves there are right now many, many, many people who will be feeling to blame for Sandi's death. They will all be wrong. For small transgressions: forgive yourselves; she did. Sandi understood better than most how painful this business called living can be and how many serious or foolish errors one may make along the way. I do not have to think about this one at all: Sandi forgave you every-/anything you may feel led to her death - I know this is true. AND, oh Josh, how she loved/admired/enjoyed/and was ultimately granted light by your existence. That she could not bear the pain of your suffering is simply how every mother feels and is not a cause or a reason for her self-termination...even if she sometimes thought it would be. Ultimately, Sandi chose to leave DESPITE her great love for you, not because of it. She simply could not go on. If she were here to say, and perhaps is through me, she would beg your forgiveness not ask you for apologies. She will be hoping that perhaps you, the great sun in her life, will be one day able to understand enough. Enough is an important word, Josh. Not completely - we never can - but enough. If you give it time, I know that understanding will come. Perhaps you are already within it.

5. Ultimately, Sandi believed in a good and loving God; this, despite her endless struggles with all sorts of pain. I know she did, for this was a very ongoing topic of conversation between the two of us. Whether you share her beliefs or not, it will help to understand that *she* held them and that in her mind, and in her own way, she was blasting a path out of the darkness and into the light. With everything of truth and small beetling faith that I have, I have reached into that darkness tonight to hunt for Sandi. I did not find her. I reached instead into the light and I did find her: a sense of her, blinking, still alive. I have a poor dingy sort of belief but dammit, it is strong enough to produce that sense of her fiercely enough for me to believe it. There is still a Sandi. Reach for her.

I have little more to say, Sajid, Josh. I hear in myself the echo of a very great pain but one I survived and will continue to survive. (The pain of her brother's death by suicide). There is nothing else to do except to continue to learn the gentle art of acceptance and letting go even when one most feverishly does not wish to do so. We could not give Sandi what she needed - it is my fervent prayer that Someone Else could, did, has, and is continuing to do so. It is my hope that if this Someone Else exists, we too may be able to tap our meager requests for some staunching, some peace, and, at length some joy.

Very much yours in suffering,

-C

Here is a poem she wrote for the poetry board they both wrote on.

Requiescat in Pace – for Sandi Blakemore Baig

Ah, there, my darling, will you be running
in those tall grasses now –
steeped in innocence, gone small, gone young?

The painful flesh has fallen:

you free, you free, you free. I
will miss those bold blue cat eyes,
all the songs, and very much
your brazen bell of laughter.

I'm unwrapped

in this dreadful rasping pain: your son, your son,
and husband, giving mercy if I can

(I can't I can't I can't) I can, I can.

My giggster friend, my Sandi-with-an-i,
we had our short time wondering; we cried
and waited, cried and waited, tried and cried.

Not with a not, but a shot - and did that Sandi spirit fly
in tessellations to a softer sky?

Ah, there, my darling, lovely one,
you always were a child:

a big audacious child afraid to die

but more afraid to live, it seems,

and I, and I, and I

will reach for/with you always, dear.

Good-bye.

I took my grandson Maxi to see Lenoir Ryne College – he was amazed at the number of books in people’s offices, more than his elementary school library.

He is developing religiously. Alex taught them the basics of the rosary, and now he starts it up himself.

Nov. 1, 2006

From Anne – Direction for Our Time:

Jesus

I am real, dear apostles. Do not worry that you have misplaced your trust. You will be rewarded for your service and commitment. The wise apostle understands that he has already been rewarded, of course. The wise apostle understands that being close to the King as a trusted servant is a reward in itself because through the proximity to the King, the servant becomes more and more noble. I am changing you if you are walking with Me. I am stretching your spiritual capabilities. My beloved lay apostles will find that the changes in their soul are constant, but gentle. There is great spiritual progress available in this time. This is My mercy and this is My plan. Through the holiness of the few, I will convert many. Be courageous while I make these changes in your soul. Be at peace. The Savior seeks to preserve His plan by calling more and more into the field of service. Rejoice when you see many responding. Understand that this plan is for all. You are called. You are listening to My direction and you are becoming holier. Through you, I call to others. Others listen and respond, and through them, I call out again, to more and more. In this way, a multitude is drawn into the safety of the family of God. Be at peace, little apostle. All is well and heaven is content that God's plan is proceeding. I will never leave you to execute My plan alone. You will always be acting with Me if you are acting for Me. Do you understand? I know that you understand because it is simple. I am with you. I will never leave you.”

This message helped me greatly as I was feeling discouraged about the student response at Lenoir Ryne College. Partly buoyed up by the message I worked on a changed format for the class and it seemed better. As when Jesus told the disciples to “lower the net again.”

Jesus: It is usual that in a new mission territory you can’t just use old methods. You have to let the Holy Spirit show you how. See how some responded to the love behind your efforts?

Nov. 1, 2013

I attended a sublime Mass for the Feast of All Saints. Deo Gratias. I felt lifted to heaven.

Nov. 2, 2013

Some of my friends wrote beautiful loving responses to my mini-talks on the web-site. It was so wonderful. I always think my voice is terrible because of my NY accent but people love it anyhow. Even Steve’s father in England liked it

St. Thomas says that worry is an obstacle to contemplation.

Nov. 4, 2013

We had a glorious festival for Feast of St. Charles, our patron saint. They had tables in the Hall with some of the cooks in ethnic dress – especially Indian Saris and Guatemalan head dress and woven skirts and colorful blouses as well as Hmong Udon soup, Filipino food, Polish, German, Italian, Indonesian....etc. The food was wonderful, but especially the lovely feeling as if this was the true UN hosted by Jesus, Mary and Joseph, as it were. They also had soccer games and bi-lingual bingo and someone painting the faces of the kids. It was great at the Mass to have more of a mix of Anglo and Hispanic. Since none of my family came I was able to sit next to Senora Magdalena and then have other Mayans on the other side. It was a real tour de force for Fr. Ken as he spoke the prayers of the Mass alternately in Spanish and English. He looked exhausted but so happy to see his family all having fun.

Nov. 6, 2006

I decided to renew my contract with Carla and Steve for one year. It feels realistic. Got to St. Aloysius earlier than usual. Prayer of quiet. I see that this gift of prayer of quiet is like a doctor anaesthetizing a patient. He wants to give me rest from the pain of life and slow me down - to make sure I am not worrying instead of praying. Like Mary “sleeping me” her child, as Carla and Steve call it when they lull the baby to sleep in their arms.

Nov. 7, 2006

Students acting badly – talk and laugh in class even when reprimanded.

Jesus says: They wanted to throw me off a cliff. You are going through what I did. Keep offering it up and we’ll see what you should do.

Talked to other teachers and got good ideas for enforcing disciplining by threats of lowered grades.

Nov. 8, 2006

Victory over student rebels with my ultimatum. I hear Jesus telling me that He needed me to see where their pride and concupiscence is, so that I can teach them better. I need to see them more realistically. These kids don’t need self-expression as much as they need discipline.

November 9, 2006

Feast of St. John Lateran. I am thinking that the Common of Dedication of Churches in the liturgy of the hours book coming before Common of Blessed Virgin Mary and others, is because of the Real Presence in the Church.

There is a lovely antiphon: Come let us worship Christ, bridegroom of the Church and from the Office of Readings: God wishes to enter your soul, for He promised “I shall live in them, and I shall walk in the corridors of their hearts.

Text of my mini-talk using the microphone for my web visitors (www.rondachervin.com):

Me, Speaking, Instant Spirituality #2 Inter-Generational Romanticism and Anger

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

I was very pleased with your encouraging comments about my first audio mini-talk on Savoring the Good. Thank you for writing to me.

As you may know I am involved in the study of anger-management, especially the system, Recovery, Inc., devised by Dr. Abraham Low in the 1940's. In this mini-talk I would like to relate what he says about romanticism to the anger adult children have about their parents sometimes and the anger some parents have about their adult children.

Abraham Low defines romanticism as having glorious unrealistic hopes about life and especially about relationships. We all have a pretty good idea what that means in romantic love – such as a young man thinking his fiancé will be an angel in marriage because she is so sweet and so physically lovely, or a young woman thinking her fiancé will be an ideal husband because he is so understanding and strong during courtship. The marriage may be very good and even holy but it will surely not meet the romanticized expectations of perfection each one is cherishing beforehand. This often leads into anger, hot or cold, at the discrepancy between the dream and the reality.

What I have noticed in my own life and that of others is that the same kind of syndrome comes up inter-generationally. It wasn't until my parents died in their 80's that I finally stopped blaming them for everything that was wrong with me. Behind this anger, I now realize, was a romantic notion of what a perfect parent would be like – she and he would understand the motives behind every single thing I did, always give these the best interpretation – in other words, they would adore me for the rest of their lives. Disappointed in this expectation, I was angry at them, a lot of the time, in spite of great efforts towards Christian forgiveness. Somehow I never accepted the truth that everything about our lives involves suffering as well as joy, and that one of these sufferings is having parents who do not totally affirm and worship us, and even sometimes reject us partially, or totally, because of our real faults!

Now, then, what about our expectations of our children? We imagined that each one would be perfect in a different way – one a dandelion, one a lily, one a pine tree. They would share our most cherished values, especially the Faith. If they did not enter into the same professions where we worked, what they did would still be one of our most approved professions. They would have all our virtues and none of our faults! How “romantic!” How disappointing! Guess what? They had free will. They made their own choices. We cannot exempt them from the sufferings that followed from the bad choices. Only when we stop being angry at them

for failing to meet these unrealistic expectations can we begin a grateful tally of all the good qualities they possess, many of which we helped them develop. By analogy – they have some of our virtues but in a different “musical key.” Only when we stop being angry at them, can we affirm and cherish them as we should, even as we pray for grace for them to overcome their faults in fidelity to the way the Lord is leading them.

Suggestions:

1. Make a list of every virtue each of your parents or parental figures possessed and say a prayer of gratitude for how these virtues helped you in life.
2. Write or speak out a prayer of forgiveness for the negatives your parents had that hurt you.
3. Make a list of every virtue each of your children have. Thank God for these good qualities.
4. Write or speak out a prayer of forgiveness for the negatives that impact you in hurtful ways.

Heh, I did it myself to make sure I was being authentic. It felt good.

God bless you, with love and prayers, Ronda

If you found this talk insightful, you might like my book *Taming the Lion Within: 5 Steps from Anger to Peace* or the videos and CD's based on the book you can find on my website www.rondachervin.com

Nov. 6, 2006

Terrible day with disobedient Lenoir/Ryne students – I was told tough love was the only solution, but I feel crushed and angry. I need to use my Recovery Inc. teaching: see their average, not a romantic view where they would love me so much they would be perfect.

Jesus: I didn't reach everyone. I was mocked and rejected.

Me: I need your Holy Spirit to show me what to do. I don't want to give up. I don't want to fail.

Jesus: It is all right. I see your struggle and let's see what happens. You can shake the dust off your feet, but you don't have to.

I wrote a tough love letter to them – friendly but firm giving penalties for even whispering in class. I was afraid they would go on strike when they read it but they settled down very well and started getting friendly and normal again.

This is the first time I've been able to use tough love because I have too great a need to be liked.

Nov. 11, 2006

We did our Spirituality and the Arts workshop at the parish. Some came from Newton but the total number was low. Still it was more intimate because of that. Fr. Ken did wonderful talks. Here are some highlights from his talks and my spontaneous thoughts, and comments from the group.

I first gave my basic *Called by Name: Following Your Personal Spirituality* talk based on the booklet. I added in about how artistic types often don't fit any group spirituality. Also about Mary as dramatist stage-manager of the apparitions, and recommended JP II's Letter to Artists. He says that even the darkest art helps people see the need for redemption.

Carrie shared "I used to be an interior decorator; but now I live alone and decorate my interior!" She also says she plays sacred music when she wakes up in the night. In the old Cathedrals there were beautiful sculpture where no one could see them but God – now through photography we see them.

Someone said that modern art gives a sense of healing of individuality such as looking at Dali's eccentric clock painting. Another that art gives power to move forward.

We shouldn't be looking for a 4.0 in holiness, Fr. Ken said. Keep your eye on Jesus, not on myself, and my progress in holiness. I thought that choleric goal oriented people probably need to think of holiness as something to strive for more than more laid-back types who do things more organically.

Fr. Ken said he thinks of knowing Jesus not "face to face" but more seeing His back as he's walking ahead of him." James and John are behind talking about who will be the greatest and Jesus is walking ahead saying keep your eye on the path. We should be moving where Jesus is walking.

Later we talked about this – Fr. Ken is neither braut-mystique (bridal mysticism where Jesus is known mostly as lover) nor apophatic (imageless spirituality) – he thought it was more like glimpses. He might be working on a piece of music and then senses God on the horizon, beckoning. Only in heaven will it be face to face; now we have the foretastes. "Noli me tangere" Christ says to Mary Magdalene. "I have not yet gone back to the Father." I joked – we could call it glimpse-spirituality, but that sounds awkward.

I didn't like that image but, allowing it to reach me, I realized it is like that with peace-making where I am way behind where Jesus wants to lead me.

Fr. Ken mentioned that children are fascinated with churches – a sacred space, a sense of being pulled toward the transcendent God.

FR. KEN'S TEACHING at the workshop:

Transcendentals – the good, the true, and the beautiful. Von Balthasar – need for beauty, not only truth and goodness. Ronda: Do the Tridentine Mass supporters love the beauty of the chant so much as a balance to their emphasis on truth and morality? Beauty is the resplendence of God shining through creation. The role of beauty is to make the good and true attractive.

Lots of bad results came from the idea that beauty is in the eye of the beholder. This makes me the idol and arbiter vs. seeing that beauty is rooted in God, not in me. Good is what we should do; truth what has been revealed. In the West we have separated beauty from the good and the true. If the good isn't also beautiful then, Balthasar warns, people will seek beauty in evil. Evil can be attractive; but the good and the true are glorious. Note Balthasar's title: The Glory of the Lord.

Spirituality = the way we live what we believe. Moses is fascinated by the burning bush. God is a fascinating mystery that I cannot touch, or like Isaiah: a man of unclean lips – sense of distance, purging.

Holiness is a process – so we need not be discouraged because we are not there yet. Dogma is a door, not a wall. We are becoming.

It is terrible that the arts are being pushed out of the school curriculum. If we don't have time for the arts we don't have time to be human or godly.

The appreciators are an antidote to only wanting to eat, use, have sex. Great art brings even atheists into beauty.

But music now has become consumer oriented.

The arts can speak to you not in words. He remembers when he was 14 lying on the floor doing his homework and listening to the radio – Mozart's D Minor Piano Concerto – a mystical experience where he was taken out of himself, held there and it was as if his whole future was planned and he followed it. Music is a way to flow into the mystery.

You do the best you can. Then God seems to move away. What you were clinging to was not God but where you were to be at that time, with the degree you could understand God then. The great moving away is death. When you die He is walking you out of life.

Desert vs. the promised land. His spiritual director at the seminary told him “between Egypt and the promised land there is always a desert and you must cross that.”

Beauty open us to this process.

If poor art, like charismatic songs, helps, how much more would great art do?

We become smaller when everything is relevant instead of great.

Non-fiction is like a reporter and what we see is not very good. Great fiction brings us into another world.

We live in a culture of anger, depression – things aren't going right, great losses of people we love, loss of job....

Depression is anger turned inward.

Beethoven is great for the depressed. He was born ugly, clumsy, rejected in love, was treated badly in his profession. then goes deaf – everything in his life blood is seeping away. He was going into despair. He wrote a lamentation. He became suicidal. But he was also writing the 2nd symphony. It is full of joy, and hope, and courage and inner vitality. It is the most optimistic piece in the world. Music heals vs. wallowing in our problems. Rhythm – life, vitality. The enemy of healing is inactivity. His whole music was about overcoming, moving forward.

The Gregorian chant has some parts for the trained, some for soloists, but then also simply chant for the priests.

Fr. Ken doesn't see God as solving his problems, but pulling him out.

He prefers that people be enticed to pray more rather than feeling more obligated.

He studied the Mass in every detail in seminary so that he would feel pulled into it.

November 12, 2006

Jesus: You need to believe more that every little sacrifice you offer is really a source of grace for family and students. Believe that I will bring good out of every evil.

Nov. 24, 2006

Last night I wrote the lecture for next semester's class in philosophy of human nature. It sounded good to me, but a little too hard. During the night I begged the Holy Spirit to help. I was almost ready to give up, thinking, hey, it would be better for the students to go to trade schools and vibrant Churches and forget about liberal arts all together. In prayer, it seemed the Holy Spirit forced me to see how hard it is for many of these college students (some are very good, of course) – such as, they hardly ever have to write in script because so much is computerized, so it is very, very, hard for them just to push their pens across the page to take notes. And, of course, they are mostly watching TV or doing web games so they don't have much vocabulary. I kept seeing the lovable faces of some who are having the greatest difficulty with college work and wanting to be able to help them so they can not only barely pass but actually learn a lot of deep wisdom.

When I woke up I was ready to simplify my lecture and assignments, make them very step by step slow, presuming much less ability.

Letter to a friend (my godchild Rebecca Geraghty) with diabetes who keeps having pieces of her feet removed.

Dear Becky,

I have been praying and praying for you, dear godchild. I keep thinking of the pierced feet of Jesus on the cross. Here are some excerpts from St. John Eudes. The whole passage is in the Office of Readings 33rd week Friday p.1269 in my book.

"The Son of God wills to give us a share in his mysteries and somehow extend them to us. He will to continue them in us and in his universal Church. ...He intends to perfect the mysteries of his passion, death and resurrection, by causing us to suffer, die and rise again with him and in him. Finally, he wishes to fulfill in us the state of his glorious and immortal life, when he will cause us to live a glorious, eternal life with him and in him in heaven."

I find it helpful that it doesn't say He allows this to happen but He wills it to happen as I have always preferred to receive pain from his hand than the hands of "nature"? fate? other schlemiels like me?

Love, Ronda

Nov. 30, 2006

A woman watching my *Taming the Lion Within: 5 Steps from Anger to Peace* on Johnnette's show thanked me so much because she doesn't feel so alone and she immediately got the book and went to a Recovery, Inc. meeting in Phoenix.

Jesus: Yes, all this work is good. See the good results of being open and honest and witnessing.

Thinking of Carla's letter to her friend who shot herself, it seemed as if the idea was that salvation is guaranteed. I asked in prayer: But, my Jesus, you don't teach universal salvation.

Jesus: You don't need to know the secrets of my mercy. You are to pray and teach and exhort; not to judge and know.

Billy Graham in New Orleans – had the whole stadium march out to evangelize the French Quarter. So great singing Saints Go Marching in. Well, we do that too with huge youth rallies with the Pope, etc.

December 1, 2006

From Anne Direction for Our Times:

Jesus

I speak with determination today. I look at My lay apostles, serving so diligently to prepare others for My return, and I am consoled. My heart sighs with the rejection of some but also lifts in hope at the acceptance of so many. Little apostles, you are pleasing to Me. You are laboring for heaven and you are teamed with heaven. Together, we are bringing hope to those who were

formerly without hope. This is the way for you, the path to holiness. I direct you in everything and you proceed along this path that I have marked out for you. All is well in your case. I want to explain to you why I speak with determination today. I am determined to push out further into the world. I desire that everyone have the light of heaven. I want confidence for all and comfort for anyone suffering. I send a great rush of grace for conversions at this time. This is a time for hearts to change. Because I desire this, a great many conversions, I am supplying all that is necessary to achieve this goal. You will find, My apostles, that many will be drawn to the truth of your mission. Accept this with profound humility. Show the world how small you are and they will see how great I am. This is the way to win souls for the Father. I am so pleased when an apostle accepts slights and insults with peace. I am pleased by this because it shows Me that you are truly accepting the call to imitate Me. It also shows Me that arrogance is receding and humility is spreading. Oh, what joy this gives to the infant in the manger. Accepting insults in humility is a most favorable gift for the King. Truly, I look at these offerings and I rejoice, graces flow unhindered and unencumbered, bathing the whole world. Never underestimate the power of you, the humble apostle, joined to Me, the determined God. Together we are changing the world.

I loved your message Jesus. Yes, I must be small and trust.

Dec. 2, 2006

It was a joy to be able to give to the Missionaries of Charity at the end of the year to feed to starving, knowing that by living more simply I can do more.

Jesus: I want special trust right now. Just do all your small tasks cheerfully and don't push anyone. Offer up not pushing anyone.

December 8, 2006

I had a crazy miserable experience yesterday and it hurt me so much in such an irrational way. I think it's funny. Lots of things that hurt are funny from another point of view.

My beloved priest friend, the pastor of our little parish, is a former Episcopal organ player. He has a long scraggly beard and looks like a Patriarch or a Russian elder or Gandolf of Lord of the Rings. I love the way he looks.

Suddenly he cut off the long beard for a Van Dyke short one and he looks like a photo of some 19th century professor type. I was stunned and realized with a bang, that friends have absolutely no power over their friends, especially new friends. Maybe it was a whim, so maybe he'll let the beard grow again. From pictures that are around and in parish directories I think he's worn the long beard for many, many years.

Carla chided me. "He's your friend, You have to love him no matter how he looks. Would you want him to give you his beard instead of himself as your friend?"

Jesus seemed to laugh at me and seemed to say: “Well, I won’t cut my beard off.”

I talked to Fr. Ken. He just does this once or twice a year because he hates getting haircuts and beard trims, so he does a big one but then lets the beard grow back. I am much relieved.

I think my extreme reaction has to do with the idea from childhood that men who change in some way are due to leave.

A WHOLE BATCH OF BEAUTIFUL LOCUTIONS FROM ANNE

One is called: Heaven Speaks to those considering suicide

Jesus:

I have many things to say to those who are considering this act of self-harm. I love you. I see your pain. I understand that you long for relief from your anguish. Please, bring your anguish to Me. I can help you. You are so valuable to the kingdom and I need you to help bring Me to others.

“How?” you say, in your great interior grief. “How could I possibly be helpful to Jesus and to others?”

I will tell you. Your pain is the pain of many in the world today. Many souls feel your grief, your hopelessness. Many carry heavy crosses of illness and addiction, loneliness and hopelessness, rejection and anxiety. Many of My children look into their future and see only more grief and pain and this takes their courage from them. Dearest friend, you must not do this. Do not look into tomorrow and expect today’s pain to be repeated. You are not certain of such an occurrence. You cannot be certain because I, God, could change your life during this day, today. You must remain in this day, in the present, because I have given you adequate grace to deal with your cross. It is only when you look into the future and think that your Jesus will send you no relief that you find life unmanageable. Understand this. Your life is only unmanageable if you put Me out of it. If you let Me into your heart, into your life, I will make it not only manageable, but joyful.

You are sceptical. You cannot believe in a future with joy because the present holds such pain. I understand this, just as I understand everything about you. You may not know Me well so I will tell you something about Myself that may help you to decide that trusting Me is a good decision.

I have never been known to break a promise. Never. Today, I have a promise for you.

If you ask Me to help you, I will help you. Ask Me, My beloved one. You are important to this Kingdom and I have a plan for you. I need you. I need you to serve in a way that you do not and cannot understand today, in your great hopelessness. I will reveal the plan but you will have to be courageous and allow Me to move you from this place of despair to a place of hope in your heart. I will do so. I will move you along, away from your sadness. You must trust Me just a little bit and give me just a little bit of time. Even now, as you read these words, hope is stirring within you. This hope is from Me and it is the smallest indication of what I will bring to you. I am giving you courage. I am giving you hope. Rest with Me.

Say this, "I will rest Myself against Jesus and wait for Him to send relief."

I will send relief. Do not be afraid. I am with you now and I will never leave you.

November 30, 2006

More from this booklet to those thinking of suicide. This is allegedly from St. Margaret Mary Alacoque:

Dear little soul, you are in pain. Your anguish feels deep, I know. Often, the most difficult part of suffering anguish is the perception that nobody understands the depth of your pain. One can feel very alone in such pain and when one seeks out consolation from others, one is often terribly disappointed. Please listen to me. I am your sister in Christ. I experienced great anguishes while I was on earth so I am rejoicing that God allows me to help you. When you go to another seeking comfort and you find yourself in worse shape, feeling even more misunderstood and alone, you must come to me. Say, "Margaret, I need help. I need help now."

I, Margaret, will go directly to the Throne of God and I will remain there until you receive the comfort and courage you require. My friend, it is important that you know that you are not suffering alone. Jesus sees your suffering. He feels it with you and His Sacred Heart is moved to the most passionate desire to assist you. You must allow our Jesus to help you. When you make this emergency prayer to me, Margaret, you are really saying that you are willing to let heaven help you. How heaven rushes in at this time. You will know that I have heard you because you will feel a change. It may be just a whisper of a change, just a little shifting. It will be noticeable to you as a feeling of calm in your Spirit. When you feel this little feeling of calm, you will know that you have been heard, that help is on the way and that you are not alone in your suffering. You have my promise that heaven will surround you until the frightening feelings pass.

I want to say something else. It is common for a person on earth to have thoughts that are not from God. Everyone on earth struggles with this at some time. We could say, actually, that everyone on earth struggles with this each day in terms of temptations. The battle is not finished until you die in your body and come to God's Kingdom. Given this, the constant need for struggle, you must view your thoughts of suicide as temptations. Do not be alarmed by these thoughts in that simply having these thoughts does not mean there is any reason to act on these thoughts. Do you understand? Do not be afraid. We, the saints in heaven, all had bad thoughts and temptations during our time on earth and we all at times failed to fight off temptations. The temptation to commit suicide is one where you must fight hard, with everything you have because of the nature of the consequence. If you take your life, you will not be able to go back and say, Jesus, I want to do better and serve you now. You take away any second chances for yourself to convert to Jesus and try again. Dear friends, this is wrong for you. It is not the answer you are seeking.

Jesus needs you to stay in the world until it is the right time for you to come home. This is God's plan and it is always best to follow God's plan. The last day of your life is determined by God. You must not think that the answer to great pain is suicide. This act of self-harm is always a mistake. Always.

November 30, 2006

St. Margaret Mary Alacoque

My friend, you have been hurt. I see that. I understand that you are carrying wounds that cause you to ache. You may not even understand the source of your pain and your wounds. You know that you are not perfect and that you make mistakes. Jesus accepts this about you and loves you most tenderly regardless of your mistakes. I want you to consider that others also make mistakes. Others fail in love and in kindness. Others are imperfect as we were all imperfect on earth. The mistakes made by others can cause us the greatest pain. We can carry wounds with us without even being aware that we are doing so. These wounds then spread to other areas of our hearts and result in a general state of pain that is hard to come back from.

Jesus suffered terribly on earth. He carried wounds, also. Jesus, in His most Sacred Heart, understands exactly how you came to be in such pain. He knows more about the source of your pain and hopelessness than you do. My beloved friend, I beg you now to turn to Jesus. He will heal you from wounds you do not even know you are carrying. You have felt loss in your life and there is emptiness. Jesus will fill you up again and restore you to a state of hope and joy that will flow out from you to others. I am telling you that your great pain will recede. When your great pain recedes and joy takes its place, you will be so kind to others because you will understand how they are hurting. You will look at another in anguish and your heart will be moved to the greatest pity for them. You will say, 'I remember feeling that badly.' Only one who has suffered such anguish can really understand it. Would you agree? Do you remember a time when you spoke to someone about something that they had also experienced and you felt understood? It will be this way with your great pain, also, and someone who feels hopeless will gain hope from you. If you take your life, you will not be around to help this person in the future.

I want you to know that Jesus, in His most Sacred Heart, feels your pain. Jesus suffered so that we could be forgiven. The fact that Jesus suffered willingly does not in any way take away from the fact that Jesus suffered terribly. Perhaps, my friend, you can look up to Jesus and tell Him that you, in your suffering, understand something about His suffering. If you do this, all of heaven will rejoice because you will be on your way to becoming a saint. Believe this, my friend, because it is truth. Many will share with Jesus in His joy. Many will even respect His cross. But few are there on earth who will carry the cross and turn their eyes to the Lord in love during their suffering, which is what Jesus did. Do this, beloved one, and heaven will lighten your cross and remove this pain more quickly than you expect.

December 1, 2006

St. Margaret Mary Alacoque

I feel such compassion for you, my friend. When you are carrying a heavy cross, it is difficult to see that it will end. Sometimes, you do not believe it will ever end. In terms of human power, maybe it is even impossible that your cross will end. But nothing is impossible for heaven. In heaven, you see, we live with miracles happening all around us. When you come to heaven you will understand what I mean. If your situation requires a miracle from heaven, you should ask for one. Miracles are not impossible

when you keep company with saints. Saints, indeed, are all about obtaining miracles from God. God gives us these things, these miracles, because we suffered with Him while we were on earth. You will be a saint if you suffer with Jesus. And then, you will be able to obtain powerful graces, also. You will say, God, please help this person. God will do so when He sees that you are making the smallest effort to accept your suffering with Jesus. You have influence in your suffering. You have intercessory power, which means that if you ask for graces for another, God will grant them. This may be difficult for you to accept because you feel so sad or angry but I will use my influence to obtain graces for you to help you to understand. You will see that your suffering, your pain, is being used by heaven to help others. It will pass, my friend. You will feel better. I make this promise to you in the presence of Jesus Christ. He will keep this promise for us.

More from St. Margaret Mary Alacoque:

I am going to give you some advice. I am one who suffered great anguish on earth, as I said, so I am a good one to help you. Remain very calm during this time of upset. Do not panic. Do not act in haste. Let us, your heavenly friends, calm your spirit. If you deal with your pain in quiet, with an attitude of calm, you will be less likely to make bad decisions that create even more pain. It is best, indeed, if you can delay important decisions until you feel better. Be wise about your suffering and allow yourself to be quiet. This is not a bad thing. Spending time in silence, reflecting, will not harm you. While you are remaining in quiet, ask Jesus constantly for help. Ask Him to remove your pain as soon as possible, and ask Him to help others who are suffering this pain. You are joined to heaven, remember, so there are many of us in heaven who understand that you are suffering and seek to help you. You are not alone. We will never abandon you in your anguish. Ask heaven to send you calming graces and heaven will do so. Remember that you are important and that we love you very much. Your mistakes do not affect our love for you because we made mistakes, too. Heaven is filled with saints who were great sinners on earth. We repented and God forgave us. Be at peace about your mistakes because the experience you gain from your mistakes helps you later. Do you understand? God has a plan for you. Taking your life is not part of that plan. You are surrounded by saints and you are surrounded by angels. You belong to our family and you will have all that you need.

Blessed Mother

My dear little child, how heavy is your heart. I see that you are suffering and feeling alone. Dear beloved one, you are not alone now and you will never be alone. Even as you read these words, heaven surrounds you. The angels pray constantly for your recovery, for a return to joy for you. You must believe that I tell you the truth today. I am Mary, your mother, and I can only seek what is good for you. I will seek what is good for you right now, before the Throne of God, and ask the Father to send you heavenly gifts of courage and calm. You will move through this day that is already passing into the past and tomorrow will be better. Each day will move you closer to recovery. Do not think for a moment that God will leave you with pain that is unmanageable. God will not do this. Ask for help and you will receive it. I am here, with you now, and I will make sure that you receive all that you need to move past this period of anguish. Heaven does not will this for you. Heaven wills hope for you. Heavenly graces filled with hope flow into your soul now. Rest in God's grace and I secure all that is necessary for you. I am

your mother. I love you completely. I will help you. May I ask you to help me with something? I ask that you turn away from anything that is causing you this pain. Walk away from habits that bring darkness into your little soul. I will give you the light to understand what is creating such pain. You will not be left confused. Your cross will be lightened. You have my assurance of this. Be at peace today because truly, heaven hears your prayer and moves to answer your prayer. You will see heaven helping you in many ways, my beloved child. You are not alone.

To those who have left the Church

Jesus

I call out to those who have left My Church. Come back, I say. Return to the safety of the sacramental walk. It will be best for you and I want only what is best for you. Be assured of My welcome. Be assured that I want your return. Do not think that you are unwelcome in your faith. How could this be when I, Jesus Christ, personally call out to you? My Church on earth represents Me. It is My Church and belongs to Me. When the people of My Church accurately represent Me, you feel cherished. I want to restore you to your Church and I want to restore your Church to you. You see, My friend, it is best for you, given your call to holiness, that you proceed on the path that is protected by My Church on earth. I have so many ways to help you if you are following your faith within the protection of My Church. My Church has suffered, it is true. My Church continues to suffer. Part of the reason My Church is suffering is because you are away from it. My Church needs you. My Church wants you. You must return.

Beloved child, I am asking you, indeed, I am pleading with you to consider your circumstances. If there are reasons that inhibit a full return to the sacraments for you, I ask that you discuss these reasons with one of My priests. I will protect your desire to return to the sacraments. I will not reduce the standards of My Church for your circumstances but I will help you to adapt your circumstances to those standards. What is Jesus saying, you ask yourself. Let Me be more clear. This time on earth is a time where so many have compromised with standards of behaviour that the compromised standards have become the norm. I cannot and will not accept this. I do not accept this. If I were to accept this, I would have to change all of heaven and all of those who have served in times before you. Also, I would have to jeopardise the future of all those who come after you. My friend, listen to Me. Hear My words because My words are truth. Reject the rebelliousness of My enemy. Accept that you are called to follow Me and raise your behaviour to My standards. I will help you. You will be welcome in heaven if you accept that I am God. You will have to accept that I am God in order to gain heaven, of course. Will you not accept this fact now, before your time on earth is finished? Will you return to Me now given that ultimately you hope to do so? My heart longs for your peace. I see everything. If you have been hurt by those who claimed to represent My Church but who failed, I will heal you. Do not use this hurt as a reason why you step away from all that I offer for you through My Church. This has taken you in the wrong direction and others walk behind you. Please, come into My Church. It belongs to Me, after all. You are welcome, regardless of your sins.

December 3, 2006

A good day. Steve's toe was hurting, so I helped more with little tasks. Yes, my Jesus, I can do little things patiently and sweetly.

Jesus: Now rest and be good to your students tomorrow. Stay in My heart and love everyone with My love.

December 4, 2006

It looks good with the Lenoir/Rhyne students. I was happy to see one who had been in terrible trouble.

December 5, 2006

There was a Glorious concert at the College. Jesus wanted me to have this beautiful gift for Christmas, shared with Carrie, to hear this wonderful music, and see my students who are in choir at their best, doing what they love.

December 6, 2006

The psalm prayer was from Psalm 36 "Give us true knowledge of Your mercy so that we may renounce our pride and be filled with the riches of Your house." I was thinking how pride is related to not knowing His mercy for others and for ourselves so that we judge them harshly and ourselves, also, thinking that it is all up to us humans to do things well and if we don't we are doomed. The Psalm says also "He so flatters himself in his mind that he knows not guilt." Yes, as if the others have all the guilt and we are near perfect!

December 5, 2006

More from Anne of Direction for Our Times:

Jesus

My beloved one, change is coming. You feel this. You are preparing to finish your time on earth and begin your time in eternity. That day, the day of your death, will be a joyful day because you will return to Me. Do you consider your death joyfully? Perhaps not. Perhaps you are afraid. Dear little child of God, I want to help you with any fears that take away from your peaceful consideration of the next life. You see, in our humanity, we fear death and suffering. I understand this perfectly because I also experienced a dread of suffering. I did not fear death, though. I knew that death would bring liberation for Me in that I would be free of the constraints I experienced in my body. Dear beloved one, it will be a liberation for you, too. When your body ceases to live, your soul will become fully alive. There is nothing to frighten you. I will be there for you. I will take you to Me and comfort you. You will feel safer than you have ever felt on earth. Do you believe this? You should believe this, My friend, because it is the truth. Reject My enemy, once and for all, and rest in My heart while heaven prepares you to come home. I will remain with you constantly, helping you, consoling you, preparing you. At the end, you will feel My peace surrounding you. I will do this for you if you let Me. Right now, at this time, I continue to make ready your reward. You see, your reward is not final yet because you are still serving. Perhaps you are serving in illness, in weakness, or in sadness and grief. Offer it to Me, offer it all to Me, your Jesus, and with it I will do the most magnificent things for others still serving on earth. I will take your little offerings and

use them to console the Father, who is rejected by so many. Our Father is so good. You will understand His goodness more fully soon, when you come to Me. I promise you, little beloved one, that you will rejoice in any offerings, however small, you gave to our Father during this final time of service on earth. Be filled with joy. I am with you and will never leave you. In your precious little heart, take My hand in yours. I will hold you steadily, never letting go, during the time of transition between your life on earth and your life in eternity. I am with you in each moment.

St. John, the Apostle

Greetings you to, my beloved family member. I am a quiet visitor in your soul. I am quiet because I am reverent in the face of your preparation. You see, the Lord has willed that you be given these words and graces to calm your fears. A steady stream of grace will flow into your soul at this time, preparing you to make the transition to the heavenly kingdom. How blessed you are! How merciful is Jesus to make these words and graces available to you! I am not surprised that Jesus does this for you. I am a witness to the great love Jesus holds for you. Jesus loves you so much that He cannot wait to give you heavenly gifts. He is giving them to you now so that you will have a foretaste of your reward. When you die, you will come into the family of God. We love each other very much because we love God and join God in His love for each of our brothers and sisters. This love is different from love on earth. This love never fails. This love never weakens or alters. The love we feel for you and for each other is a reliable and continuous state of existence. We see each other as we were in our humanity, flawed, and this makes us even more tender in our love. You see, dear friend, the times we failed on earth helped us to become humble. There is no arrogance in heaven and you are coming to heaven. I am telling you that if you made mistakes and committed sins you are exactly like the rest of us. Confess your sins and allow Jesus to free you from the hold they have on your soul. Jesus forgives. Jesus forgets. You must accept His forgiveness and allow Him to grant you acceptance for yourself. Jesus can make all things new and He will make you new when you come to Him. Have no fear about your welcome. You will be welcomed by Jesus and by your whole family. I, John, am an expert on the love of Christ. I rested in the love Jesus had for me and I am asking you to do the same. Rest in the love Jesus has for you. Let it encircle you and penetrate you. You are cherished by Jesus Christ. He accepts you just as you are. Be at peace, my friend. Remain in heavenly quiet and allow Jesus to put the final touches on your soul.

St John the Apostle

My dear friend, how often have you known contentment? In your life on earth, how often have you sat in silence, thanking God for all of your blessings? Perhaps you are a wise person and you have done this each day. I am glad. Perhaps you have been busy and distracted and you have not done this enough. It is time to change. For a moment, thank God for all that He has allowed you to experience on earth. You have seen great goodness. Where have you seen goodness? Consider this question. Think back with me on the people you knew who were good. Why were they good? What was it that impressed you about them? You have also seen great evil. Offer God a brief prayer for those whom you witnessed working against goodness and then think no more about them. God will be merciful, particularly if you ask Him to be. Come back now to the examples of great goodness because it is in this goodness that I want you to rest yourself. You will always remember those who were better than you in terms of following

God or following Godly principles. Be at peace in this. It is not to torment you that I bring these things to your mind, but to console you. If you think back on the good people you have observed, you will be thinking forward to the good people you are about to meet. Heaven is filled with people who made decisions for God. Heaven is also filled with people who chose against God, but who repented, allowing God to purify them. What you will remember about a good person is this. That person made decisions based on love. That person overcame their own desires for the needs or desires of others. That person often took a harder road in order to do the right thing. You will recall that the decisions to do the right thing cost that person something. There was sacrifice. Rejoice with me, John, as you consider the heroic goodness of another. In doing so you are becoming acquainted with heavenly principles, even as you remain on earth. This is a good exercise for you because we will bring you to the heavenly kingdom soon. Anything you need to be comfortable here will be given to you in terms of graces. I would like to see you at peace. I would like to see you accepting yourself as Jesus accepts you. Do you wish you had more to offer to Jesus? We all did and I mean that sincerely. Every one of us who considered our lives wished we had more to give, that we had been better, loved more completely and selflessly, served without interruption, and accepted the truth of God's presence. If you wish you had been better, you will fit right in with us in heaven. Be at peace. Contemplate the goodness you have seen and believe that Jesus accepts you, just as you are right now.

St. John the Apostle

Dear friend, we, your heavenly companions, whisper into the ears of your soul during this time. We are helping you to leave this world and enter the next. We do this to assist you and we do this because it gives us joy to see that you are nearly finished with your earthly labours. We are happy for you. Any expectations you have of heaven and God's kingdom are certainly underestimates because nothing can prepare you for the love of the Father and nothing can prepare you for the love of the family you are about to meet. We are all together in God's love and God's love unites us. This is the truth. Another part of the truth that will delight you is the personal, intimate love God has for you. You will experience this in Jesus Christ, our beloved friend and saviour. I lived for love of Christ on earth. In heaven, I live because of the love of Christ. How far short I fall when I begin to talk about the love of Jesus Christ. It is like trying to describe an ocean by indicating a small cup of water. Still, even though one is destined to fall short, one must begin. Jesus loves you so much that He lived each day for you, personally. The fact that He lived each day on earth for you personally, in no way detracts from the fact that He lived each day for me personally. Because of the nature of God, God can be equally present to each man simultaneously. You will come to us and you will be with Jesus. You will never be separated from Him again. You will know perfect security, perfect acceptance, and perfect intimacy with Him in heaven. My friend, there are those who will choose eternal separation from our beloved Jesus but you will not do so. You will choose Jesus. Choose Him now so that He can shower you with mercy, thus preparing you for your homecoming. Confess your sins. Admit to your failures. If you do this now, grieve for your sins, you will have begun the process of self-acceptance. Jesus forgives you if you repent. This is always the case. But you have the need in your humanity to accept yourself and become peaceful about your past sins. If you do this on earth, there will be no barrier to an immediate unity with Jesus, in other words, heaven. If you do not finish the work on earth, you will have a need to finish the work in the heavenly kingdom, that is, in purgatory. I, John, am encouraging you to at least begin this process now. Either way, Jesus is all mercy, all forgiveness. If you

trust in Jesus, in His mercy, He will reward you with an unlimited amount of this mercy. Oh, my dear friend, take my words to your heart and believe them. I am trying to help you by giving you good advice and accurate information. Be humble and accept me as your brother, who gives wise counsel. I am praying for you now. Ask me to help you in this process and I will do so. Peace be with you and with all those around you.

Blessed Mother

My little child, how joyful I am to be with you. My heart rests with you as you contemplate God's mercy. There will be no difficulty with Jesus accepting you. If you feel the smallest desire to be with Jesus, to rest in His merciful gaze, you will do so. You belong to heaven, little child. Be very humble about your entrance into eternity. A good child, a faithful servant, comes to the door in humility. This is what you must do. God is great, very great. God is all goodness, all power. Comparatively, what are you? I will tell you. You are God's beloved and immeasurably cherished child. You are like a small infant in my arms, in need of comfort and nourishment. Allow yourself to be a small and helpless infant and I, your heavenly mother, will give you all that you need to appear before God. I know about God, my child and I know about you. I know about heaven and I know about the family who prepares to welcome you. I know what you will need to be comfortable. Allow me to help you become comfortable. We are all here for you. We desire to make you comfortable. If you have a thought that troubles you, simply give it to me. I will see to it by either removing the thought from you or revealing God's truth about the matter. You will have peace. We, your heavenly family, surround you. We help to remove any bitterness that remains with you. I love you, my little child. You are dear to me. A mother does not leave her child when her child needs her and I will not leave you.

(RE-READING THESE MESSAGES TO ANNE OF DIRECTION FOR OUR TIMES AGAIN NOW IN 2018 I AM SO MOVED BY THE BEAUTY OF THEM. THESE EXCERPTS COME FROM BOOKLETS YOU CAN GET BY GOOGLING *DIRECTION FOR OUR TIMES VOLUMES* IN CASE YOU WANT TO GIVE THEM TO OTHERS WHO COULD BENEFIT.)

December 7, 2006

Peaceful day. Jesus: "Be still and know that I am God." Don't make idols of your plans.

December 11, 2006

How strange to be in the Lutheran chapel at Koinonia House where my new office will be. The look of the chapel is so Catholic since the pro-Catholic Lutheran Pastor Andrew has studded the walls with icons of the saints and even a picture of JPII and the words of the service he celebrated were the same as our liturgy, but no one kneels at the consecration or for communion which I did not receive. But I felt the grief of the separation. Lord have mercy and bring us so close that we have to reunite!

Jesus: You see all the bridges I made for you?

Yes, yes, yes!

December 12, 2006

Jesus (via Anne's Direction for Our Times)

Life on earth is filled with change. If you look back on any life, you can see marking points where that life changed. Sometimes change comes in a predictable and expected manner, as in the movement into a vocation for which a person prepared. Sometimes, change comes in an abrupt manner, as in situations where a person is injured or dies unexpectedly. It is this, the change viewed as a tragedy that I wish to discuss today. My friend, there are events in every life that stand out as difficult and life altering. This tragedy, this abrupt change of course, will stand out to you, I know. When you feel a sense of shock, a sense of stunning upset in your life, you must look for Me. I am there. I do not remain with My children, day after day, and then abandon them when they most need my support. Your grief is understandable and I will support you in it. You will not always understand why I allowed a certain thing to happen. In your expected inability to understand, you will challenge Me. You will say, "God, how could you have allowed this? God, where are you? God why have you abandoned us?"

My friends, bring those questions directly to Me because I, Myself, am the most sympathetic listener when it comes to these heartfelt cries of anguish. You see, I made these cries Myself. In my humanity, on the cross, I felt abandoned. In My humanity, on the cross, I questioned the value of God's plan. From My viewpoint, nailed to a piece of wood and raised aloft as a subject of total rejection and derision, it appeared that I suffered more than anyone. It appeared that none could know the extent of My pain. My beloved child, I tell you this so that you will understand that I, your Saviour, grasp the depth of your pain. I will walk you through each moment of anguish, surrounding you with heaven's graces. No. You will not be left to walk alone through this tragedy.

St. Ambrose

My friend, rest with heaven a moment. At this time, it is important to remember that every life on earth is finite. When a child is born into a family, there is no way to know the extent of their life. There is no way to know the plan for that life. There is no way to know the sufferings and joys that will provide formation for that life in order to bring that child to knowledge of God to the extent that God has intended. We, humanity, simply do not know God's plan. If we accept this truth, we will move through our lives with a greater appreciation for the possibility of change. As you walk the earth today, which one of you knows whether or not you will be walking the earth tomorrow? No person on earth today is assured that they will be on earth tomorrow. Clearly, it was the same in my lifetime. Nobody knows whether or not this is their last day to serve on earth. In the same way, perhaps you celebrate good health today. Does this mean you have a guarantee of good health tomorrow? Can you prevent a circumstance that will alter your health or your ability to serve tomorrow as you serve today? No, dear friend, you cannot. Accept this fact and you will serve in greater humility, aware that God could allow your course to be changed at any moment.

You, my beloved friend, are experiencing this today. You are stunned by the change in course that God has allowed for you or for someone you love. I understand. I want to compare your situation to that of Jesus Christ's situation in His passion because we, as

Christians, must compare every experience to the Lord's experience so we will understand how to best conduct ourselves. Jesus suffered terribly before He died. His death was not sudden in terms of time in that He carried a cross to an expected death. That stated, can anyone be prepared for a torture and death such as He experienced? What preparation can there be for a mother to bring her to peace about such torturous treatment of her only child? Can a mother ever reconcile herself to a child's death, particularly such a violent death? My friend, you are possibly shaking your head, saying, 'No. It would be impossible for a mother to reconcile herself to the cruelty levied at her Son.' I understand. I, agree with you. Taken by itself, without the illumination of God, it would be impossible to accept such a set of circumstances. In the same way, if you take your tragedy by itself, without God's illumination, you may find it impossible to reconcile yourself to it.

Our mother, Mary, did reconcile her mother's heart to the will of the Father. She did this by joining herself to God's will in each moment. Mary never separated her life and every circumstance around her from trust in the Father's plan. This, most assuredly, does not mean that Mary was given extraordinary light to understand God's plan in each moment. On the contrary, Mary had to practice trust in a disciplined way because there were more moments of fog for her than clarity in terms of why God was allowing or advancing His plan in a given manner. Poor little mother, so worried for her Son's safety and happiness. Can we say that Mary proceeded wisely, despite her anguish? Yes, truly, we can say this. Mary proceeded wisely because she trusted that even though her Son suffered, even though her Son died, God's plan was the best plan, both for her Son and for humanity.

My friend, perhaps you cannot see God's plan illuminated in your grief and your pain. We understand. We will not leave you as you move through this period of shock. Believe me, one day you will see God's plan and you will look back to this day with perfect understanding, saying, 'Yes, I understand God's plan.'

St. Ambrose

Some of us walk through life trusting God. It is a habit that we have practiced for many years and it comes more or less naturally to us after a time. When a tragedy occurs in our life, we proceed through it in trust, despite our anguish, simply because this is what we have done in the past. Oh, my beloved friend, how priceless is the discipline of holiness.

Perhaps you do not trust God and you do not have a habit to fall back on. Perhaps you are angry at God over something else and now you are confronted with this tragedy. You are possibly experiencing a grave temptation to hate God because you are blaming Him for this tragedy. I can see how this would happen. I can see how events in your life have brought you this point. This is not a good place for you. You know that. You are angry at God and yet, God is not angry at you. You want to cast God out of your life and yet God does not want to cast you out of His presence. God, on the contrary, wants to pull you up against Himself so that He can console you. God has so many things to whisper in your ear. You will not be able to accept this tragedy if you do not allow God to help you. Fine, you say, rebelliously. I do not and I will not accept this tragedy, ever. Hmm. My friend, the tragedy is not going away, simply because you pledge to reject it. The tragedy has occurred. You cannot control tragedy any more than you can control death. You will die and this pain will have ended. What then? Will you wait until that moment to reconcile with God and your heavenly family? You are a person of good will. Surely you will not choose eternal separation from God. That would not be

good for you. Do you want to spend eternity with your loved ones? Perhaps you should consider that your loved ones wish to spend eternity with you. I can promise you this today. Your loved ones want you to be with them in heaven. They are telling me this now. They are here with me, watching you, surrounding you with prayer, and they are asking that you accept God's grace into your heart. You see, you are not alone. You are not abandoned. God allows all those who have gone before you to help you in times of difficulty. There are many here who seek your peace. Ask God to give you the grace to reconcile yourself to His will. He will do so. I will help you. Throw yourself into the arms of your beloved Saviour and allow Him to protect you and comfort you.

St. Ambrose

My friend, my beloved family member, I am going to help you. Take these words into your heart. The graces attached to them will sustain you. You will see that very often the kindest, holiest people are those who have experienced tragedies. They understand that great pain comes into every life. Sometimes, there is nothing to comfort you, no drink of water in your parched thirst for yesterday. Do you wish to undo God's will? Would you like to be one who rejects God's will and marks out his own path to Christ? This would be like driving a car while blinded. Only God can see your destination and only God can see the best course for you to travel to arrive there. Perhaps there is great guilt in your grief. Perhaps you hold yourself accountable for something that you feel contributed to the tragedy before you. Oh dear friend, please, give this guilt to God. Allow God to take this away and let Him do with it as He wishes. If you turn to God now, He will remove this burden from you and put it exactly where it needs to be. God will burn it up in the flames of His passionate love for you. If you need to confess a sin, do so. Otherwise, consign your guilt to Jesus as something that He must take care of for you. The Lord, in His great mercy, rejoices in exactly this type of request. Do not revisit yesterday, except as it causes you joy. I want to say a final word to you. The only way to travel the road to heaven is in trust. If you trust God, even the littlest bit, you will make progress and you will stay on the path to Him. You will proceed in some measure of peace and you will remain calm. Dearest friend, when you feel that you cannot remain calm, call on heaven. You can tell heaven that you have an emergency. Heaven will respond at once, bringing graces of trust and calm to you. If you trust in heaven, and you should, you will understand that heaven never abandons anyone. Heaven does not abandon you any more than heaven abandons those around you who also suffer at this time. Ask for graces for those around you and they will receive graces because of your request. If you pray for others in a time of such great pain, heaven will flood others with graces because heaven views this prayer, made in sorrow, as the most beautiful act of trust. The angels delight in this prayer and bring this prayer before the Father as evidence of man's respect for His dominion. God the Father, in turn, unleashes a torrent of conversion, healing, and calming graces for all involved in the tragedy. Truly, the Father orders the angels and saints to benefit thousands from such a situation. Talk to heaven and you and all those around you will be blessed powerfully.

Blessed Mother

My poor little child, how you suffer. There are times when suffering is so great that a little one cannot even feel the comfort that is lavished upon them. It is this way for you now. In your grief, you stagger, but you are supported. I know that you do not

always feel this support. We accept this. Later, when you come to heaven, you will marvel at the generosity of heaven as you understand the great lengths heaven went to in order to support you through this tragedy. Dear beloved child of the Father, rest in your little soul. You are like a wounded one who requires heavenly nursing. We will nurse you. I will watch closely and take each opportunity to send you examples of heaven's tender care for you. God has a plan and you are part of that plan just as I was part of God's plan. I am playing my part in God's plan now in speaking these words to you. Why do we use words? Little child, we use words to communicate truth because we are holy souls, filled with God's integrity. These words represent God's truth. If a person sends a letter, filled with love, can you say that the person sent words? Is it not more accurate to say that the person has sent love and kindness which brings also encouragement? On earth, in the limited view of those who do not yet experience heaven, perhaps it is true that a word is simply a word, representing a concept. In heaven, which is where we speak from, a word is much more. These words carry with them heavenly graces of truth, of comfort and of joy. My love for you, which is part of God's love for you, flows out from this page to your heart. My intercession for you is taking place as you read these words. Heaven is with you, I promise you. I am your mother and you are my beloved child. Turn your face to me and I will give you heavenly comfort that cannot be seen or understood. You will know that I am with you by the calming graces that come with me wherever I go. I am calm because I see God's plan. I will give you this calm and help you to see, at the very least, that God has a plan for you and that it includes this tragedy. I am with you, little dove. Your pain will not be without value and every tear you cry will be a tear that is noticed by heaven. Peace now, as we walk with you through this time of grief. We will give you the graces you need to cope today and to grow in holiness tomorrow. All is well. Heaven surrounds you.

I read an article Sister Judith sent about how the English Catholic Churches that had become depleted of late are now full up with immigrants from Brazil, Asia, Africa with vibrant ethnic-flavor Masses, full of life and hope. They come and they find the one thing that is the same is the Church.

I recalled Mary Neill saying "Ronda, don't worry. It's not the intellectuals who will save the church but the anawim (the uneducated masses)"

December 18, 2006

Asking Fr. Ken's advice about some family problems he said "Hardly ever when you want to help people, will they receive your help in the manner you want them to." For instance, if you give people money, it is theirs and they won't spend it as you would like them to!

Basically, as in marriage preparation, we have to say "I put up with you and you put up with me."

December 12, 2006

Tonight there was an Our Lady of Guadalupe procession from the center of town to our Church about ½ hour's walk. I loved seeing the kind of stiff seeming male Hispanic leaders tenderly laying flowers around the platform holding the statue of Mary. In Jungian terms I suppose that is how they get in touch with their feminine side.

Only about 10 of the 200 people in the procession were Anglo's. I love Our Lady of Guadalupe so I thought I should go even though it was walking in the dark in the night.

I kept thinking of how 35 years ago Martin went on a business trip to Mexico and I went with him to see the shrine of Our Lady, and joined in by crawling on my knees on the cobblestones across that huge plaza in front of the Church to finally reach the tilma. During that painful crawl I offered it up for my students at the new teaching job I was to start at Loyola Marymount and for everyone in my family. So many graces came pouring down amidst all the sometimes terrible crosses.

In the procession tonight we had candles and it felt like somehow making a dent in the mentality of this non-Catholic Bible-belt area.

During the Mass there was mostly the usual charismatic style songs of the Hispanic choir, but it seems Father Ken, who is teaching formal music to the leaders, got them to be able to do deeply beautiful old chant songs in Spanish as well. I marveled at his pastoral heart to "hide" his own feelings about charismatic songs and to learn Spanish perfectly so they would trust him to move them along in the music. Maybe that's not how it really happened, but that is how it seemed.

Father Ken gave a rousing sermon about how fences and walls can't keep out God's love and how Our Lady of Guadalupe is an icon of God's love being greater than cultural barriers. I kept thinking how she "came" with these Mayans to this strange Southern part of North America – as the feminine icon of the Church who they are bringing in so many good ways to our less devotional Anglo Church.

December 13, 2006

Heaven Speaks to Those Who Struggle to Forgive

Jesus

How blessed I am that you take a moment to read these words. I am God. I am complete, and yet your simple act of reading My words gives Me glory. You are important to Me and you are important to My family, which includes all men of good will. Because I love you and because I need your help, I wish to give you the opportunity to find greater peace in your heart. It is clear to Me that many suffer from hidden wounds. The only way for these wounds to heal is for the carrier of the wound to forgive the one who inflicted the injury. My dear child, this can be difficult. When a wound finds a home in the heart, it becomes comfortable there. It must be loosened and shifted. Both a willingness to forgive and a spirit of forgiveness are necessary because it is these things that make the wound uncomfortable. The wound then begins to dislodge. This reawakens the pain but only temporarily until the wound is removed altogether.

I want to begin this process in you. If you proceed in the process of forgiveness with Me, you will find that forgiveness floods your heart. Your wounds will be gone. I have the power to heal every one of your wounds. When you try to do this alone, you do not experience success and you find that bitterness persists. Bitterness characterises My enemy. Forgiveness characterises Me. You, a beloved little child of God, seek to find peace in your heart. You will only find peace if you step into the stream of goodness. This stream is like a river of grace with which I desire to bathe you, removing all pain and injury. What will remain in your soul is joy. This joy, this heavenly peace, will be obtained by accepting your flaws and accepting the flaws of others. You see, My friend, if you accept the flaws ... and you will soften in attitude toward yourself. I love you. I accept you. I need you to accept yourself so that you will be at peace in My kingdom and it is through forgiving others that you will find acceptance of your own humanity.

St. Faustina

Oh my, how we suffer on earth. We are so very woundable, are we not? Our humanity makes us vulnerable and we are subject to pain. My friends, Jesus wishes to heal you from the injuries levied against you. It is possible that you are suffering from pains that were inflicted in the past. At this time, Jesus is allotting a torrent of graces because He wants His little ones to be at peace. If a person is at peace, that person can serve God with very little self-will. There are different periods in the history of this world. At different times, Jesus sends different graces, always considering the appropriateness of the grace for the time. In other words, Jesus knows what His people require and gives accordingly. At this time, the Lord sees that souls are in distress. The great darkness has obscured the usual process of acceptance for others and many carry heavy burdens that they should have cast off already. There is a preoccupation with self that precludes God's children from considering the struggles of others. This preoccupation has inhibited spiritual healing for many. Jesus wills at this time to send heavenly help that will shake God's children out of this fog. You have been hurt by others. Heaven knows this. Now it is time to forgive those who have hurt you. Jesus is all mercy, it is true, but God is also all justice. Those who have hurt you will be held accountable. Do you want this? Do you desire it? My friend, nobody escapes divine justice. Where does that fact place you in terms of the sins you have committed? Are you free from sin? Have you hurt anyone in your past? Be honest and I will ask God to illuminate your soul for you because you are in the same boat as those who have hurt you in terms of being held accountable for sins committed. Perhaps you have been injured grievously. Perhaps the evil committed against you far exceeds anything you have ever done wrong. Be at peace. God will make all wrongs right and the one who hurt you will have to deal with their own process. We are concerned with your growth today and your growth will be stunted if you do not accept forgiveness into your heart. You need bring nothing to this process but willingness. Tell Jesus that you are willing and He will begin His work. If you are not willing, I understand that, also. In that case you must ask Jesus to give you willingness. Jesus loves this prayer. Do not think it makes you unworthy of the process. You say, 'Jesus, I am too angry, too hurt. You will have to heal me enough so that I can even allow such a process to begin.' The heart of Jesus rejoices in this and He tells the Father that truly, this is a soul in which He can work. In other words, I am telling you that there is no reason to persist in bitterness. It is time to let it go. We will support you and sustain you.

St. Faustina

My friend, there is great opportunity here. Jesus is promising you that He will assume responsibility for your healing. This is the healing that comes from heaven, the authentic liberation from spiritual and emotional distress. This is not something that is obtainable from a worldly source because only the divine can make these promises and then deliver these graces. I cried many tears on earth. Do not fear tears. Tears provide the soul with moisture which allows for great growth in virtue and holiness. Tears are a sign that healing is taking place. Sometimes, tears flow out of the person and with the tears goes the hurt. Goodbye to hurt. Welcome to forgiveness.

What does forgiveness bring? I will tell you. Forgiveness brings peace. Forgiveness brings self-acceptance because you are able to say, yes, this bad thing happened to me. Yes, it was hurtful and I suffered pain because of it. Then you stop and say, "No. I will not allow this injury to suffocate the goodness in me. No. I will not allow it to divert me from God's will in my life. I will not behave badly because someone else has behaved badly. If I do so, I am being tricked."

You see, my friend, the path of bitterness leads in the opposite direction of where you must go. Come our way, to heaven, and you will have joy. The enemy seeks to divert you by encouraging you to persist in bitter self-righteousness and indignation. You know that it is not Jesus who advises you to hold on to anger. It is His enemy, who is also your enemy.

St. Faustina

Ask yourself this question. Are you angry at Jesus? If you answer yes, you must tell Him and talk about it with Him in the silence of your heart. There is only one combatant here, my friend, because Jesus is most assuredly not angry at you. As such, you are fighting all by yourself. Day after day, you make a case against God, reviewing all of the hurts that God has failed to prevent. You find yourself softening at times, and then you hastily list the wrongs God has committed against you, backing up your case and affirming your decision to ignore God or even work against Him. If you could see me you would see that I am shaking my head sadly. This will never succeed for you. This state of affairs will really have to cease. I would like to say, 'Stop this at once' but who am I to give you orders? You would say, "'Who is this Faustina who speaks with such authority? Faustina does not understand my pain or she would join me in my anger against God.'

You are wrong, of course. I would not join you in your anger against God because I know God. I am united to Jesus in heaven and I am continually suffused with His love for me. At the very same time that I am suffused with His love for me, I am suffused with His love for you because it is all the same love, from the same Source, and it includes us all. Do you understand? Will you try to stay with me while I attempt to explain this to you?

I exist permanently in the heart of God. You exist permanently in the heart of God in that He created you and He cannot fail to love you. He is enamoured with every part of you, every characteristic, and every possibility in your future. Your anger, your pain, your sinfulness, in no way diminishes God's love for you. This is not even possible. God will never reject one of His children. It is His children who reject Him. My little beloved friend, you are like a small child sitting in a corner at a birthday party with his arms crossed. Will you do this in heaven? Will you come to heaven and refuse to join in our joy? No. You will not.

You will have to work through this pain in purgatory. Now, perhaps you are getting angry at me. You say, 'More injustice! Faustina is threatening me.' I am not threatening you. You are my little brother or sister and God has given me the task of helping you to cast off your bitterness, allowing Him to replace it with His forgiveness. In order to do so I am using the powerful weapon that is the truth. You have a great many friends in heaven and they want you to begin this process now so that you are ready to come straight to heaven when you die in your body. I want this, too. Jesus wants this, also. We have many people here who are heavily committed to your cause. Won't you come back to completeness now? I love you very much. I know all about heavy burdens that tempt one to bitterness. Sit in silence and we will begin this important work in your soul.

Blessed Mother

I am with you, my child. I am in all of your pain and I understand why you are having difficulty. Heaven sees everything. This fact should only console you because heaven completely accepts humanity. Dear child of my heart, heaven was created for you. Let me repeat that for my little wounded one. God made heaven for you. This is your home. You will come here if you accept Jesus when you die. Accept Him now and you will live out the remainder of your time united to all of us, who seek to save others. I want to explain something to you so that you know that we understand your predicament. Your difficulty in forgiving is understandable. I had to forgive those who crucified my Son. My love for Jesus is combined with my respect for Him and it was this way for me on earth. He always served God's children. He always put the good of humanity first, sacrificing everything for every human being ever created. His love was perfect and perfectly selfless. Yes, I loved Him fully. In His presence I could only melt with the love He exhibited. When He was crucified, and even before that, unjustly castigated and slandered, my heart nearly broke. At His death, My heart stopped as well, in terms of its ability to recover and love. It was only through the grace of the Almighty God, who breathed forgiveness into me, that I was able to continue on in the world without my Son. I am telling you that you should not be ashamed to need God's help in this process. I, also needed God's help. God placed forgiveness in my heart and He will do the same for you. A final word of love for you is this. Remember that you have hurt our Jesus and Jesus willingly forgives you. Jesus loves you so tenderly. Forgive others as Jesus has forgiven you and you will know heaven's peace. We will help you. I am with you and I will never leave you.

December 13, 2006

I asked Jesus what I would do if I trusted in him about difficult family problems. He said "Wait till January 1st and in the meantime have a good Advent by just serving with love in the home."

December 14, 2006

From Heaven Speaks to those who have Rejected God.

Jesus

I speak today with the greatest seriousness. My beloved one, you were created by God. God did not create you to reject your place in His family. You are important in this family, which includes all of mankind. To cast yourself out of God's love is to cast yourself out of your family. You object to this, telling yourself that you do not reject mankind, only the Creator of mankind. My friend, this is like reaching into your chest and removing your heart with the goal of rejecting your heart but accepting your body. The body will not function without the heart. It cannot. In the same way, the family of God cannot function without the sustaining hand of the Father. Even the earth would fail to exist if the Father were to withdraw His benevolence. Your rejection of God proceeds from anger. You move to deny this. Perhaps you cite scientific evidence that claims to supplant God's existence. When you die in your body and you come before Me, Jesus Christ, you will be dazzled by the extent of what humanity does not know. The body of knowledge on earth at this time, while exciting for you, is miniscule when seen against the light of the full truth that you will be allowed to explore in heaven. I bless all science of good will. God has been merciful in the extreme through science. Many men have studied science and been brought to a profound respect for the Creator through the knowledge they have gained. They will continue this study in heaven, of course, and be blessed even more. Additionally, many men who study science have served their family, humanity, profoundly through their cooperation with Me in their studies. Do you understand? They cooperate with God and God, through that cooperation, blesses humanity. It is arrogance on the part of mankind to believe that they have discovered anything that I do not wish for them to discover. You, as one of God's created ones, must come to accept that those using science to subvert Godly principles are working against the Creator. They will be accountable for any damage done to the Kingdom of God. I am merciful to those who repent and I will be merciful to you. I speak to you today, not to condemn, but to save. I am with you. Do not reject Me.

St. John of the Cross

My friend, you cannot persist in rejecting God. It is too hard for you. Perhaps you do not understand the burden you carry. I will tell you about your burden so you will understand just how heavy it is and perhaps agree to put it down for a moment. The weight of your burden is such that your soul cannot be lifted. I am strong in my determination and I am strong in terms of God's divine power. Try as I might, though, I cannot lift you. You are as heavy and immovable as ten tons of bricks. When a soul believes in God and respects God's dominion over mankind, that soul can be lifted like the lightest feather. We can give that soul comfort and consolation. We can gain graces for the soul so that it can feel our love and the love of the Creator. The soul who accepts God is light and can be drawn easily into the divine truths. The acceptance of God gives souls a buoyancy that keeps them up above the water line, faced into the light of truth. This light flows steadily into these souls and the love that grows in them nourishes both the individuals and all those around them. You do not have this. You have rejected access to the One who loves you unconditionally. We surround you, hoping for an opportunity to help you but you block us out. Consider those around you. Think of those you love. Do you wish them well? Do you desire their safety? This love you feel, this caring, is the evidence of God inside you. Though you purport to reject your God, you cannot do so entirely because to fully reject God, you would have to reject all forms of love. Please understand that there are only two ways to proceed. One is from love, God's way. The other is from hatred, the enemy's way. Ahh, you say, John is simplistic. I must tell you that I take that as the highest compliment. Heaven is simplistic in that it originates and is sustained by love. We will continue, you and I, to explore your rejection of God together.

I am trying to help you, my friend, because I love you. You do not know me enough to love me but when you get to know me, you will love me. Thank you for entertaining my thoughts for these few brief moments in time.

St. John of the Cross

There are several ways to proceed. One, you can continue on in your rejection of God. Two, you can accept that God loves you and ask Him to make Himself known to you. Three, you can accept that God exists but continue to deny Him access to your life.

If you do the first, nothing changes. You will have the greatest difficulty when you die and meet God because you will have to accept that you rebelled against perfect love. This will be painful for you, in the extreme. God is merciful, of course. He will give you an opportunity to repent and if you do so, you will be taken joyfully into the family. At that time, however, you will have to begin learning all of the lessons of love and humility. This will take time but God has prepared a place for you to do this. It is called purgatory.

If you follow the second option and accept that God loves you, asking God to make Himself known to you, you will begin learning about God's love on earth, in your life and through your relationships with others. You will know joy, again, my dear friend, and you will have hope in your heart. God will flood you with graces, we will surround you and defend you as you grow in virtue, and upon your death you will be welcomed with the greatest joy and celebration. Truly, when you accept God and let Him teach you about love, the day of your death is a happy day indeed.

The third option is not the option I would take but it is better than option number one. You can accept that God exists but keep Him at a distance. This is better than option number one because you are giving God some measure of respect. God rewards all such respect with untold generosity. Also, if you at least recognise, even in the smallest way, the existence of God, you leave a door open to a relationship with God. Perhaps you are not willing or able to ask God to reveal Himself to you. Possibly you are fearful of what God will ask of you. This is short sighted because anything that God asks of you becomes easy when you embark upon it with Him. At any rate, though, at least tell God that you recognise Him as the Creator and there will be a link between you and your God. It will be like being in deep water and holding on to a rope. You may not make progress, in that you are not allowing God to pull you into the boat, but neither will you be lost.

I love you. My heart has the greatest interest in helping you come back into our family. You see, I am looking at you with heavenly eyes. I see all that you can do to help others know God's love. We need you so badly. You have potentials that you have not touched. Only with God's grace can your full potential be realized because God ignites the growth process, just as truly as he takes a seed and creates a massive tree. You have seeds of the greatest, most powerful goodness in you. Come back to God's love and He will ignite the growth process in each of these seeds. God, Himself, sowed these seeds and He has a divine purpose for each of them. Be at peace as you consider your options. You have heaven's assistance.

St. John of the Cross

You have been patient with me and I am grateful. I have a few more thoughts to share with you so I will presume upon your patience for one additional moment. If you have held onto your rejection of God for some time, you will find that these thoughts are unsettling. I, John, speak of choices as though these were easy choices with no subsequent emotional effects. I know what I am saying to you in that I understand the emotional impact of making choice number two or even three. You will not be left to walk through this alone. Any aloneness you have felt in the past has been self-imposed. Listen carefully to this. I know that you have felt isolated and abandoned in your pain. Jesus felt the same way on the cross. In truth, He was not abandoned and neither were you. You simply locked us out. We, the saints and angels, cannot help you without some willingness on your part. The best we can do in these situations is to seek to protect you while we wait for the smallest opening in your heart.

I ask you to take some time in silence and consider these words. You will see that I am reasonable in my contention that if you feel any love at all, you are still interested in being in God's presence. To say that you do not believe in God or God's enemy is to simply deny a truth as obvious as the truth that water is wet or wind produces movement. You can argue about the truth, you can distract yourself and others from the truth, but ultimately, the truth remains. God exists. He loves you. To reject Him is to choose His enemy over Him. This is a mistake for you. Accept God again, if only in the smallest, most limited way. These words and the graces that accompany them are not simply for this moment. I am going to stay with you and remind you of them. I, John, love you and I will not give up on you. Feel the heavenly calm in your soul. There is no need for anything other than calm. If you are not ready now, do not be distressed. There will come a time when you are willing to accept God. I am with you now and I will be with you then, praying for you and gaining all possible graces for you. You may feel anger at me. You may say, 'John is a fool. I am ridiculing John and yet he continues to express love for me.' You are right. I love you even though you ridicule me. I am in heaven, you see, so I am like God. Even if you ridicule God, He continues to love you and hope for your return. So, in simply reading these words, you have had your first lesson in the unconditional love that is God's. Be at peace. You are not alone.

Blessed Mother

Dearest little child of heaven, you are not as intellectually advanced as you think. If you were truly advanced in your intellect, you would be working hard to become a saint because when one authentically applies the intellect to the consideration of truth, one is enchanted with the limitlessness of God's knowledge. One then desires to proceed more and more deeply into these heavenly truths. This can be done during your time on earth.

You are loved. You are cherished. We in heaven have many hopes attached to your conversion to God in your heart. The first reason that we harbour such hope is that we see the goodness in your soul. You may detach this goodness from God, stating that this goodness originates in you. In other words, you claim this goodness as your own. I am Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ, and I tell you today that any goodness in your heart originates in God. Do not claim something that came from your Father. Would you claim your genetic composition? Did you have anything to do with it? Did you choose it or design it? This is silliness, of course. It was chosen for you so that you could serve in the way God intended. Do not reject the one who lovingly created you to serve at this time. All of heaven is interested in your acceptance of God. You are that important to us. My motherly heart suffers

at your rejection of God because I witnessed what Jesus did for you. Be at peace. I will help you and you are loved. Take John's advice and accept God into your life. You will be so grateful that you did.

December 16, 2006

Lily says with family what is needed is the apostolate of being. Yes, don't push, be gentle.

Memories of Dietrich Von Hildebrand by Ronda Chervin, Ph.D.

(This was for an article for the Von Hildebrand Legacy publication. It was not used because of a change in the organization's plans but I am leaving it here for those of you who have read things of his but don't know what he was like as a personality.)

It was truly a miracle that I met Gogo (as all his friends called him). Here is how it happened.

I was brought up as a total atheist, though my background was culturally Jewish. I studied philosophy hoping to find truth but only found skepticism, relativism, and historicism. I was looking for love but only found fascinating, sinful, disappointing relationships. By the age of 20 I was in despair of ever finding love or truth.

One Saturday my mother, who never surfed the TV, not ever, turned on the set in the middle of the afternoon, and there was a program called the Catholic Hour with two philosophers on it: Dietrich Von Hildebrand and Alice Jourdain. "Ronda, come see, there are some philosophers on TV." To my amazement, these philosophers were talking as if truth, love, goodness and beauty were objective realities.

I wrote them a long letter describing my futile search and asked if they could help me. It turned out that Alice (Lily – shortly afterwards to become Gogo's second wife) lived but 2 blocks away from me on the West Side of New York city. Neither she nor I, nor Madeleine (to be Stebbins) who was her roommate will ever forget our first meeting. Somehow, even though I was an atheist, I knew that there was something extraordinary in that apartment. Never had anyone looked into my eyes with such compassion and insight as did Lily. Afterwards, I danced down the street thinking, "I have met a saint."

Impressed by my yearning for truth, Lily suggested that I make a visit to the classes of Dietrich Von Hildebrand at Fordham and if I was enthusiastic, why not transfer my Woodrow Wilson scholarship from Johns Hopkins graduate school to Fordham.

Stephen Schwarz escorted me to Fordham. Two things caught my attention. The first was that, unlike the professors at Johns Hopkins who seemed to me to be desiccated academics, Von Hildebrand and Balduin Schwarz were vibrant men, overflowing with joy. Secondly I noticed that they could refute skepticism, relativism and historicism in a few sentences.

I like to think that two of my favorite saints also had something to do with the miracle of my mother turning on the TV at that moment: St. Therese of Lisieux who, during her dark night, prayed so much for atheists, and St. Edith Stein – who, having been an atheistic philosophy student from a Jewish background herself, surely she would want me to meet her "cousin" philosopher, Von Hildebrand.

Of course, being such a thoroughgoing atheist who had been brought up to think that all religious people were stupid and weak, I didn't think that the wonderful traits of Von Hildebrand, Lily, and the Schwarz's: Balduin, Leni (a convert from an atheist Jewish background) and Stephen, their son, had anything to do with their religion. I just wanted to be with them.

Zealous Gogo, at the urging of Lily, quickly arranged for my scholarship to be transferred and within a month I was taking courses at Fordham.

Ecstasy is the only word to describe my reaction to each of Gogo's classes, as I realized that truth was real, and what glorious truths, such as proofs that moral values were absolute. Simultaneously I was lapping up the love the members of the lay community surrounding me with. Getting to know them took place at lunches at the Schwarz house, and on the D-train of the NY subway from the Manhattan to the Bronx and back again, for I was able to travel a whole hour each way with either Gogo or Balduin who were riding up to the classes I was taking and they were teaching.

The miraculous events that led me to become a Catholic a year after meeting Gogo and Lily are told in my autobiography *En Route to Eternity*. A large part came from reading the authors recommended by them such as Augustine, Newman, and Chesterton. The night before my baptism I was visiting the Schwarz's who would become my godparents. Gogo was there. On my way home, I grabbed his arm and asked, "But suppose it isn't true, after all?" I expected some insight into philosophy or psychology of religion, but he replied with the simplicity of a peasant, "but think of the miracles!"

I found the personality of Gogo overwhelmingly. That the same man could be so serious, so deep, but also so spontaneous and affectionate, delighted me. We used to attend the same daily Mass, walking from different directions. Always I would find him singing opera loudly along the way. I often thought of this as the Italian side of his personality whereas the philosophical side was more German.

These personality traits of Gogo made whatever he wanted to teach me not so much didactic as enticing. And this was not only in the realm of philosophy. My father was a lover of classical music who filled our early childhood with the sound of music every hour he was home. As a teenager I rebelled and listened only to popular tunes. By college I gradually grew to love classical music, but had very little sense of choral music. I will never forget sitting in a room next to Gogo who was playing a 78 recording of Mozart's *Laudate Dominum*. To make sure I understood the beauty of it, he grabbed my arm with his hand and emphasized each climax of the singing with an extra squeeze accompanied by his radiant smile.

Another memory from these early days of the friendship, which would last until the end of his life, is of his insistence that those of us who rode with him on the subway from Fordham back to Manhattan pray *Compline* out loud in Latin. It was for me such an exemplification of the later buzz-word "counter-cultural" but also of freedom of spirit. In later years I followed his lead by insisting that friends pray the rosary aloud with me in airports during long waits at the gate.

Gogo played a large role in my marriage to Martin Chervin, a man from an orthodox Jewish background who had become an atheist as a teen but who wanted to know Christ. When I got interested in Martin as a possible spouse, I was on the verge of

becoming a Catholic. At the time, he was a divorced playboy. I was confused. I thought a good way of getting rid of him would be to introduce him to Gogo and Lily and the Schwarz family. Surely they would tell me to drop this dangerous friendship immediately. Instead they all loved him and encouraged us in what turned out to be a long chaste courtship and helped us get a dispensation from Martin's previous non-religious marriage. We went through a long process with the New York and Roman tribunals. Finally Gogo was instrumental in persuading a prominent Cardinal to intervene for a dispensation in favorem fide.

It seemed as if Martin would soon become a Catholic. A major influence on him was the reading of *Transformation in Christ*. He recognized the genius of Gogo's combination of consummate understanding of human nature with sublime faith.

Even more, my husband, who had the same kind of joie de vivre as Gogo, could only have understood a faith like Gogo's, which included rejoicing in the goods of the earth, as well as opening to the redemptive gifts. Before meeting Gogo he thought of Catholics as either tight Puritanical types or rebellious sinners. It took him many years to finally become a Catholic, because he detested the American post-Vatican II Mass. Shortly before Gogo's death he made a bargain with God that should Gogo survive longer, at a time when his life seemed almost at an end, he would take it as a sign to become a Catholic in spite of his dislike of the English Mass. Gogo was spared a short time longer and Martin did become a Catholic.

Gogo also had an influence on the conversion of my atheist mother. She was horrified at my interest in Roman Catholicism, but the personality of Gogo opened her to investigating the faith for herself. He decided to meet her informally at our home for individual teaching sessions to overcome her formidable doubts. In a charming gesture, the first time he came he presented her with a huge bouquet of peonies.

A few less important but telling memories:

Before his conversion, Martin and I were once traveling in Europe and went out of our way to go to Florence to see Gogo and Lily. I was praying constantly that whatever Gogo said would be a turning point for Martin to becoming a Catholic. We had a lovely visit but mostly the conversation was humorous and anecdotal instead of deep. At the end I was alone for a few moments and told Gogo how sorry I was that no important points had come up. Immediately Gogo's humorous expression changed to great seriousness and he exclaimed "What a sin on my part to have talked so much thoughtlessly!" I was touched by his readiness to acknowledge a fault even when it was unintentional.

Summers included a yearly meeting of a lay community that most of the Von Hildebrand circle were part of. I occasionally came to these meetings in Bavaria. The Mass was celebrated in a small chapel with parts of the congregation on either side – men on one side and women on the other. It always delighted me to see that, even after many years of marriage, Gogo could not bear to be separated from Lily – so throughout the Mass he would turn his head and gaze upon her with love.

A memory that fits with the name of the book *The Soul of a Lion* took place when Gogo and Lily came to Loyola Marymount University where I was teaching in the early 70's. Gogo gave the first talk. During the break, Lily told me that I must sit next to him while she was speaking and be sure that he stayed calm because he could have a fatal heart attack at any moment. During the

question period the wife of a colleague of mine challenged Lily on some point. Gogo took it as an insult and tried to leap up to seize the floor. I grabbed him to hold him down. He turned on me swiftly and remarked: “Ronda, you can’t keep me down. I am not a lamb, I am a lion.”

We all knew that Gogo had a bad heart. Once, toward the end of his life, I had a nightmare that he was falling down a staircase to his doom. After that, whenever I was with him and there were stairs I pushed myself ahead of him so that I might cushion a fall.

As a professor of philosophy I have taught Gogo’s books for decades with great impact. Some of my philosophy majors such as Michael Healy and James Harold, now at Franciscan University of Steubenville, went on to graduate school to study his thought. I cannot teach his ideas, or those of Lily, my life-long friend, without a sense of the presence of their minds and hearts and souls permeating my smaller personhood. What a legacy. Viva the Von Hildebrand’s!

December 17, 2006

Heaven Speaks to those who suffer from financial need.

(Those of you who know my, Ronda’s, love of simplicity of life will appreciate how much these words, allegedly of Jesus to Anne would delight me.)

Jesus

I speak today with such love in My heart. There are those among you who suffer from financial need. You do not have enough money to sustain your family. Perhaps you do not have what you need to buy food or to pay for your shelter needs. My friends, you are not forgotten. Heaven will not abandon you. I see your distress and recognise your need. I want to ask you to look at your situation fearlessly. Ask yourself if you are in real danger of going without food. Are you in real danger of losing your place of shelter? Consider these two things as your basic needs. I am asking that you begin to think of your time on earth differently. Consider exactly what your body needs to continue in service to Me. Some of My children on earth have been blessed with great abundance. In some cases, this great abundance has created a craving for more that is undermining heaven’s goals for the soul. Additionally, this craving for more has become a distraction, diverting some of God’s children from the task of growing in holiness. My beloved ones, if this describes you, if you routinely have enough food to eat and a safe place to rest, yet you continue to worry about money, then you must change your standard immediately. What will you do when it comes time to leave all of this? Will you object when Jesus does not supply you with these extra things in heaven? You may not want to come to heaven because there is no excess of material goods here. This is silly, of course, and I am being playful with you but please try to understand My point. Excessive material goods are a distraction. If you have financial needs that can be rectified by cutting back on your standard of living, do so at once. I will help you and I promise you this today because this is very important for you and for your family. I am asking all to reconsider their needs and use less when possible.

For those who cannot sustain basic food and shelter needs, I have something else to say. You are loved. You should ask Me to send help and I will begin to do so at once. My beloved children, I did not create you to go hungry. I did not create you to sleep in circumstances that prevent safety. I want you to know that during My time on earth, I often experienced hunger. I very often did not have a place to rest My head. Indeed, I was born into poverty and I understand poverty of the physical type. I want you to know something today. Financial poverty, physical need, does not equal spiritual poverty, meaning spiritual need. I am saying that you can be far wealthier than any king or queen, even if you are the poorest of the poor. Perhaps you are hungry more than you are fed. Perhaps you have no home. My beloved child, you will have a beautiful home here in heaven and in it you will entertain your loved ones with great bounty. You will have enough of everything in heaven and you will be treated as a royal personage by Me, your Jesus. Your time of poverty on earth prepares you for a time of great wealth in heaven. You must accept your circumstances in peace, even while you try to change these circumstances. I will not accept that you did not want to work to support yourself or your family. That is not an acceptable reason to suffer need. I want you to try to sustain yourself and those for whom you are responsible. But if, through no fault of your own you suffer poverty, I assure you today that if you accept this in peace I will reward you beyond your furthest imaginings. In places where people are poor, I am there with My greatest graces. Dear beloved ones, believe Me today when I tell you that people who come to heaven do not regret anything they suffered on earth. Rest in this thought. You will not regret your sufferings. You will only regret the times you failed to love. Ask Me for help and I will help you. Be at peace. You have not been abandoned.

St. Augustine

Dear brothers and sisters, we in heaven remember being on earth. We remember having great wants and suffering from poverty. Some of God's saints were wealthy on earth, of course, but many were not. The time in which you live is a time of great abundance for some. It would make God happy if this abundance were shared so that few experienced hunger that resulted in disease and death. There will always be poor, it is true, but this fact does not excuse anyone from failing to assist them. If you are wealthy, you may say, 'What can I do?' I will answer you today. Give. Give often and give more. Work for others with your power and influence. Spread Godly principles of responsible use of material and financial wealth. Also, deprive yourself of something. Sacrifice. Perhaps you are in a situation where you were accustomed to a high standard of living and now you find that you have had to reduce your standard. Praise God for this. Rejoice because in this circumstance you will learn many things. You will learn to trust God. You will learn to have compassion for others. You will learn that not everything has to do with bodily comfort.

In looking back at my time of service on earth, I am aware that the time of greatest growth for me was the time when I suffered. This is basic spirituality of course in that it is hard to become holy if you never deny yourself. In order to become holy you must take up your cross. This cross can come in many forms and the best response to the cross is always to pick it up and walk with it. Move. Do not lament that the cross has been placed on your doorstep. Accept the cross as coming from heaven and, putting one foot in front of the other, climb the mountain toward Jesus. There are always those who suffer more than you and there will always be those who suffer less. Do not let poverty make you bitter. To do so would be to reject God's generous offer of

holiness. During this time, many are suffering from financial difficulties. Is heaven any less present? This is the same as in many periods of history. Be at peace in all circumstances around you and you will find that God gives you what you need to serve Him in each day. If you are hungry, offer this to God, even while asking Him to provide you with more food. God will make you a saint quickly in these circumstances and you will experience spiritual richness. If you have enough and you are not hungry, deny yourself food periodically. Simply do not eat for a day and offer your hunger to God so that He can take your little sacrifice and obtain graces with which to feed others. Heaven will help you to understand God's will in either situation, either poverty or affluence.

St. Augustine

In a world where many have rejected God, it is necessary for many to learn about trust. Reliance on God is something that liberates a person. God can teach this lesson by withdrawing financial security. If you have lost your financial security and you are fearful, talk to God. Tell Him your fears. Tell Him about your obligations, particularly those you find you cannot meet. God will help you. There is no shame in not having enough money. Jesus, Himself seldom had money, not to mind enough of it. Did people look down on Him? Yes, they did. Did people have to take care of Him? Yes, they did, and they are being eternally rewarded for doing so. If you find that others have to help you, accept this with grace. Perhaps this is painful for you. Perhaps you find it humiliating. I understand. I am with you in this humiliation. Humiliation brings humility though and while I know the humiliation part is difficult, the humility part is heavenly and makes you open to God's love in a way that delights heaven. If others have to care for you, sharing their food, shelter, time or wealth with you, accept this in peace. You may not have anything with which to reward them but God has all of infinity to bless them for their kindness to you. Indeed, your situation may be the best opportunity these people have to obtain holiness. Here is a snare. Do not become angry at the ones who help you, even if they give with superiority. If your circumstances make them feel superior, then they are in greater trouble than you and they have their own lessons to learn. You must pray for them and concentrate on the lessons God is teaching you today. Accept the help of others as though it were directly from the hand of God. You are in financial trouble. You pray. God sends help. Be grateful to Him and rejoice. Do not criticize the manner in which God sends the help. That is like being on a road walking, certain that you cannot continue as you are too tired. You have miles to go. A car comes along and offers you transport. You get into the car and begin to criticize the colour of the seats. Would you not shake your head at this foolishness? Would you laugh at the ridiculousness? Would you feel sad for the one who offered his help, only to be mocked and ridiculed by a mean spirited one? Be loving. Look with favour on those whom God sends to assist you.

St. Augustine

Dear friends, we in heaven see your needs. We hear your prayers. Come to God with everything. Be at peace in everything. Be like trusting children who know that their father will provide for them when the time is right. You will not regret trusting God. Trusting the Father becomes a habit and it will serve you well in every area of your life. Perhaps you have enough money and you always have had enough money. You, even more than a poverty stricken one, must learn trust because there is a temptation

when you are wealthy to rely on your wealth to protect you. Oh my, such folly. Such perilous folly is this. Truly, this is living in a house with no foundation. All may be well when it is sunny but in life storms must be expected as they come with regularity. An abundance of material wealth makes it even more imperative that you learn to rely only on God. Ask me for help with this and I will teach you everything I know about trusting God.

If you fear for the financial protection of your family, ask me to intercede for you. Jesus has the greatest tenderness for the poor because He, Himself was poor. Jesus understands that you worry about providing for your children and taking care of each other. Jesus accepts that this desire to provide for your loved ones is a holy inspiration that comes from Him. He will reward this by giving you all possible assistance. Do not think that you are working outside of God's will if you strive to protect your family financially.

Also, do not be afraid that God will punish you if you are wealthy. God, Himself has allowed you to be wealthy but God did not allow your wealth simply for your personal comfort. God allowed wealth for you so that you could steward this wealth in such a way that God could assist others through you. You will want to allow God to do this with freedom, which means you need to be praying for God's direction at all times.

Be at peace in all circumstances. God loves His children and you will not be abandoned. We, the saints in heaven, will assist you to find the right answers to all of your financial difficulties. There will come a day when you finish your life and all of these problems will cease. On that day, I, Augustine will be waiting for you so that I can congratulate you on the holy way in which you faced your financial circumstances.

Blessed Mother

My dear child, I am with you. There is a holy way to conduct yourself in your situation. If you pray, you will know which is the holy way that leads to my Son. I will protect you from choosing an unholy way that leads away from my Son. You see, little child, in everything you face there is opportunity for holiness. Heaven can use your day to move our goals forward if you are the poorest of the poor or the richest of the rich. All we need is your yes to Jesus. Say yes to my Son. Accept any crosses you have. We will help you to provide for your family. We will help you to have peace in any suffering. You will not be abandoned. I am a mother and I had many worries because of our lack of wealth. Many people assisted my little family. My gratitude for the generosity of others is still with me and God's gratitude for their generosity is still with them. Do you see? If you help others you will be rewarded for eternity. If you accept the help of others with dignity, you will become holy and set an example of dignified suffering. Beloved ones, I promise you that you will have what you need to become holy. Do not think that heaven abandons you with financial problems. Heaven helps in these matters as much as heaven helps in spiritual matters because we understand that all that happens in your life shapes your spirituality. Walk each day with heaven and you will see our help. I am your mother and I will not abandon you to these troubles. I will give you peace in all of your troubles.

December 18, 2006

Heaven Speaks to Parents who Worry about their Children's Salvation

Jesus

My dear ones, you worry for your children. I understand. Your worry is a sign that all is right with you because a parent who loves their children feels concern for them....

Perhaps you have always followed Me but your children have strayed from the path and are spending their time in the world, away from Me. This causes you grief, I know. Pray for your children but do not become preoccupied with your worry about them. If you are connected to Me, I will be with your children. I will wait for a moment when their hearts are open to Me and I will fill them with graces, healing their wounds and softening their hearts. I do this constantly for holy parents and I will do this for you. Do not worry that God will abandon your children. A parent's prayers are powerful and these prayers are inspired by Me. Understand that you are working with heaven and with Me to convert these children. In order to console yourself, look at the love that is in your children. Look for any evidence of goodness. Remember the goodness your children showed to you when they were young. There you will find hope of that same goodness returning and growing when your child is converted. Be at peace, dear parents. God loves your children, too. Heaven will not forsake them. I see their wounds and understand what led them away from Me. I, even more than you, have compassion for their pain. I, even more than you, know how to heal their wounds and restore them to wellness, emotionally and spiritually. I am aware of every obstacle to holiness that they face, just as I am aware of every obstacle to holiness you face. I want you to be holy. The best way to help your children is for you to be holy. I ask you today to concentrate on your own holiness. If you do this, I will inspire you with exactly the right course to take to help your child. I keep My promises, as you know. Strive to be holy and I will help your children.

St. Monica

How heavy is the heart of a parent when their child has abandoned morality. This causes a pain that does not heal until the child has returned to God's path. I understand this burden because I carried it myself. Jesus seeks to help all such parents because He also understands this burden. With heaven, the priority is always personal growth in holiness. For this reason, God uses every experience we have on earth to make us holier and to bring us closer to Him. If we are close to God, God can use us powerfully and this helps the family of God. At this time, heaven has a need to bring light to a dark world. It is the darkness of the world that has distracted God's children. Perhaps your child is among these. Jesus is telling you that the best way to help your children is to become holier and holier so that His light can flow into the world through you. When a soul participates with God in this process of renewal through their personal holiness, God experiences great gratitude. God denies that soul nothing and the soul has great intercessory power. If you work for renewal through your attempt to become holier, God will reward you. Part of the way God will reward you is by reclaiming and healing your children. Believe this, my dear parents. It is true. Jesus promises all lay apostles that He will pursue full conversion of their loved ones. Jesus does not make this promise lightly. Jesus intends to keep this promise. If you work for Jesus, you are doing what you need to be doing for your children.

There is an excellent opportunity for holiness in this situation and that is by practicing trust. When you trust God, you are free to be joyful in His service. If you look at your children and feel distress at their condition, but then turn to God and trust Him with these children, you will know joy. It is good to tell God that you trust Him. It is good for God to hear this because it consoles Him. It is also good for you hear yourself telling God that you trust Him as you will begin to believe it because you hear yourself saying it. I am going to give you this advice and then I will pray that you take it. Each time you feel worry over one of your children, say, "Jesus, I trust in you. Take care of this child." If you feel worry for one of your children one hundred times today, say this prayer one hundred times on this day. Believe me, Monica, that it will work. I will be helping you with this and praying for grace for you. This is a new way to proceed because you are actually fighting the enemy's attempt to distract you with worry. I will be working with you and with heaven in the struggle to reclaim your child so you are not alone in this project. Show Jesus that you understand His great power by trusting Him.

December 20, 2006

St. Monica

There are good ways to prompt conversion in your children. The best way to prompt conversion in your children is to love them, even in their error. When you are with your children, show them God's love by loving them. Do not focus all the attention on their errors or on the areas where you disagree with them or where you believe God disagrees with them. Instead, shine the brightest lights on the areas where you agree with them, where you feel God agrees with them, and where you see hope of greater goodness. What is it that God is consoled by when He looks at your child? Find this in them and talk about it. Your children will see God in you if they see God's love in you. Treat these loved ones in error the way Jesus treated those who were in error. Jesus was kind and loving. Jesus loved each person on earth individually and totally. You must look at each of your children with the Lord's eyes and love them individually and totally. This can be difficult, particularly if your child is behaving in a way that is not lovable. In fact, it is most clear that you will not feel this love in your heart if your child is behaving in an aggressive or hurtful manner. This is no problem if you work with heaven because Jesus will put His love in your heart. In this way the renewal begins in your family. God's love is abundantly available. God's forgiveness is also abundantly available. Ask God to send forgiveness to you so that when your children look into your eyes, they see only love.

St. Monica

There are those among you who are wondering how to reconcile your feelings about your child's sinfulness to your faith. In other words, you believe perhaps that your children's soul is at risk because of the behaviors being practiced by them. You possibly feel concern about their bitterness or rebelliousness. I will tell you that each family on earth is a model of the bigger family of God. God is telling you through this apostolate that each apostle brings light to the world through their commitment and service. It is the very same in your family. If your child is in darkness and is being deceived into thinking that sinful behavior is acceptable, you have all the more reason to allow God's light to flow through you. Through being exposed to the light, your children will begin to understand what is dark. You should tell your children in the greatest love that you are concerned. Tell them why you

are concerned. Give them anything that will help them. Do not allow yourself to be intimidated and stand firm in your beliefs, my friend, but do not ever leave God's love. Most particularly, you must love your children while you are explaining your feelings about behaviors or attitudes that you find concerning. Indeed, it is at this time when you must allow the most love to flow through you. It is not appropriate for you to make judgments, of course. Only God can judge. Only God knows the true nature of the wounds in your child and if your child feels judgment from you, your child may turn further from Christ. Remember that Jesus came not to condemn but to save. Your interactions with a loved one in error must reflect the goal of saving, not condemning. Oh my dear parent, I feel your concern. I feel your heartbreak. Loving each other with God's love creates vulnerability to this type of hurt. Parents are well familiar with the hurt of rejection. I am cautioning you to love because heaven seeks to pull your children back at this time and heaven does this most successfully through love. Pray and be at peace. You have more help than you can possibly imagine.

Blessed Mother

My dear parent, how my heart hurts for you. I understand the pain of worrying over a child. I know that you worry because you seek to prevent additional pain for your child, regardless of their age. I know that you see their path and you fear trouble ahead for them. I also see this and I will help you to call your child back to God's path. We do this in great love and gentleness. This is the best way. I will give you my gentleness and with it you will melt your child's heart and create in them a longing for goodness. There is no circumstance that should cause you to give up hope. I will not allow you to give up hope. Even as you read these words I am obtaining fresh hope for you and with this hope I am also obtaining a spirit of calm that will enable you to serve in peace. We will surround this child for you. We will protect this child. If your child has died and you worry for their salvation, I ask you today to stop. God is all merciful. Trust in His goodness. The good God could not face a parent who trusted Him and disappoint that parent. Your greatest weapon in the battle to save your children is trust in God. Use this weapon and be at peace because I am your mother and I read your heart effortlessly. I will help you. Your battle is also my battle.

December 21, 2006

I spent a lovely overnight with the Ballards – a couple, both Lutheran ministers who became Catholics last Easter. They live in Asheville. She is a beautiful contemplative iconographer and he is hoping to become a deacon but is also a counselor as well as a theologian. We had wonderful talks. I hope they will become real friends.

Heaven Speaks to those Who Fear Purgatory

Jesus

My beloved children harbour many fears. This is understandable. The fears of one can be transmitted to another and this is not good. During this time, fear spreads through the world quickly, almost instantaneously, through the media. Perhaps you rise on each day and look out and see that the sun is shining. It is a good moment for you. I am with you, you are fed, and My sun is shining. But this is not enough. You look to see what is happening in other parts of the world. Through communications that are

often unnecessary for you, you learn that there is war, disaster, and famine. You look out again but the joy you had taken in the sunshine is gone. How can you feel joy when in another place there is war, disaster, and famine? You fear immediately that these things will come to you.

I want you to be aware of the needs of others and if a cross comes to you, I want you to carry it with dignity. But I want you to remain in your life, paying attention to your tasks. My friends, few are serving in the area where I have placed them. They are isolating themselves, listening to events from everywhere else in the world. In the meantime, events in their own areas pass unheeded and untended. It is true that I will use communications to further My renewal. I will use everything I can to save souls. But I want less time given over to the consideration of the crosses and challenges of others and more time given over to the crosses and challenges in front of each one of My children. My enemy is using these communications to inflate the fears of My children. Fear is not from Me. Because there is disaster in one area does not mean that you are assured of disaster in your area. Children, listen to Me. It is good to sympathise with others through constant prayer and concrete assistance. It is not good to be inundated with images of disaster. This is not from Me. In each of those situations, there are holy men and women acting as apostles and helping Me. They are becoming saints through these situations. My angels are present, as well as My saints. I am present. I am sustaining many and reaping a harvest for heaven in every event that occurs in your world. When each soul completes their time on earth and comes to Me, there is justice. You do not see this on your televisions. You do not read this in your newspapers. I am barely represented in these communications so you must not look to these communications for truth. Look to Me, in prayer, and there you will find truth.

I make reference now to the fear harboured by many that they will suffer unbearably in purgatory. My friends, you see unjust and seemingly unbearable suffering on earth and you are fearful. You then transfer this fear to Me because if injustice is allowed on earth, surely injustice is allowed in the heavenly kingdom. This is simply not true. There will be no injustice here and you will not suffer physical pain in purgatory.

Perhaps this does not comfort you. Perhaps you understand how sinfully you have behaved and you fear just punishment. If you feel this way, you have not spent enough time resting in My companionship. You do not know Me. You do not understand heaven or its many kingdoms. I do not hold this against you. I understand and it is for this reason I am giving you these words. Do not be afraid of the process of purification that awaits some of you after your death and before your entrance into heaven. There is nothing to fear. You will find that I am all compassion and mercy. I do not seek to condemn you, but to save you. I am your friend and I love you. Even if you are not My friend now, at this time, I have hope that you will change your mind and become My friend later, at the time of your death. A friend does not prepare pain for a loved one coming in from a long journey. A friend prepares a time of recovery if it is necessary and that is what I have prepared for you. Think of time in purgatory as time for recovery. You will recover and grow in purgatory if, together, you and I, find that you need this. I will take care of you, always.

St. Andrew

God's friends in the world have a certain amount of trust in Him. There is not enough trust in Him, it is true, because there is really no way for a soul on earth to fully understand the Godhead and what flows from Him. But the small amount of trust that souls on earth have for God is well placed and benefits each person immensely. Truly, a life lived one way would be lived in a completely different way if a person allowed heaven to place greater trust in their soul. I am telling you this today because I look at you and I want you to live differently. Your life can be altered if you trust God. You will bring far more souls to the Father if you trust God. Yes, it is all about trust. Many say they trust God but then they fear purgatory. I am not trying to catch you in something. I am trying to reveal to you a possible discrepancy in what you say and what you feel. It is good to identify this discrepancy if it exists, in order to correct it. If you follow God, you do so because it is the right thing to do. You are wise. I tell you today that it is the right thing to do because God is good. God is all love and love generates, by its nature, mercy. It can do no less. A loving heart is a soft heart. A loving heart is also a wise heart and in its wisdom the wise heart understands what is best for the recipient of perfect love. In this great love and wisdom, God allowed for repentance. He did not have to do this. He did not even have to create us and when you get to heaven you will understand how good our God is and how infinite is His love. But God, in His love, did create us and allowed for a life for each of us. God understands our weakness and delights in the process of perfection that we embark upon through fidelity to Him. God's expectations are realistic and compassionate. God expects that we will experience our weaknesses and God understands that at times we may travel down paths that lead away from Him. God could have said, "You cannot be admitted to heaven unless you become perfect on earth." He could have said this, my friends. He is God. But He did not. He said, instead, "I will allow for the imperfections of My beloved created ones. I will help them by allowing them, if necessary, to complete this process of purification in the safety of My kingdom."

Purgatory is another extension of God's generosity. You will be safe there. In considering this as a possibility, you must rejoice. Fear of purgatory is unnecessary and inappropriate.

December 23, 2006

I read this wonderful, wonderful book *Left to Tell* about Immaculee, a young African woman from Rwanda who was hiding during the genocide in a bathroom with 6 other young women and survived. Her family except for one was massacred. She asked to go back to her village, having been saved by the French, and when she saw the man who slaughtered her family, broken, now a prisoner of her tribe's soldiers she was able to forgive him. Asked by the soldiers why she did that since he deserved hell, she, all of whose possessions had been destroyed by these enemies said "forgiveness is the only thing I have left to give." It is a stunning book.

Jesus: See what I can do? Please dear Ronda stop being afraid – there is nothing I won't do to help anyone to love others who prays for that.

Sweet, sweet e-mail:

Love you, love your work, love your web mini-talks!

Please continue your work and thank you for sharing yourself with us.

Merry Christmas and may you be abundantly blessed.

In Christ, Elizabeth Lowry

December 26, 2006

Carla Eaton, my twin-sister, sent me Elgar's Dream of Gerontius for Christmas as asked. I had worn my cassettes down playing it at all the family deaths for months over and over again. I love the exalted pathos of it. This time I was sure Blessed Cardinal Newman, who wrote the poem, must have inspired Elgar melody by melody since Newmanw as a musician. I thought "It is Newman's Jesus, that I love. This is Your song, Jesus.

Jesus seemed to reply: Your books are also songs of Me. Thank you. Please let Me sing a song of peace in your heart at this Christmas time. Just pray My name and look at Me as a baby in the pictures around you.

He also seemed to tell me: "Of course you feel that you can't be holy with your jumpy nervous temperament. You just have to see this with humility and call upon Me constantly to live in you, like St. Paul did. Who would have thought the St. Paul who arranged the stoning of St. Stephen would make it?"

December 27, 2006

Dear Paul, (I don't remember who this is, but the letter has relevance to anyone with his problems.)

I have been praying for the gift of counsel, but I am really not a psychological counselor but a mentor and philosophical counselor, also a prayer warrior. Also since my son Charlie committed suicide at age 19, I am traumatized. I cannot deal with others about that subject, but I can talk to you about despair in general: Here are some suggestions after praying for you about an hour. I would ask you to consider them even if they seem impossible for you:

1. Go to confession and go to at least Sunday Mass. (Maybe you still do)
2. I find truth is the best remedy for despair - either read the Vatican Catechism - you can find it on the web, or Peter Kreeft's Summa of the Summa slowly - if you disagree, dialogue with me about them.
3. Pray the rosary every day.
4. Go to the web to Recovery, Intl. which is for depression, anxiety and anger - they are free groups and surely there are some in Boston area. They were founded in the 1940's and operate a little like Twelve Step - free, except by donation. They helped me enormously with anger. I think you have lots of anger.

If you want to trust me enough to try any of the above, I think God will give me the grace to help you. Because of my son's death I will spend any amount of time to help anyone in despair, so don't hesitate.

Shalom, Ronda

December 28, 2006

Dear Jesus, Mary, Joseph,

At my suggestions and the desires of some of the strongly active pro-life people in the parish we had a special Mass of Reparation for abortion on the Feast of the Holy Innocents. Fr. Ken did it beautifully, emphasizing how this feast had fallen out of popularity but now has a new meaning. Others were planning to do the rosary and intentions but they had been sick during the holidays and didn't do it, so Father Ken quickly asked if he should lead it. I know he is not fond of our loud rosaries so I was surprised. In the biography of Mother Benedict Dus, foundress of Regina Laudis it mentions that she used to say she needed to meet the expectations of each sister. In a certain way Fr. Ken wants to "be all things to all men" because he wants to meet our expectations. I thanked him for making the sacrifice of saying the extra Mass. He said "that's what it's all about." Why do I keep forgetting that?

I was feeling such gratitude for him and for our friendship.

Jesus chided me gently: "Friendship is a necessity, not a luxury. You might not have survived here without him.

Carla Eaton recommended the film *Joyeux Noel* about French and Scottish and German soldiers during World War I having a cease fire and celebrating Christmas together.

I thought: in purgatory we will be stretched to really believe that good is stronger than evil.

Dec. 29, 2006

I saw a fantastic TV spot showing a young woman cast down by fear of her pregnancy and the video offering help in such a way that someone seeking an abortion might call the Pregnancy Line. I checked the web and it was a pro-life message with links to local pregnancy counseling centers that are pro-life. I sent a contribution to Pregnancy Line – Virtue Media.:

Here is another audio of mine I put on my new web: *Me Speaking #3 Healing of Envy* December, 2006

Envy! What a role it plays in many of our lives. It could begin with feeling a sibling got more love in the family because he or she was prettier, brighter, or more talented. In school, envy of classmates who were better looking, or stronger, or richer, or had greater ability in sports or academics, or the more popular. At work, envy of those higher up on the ladder or those more sought after socially, or those with more sex appeal. In Church life envy of those closer to the priest, or of the priest himself by those

who wished they had that vocation, family Christians envying the freedom of the singles; and singles envying the married and the parents. And, of course, we can envy those who seem more holy than we are as in “how come she thinks Jesus is talking to her specially? If He talked to people that way, it should be me?”

Think about the horrible feeling in ourselves when we envy, such as low-self-esteem in the area where we can't compare; bitter resentment that we don't have what the other does, admiration sullied by dislike of the one who is envied. Often there is a desire to find fault with the envied person, to run them down, or gloat over their failures.

One of my main areas of envy started with my unidentical twin-sister, Carla, a dancer, who was ethereal and graceful where I was clumsy with nervous jerky hand gestures. In later years I envied anyone with that kind of graceful beauty, such as certain women prophetesses in charismatic renewal who spoke with hands upraised in voices flowing with supernatural grace.

What heals such envy?

First, I believe we have to admit to our envy, no matter how shameful.

Secondly, we need to trace childhood feelings of being less lovable because not as good in some respect as someone else.

Thirdly, we should bring to Jesus our feelings of being less than another, our fear that He loves us less because we lack some quality another has more of.

We can ask Him to tell us how He loves us even if we feel inferior.

After we have let Him show us in whatever way He wishes that we are lovable, we need to repent of any ways we have hurt those we envy by gossiping about them, or tearing them down.

When we are healed we will be able simply to admire those with qualities we wish we had more of; rejoicing in being able to enjoy their gifts.

Here is when healing of envy began in my life. I was visiting a monastery of contemplative nuns. While waiting to speak to the Superior, I sat in the chapel and observed them one by one coming in for prayer, able to sit in perfect stillness, rapt in communion with the Lord.

I thought to myself, how can Jesus love such a fidgety wretch as I am, who can't sit still for more than 5 minutes. I will never be holy.

Jesus seemed to speak in my heart with these never to be forgotten words: You will never be a woman of that kind of peace. You are a Jewish convert and you carry the Jewish yearning for the Messiah. In the Church, your name is not peace, but yearning.

If you have any envy in your heart – why not try the steps I just suggested. May God bless you and help you to understand your own special loveliness.

Segment 4 Me, Speaking: “Self-Righteous Anger: Sending Others to Hell in a Hand Basket”

As most of you know, I have been studying anger management and relating it to Catholic spirituality for a long time. An area I struggle with a lot is self-righteous anger. Self-righteousness is tricky. Here are some helpful distinctions:

- Unrighteous anger - we are in the wrong but we blame others, or things such as computers, or even God.
- Righteous anger is good. It pertains to situations where we are angry at injustice and our anger is proportionate; not harsh, eager to right the wrong, and to forgive, such as Jesus anger at the Pharisees which didn't keep Him from reaching out to Nicodemus or to Saul, the Pharisee, after his stoning of St. Stephen!
- Self-righteous anger is anger for a good reason but is tainted by arrogance, harshness, and reveling in our superiority over those who offended us by their sins. When we indulge in such anger, we are probably eager to consign the offender to hell in a hand basket or whatever way would be even swifter! Examples would be anger against someone who rejects the divinity of Jesus or rejects the Church; someone who exploits me or someone dear to me; a spouse whose betrayal leads to divorce.

In situations such as these, here is what goes on in me:

- sorrow for the objective injustice and for the offending person who is wrong-headed or cruel;
- rage that I am unable to force the other to change;
- a burning feeling in my chest – a sort of emotional “heartburn” as toxic fantasies of their defeat course through my feverish brain.

Every time the Holy Spirit tries to remind me of the words of Jesus “forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us,” I mutter those words quickly, but then revert to a cycle of

- recalling the words or deeds of the offender
- gnashing my teeth, sometimes literally!
- and then rehearsing words of sarcastic refutation, plots of vengeance; or plans of disdainful rejection of the offender and withdrawal.

What I am doing with self-righteous anger is what Dr. Abraham Low of Recovery, Inc. for anger, fear and depression, calls trying for “a symbolic victory.” What does that mean? Well, because we don't have the power to win over someone such as the

defamer of our most cherished beliefs; or the exploiter of the weak, or the one who betrayed us personally; we want to defeat them in some other way. As Von Hildebrand writes, the self-righteous person wants to seat himself on the throne of truth and hurl denunciations. Less dramatically, this is done by condemning or ridiculing the offender in our conversations with allies. I cover my feelings of weakness to bring about justice by the superior feeling of being JUDGE.

When we have sent the offender in a hand basket to hell, symbolically, through denunciation in our heads or in our conversations with others, we feel powerful.

But only for a short time, because real power is not in hate but in love.

As part of His prophetic teaching role, Jesus did denounce the sins of others, but one on one he was always eager to forgive and save - even in the case of Judas.

I challenge myself and you, the listener, to make a list of old and present enemies: either those you hate from a distance such as politicians or those you know personally.

Then, consider:

Is my sorrow and anger helping these others to change?

- 1) What could I do that would help bring about change? We should never resign ourselves to evil in others if we can make a change for the better. Certainly, if everything else fails, there is always prayer. Walking away from a situation is also a form of change

but then we needn't spend time afterwards in venomous descriptions of the offenders.

- 2) Would greater forgiving love in Christ of each person, cast out self-righteous anger from my heart? Say a prayer for this blessing with respect to each person you are angry at.
- 3) Can I try to give up symbolic victory hot or cold in my thoughts and conversation?
- 4) What would be left if I let God cast out the anger in my heart: only sorrow and forgiving love?

December 30, 2007

I watched movie Joyeux Noel about French, Scottish and Germans meeting between the trenches in WWI to celebrate Christmas. Afterwards I thought I should ask Jesus about war.]

He seemed to say: I cannot prevent the consequences of worldliness in all its forms of power and greed but I can bring good out of evil as in the respites in the film.

December 31, 2006

Is Gregorian Chant the sound of trust?

Praying about the role Consecrated Widows that is starting. Had given myself a Jan. 1 deadline to see if the Archbishop wanted to advise me. No answer. But my sense is that Jesus wants me for this new thing (revived of course) of Consecrated Widows under the bishop, not to be sister in a community of consecrated widows. I think I am more of an individual, like Catherine de Hueck Dougherty or Dorothy Day, or Lily.

I am not part of a group of lights, but a single light on a candle stick?

January 1, 2007

More from Anne – Direction for Our Times

Jesus

I, Jesus, take delight in My apostles. I look into the world and see My friends, serving each other and growing in love and truly I experience delight. My friends, you will be well rewarded. The holier you become, the easier it will be for you to come to heaven. That is My goal for you, that you become so holy on earth that your death be a time of great peace and joy. How I anticipate the homecoming of each of My beloved servants. I plan for the day and prepare for the great rejoicing that will take place. You will be welcomed into eternity by a multitude of apostles, all of whom served before you. You will recognize your friends and family in heaven and they will assemble to greet you. Such joyous reunion. Such well-earned reward. My friends, your life will pass quickly, far more quickly than you can imagine. I speak to you today to remind and encourage you. I remind you that you are committed to Me, to My will. Begin each day remembering that you have made a commitment to serve heaven on that day. If you pledge your allegiance to God, you are on the side of God. If you are on the side of God, you are working against God's enemy. I want you to reject all that comes from the enemy. Be diligent about your time in silence and I will reveal anything that I wish you to reject or abandon. I draw you into My heart, further and further. There is always a need to advance. Today, I call you to make an even greater commitment to advancing in holiness. I will help you, of course. I will make your path even more clear to you. I come today to remind you of your pledge, but also to encourage you. I look into the world at this time and there is darkness, it is true, but there is also light and that light comes from your commitment to Me. The angels see your service and they rejoice. The saints see your service and they applaud. Our mother, Mary, sees your service and she is comforted. I, Jesus Christ, see your service and I experience delight. You are part of a team, My team. We are the team that brings salvation and we do that through love. In your heart I am placing a love for humanity. You will experience this love individually, for each person with whom you come in contact. This is how I experience love. I love all mankind and I do this one person at a time. You must do the same. Love those around you, particularly those in your family. Treat each person with dignity and respect because if people see that you are good, they will understand that I am good. Be at peace. I am with you in everything and your service delights Me.

January 4, 2007,

My baptismal feast. Elizabeth Seton, a nun widow, my beloved friend.

I am working with Anne Lassiter on the Widow series for EWTN. She is so much more empathetic and compassionate. I realize I am less empathetic because I am jealous of the widows whose marriages were better and therefore are grieving more than I did. I need to get healing on this. I was thinking that this made me less able to do the series.

Jesus: No. Because of your difficult marriage you threw yourself into My heart early on. This makes you able to speak survival to the widows and unhappily married potential widows who will watch. Let Anne carry the compassion part. That's why the Holy Spirit led you to choose her. Now, stop, don't rush along. Stop and bring to Me again your hurt at the problems in your marriage. I brought so much good out of that evil. I saved you from the pit of despair. Martin is trying to help you now from heaven. He understands his sins better and your sins of desperation and retaliation.

I realized I am envious of my sister's marriage!!!! This explains a lot of the tensions in relating to them as a married couple!

January 6, 2007

There are a few reasons I am writing to you, Father, (the head of the Retreat Center where I lived for several years):

As I slow down it is so clear to me in my prayer times how much your spiritual way is with me, even if only in the tiniest form compared to your version of it. Thank you. You once said about what to do all day - have your prayer times and then respond to what comes along! For workaholic "projectitis" types like me, that is so radical and I mutter this advice to myself from time to time.

Epiphany – Father Ken's sermon was about the many parts of the Epiphany scripture about the whole world being united by faith in Christ, as contrasted with our desire, often, to define ourselves by division – as in I am this color and they are not; or this race, etc. I thought of how I used to divide myself from the congregation on Sunday on the basis of they not being daily Mass Catholics (I mean those who could easily go to daily Mass but chose not to). But since being at St. Charles I am getting the grace to love to sit at Sunday Mass and revel in the faithfulness to Jesus expressed in regular going to Sunday Mass. I think this change comes from my spiritual friendship with Fr. Ken so that I see some things the way he might see them – an opening to other ways of understanding things. Maybe less critically?

Jesus seems to tell me: I love to see my beloved disciples at daily Mass, but I also love to see my disciples who come only on Sunday. You cannot know how many times during the week they lift their hearts up to me. After purgatory everyone will be with me every day for all eternity.

At the Hispanic Mass tonight they sung Silent Night in Spanish syncopated. I was feeling very tired and kind of glum and it amused and revived me greatly even though musically it is so weak.

Jesus seemed to tell me that I am tired because I am sharing in the family anxieties about work and finances right now. I have to give those anxieties to Him whenever they come over me.

Watching a film that none of us liked much at home this evening with lots of us joking about its defects, I enjoyed the humor and closeness.

Jesus: Stop trying to control everything in the house. I love everyone here and you will all help each other.

Since I am old I need to have Carla even more. Just seeing the “caretaker” helps. This is part of the new plan we are trying. It is good for me to humbly accept her help. She has a great heart for helping me. I was touched that she folded some of the garments that were mingled with her wash. I have never folded garments myself ever. It is good for a grandmother to help a lot and be helped a lot.

January 8, 2007

I bought some copper toned brown material in crinkle cotton which seems as close to sack cloth as one could easily wear for summer dress – got the idea while hand sewing it that I could be a penitent dedicated widow.

Jesus seems to say: “Identity” through garb is important. I want you to be happy in your dedicated widow image. Don’t over-analyze it. Do what seems good to you. That something makes you feel free, even in the sense of playful, is good when it comes to choices between good things. You are trying to do something symbolic to be liberated from the insecurity that goes into having to wear acceptable clothing to society, where you want your clothing, the Cross, the Miraculous Medal to be a statement. Look how much good the teens themselves and those who see them get out of wearing Catholic T-shirts.

I spoke to Fr. Ken about this and he thought it was right on, based on what he thought was the need to have varieties of expressions for this renewed vocation in the Church. It made me glad that he confirmed it since I am so aware of the role of self-deceit in life.

January 10, 2007

First day back at the college. Good warm talks with Pastor Andrew and others. The course evaluations from last semester were available. I was discouraged by some nasty remarks. About 1/3 disliked the course and gave it an overall rating of C or D but 2/3 liked the class and were between B and A. More A’s than C’s and D’s. Even though I know it was an experimental first time teaching these students at the college and that there were lots of rough spots, I felt bad and wanted to stop teaching after this semester.

Jesus: I wanted to flee from the Garden of Gethsemane. Offer the pain for precisely those students who rejected you. You have a lot of wonderful things in the course, inspired by the Holy Spirit. Try your new method this semester and don’t make any decisions to leave until you see how it is going.

January 11, 2007

Response to letter from a man who is into international business systems:

Dear Frank,

On the abortion is murder question and punishment: Since it is the doctor who performs the killing it was doctors who went to jail in the past, not the woman. I think punishment was lighter not because it was not thought of as killing the innocent but because of compassion for women in panic and guilt about sex outside of marriage.

On the missionary issue - Jesus said "go out and baptize all nations." He didn't just die for his tribe but for the whole world. If you read the missionary documents of the Church since Vatican II they are written to include respect for the truths in other religions but still conviction that everyone needs Christ. I like to say about this "How could you know Jesus and not want everyone to know Him?"

January 10, 2007

I saw young woman from class last semester who was suicidal. I had intervened to bring her to counseling and I pray for her every day. She looked great and said she was much better and responded to my hug. Deo gratias. Alleluia.

Jesus: Of course sometimes even when you pray I allow bad things to happen for my own reasons, but please have more trust that I can help.

At the swimming pool during visitors' swim there was an older woman talking to her friend: "Can you believe my husband is such a micro-manager he takes out the dishes I put in the dishwasher to wait to be full and re-organizes them." I thought this would be a good one for "retired couples" woes! (When telling this anecdote I find many say, well, of course, I do that also!)

January 13, 2007

Jesus: Don't be anxious about anxiety!

January 15, 2007

I wished I could hug every black person I saw today for Martin Luther King Day as if it were their feast day, but figured they wouldn't really like it if I did.

Father Ken was commenting on the idea of perfection in the words of Jesus, as in how could He grow in perfection as the Scripture seems to say. He thought perfection meant having completed the work He was sent to do. I piped in "so when we are told to be perfect He means that He wants us to become what He wanted us to be, to finish our work on earth?" "Yes," Fr. Ken said. I can't be without flaws, so I prefer this meaning.

Trying to explain about dedicated widow garb – in prayer I could find some reasons I haven't articulated too well yet:

solidarity with others who are dedicated to the Lord by a special dress even if it isn't a habit?

being, like them, more covered vs. sort of loose hippies dresses which seem too wide open.

It is appropriate, not scrupulous, even for an old woman to not want to look open to men if she is only open to Jesus.

Pastor Andrew loves having me come to the Lutheran services, even if I don't go to his communion, but I pray for the unification of the Churches. He seems to love my spirit.

January 20, 2007

There was a blue grass concert at parish. At first I just loved it. The loud music distracted me from my problems. I said to a friend: see there is more in life than my problems. But after about $\frac{3}{4}$ of an hour I could hardly stand it and just longed for classical music. Is it that popular music is too horizontal? If the words are religious, as in Gospel music, then I like it better, of course. Maybe classical music is a miracle, given that the other kind is so much more easily appreciated by the masses.

January 21, 2007

I love how at the Hispanic Mass they have the birthday children come to the center in front of the altar to be hugged first by the altar servers and then the family and the priest. How their specialness is in this way appreciated within the Church family as well as their own!

Jesus: be gentle with those you love who are suffering and gentle with yourself, too.

January 23, 2007

About my fatigue and digestive problems that have me so worried about the future, I think I am afraid that if I cannot go out to teach I will just fall into the quicksand of too much leisure.

Jesus: It would frighten you to know all the sufferings you will have before you die. I promise to make you holy. For the rest, trust and see what happens. Your trust in Me is more important than any happening in the future.

January 27, 2007

I felt gratitude for friendship of Pastor Andrew, Chaplain of Lenoir Rhyne College.

Jesus: See the bridges I told you I had put there for you to cross?

I came home and in spite of the usual fatigue after the long Friday ending with the evening Mass (so beautiful always and so consoling to see the indefatigable sacrifice of Fr. Ken), I felt as I was going to bed on the verge of a new breakthrough.

Jesus: I want so much for you to break through – interiorly to a much deeper trust. Let me do it in you. Your only agenda: Be Mine – Mine whether you are sick or tired or joyful. Sing My song all day.

January 28, 2007

Looking through gorgeous elaborate gift book called In the Footsteps of Jesus: Pilgrims in the Holy Land, hadn't noticed before that they had this droll way of describing the history of Jesus and of pilgrimages as if every picture was an illustration of a newspaper article such as DEMONIAC'S WITS RETURN and Pigs Jump to their Deaths.

January 29, 2007

I have a strange rebellious student – he wrote in his journal hand out about how he was reincarnated from a cow – wonderful, no one bothers cows; and then a mouse where he was alarmed that humans were so afraid of him and eventually was eaten by a cat. Presumably tongue in cheek but he was also sassy to me in class.

Jesus: He is lost right now. Pray for him and ask Me to cast out the demons.

January 31, 2007

I am reading Toni Morrison's book Love – entangled loves. A climax line is this: "Dreams are only nightmares with lipstick." Cynical but interesting in terms of fantasies of perfection that we co-dependents tend to indulge.

Jesus: Only My love can transfigure tangled human loves by bringing mercy and forgiveness when there is so much knotted love and hate – also the prayers of Our Lady of Knots.

February 1, 2007

The following is notes for a mini-talk:

I happened to be commending the young (to almost seventy year old's, like me, anyone under 50 seems young) manager of our neighborhood Eckerd's drugstore on the pleasant way he treats customers. He replied with a grin, "Well, sometimes I'm grouchy, but it's no fun."

I laughed at his nifty way to put it.

I rarely describe myself as grouchy. Usually I am either happy or furious. So, I wondered, it sure isn't fun to be furious.

Wouldn't I rather be having fun?

In Abraham Low's anger management program one of the phrases we are supposed to repeat frequently to ourselves is "anger is your worst enemy; humor is your best friend." Surely humor comes under fun.

So, let me take a typical event that makes me angry and see if I can transition into humor and fun right now, on the spot, as I compose this mini-talk for you.

I have a tall, handsome, sportsman student in one of my classes who clearly hates my style of teaching or the content, or both style and content. This he indicates by a yawn of sophisticated boredom or a sneer. Often he opens a book unrelated to the class holding it visibly in front of him while I am trying to pour my pearls of wisdom into his skull.

Enraging.

Between classes I plot suitable punishments for the young man's behavior, gnashing my teeth while doing so. Of course there is nothing wrong with constructive plans for insisting on better classroom manners. It is the gnashing of teeth I need to get away from. Would humor help?

How about laughing at myself for my vain wish that all my students would love and adore me as the greatest sage they've ever had the privilege of having as a professor? How about marveling at the brinkmanship of a student playing games with me at the risk of flunking the course if he misses most of the relevant instructions for what is wanted on papers and tests?

Ahem. So far this humor seems more bitter than side-splittingly funny.

Okay, how about thinking up a truly funny way to trump him next class. How about kneeling in front of his desk and begging him to pay attention to my wisdom lest he wind up unable to graduate because of this one course he forgot to make up after flunking it?

Or, starting the class with a prayer like this: "Dear Lord, please put directly into the heads of any students who don't like my teaching style, whatever truths You know they need to improve their lives."

Ha! Ha!

Sounds a little manipulative. Could put off a serious non-Catholic student who never conceived of mingling humor with prayer.

How about reading the Scripture passage where, after his beautiful sermon, they tried to throw Jesus off a cliff in his home town. And then add as commentary – "I'd rather you threw me off a cliff than just ignored my teachings."

Hard to pull off, I think. Could make the whole class think I am a melo-dramatic freak, not to mention so vain as to compare my speeches to those of Jesus.

How about just catching his eye when he walks in the classroom, smiling and waving at him. If I can't catch his eye I could call out when his name comes up on the attendance roster, "How ya doing?" and then wink if he looks up.

Jesus seems to say to me in my heart, “Ronda, you can’t laugh in a good way unless you love someone. Why not start with forgiving a student who might be so caught up in either error or despair that he has no room for truth or even respect for authority figures?”

I consulted other faculty and administration. More simply, they regard such behavior of a student as a violation of professional courtesy. I decided to pray a lot and apply the penalty in the syllabus of asking the student next time he acts up to leave the class with a 5 pt. penalty off the grade. With grace I was able to talk about the rules beforehand with sufficient emotional control and then when he violated them again to tell him to leave. He declared –“I will be the first martyr.”

It turns out he is rather well known for this. His advisor is going to talk to him about accepting the rules or taking a Drop/Pass in the course.

Later reading journals by other men and women on sports’ scholarships it is clear that many of them simply regard the purpose of college, not at all as the Mission Statement would have it, but simply as a sports’ arena. They get athletic scholarships and, more or less, the fee they have to pay is to sit in these core classes they have no interest in.

Perhaps we liberal arts profs are simply holding chairs in a cultural survival that has evolved into another form – sports and professional schools?

Jesus seems to say – “I love everyone. In these circumstances they can still be reached by philosophy courses in the framework of faith in Me. Most of them already love Me. So even though this mind set of many of them makes it harder, let the Holy Spirit work through you as long as it is possible. Try to see some of the sporty students who are so difficult, as “poor” in culture. Your cultural riches were a gift. Follow St. John Bosco and don’t let yourself feel superior because they make you feel insecure being big males who don’t understand your type. But they have good will because they love Me.

February 2, 2007

Mary: You were so pessimistic about family problems and you gave it to me and then when you came back from the college it was so good in the family in its own way. I am making your family into an affirmation house for those I want to heal. See how good it felt.. You can try to be the spiritual part of making the home a place good for people to visit.

Amy, a poet guest of my daughter was overwhelmed to have a birthday party – she never had a real one with presents and candles in her life in her specific circumstances as an adopted child.

February 4, 2007

Me, Speaking #5 Liturgy as Encore February, 2007

I took a new friend of mine, Amy, to a Mass. She was baptized in the Episcopal Church but not brought up to be religious. Watching her watching the liturgy, so familiar to me, I thought of this analogy probably because my priest is an organist and Amy is a cellist.

Suppose an organist started his daily practice each day with a favorite Bach piece and ended his practice with the same piece. Over time it would become “his song,” and he would never tire of it. It would become the framework of his time at the organ.

Similarly, the priest intones the words of the liturgy every day and on the weekend many times. He must experience it as God’s song. And think that if he sings it well enough to his tired flock, it will sing in their hearts as they go through their difficult week or day. It will become the framework of their lives.

I am thinking of a lovely way Catherine De Hueck Dougherty, of Madonna House fame, used to console the burdened. She would say, “everything happens between 2 Masses.”

The same might be said for the repetitious words of the rosary. Often boring for children forced to repeat them in family prayer, for devotees they become Mary’s song and we her choir.

After Vatican II there was a move to replace the simple rosary, thought to be said in too rote like a manner, with the Scriptural rosary, broken up on each decade and sometimes each bead with Scripture passages. I liked it at first, but then found it required too much effort. =I was relieved to read in the book of some psychologist of religion, that the rosary, like prayers in several other religions, is like a “mantra.” The purpose is not meditation on religious mysteries, but letting them soak into the unconscious. Isn’t that true of our favorite songs, whether they be popular or classical? We have taken in the meaning of the song so that at the very first notes the entire mood of it infects us with glee or hope.

Praying in tongues is much the same, especially singing in tongues. An interpretation helps but we don’t want to hear more and more elaborate interpretations or variations. We want the meaning permeating the melody to lift us into another realm – the kingdom of heaven.

I think of daily Mass sometimes as keeping one foot in heaven – especially so that the other foot doesn’t get caught in the quicksand of my often compulsively anxious thought patterns.

It is considered to be a sign of success if at the end of the concert the people rise to their feet and yell “encore.”

Our whole lives of liturgy and rosary and praying of the psalms – what are they if not encores?

In heaven, I imagine that musicians get to play along with their favorite composers. To extend the analogy – what will be our joy one day to attend the heavenly Supper of the Lamb?

February 6, 2007

Today I learned the shocking news of Peter's death – former son-in-law, father of 4 grandsons who live with me. Martin and I lived together with this family for many years. I loved him very much and prayed so much he could be freed from his alcoholism which led to his death at 53.

The next morning after the news, praying the rosary in the car with the boys Nicholas and I felt Peter's presence. Carla had a long good healing dialogue with him and "saw" him whirling around happy. Patricia Treece, my friend and god-mother of one of these grandsons, saw his grandmother and an angel with him at his death seemingly alone in his apartment in L.A.

Carla's friend, now mine, Amy, is our visiting poet, cellist, nurse. I taught her the mercy chaplet and the rosary. She loves it. Fr. Ken came over to be with the family about the death, and the boys opened up some also; lots of sharing on their best memories. Sign of how good it is to be a flexible personality type in these circumstances. I had a heavy planned agenda of how to deal with everything, but Carla invited Fr. Ken and said the boys were not ready to talk about their father, but then after more desultory dinner conversation they were. Carla will go to the Memorial Mass for his soul Fr. Ken will celebrate.

Feb. 10, 2007

I was upset about something in North Carolina and thought of escaping.

Jesus: Where are you running to? Everything is in Me. Quo vadis? Surrender.

Feb. 11, 2007

I had an insight at Mass about all these fantasies of flight whenever I feel blocked even on trifles. I thought I should try for Lent to give up fantasies and commit for a year to stay.

Carla thinks my fantasies of flight are a safety valve and I can't get away from it.

Jesus: When you feel hurt, rejected, try showing the pain vs. anger or rational pleas. I would curl you into a ball and bring you to heaven except that I know you want to do the last bits of good you can do on earth...so grin and bear all the uncertainties, aches and pains, anxieties, disappointments. I will bring good from everything.

At Mass, I meditated on poverty of spirit – I thought that fantasies of escape are ersatz riches.

Feb. 13, 2007

Carla loved the Mass for Peter and Diana said she would go every week if she had such a priest. All this was deeply moving, thank you, Jesus.

Some of the students seemed to have gotten a lot out of the chapter about excuses in my ethics book. Jesus told me I should not think in academic terms but of my work as ministry and witness.

February 17, 2007

I blew up a photo of Peter holding one of the boys as a baby – since no one could figure out which baby, it seemed like the copies I gave each to hang near their beds represented Peter’s “archetypal” fatherhood. These little things a grandmother could think of are so important to me and to them.

Feb. 21, 2007

Someone blew a shofar for Ash Wednesday and about 500 people were there! The choir did an Allegri-like piece that Fr. Ken and Peter, the choir-master composed. It was sublime.

March 13, 2007

Letter to my chairperson:

This is a very sad letter to write. I have tried 3 different strategies for reaching the largely Freshman students in that philosophy class. Nothing works in terms of making it seem good to me to struggle on for another semester in the Fall. I could give you 25 reasons but most of them you could think of yourself. I think, bottom line, that I am just not able to teach well when there is so much resistance no matter what the cause. I searched my soul and went back over my whole teaching career on this discernment:

I did great with hippish students of the late 60's because enough of them were seekers to make up for the party types. Then I went through about 13 years of misery trying to reach those party types.

I did great with seminarians for obvious reasons - they loved having their mandatory philosophy taught with a mix of spirituality and psychology because that is how they think.

I had fair success with grad students at Steubenville - a strong Catholic school, but not well with the undergrads who were the opposite of party types but so uptight they wanted only formulas not creative explorer type teachers, or so I analyzed it.

I did very well at the tiny college with seminarians and small classes of previous home-schoolers.

Now, at Lenoir Rhyne College, I am back to struggle and mostly misery.

After discussing this with my spiritual director, I am feeling that I don't want to teach the Freshman classes even though much good was done and some students were very responsive. I would be happy to try classes for majors and/or electives on a Tues/Thurs basis in the Fall if such classes should open up.

I regret the inconvenience to you of this change of plans.

Let me know that you received this letter. With prayer and sorrow, Ronda

Dear Jesus, I didn't get a clear word from You, only a sense that I should consult Fr. Ken who thought this was the right decision. I do trust that You will give me whatever would be good to do in the future instead.

Jesus: I am trying to heal you of this father wound where you think that God hates you unless you are doing things that are painful because your own father was a Stoic who wanted boys. Your father did love you and delight in your feminine traits but he couldn't show it until later in life. Remember he told you that you were such a loving person and he appreciated that.

Remember the Holy Spirit told you that holiness is having nothing but love in your heart – not resentment and rage, surely.

God the Father accepts your decision. Forgive the students for who they are. They can be saved without philosophy. I save, not philosophy, even your way of teaching philosophy with Me in the center. They do love Me and know Me.

Now make an act of forgiveness of them and ask pardon for your anger at the frustration of trying to teach them. Make the rest of the semester even more beautiful and loving.

Ronda: Dear Father God, You created all human beings, and only a small percentage to be touched by you through liberal arts, per se. I know you do reach them through great books and thinkers with truth and awe, but usually through beauty and truth itself as it comes in their lives. You know my desire to reach them through words and philosophical truths but I know You are going to be helping them without my mediation in Your own ways. Please forgive my anger at them. I offer now the frustrations of the rest of this semester for graces to be poured upon them directly. May none of them be lost and may I someday see them radiant with joy in your kingdom of heaven. Amen.

March 16, 2007

Fr. Ken talked in my class at the college. Some listened raptly who never listen to me! One student wanted to see our church afterwards. Tears of joy came thinking of how wonderful Fr. Ken is.

Jesus: Right. You are not a lone ranger. You need Fr. Ken and Pastor Andrew and Phil and Larry and Marianne and Bev and Karen and Doug. So, Ronda, you want to retain your link of Lenoir Rhyne College and enjoy the good part. I want you to just sit here in Church and luxuriate in the good around you, the beauty, the family, friends, the parish, the Trinity.

March 17, 2007

Fr. Ken gave a sermon about "I make all things new." He challenged us to think what that means for each of us right now. I think I don't need to dwell on patterns that repeat in the family, the school, but hope for newness in me as well.

March 23, 2007

I am feeling so confused about staying with the family or moving out to an apartment right next door to the Church. My daughter, Carla, thinks that I need to always have a fantasy about going to another place because the fantasy works as a kind of safety-valve.

Jesus: I don't want to tell you about the future because I want you to cling to Me so closely in prayer that it doesn't matter where you are. Please trust and pray every prayer with personal yearning.

March 25, 2007

I am doing an idea-edit for a book by wonderful woman writer, a Christian therapist, Clare Ten Eyck who lives far away in a different part of the country.

Due to lots of anxiety at this time, I rather suddenly decided it couldn't hurt to consult her professionally about my own problems. =These concern, among other things, the need to constantly fantasize about leaving my present situation with my dear family.

As I began the telephone therapy sessions my prayer was: Mary, help me to submit to Jesus as the Lord of my future. Blessed Francis Libermann (a saint who was consumed with anxiety), Karl Stern (a Jewish convert who was a psychiatrist), and Mary, Exalted Widow pray for me.

Here are some notes from the first session – not direct quotations, but my way of putting the insights Clare gave me sometimes in other words.

Spiritual warfare involves the devil attacking the weakest psychological place in us. Look at the anxiety attacks when they come to see what other emotions are going on.

I said I thought fear of rejection was predominant, but the next Monday I was anxious for a long, long time, about 5-6 hours without any rejection theme around that I could find.

In spite of lots of therapy in the past – over a 55 year period would add up to about 7 years put together from different times of crisis, Clare thinks that even though it is the same wound, God wants to heal me in a deeper way each time the wound opens. I need to believe this vs. just wanting to blame other people in the present crisis.

She asked when was the first remembered feeling of anxiety.

I remembered staying with grandma while the separation of our parents was going on. She suggests writing these memories in the third person to get more into how a child would experience it vs. a present day hind-sight analysis so I will start with that memory.

GRANDMA AND FIRE ISLAND

The twins were 8 years old. Carla and Diana (I changed my name to Ronda after the separation. Ronda was the name my father wanted to name me when I was a baby but my mother's choice, Diana, won out – I hated the name Diana because I was called Danny for short, a boy's name but ironically, after I changed my name to Ronda they called me Ronnie, another boy's name)

They had visited their grandmother and grandfather in their summer house in Fire Island before. But this time would be different because neither of their parents would be with them during the visit. On the ferry when their mother turned them over to their grandmother she said, "I'll be back to get you soon," but did not specify. She told them nothing about the reason for the visit being that Mommy and Daddy were breaking up. Both parents thought that having fights in front of the children was wrong. The children had never heard any arguments between their parents. They had never been separated from their mother before for even a whole day. Their father often left on business trips.

Diana felt anxious, therefore, at being parted from her mother.

She didn't like either of her grandparents. Her grandfather was a stiff old man from Colombia in South America – a Sephardic Jewish Mason (the Mason part she only found out decades after his death since it was a secret). The worst part about him was that he was a dentist and the pain of his ministrations was the worst she had ever known in her childhood years. Her grandmother was a loving woman but crazy and also a cleanliness fanatic. At all visits to her house, she insisted first on scrubbing the little girls' faces and necks and hands and arms and also combing the knots out of their hair. Also she tried to teach them little things about her Christian religion. Since Diana and Carla's parents were militant atheists they ridiculed Grandma Grace as being stupid and weak.

For these reasons, Diana felt anxious about this visit. She refused to eat some of the things her grandmother prepared. She felt compelled to learn the little song, Jesus, loves me, this I know but later in bed made fun of it with her sister.

NEXT MEMORY OF ANXIETY

After the separation their father moved to an apartment with his new wife and step-daughter about 10 blocks away. Diana and Carla moved with their mother to a house on the same block. Instead of the beautiful apartment on Riverside Drive overlooking the Hudson, they now lived in an apartment near Central Park. It was large but had mice and cockroaches. Their mother took a part time job and therefore was not home when they got home each day from school as she had been at the Riverside Drive apartment.

Ronda (name changed at her insistence), 8 years old, felt afraid to walk home because on the same block was a bully. He was an Irish Catholic kid, Johnnie, maybe about 6 years old but tough, and he liked to force even older kids to cross the street to the other side or he would threaten to ride into them on his tricycle. So brutal was the face of this little kid that both girls were frightened of him and felt they had to obey him.

They told their mother. She said that next day she would leave her job earlier and meet us at the corner and talk to the boy's mother. Diana felt sure that her powerful mother would be able to solve the problem immediately. The three of us walked down the street and sure enough the little boy appeared on his tricycle and told us to go over to the other side of the street. This was his side of the street. My mother started trying to reason with him. Out of a second or third floor window a large unkempt fat woman leaned out and yelled "Get out of here. Your girls must have been bothering my son."

Ronda was sure her very eloquent mother would have a good comeback for that. She was shocked when instead her mother suggested they cross the street and then suggested that in the future they should take a long detour and come home by a different route.

That made Ronda feel much more scared. She didn't want to walk blocks out of her way so she convinced her twin sister that they should run all the way from the corner to their apartment house, as if playing a game, so they wouldn't get anywhere near the kid.

Early Third Person Narrative involving sensuality:

Little Diana and Little Carla were 2-3 years old. (Their father always played classical music very loudly in the evenings when he came home from work. He especially liked sensual music such as Ravel's Bolero) After their bath they were used to coming into the living room and dancing around naked to the music. One evening their play became noisy and more boisterous than usual. Their father suddenly barked, "Enough is enough," and smacked them on their behinds. Neither parent had ever spanked them before and their father never spanked them again, which may explain this memory being so strong for both of the twins. Diana always thought Daddy had only spanked her, but she asked Carla who said it was both of them.

I tend, still today, to relate sensuality (nakedness?) with rejection.

Clare says that shame comes when we feel rejected for no reason we can fathom. So this could be a repeat of the feeling that my father rejected me for no reason. That he set me up to be sensual with the nudity and music and then spanked me.

This could explain my persistent syndrome of expected to be rejected by men just for being spontaneously me. I usually think they will reject me because I am sharp and argumentative as my mother was, but Clare thought that argumentativeness could have been the defense I threw up against my parents' sensuality and that of others.

Of course my intellect is also my gift but it could be refined by the intuitive feminine, Clare suggested.

Now, I am thinking that intuitive feminine is associated for me with sensuality and therefore I am suspect of it, unless it takes a religious form as in the much more physical charismatic prayer mode with the swaying and clapping and dancing and singing in tongues and laying hands on men as well as women.

When I woke up the day after the evening phone session these things came to mind in prayer:

Sensuality is also vibrancy which is a trait I share with the more sensual members of the family.

Jesus seemed to want to tell me these things:

“Since your mother made an idol of spontaneity, I thought you needed discipline through your father. I gave you the legacy of vibrancy, but I wanted it to be controlled so I used your father to keep you from living out the tragedies coming from the sensual in your mother’s life.

“But with the separation, My plan was for you to develop on your mother’s philosophical lines. Her love of you was tainted by the wrong sensuality but she gave you the warmth that you have by her strong love of you.

“I have used your sensuality to make you a vibrant speaker and teacher and a vibrant mystical Catholic. You are sealed in My heart and you don’t need to be afraid.

“With the bully on the street, I was there, so you weren’t hurt, just threatened. I sent angels to protect you in those streets of New York.”

In spite of all these beautiful insights and messages I had one of the longest anxiety attacks this morning after the session. Until typing this all up I felt kind of hopeless about the whole enterprise of digging this all up again. But now writing the words it seemed Jesus sent, I feel hopeful. I am thinking it would be natural to feel more anxiety having to remember all this again all in a clump.

Maybe this is my 70’s crisis?

March 27, 2007

Forgiveness of sensuality in the family and in myself:

Dear Jesus, I give you the pain the sensuality of others in my family caused me, offering it up for their journey through eternity or for their conversion on earth. Send the Holy Spirit to show me how their sensuality was related to weaknesses so that I can more easily forgive.

Forgiveness of:

Parents: Because without their sensuality I would not even exist to know and love You and all the other realities You created that I love.

My mother: Part of it was her way of compensating for her childhood deprivation from her own mother’s coldness. She was seeking love desperately from women and men through sex.

My father: Stuck between his own Don Juan father and puritanical mother he didn't know how to love daughters. He had hoped we would be sons, so he treated us like sons. I forgive him for not giving me a good start with men and thank you for the healings I got visiting him in his late life.

Myself: I forgive myself for seeking love through sex as a teen, desperate for approval and love from male figures.

I accept that because you use sex to bring new human beings into the world You have to give us such a strong sensual drive lest we be self-enclosed prideful Stoics instead of vibrant relational husbands and wives and pro-creators.

I thank you, God, for sending me all those wonderful pure men, my god-father, Dietrich Von Hildebrand, Charles Rich and the many priests who have fathered me so much in spiritual mentoring.

Thank you Jesus, for being my true love as a widow dedicated to the Lord, and all through my life as a Catholic by coming into my body in the Eucharist.

This exercise suggested by Clare left me feeling joyful, hopeful, and with new energy.

March 29, 2007

I got a good idea to do courses at my friend Karen's house, Lenoir Ryne, and the parish on SPIRITUALITY OF THE EMOTIONS. These would be very practical sessions – over 10 weeks once a week with a teaching and then an exercise they share about next time.

I think the fresh energy comes from the work with Clare.

I talked to a friend about heavy problems at a place I used to be.

Jesus: I want you to show compassion to each of your friends in their troubles but not to think you have to solve them. Focus on things you can do such as spirituality of the emotions. You are not good at mediation or diplomacy so you cannot help much except by listening and prayer. Don't get into needing to know what is happening in those on-going conflicts. It is all in My hands. I love each friend more than you do.

April 1, 2007

Session 2 with Clare

I told her my father said that he was not sure about having us but that mother wanted us.

Clare pointed out that we need the father for protection. It is his body that protects us. I have lots of reasons to feel unprotected – my father's leaving when we were 8. If my father had approached the bully on the block then the mother probably would have scolded the kid, but my mother wasn't a powerful protector in that instance. I added that since Martin got deathly ill, I didn't feel

him as being such a protector anymore – latched on to spiritual friendships with men to find protectors. I could forgive myself for that more than I do.

But I have had good male friends and priest figures who have been protectors in different ways.

My present situation isn't very secure. The qualities that were missing in childhood after Dad left are still missing, said Clare. Even if our security is in Jesus, practically we have to do certain things to provide safety for ourselves. It is not wrong to assess what will give me security. Clare says **GOD WILL DO EVERYTHING FOR YOU THAT YOU CANNOT DO FOR YOURSELF.**

If I felt really safe, I would not have to fantasize about other possibilities. I feel fragile. Therefore I try to find safety.

Clare prayed in tongues and gave the interpretation herself that Jesus will tie up the loose ends in a totally satisfying way. He will break the bondage through the generations, cut the cords, and set the whole family free. She saw a waterfall opening up and pouring down on the family.

April 3, 2007

Carla said that contradictorily I want to live alone and also have someone to talk to every minute!

True.

Jesus: I am using her to help you. Be not afraid. It is a hard time for you. Hold tight.

April 4, 2007

Ros Moss, my godchild, well-known from EWTN told me about her idea for an order of sisters. I felt attracted if wary.

Jesus: For now encourage her but don't leap.

April 5, 2007

I thought maybe Ros' order should have consecrated widows around it. She doubted that. She thought it would be hard enough helping older women to adjust to her community without having other options nearby.

My daughter, whose house I live in, but who is a lapsed Catholic, wondered why I would even think of moving in with strangers when she loves me so much. I said because I want to be with Catholics. That is the conflict. I want to be with Catholics spiritually but with the family for emotional reasons, especially because most others don't understand my personality, but also because I love them so much.

Jesus: I know your pain to have no one in the family who knows Me in the Church as you do. I honor your pain and I **WILL SAVE THEM ALL!** Do you believe Me?

Ronda: Lord, I believe, help Thou my unbelief.

Ros Moss was visiting. She says only Jesus can heal Carla, not me, and she needs to know it is Him when He does it by ruling me out.

During the Mass I strongly felt I should leave the family house and live nearby, still visiting and helping the kids in the faith, unless God sends me a strong sign otherwise.

April 8, 2007 Easter Sunday

I thought of all the good, especially the grandchildren and Amy that came from being with the family.

Worrying about the future, Jesus seemed to say “You have given your whole life to the Church, the Church will take care of you.”

April 12, 2007

I took the apartment adjacent to the Church. Carla is relieved I will still be nearby vs. moving far away and is willing to go with the plan for my taking dinner and swim, etc. with them every day.

I wanted a one bedroom but they only had a two bedroom on the ground floor. I am hoping to make the master bedroom into a hospitality room.

This evening after the decision was made Carla said maybe she'd like to try a small Mass once – such as the Friday Latin one, and then she sung the Salve Regina in Latin two times over! It was wonderful and seemed to show in some way that my leaving wouldn't impede spiritual progress.

I spoke to Clare, the therapist. She thought it was a wonderful decision to move, not coming out of neurosis. If one lives in a very tense place then it is harder to draw close to God. Spiritual growth she thinks takes place more in solitude.

I thought if God gave me a way out I should take it.

Clare said that in prayer she thought I need to spend more time with Mary so I can see how she is trying to mother me, and all the children miscarried and on earth. I could use the quiet prayer time to open myself to Mary. I could ask Mary to lead the prayer. She might want to do something new such as rocking me in her arms.

I thought that, of course, it is painful that my place of refuge didn't work all together as I hoped. Mary wants to be my refuge. Clare said I need to allow her to nurse me and take me through every stage of life.

Clare prayed in tongues. I felt the warmth of Mary surrounding me and recalled that Mary gives the Medjugorje visionaries hugs before she leaves them. Clare said she felt the presence of Mary tenderly embracing me. She heard Mary telling me “You will rest beneath my smile.”

Clare said she saw a large Jesus behind Mary in the rays of divine mercy pouring that mercy on the apartment. She had a sense that in that apartment I would be satisfied.

I could let the apartment be rather bare.

After talking to Clare I did feel as if Mary wants to be with me there in the apartment.

Mary: Yes, I do, my poor little Jewish Catholic philosopher, so zealous and so sad.

I thought I should call her Mother Mary.

Ronda: Mother Mary, lead me in prayer

Mary: Like Martha you are busy and troubled about many things. I want to bring you into my Son’s peace. Sit quietly in this chapel where He dwells and breathe us in, JMJ. Pray, Jesus, Mary, Joseph bring me peace...and stop scruples that offend against trust. You will be distracted. That’s all right. I am your mother.

Prayer of quiet came right away.

Mary seemed to tell me that it was not a mistake to have lived with the family. “There was much love and healing. But without much quiet prayer time, you cannot become peaceful. Put that quiet prayer first in the apartment. You are not too busy. Your angel will remind you. No strain. Pray “Jesus, Mary, Joseph, peace” silently during Mass.

April 15, 2007

Tears of joy at Maxi’s (my 4th born grandson) first communion with Carla there. I thought, the Church is my womb; the priest is like St. Joseph bringing Jesus to us. Each time He is born again in the Eucharist.

Carla said about the move that I shouldn’t feel badly. She wants her house to be a cave of refuge for everyone in the family where we can come for healing of stuff out in the world.

April 18, 2007 – I love walking over the Church before bed and early the morning. Truly my celestial living room.

April 20, 2007

Vigil of the widow dedication. See www.rondachervin.com under Widow Options for more about other consecrated widow ways of life.)

Jesus: Dear one, don't upbraid yourself about many ways you have tried to do this before and your whole mixed widow story. All along I have been your 2nd bridegroom watching, waiting, calling, embracing. You have always been mine and I am yours. Just rejoice in your dedication and we, myself, Mary and Joseph, will do the rest.

April 21, 2007 We had a beautiful dedicated widow ceremony. I like Clare's image of resting under the smiling Mary – my friend Karen found me an image of Grunewald's smiling Madonna on the web to put up.

DEDICATED WIDOW SMALL CEREMONY FOR Saturday April 21 around 11:45 AM

Fr. Ken: Ronda Chervin, daughter of the Church, what do you ask?

Ronda: I ask a blessing from the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit and the intercession of Mary, Exalted Widow and all the widow saints on my life as a widow dedicated to the Lord.

Fr. Ken: What is the rule of life you plan to follow?

Ronda: (with flexibility due to family or work needs)

Private promise not to ever remarry.

A simple life – giving everything away to the poor or pro-life I don't need as a necessity.

Daily Mass and frequent Confession.

Daily Rosary, Chaplet of Divine Mercy. Prayer from the Liturgy of the Hours and Office of Readings and other spiritual readings.

Silent prayer in adoration of the Eucharist or in my oratory at home.

Most of my time will be devoted to my family and apostolic endeavors such as writing, speaking and teaching.

Consultation on major decisions with my pastor who is my spiritual director.

Fr. Ken: (laying his hand on my head) I bless you, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as a widow dedicated to the Lord.

I felt very, very happy doing this with the widows who came to the workshop praying also and accompanying me back to the apartment where Fr. Ken blessed it.

April 22, 2007

Telephone session with Clare Ten Eyck:

Clare:

“Think of your home as like the house at Ephesus. Mary will be tremendously present with you. Every move you have made to different locations has added a piece. God uses each one. Each move gave you something. Ask yourself, where was God in each move and what was the gift He was giving you? How did He use you?”

At the new apartment immerse yourself in His presence. Let the Holy Spirit and Mary guide you in prayer as if you were one of the widows allegedly with Mary at Ephesus. Let her guide you moment by moment in your outside work.

With the students it is only because you are loving that any truth will reach them. Truth without love is not truth. John Paul II wrote that when you speak the truth it carries a blessing and when the heart is ready, the grace will come.

It is not wrong to just say to Jesus, “Here I am, help me.” That is poverty of spirit. Not just asking Jesus to save me from some mood because He wants me to get back to work quicker.

Bad moods? Enter into the moods and take them to Christ. Don’t just try to distract yourself.

Clare thinks I have to get into the feeling. Every feeling has a root so we have to go into it.

It is more difficult to break a family unspoken commandment such as my Nietzschean family code that you can only be joyful, than to break one of the real commandments. I am learning from a new friend who is obviously vulnerable that weakness makes people lovable whereas my family code is only smartness and efficiency is lovable. We are afraid that if we show weakness we will be rejected, especially in close relationships. We suffer more if close ones reject us than audiences, for instance.

Clare prayed in tongues. I heard Mary say through her tongue that this will be the best part of my life. She saw Mary singing joyfully that I am letting her serve me! She wants to minister to me. I will have an even more fruitful ministry, maybe like that of Corrie Ten Boom who did so much towards the last part of her life.

Now I will work on my assignment: “Every move (from place to place since being a widow) has added a piece. God uses each one. Each move gave you something. Ask yourself, where was God in each move and what was the gift He was giving you? How did He use you.”

May 3, 2007

I was taking Senora Magdalena home but realized my car was by my apartment. (Senora Magdalena is a Guatemalan grandmother who walks 3 hours from the house of one of her grandchildren to get to daily Mass, rain or shine! We daily Mass people take turns taking her home when she comes. We can’t know which grandchild she is visiting to know when she is coming since she doesn’t speak even Spanish but some dialect and couldn’t understand us if we called her). I invited her in to see my oratory and family photos.

May 5, 2007

I got all upset trying to figure out how to cut for the pattern of the blue widow dress. Someone who was going to help me had to do something else and I used the “s” word twice trying to get it right myself. She heard me. She was not alarmed, though she was afraid I was angry at her, but I felt despair thinking how bad I am to care so much more about the dress than about minimal politeness and refinement. Then, today I got so angry at a student who was protesting his well-deserved grade that I yelled at him to get out of the classroom – there were 2 other students there waiting to hear their grades. Feeling I was losing it, I desperately asked Jesus for advice.

Jesus: You are afraid of being vulnerable and then you lash out . Those who are vulnerable for any reason cannot overcome weakness very often of whatever kind. I allow you to become unable to control your anger so that you can also experience the humiliation of being unable to simply be what you want to be. It is not important to be efficient or even to succeed at many things. Experiencing My loving mercy is more important. Forgiveness is more important than efficiency. Learn this.

I thought, maybe I need to speak much less. Jesus didn't say no!

May 6, 2007

Jesus seemed to want to tell me “I have made you My bride but not yet the transforming union. This is why you still sin so unexpectedly. Hope, dear little one, I will melt, mold, fill and use you even more.

At confession for anger Fr. Ken said that I should let the energy of the anger fuel the thinking; gathering the response so that it is objective, listening to the others more carefully to see what is behind their words.

I made a visit to Los Angeles where my daughter, Diana, lives. I got to see her having her legal marriage blessed in the Church. Such a beautiful thing to see the love for each other they pledged, as the priest said, after so many years knowing each other's flaws.

I made a pledge that if Diana went to confession I would give up complaining and negative remarks. Even though I have not been “perfect” about this, I have been doing better. I think my guardian angel stops me from obsessing with complaint every day.

May 16, 2007

A very hard day. The nurse of the eye doctor put in a very stinging dilator. I got freaked and even though I was relatively calm, objected to her not warning me, I felt rattled.

Jesus seemed to say: I want your program Spirituality of the Emotions to be very strong so I am allowing you many examples from your own life of where you over-react. Also, you are forgetting My project to make you a saint. Giving up complaint will be a very important step. Now go to sleep early and “rest under Mary's smile.” Don't push.

When I woke this morning I felt Jesus' presence in the room and I started to sing "Oh one of these mornings, bright and early I'm gonna spread my wings and fly. Fare thee well, my darling, fare thee well." I related it to leaving this earth in death someday. Later I realized it was Ascension day.

May 17, 2007

Jesus seemed to say: See with My eyes. Do you see how people drink too much to deal with pain instead of turning to Me? Pray for them when you see this. I will be able to use you to help them when your heart is larger, filled with compassion instead of judgment. Let me widen your heart. I do this when you let Me. Open.

May 19, 2007

It seemed to me that some who drink too much do so because they don't know how to let out the pain in their hearts and that makes them heavy-spirited. I could be grateful that I am able to let everything out more even though that has its own shadow. I need to picture the people I am alarmed about someday in heaven free and joyful.

Fr. Ken says that in such situations one needs to remember the pain of the person who is taking a false path – and keep remembering this all the time one is in their company.

Tonight was the first time Fr. Ken brought Jesus in the monstrance to the chapel for Me to adore Him that way. (This Church does have formal Adoration prayer on Friday evenings. Having him in the morning each day was a privilege because I am a Dedicated Widow.)

During this time Jesus seemed to tell me: "You are used to being high power all the time. It will take you a while to come to peace. Putting your time with Me first will help. Yes, detach from worry about health and give as much as you can to the poor. (I found a Catholic doctor who seems to understand better that I don't want to pay for preventative things that might never come to pass). Each time you want to clutch things in time, open your hands and let Me loosen your grip, finger by finger. Are you not My bride? See how I am giving you prayer of quiet in My presence in Adoration and in the Church each morning to encourage you.

I decided to put my long quiet prayer time in the morning as soon as possible instead of shoving it in later when I am more tired and also to accept every suffering I will be sent for the rest of my life. I want transforming union not for my vanity but for the sake of the Church. John Paul the Great, Mother Teresa, pray for me. Several other people started coming the hour before the daily Mass each day. (Daily Mass is at noon in this Church) It was so sweet to be with them. Carrie who is so contemplative and can be absolutely still sits next to me.

March 20, 2007

Jesus seemed to tell me to get to know more of the parishioners. Right afterwards a woman I had seen and liked felt pulled toward my pew to say hello.

I am so glad to be just 1 minute's walk to the Church. I thought humorously: "My next door neighbors are the only perfect people in the world: Jesus, Mary and Joseph!"

When I come to pray in the morning to Church with liturgy of the hours sitting in a front pew, Fr. Ken is often setting up for the noon Mass before entering into his morning schedule. If I have a nice insight I tell him about it or ask him questions. I realized this is kind of a Catholic version of the rabbinical practice of the teacher and students in the Schul reading from the Talmud but lifting their heads to share ideas and questions throughout.

May 23, 2007

A Question of Being

Martina at 14 might in this way confront Steve-Daddy-God

(Martina is my youngest grandchild. Her father is an agnostic. I wrote this poem imagining this now 1 year old one day being a teen and asking her father these questions):

Why, Daddy,

when your perfectly equilibrated scales

never failed to weigh misery

greater than pleasure,

did you still choose to create me?

Why, Daddy,

when your perfect predicting eye

saw me one day flexing my freedom

to kick you in the teeth,

did you still create me?

Religious ones,

of course, would say
the beauty of my person
is worth any price of pain,
not to mention weighing in
your sacrifices
toward more joy for me
than youth gave thee.

Do you agree?

If you say yes, my sire,
will you say yes to your
heavenly Sirewho
suffered for eternal joy for thee?

No one liked this poem in the family. Ah, well. I liked it. It's okay.

May 25, 2007

Jesus seemed to say concerning fear of having offended Steve with the poem: "You cannot to be prophetic voice without offending others sometimes. Always try to speak the truth with love but if someone is offended apologize for any roughness on your part instead of being defensive and rejecting them. Mercy above all. But I, Jesus, spoke prophetically as well as mercifully.

Fr. Ken thinks the Holy Spirit, moving as He wills, could have come to the Anglos first in charismatic renewal in the '60's, but then used these gifts now more for the Hispanics. I thought about how we anglo-charismatics went from the Holy Spirit to Marian devotion, to Eucharistic Adoration and maybe in our workaholism we need Adoration more now. "Be still and know that I am God." The Hispanics, especially Guatamalan Indian ancestry Hispanics here in North Carolina, have a better sense of stillness and worship to begin with.

Fr. Ken had bells sewn to his bright red vestment for Pentecost. I thought that bells have little tongues inside and this would be a musical type of tongue – recalled Poe’s line “the tintinabulation of the bells, bells, bells,” that my mother loved so much.

Jesus seemed to tell me tonight: “You make life harder than it has to be because of anxiety. As you put being with Me first you will gradually be less anxious, for you will value your work and the reactions of others less. You need to do this to prepare for heaven where you will not work as such.”

May 27, 2007

Jesus threw me into prayer of quiet. “If I could teach St. Catherine to read I can teach you to relax!”

The message is to speak much less.

May 28, 2007

Psalm 5 “But I through the greatness of Your love, have access to Your house.” Wonderful confirmation of spending lots of time in the chapel praying.

Jesus seemed to say, “See I brought you here. Please trust Me.” I loved the spray of red chrysanthemums in front of the altar for Pentecost, like tongues of fire.

At RCIA Fr. Ken said you can either go to Mass full of yourself trying to fit God into yourself or you can come to Mass to go into God. I thought I need to come before Mass and be more silent. Fr. Ken says that those who long for silence before Mass might be closing off to the community just as those who talk too much before Mass might be closing off to God.

May 31, 2007

After a visit of Fr. Ken to our family dwelling I mentioned how intense our family is. He thought that the intensity is good, challenging!

Jesus seemed to say: You don’t have to figure everything out. Just be loving and watch what I am doing.

June 1, 2007 Locution to Anne of The Returning Jesus

Jesus

Heavenly consideration is the compass which will insure a true course for each apostle. In every situation, consider heaven’s goals for you and for those around you. The apostle who gives thoughtful consideration to heaven’s goals will be known for speaking less, rather than more. This apostle will make decisions in My company, aware of My goals. I would ask each of My apostles to practice this today. Move into your day gently, aware that I may wish to adjust your course several times. You expect one thing, perhaps. But I, your Jesus, may need something else from you. You are committed to a certain plan, perhaps. But I

your Jesus, may have chosen a different plan altogether. Only with thoughtful consideration will you be alert to My will in each situation. Apostles, you have been prepared to serve in the manner that I require you to serve. You have been taught many things about holiness. If you are humble, you are aware that there are many things still to be learned about holiness. If you are humble, you may protest, saying, “Jesus, I am not ready. I must become holier still.” I understand your weaknesses and struggles. I do not fear the limits of your humanity. I have factored your weaknesses into the plan I have for you. You should never be afraid that you lack the holiness to complete the mission that I have willed for you. I will make you holy if you proceed according to My directions. You shall have all you need. Please begin to use all that you have been taught. Begin to see others as I see others, in need of love and tolerance. You have been taught not to make judgements. Do not make judgements. You have been taught to spend time in silence. Spend time in silence. You have been taught to trust Me. Trust in Me now, today. You have been taught not to be afraid of the future. Do not fear the future. Dear apostles, you have been taught to pray. Pray. Now, today, every day. Pray. Ask Me for mercy for this world. Ask Me for conversion graces for this world. Ask Me for the Spirit of truth in such an abundance that all eyes will be opened to God’s truth. My beloved faithful apostles, I want you to use everything you have been given to serve Me so that others may be saved. I am with you. I will direct you in each moment. You must be at peace so that others can learn about peace. You must be calm so that others can learn about calm. Do not underestimate the power of setting an example of heavenly consideration. It is this consideration in each apostle that will ultimately allow Me to reclaim a multitude of souls for the Father.”

Everything Jesus allegedly said in this locution fits so well with what He has been telling me.

I had a wonderful healing incident with a friend and mentor. I was having anxiety attacks because I thought I had to confront him on something and was worried that if he didn’t accept what I suggested he would reject me for pushing him. This opened up the whole father wound and also the rejection of so many at Loyola Marymount because of my strong magisterial teaching stance. Now, with this relatively new friend, I knew he agreed on the teaching I wanted to give, but not necessarily on strategy for parish ministry concerning that issue.

After many hours of anxiety I got to talk it over with him and he had even broader plans for accomplishing my goal. I told him about how afraid I was of rejection from him and he laughed loudly and said “how could you think that? You’re crazy.”

It was such a strong proof of how right Recovery, Inc. is with the tools “people are not transparent.” and “feelings are not facts.” Here I was, “imagination on fire,” picturing disaster for this treasured friendship and there was not a speck of truth in my predictions.

I felt a little humiliated that my friend had to see once again what a pathetic insecure person I am, but more than that I felt enormous relief and joy in his love for me just as I am.

Thank you, thank you, thank you, Jesus, Mary and Joseph for this grace.

June 5, 2007

Jesus: If you speak less it will be easier to be more sensitive and not make mistakes in being unloving by blurting out truths without thinking of how the listener will receive it. Ask your guardian angel to remind you.

June 6, 2007

Meditation group first meeting at Lenoir Rhyne College

Jesus: I want you to enjoy me together in unity and to share from the heart. That is always good.

June 7, 2007

Jesus: It was a good day. Many graces and good encounters. I want others to give you help such as Carrie and Dorothy. I know how hard you try to improve. Be of good cheer. We are with you every moment. Now be carefree.

June 8, 2007 Office of Readings Friday, 8th Week in OrdinaryTime from Gregory on Job p. 314.

“A weak minded person is frequently diverted towards pursuing exterior happiness when the breath of popular favor accompanies his good actions. So he gives up his own personal choices, preferring to remain at the mercy of whatever he hears from others. Thus, he rejoices not so much to become but to be called blessed. Eager for praise, he gives up what he had begins to be; and so he is severed from God by the very means by which he appeared to be commendable in God.”

(If we strive for good but get ridicule) finding no resting place without, he cleaves more intensely to God within. All his hope is fixed on his Creator, and amid all the ridicule and abuse he invokes his interior witness alone. One who is afflicted in this way grows closer to God the more he turns away from human popularity...pours himself out in prayer, and, pressured from without, he is refined with a more perfect purity to penetrate what is within...it is united within to one who hears from on high because it is cut off externally from the praise of men.”

June 17, 2007 to May 11, 2008

(Note: Originally this part of my journal I entitled One Foot in Eternity, but since now I have “kidnapped” this title as 6 Feet in Eternity for the whole compendium of journals, I will add put this part into Full Circle)

June 17, 2007 Beginning Adoration M-Th an hour before Mass.

Jesus”: I am drawing you inward to Me now and weaning you from everything else, even the beauty of the ocean. All this (beauty you can’t have now) will be in eternity for you. I am separating you a small distance from the family. You love them and they love you but you are not to think of them as soul-mates. Now steep your soul in us, your holy family. Rest.

June 18, 2007 - They ran out of toilet paper in the house of my family. I got very upset but didn't show it too much and went out and got a package of 6 rolls and brought it back as a BIG GIFT.

Jesus: I have to laugh with you, my dear, when you get so fussed up about trifles. Your daughter is trying very hard to make things better but sometimes she is too over-extended to take care of some things that matter a lot to you. When you get into such a snarly reaction, please laugh and offer it up for their souls more quickly. You need to laugh a lot more instead of making everything into a tragedy.

June 21, 2007

I told the Recovery, Inc. group about the family example and they laughed and laughed and it made me feel good that they laughed.

June 25, 2007

I wasn't anxious about men in authority so much before Martin's death because I had him as my security and "tough guy."?

June 23, 2007

My friend Carrie, a bit older than me, said that at some point we see that we are on our own personal exodus from this world.

June 24, 2007

I went to the Hispanic charismatic prayer meeting and put in a kind of fleece that if they let me address them with a kind of witness talk, then I would keep coming but not if they refused. They agreed and I got to talk to a leader who wants to be a deacon one day but then the meeting went on too long and they said to do it next week instead. This made me want to give up, but then the next morning one of the young women told me she was assigned to translate for me next week, so I realized they did want me to speak to them. I am too impatient, giving up too easily. I asked Jesus and my guardian angel to guide me more closely.

I realize that the Hispanos have a sort of John the Baptist way of preaching to try to break through the terrible apathy of people, especially the youth.

Jesus: The Holy Spirit will bring things out through you as a bridge but not necessarily what you want. I want you to make a leap of faith and let me harvest what comes from what you say. I can touch many hearts and minds through your boldness even if some cannot understand your ways. What is there to fear? Think of St. Paul. I have made you a strong woman, stronger than you think. I use (your) fear so that you will be a little more meek and therefore better received.

June 26, 2007

Adoration Prayer:

Me: I am so emotional. How come I test out on personality charts as equally a thinker?

Jesus: I gave you a good mind as a brake on the suffering you would have without it.

He also told me that He was glad that I have friends in the parish such as Dorothy of the great sincerity and Carrie – so contemplative and Bonny’s lovely voice and smile, and Amy’s sense of humor even in travail.

He doesn’t want me to waste time on comparisons, just ask for the beautiful gifts you see in your friends.

I keep getting ideas about an association of dedicated widows. Jesus seemed to say “I said you shouldn’t join anything, not that you should not found anything.”

June 27, 2007

At the LRC meditation group we pondered St. Cyril on Mary’s title as Mother of God. One of the group probably doesn’t accept that title. I thought if she is only the mother of His humanity it sounds as if he had multiple personality disorder! Then an analogy came to me: Even though parents pro-create and don’t exactly create the souls of their children a mother wouldn’t say “I am not the mother of John, only the mother of his body.” The parent is the parent of the whole person.

I also thought for myself that since God, not the devil, created my body I should be kinder to it and also accept my aging body with all its woes and see that offering physical pain is as valuable as giving a workshop.

June 28, 2007

My pastor is so healing because he combines beauty of soul with love of the heart whereas others have beauty of soul but more coldness of heart and others have love but it is more smothering. I suppose he would not think of his soul as beautiful, as such, but yearning for beauty of soul is part of beauty of soul as in the Augustine quote he likes so much about yearning to pray is prayer.

I was wondering why Fr. Ken didn’t announce to the whole parish that we have adoration now. I thought he wants to see how it goes. He agreed that was the reason. Since he has such a virtue of prudence he thinks more in terms of process whereas I want to race to closure. Of course prudence and process have to do with rhythm which he senses as a musician.

I should pray for more prudence vs. urgently needing immediate responses to everything.

Jesus: All of creation is process, otherwise there would only be God. I brought you here so that Fr. Ken’s virtues could anchor you and give you more peace and less restless need to flee.

First Spirituality of the Emotions in the parish. 25 came. There was such love in their faces for each other during the sharing part! It went beautifully.

Jesus: Of course. Do you forget that I love you and want to use you for others?

June 30, 2007

I got to give this witness at the Hispanic charismatic meeting: My being a dedicated widow, a charismatic since 1969, and that in the beginning we were mostly Anglo and few Hispanic charismatics but now much more Hispanic. I told them “You are the future of the Church.” We Anglos have many good things but you have more children and therefore more sacrifice and holiness. I told them how we Anglos are less now because of abortion and contraception, such a great sorrow. And that I am studying Spanish to come closer to them, also about my free room in my house for guests they could bring, for dedicated widows and also for the Hispanics in the parish. (Later one of them said that in their community they take care of all their own and they don’t need my room!)

They clapped when I said they were the future of the Church.

Jesus: I don’t want you to be so pessimistic. If I give you an idea, try it, and in some way it will bear fruit. A prophetic voice does not mean controlling what will come. Follow the Holy Spirit more freely with trust.

I am now the proud owner of two cats: Conchita and Felix – un-identical twins (named after the widow saint Concepcion de Armida (Conchita was her nickname) and her priest spiritual director)

The female cat is a calico, long hair, and he is grey and white long hair.

And they have just arrived and are taking their first smelling tour of my apartment.

They are very sweet and I hope I will be a good mother to them.

July 1, 2007

Jesus: See I have your life now in a good balanced pattern. Be grateful and now rest, carefree, please. There is nothing you have to do that is hard and we are with you. “Love and do what you will.”

July 3, 2007

Fr. Ken and Ben, the seminarian intern came to dinner with the family. I was worried about arrangements involving Ben’s allergy to cats, etc. and got all glum about the visit. Ben’s sharing of horrible traumas of his past life was so good to hear both to know him better and that the former Catholics in the family and future ones should understand how great grace can be in healing the past.

Jesus: “I told you so! Please trust Me more. Please!

July 5, 2007

Recovery, Inc. tool I hadn't heard before: "WHEN OUR WILL TO EFFORT IS GREATER THAN OUR WILL TO COMFORT WE GET BETTER." Wow!

July 6, 2007

At the Eucharistic Adoration and Benediction Friday nights, Fr. Ken dons a full white vestment and carries the monstrance in procession around the Church into the aisle passing each adorer. I think he says prayers for healing for us as he does it. With his long beard and slow procession he looks like a medieval hermit. I think that my low blood sugar after years of high blood sugar with diabetes is a grace from these prayers.

I thought of starting Legion of Mary door to door here.

July 5, 2007

Concerning starting my own group of Consecrated Widows, I had written to the diocese about it. They sent back lots of questions.

Jesus: I want you to be at peace more than I want associations. Think of St. Faustina who I told her order would begin before she died but it didn't, except in germ. I want you to put it in outer boundaries and with My help stop the racing thoughts and now just respond to Sr. S. and/or the Bishop's openings. You don't need to know. At EWTN when you describe your way of life some will be inspired. Widows will be inspired who don't do anything like trying to be consecrated widows or become part of an association or any group. They may just decide to go to daily Mass. Ronda, you are not the Holy Spirit. Let Him work with the openings we arrange. Now rest your feverish head in the lap of My mother and rest under her smile.

Maxi is being trained to be an altar server. I mentioned that he needed to make the sign of the cross more reverently at Mass. He must have taken it to heart because when showing off to me how he could do a cannonball into the pool today he made the sign of the cross going down!

July, 2007

I am reading about God destroying Sodom and Gomorrah. Even though we don't think exactly in OT ways about God, I think God certainly empowered the allies to stop Hitler. But then as we became more and more powerful our history started looking more like how successively Greece, Rome, France, England, Germany, became corrupted by power each with its own specific flaws of character, a la St. Augustine's theory in The City of God. Our flaw I think is because of affluence. As in aborting babies often because of wanting to succeed in the world instead of having more babies at a given time.

I happened to listen to parts of the opera Boris Gudonov on the radio. It led to a whole line of thinking about how history is really tragedy, but because we were brought up right after WWII we tended to think that our history was not tragedy but victory. I thought and thought about this.

Jesus: I am the ONLY Way, Truth, and Life. The only way out is up!"

(The Ascension and the Assumption as archetypes of this!)

(I sent the gist of this to a few wise and Christian friends and this answer is the best so far from Gabriel Meyer, writer and journalist):

"Yes, I, too think that postwar American culture largely blinds us to the essentially tragic nature of history. As Newman says (darkly and unsparingly), "Everything in this world finally disappoints." There is a positive way to look at this, viz., that since our nature is made for God, only He can finally and adequately (or better, sufficiently) address the fundamental desires of human beings. All other things, even the best (love, art, beauty, etc.), are created to be appreciated, and received gratefully, but, in the end, reveal their radical insufficiency as ends. All created things are doors, opening onto the greater reality they suggest, but do not, indeed, cannot embody, and to which they invite. That, again, is to say that history is tragic because:

a) it, as human enterprise, is destined to fail (the apocalypse); in the end, God comes to save us from history; or, better, to reveal history as a drama of salvation;

b) it never fails to be paradoxical: victories are always simultaneously failures, failures contain their own victories, etc.

"Which is, again, to say that history is partial, never whole.

"The terrible truth, of course, is that this knowledge never permits us to refrain from acting in it decisively, and often sacrificially, as Jesus did (e.g., the last emperor of Byzantium in 1453, sacrificing himself to save his people even though he knew that the Ottomans would likely win and that his empire was doomed.)

"Like you, I think that unwillingness to sacrifice is a key element in the failure of contemporary western society, and its current crop of ills. We want to be the world hegemon and have the perks associated with that, but we want our wars to be short, decisive and bloodless (for us). This attitude, of course, is itself a sign of corruption. Hegemons, by nature, are called not merely to power, but to sacrifice -- committing life and treasure to the defense of the defenseless and to the imposition or restoration of order."

July 8, 2007 It is darling Martina's 2nd birthday. We had a beautiful celebration as Carla always makes it. What was especially sweet was the love on the faces of the boys and Steve and Carla and Amy.

Jesus: They (Carla and Steve) are suffering so much (trying to stop smoking) – be very gentle with them.

(They went back to smoking then, but now in 2013 both of them have given it up, Carla for many years with the help of the e-cigarette and Steve with will-power – of course graces he doesn't believe in but I do.)

July 9, 2007

For years I have been fantasizing and plotting how to wind up in an old age home that would have the Eucharist and interesting conversations both. Well, my parish now, with Adoration and many deep and interesting people to talk to, most of them around my age, is really a form of this and cheaper, too. I don't have to organize the building of it or administer it!

July 11, 2007

I met a parishioner whose son of 11 drowned in a pool. I had been trying to find the family to see if I could help them in their grief since I know what it is to have a son who died. I told him that my manuscript Weeping with Jesus was an e-book and he grabbed onto that more than to the offer a visit by me. He read 50 pages in one evening. How wonderful that God is using my writings now more and more. Amy said that she thought that my writing is my true self, even more than me in conversation where I can seem more gruff. Probably so.

July 12, 2007

Jesus seemed to kiss me on the forehead because of the link with the father of the drowned son and others in the Spirituality of the Emotions group. This particular image came many years ago, shortly after Charlie's death. I was on a long car drive to the ordination to the priesthood of a friend. I took a nap and during that nap had a mystical dream of Jesus kissing my forehead and leaving a triangular white mark invisibly, such as one might find on the forehead of a stallion. From time to time the same image comes.

I also got a word that when people are very broken God wants to help them through us, but still they have to face the limitations of human love just as everyone has to and eventually come primarily to God for that healing.

July 13, 2007

My second session in the parish for Spirituality of the Emotions went wonderfully. I was so scared there would be people coming who were uncontrollably emotionally disturbed. Either they are on medication, which I am told is excellent for some people, even if medicines can be abused and bad for others, or God's grace descended, but they are getting the idea of analyzing daily life in terms of trying to reduce negativity and they like the prayer being part of it. I managed to write the drafts for all 7 sessions, and the next five audios will come all together this week.

My plan is to work on one emotion at a time. Yesterday a friend came over –(mother of 12!) now dealing with the empty nest - and our conversation raised to consciousness a lot of rejection feelings I had from a group of highly scholarly people who don't understand my "touchy feely" methods. So on the spot we did a phenomenology of feeling rejected by critical people. What emerged the most was that emotional health means that we value our own and God's approval and worry not at all about the approval of others. Of course if we had rather critical parents we will feel the sting, but we have to bear that sting and then lift it to God and let Him give us love.

A spirituality book I read had this provocative line in it:

"Most people prefer to be deemed lovable than to experience love itself." Is this an explanation for why workaholics like me often choose projects over quiet prayer time?

I thought some more about this. It's not that simple. There is nothing wrong in itself in wanting to be lovable if that means lovable because of being a good person with lots of love in me. In heaven all we will experience is love and being loved but here on earth many of us are called to be more active and have our minds on doing good and then feeling good that others think we are lovable. This might require a lot more thought than I want to give it right now.

July 14, 2007

Jesus: You can still do lots of things in one day but then you become rattled. Plan for less if you want to keep in peace.

July 15, 2007 Feast of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel. Mary seemed to tell me that when I rock (doven-ing in Jewish worship) while I pray, it is she rocking me in a cradle, so to speak. A very comforting image.

There was a glitch on getting my messages on the web. I was less upset than usual.

Jesus: Good. You don't get so upset as you used to. All these projects are good, but see, my mother's only project was Joseph and Me. For you that means don't worry about success and follow up on projects. Have faith that I can use you in many different ways.

Me: This would mean surrendering Spirituality of the Emotions, Association of Widows, Deacon Candidates and their Wives, and all these projects to You. I understand that you want me to do them quietly but not to clutch on follow up plans for fear I will have nothing to do and everything will dry up. There will always be the journals and, Jesus reminded me, if I become a saint people will read those journals! I think He was amusing me with this proviso.

(Funny to read the above paragraph about journaling being also there at this point where my main occupation at 80 is editing these journals!)

Two little children came into the chapel during Adoration with their mother to light candles. I greeted the mother.

Mary: You can greet all mothers the way Elizabeth greeted me. That is a little pro-life deed for you.

July 19, 2007

Metaphysics of Priesthood

A good priest IS his priesthood;

in time, less and less non-priesthood.

He wears his soul on his vestment.

His people feel they know him well;

Though he talks little about himself,

For more and more his self-revelation

is word and sacraments.

“Not I, but Jesus lives in me.”

Jesus says:

“Behold, my beloved son,

In whom I am well-pleased.”

I was reading a book about Sarah Web Rice, a black teacher, servant and ministry woman. It was an oral history book.

Jesus: See all the goodness in her and how I helped her in spite of her sins?

July 21, 2007

Jesus: You will have peace when you realize in depth that it is not you but I who am the Savior of the world, including the savior of you!

July 22, 2007 Feast of St. Mary Magdalene

Jesus: I could make a saint of Mary Magdalene, so surely you don't need to think your sins of the past stop me.

July 26, 2007

Even though I generally hate Philip Roth's porno novels, I read this one, since highly recommended, about his trip to Israel. Here are some marvelous quotes from Operation Shylock (p. 332 ff.) on Jews and conversation:

Jews among Jews are famous for "angry disputes, verbal abuse, malicious backbiting, mocking gossip, scoffing, faultfinding, complaining, condemning, insulting – the blackest mark against our people is not the eating of pork, it is not even marrying with the non-Jew; worse than both is the sin of Jewish speech. We talk too much, we say too much and we do not know when to stop. Part of the Jewish problem is that they never know what voice to speak in. Refined? Rabbinical? Hysterical? Ironical? Part of the Jewish problem is that the voice is too loud. Too insistent. Too aggressive. No matter what he says or how he says it, it's inappropriate. Inappropriateness is the Jewish style. Awful. (from the thoughts of a Chasidic Rabbi Chofetz Chaim: 'For each and every moment that a person remains silent, he earns a reward too great to be conceived of by any created being.' "Grant me that I should say nothing that is unnecessary and that all my speech should be for the sake of Heaven." ...when a Jew is as angry as you are, there is almost nothing harder for him than to control his speech. ..Where did the Jew get it in his head that he has always to be talking, to be shouting, to be telling jokes at somebody's expense, to be analyzing over the telephone for a whole evening the terrible faults of his dearest friend?

In his old age Chofetz Chaim extolled his deafness because it prevented him from hearing (that kind of Jewish speech). According to Chaim making derogatory remarks (called *loshon hora* (Yiddish?) about others even in jest, even without mentioning names, even if it is common knowledge, about relatives, about in-laws, about children, about the dead, about heretics and ignoramuses and known transgressors, even about merchandise is all forbidden even if someone speaks badly of you. Otherwise all you have is "everyone feeling wronged, being hurt, bristling at insults and slights, everything everybody says taken as a personal affront and a deliberate attack. "Between Anti-Semitism on the one side and *loshon hora* on the other, being squeezed to death is the beautiful soul of the Jewish people."

Back to Roth's character who says (p. 21) "The conflict is not just between Jewish people but within each Jewish person. "Inside every Jew is a mob of Jews. The good Jew, the bad Jew. The new Jew, the old Jew. The lover of Jews, the hater of Jews. The friend of the goy, the enemy of the goy. The arrogant Jew, the wounded Jew. The pious Jew, the rascal Jew. The coarse Jew, the gentle Jew. The defiant Jew, the appeasing Jew. The Jewish Jew, the de-Jewed Jew. Is it any wonder the Jew is always disputing? He is a dispute, incarnate! Is it any wonder that he is always talking, that he talks imprudently and impulsively and thoughtlessly and embarrassingly and clownishly and that he cannot purify his speech of ridicule and insult and accusation and anger?

...They came to Freud, the talking Jews, and what did Freud tell them? Keep talking. Say everything. No word is forbidden...and to Freud they spoke such *loshon hora* as was never heard from the mouths of Jews since the destruction of the Second Temple."

July 30, 2007

Mary: Every time you think of someone's unloving faults, stop and pray a Hail Mary for that person.

July 31, 2007

I was expecting that as we got closer to the Presidential election there would be more tension in the parish over the abortion issue in relation to candidates. Sure enough, I got into a debate about this yesterday.

I realized it was a Recovery, Inc. example, especially in relation to the concept of needing to accept the averageness of other people vs. projecting ideal situations of perfect agreement and basking in the truth with others and then being outraged when that cannot be achieved.

Here is how I analyze the averageness of this conflict:

It is average for many Catholics to distrust Republicans, identifying the Democratic party with compassion and thinking Republicans are hard-nosed capitalists, etc. etc. And, of course, some Republicans fit that stereo-type. In fact because of some social justice issues, I would vote Democratic myself if abortion (the 50,000,000 million dead babies) were not an issue. Therefore such democrats want to down-play the abortion issue so they can vote democratic.

As one mentor pointed out, many of these democrats are not pro-abortion, even though they will vote Democratic, even voting for a known pro-choice candidate.

It is average for some Catholics, often even more Catholics who left the Church and returned, to think of pro-lifers as judgmental if not fanatic. Since some returned Catholics suffered themselves greatly as children from harsh conservatives, we are tarred with the same brush, especially when we vehemently defend pro-life positions.

It is average for some leaders in situations where there are several viewpoints expressed to hope for mutual influence and growth vs. the tendency of pessimistic melancholics such as me, especially because I am also a Crusader, to go for fight or flight (leave, not the parish, but the group where disputes arise or fight with even great sarcasm) and want an immediate total public condemnation of the opposing viewpoint. "Symbolic victory?" – as if some penalty for the opposing voice in my parish would solve the national problem which we are too weak to win at this point?

It is average for me to hate ambiguity, and hate to have to endure any ambiguity for the sake of preserving the good part of any situation.

Jesus seemed to counsel me concerning this situation: "Pray to the Holy Spirit for those who disagree with you on election and the abortion issue. I want you to stay in that group, at least for now. The leader of it says he wants you to express your views. Especially for the sake of your upcoming anti-contraception work in this setting you should not flee from the group."

I replied: Only you, Jesus, know how painful it is for me. With my pro-abortion childhood I am horrified that Jews after the Holocaust would be blind to the torture of the innocent in the womb. But, then, to see any in the Catholic Church, my refuge from error, not be crusaders against the slaughter of the innocent babies in the womb seems even worse.

But I love the leader involved in this group I am in right now, and also love some parishioners who will probably not vote Republican no matter how loud my voice. Send the Holy Spirit and my guardian angel to show me when to speak up and when to shut up. Send Mother Mary and St. Joseph to surround me with love so that I don't get rabid about this issue. You, Jesus, when on earth, were not a zealot, but a savior. I offer the pain of not speaking at the wrong times for the saving of the lives of more babies, whether because of legal changes or the changes of heart which my leader thinks are even more important.

August 1, 2007 - message via Anne or Ireland – Direction for Our Times

(From now on I will copy the locutionary Anne's way to just put what I think Jesus said as "Jesus:" instead of saying every single time something like" it seems as if" which is awkward, but I do mean "allegedly.")

Jesus

A small child often prays that God will help him to be good. This prayer is pleasing to God. Indeed, which prayer is more pleasing? A child prays this prayer in humility and simplicity from a pure heart seeking even greater purity. It is this purity of heart that all apostles must seek. Each day should be filled with brief prayers of this kind. If an apostle wishes to reside with the Father, that apostle must become the child of the Father. God has no equal. Do not seek greatness. Seek goodness. My beloved ones, you know that I love you and that I am grateful for your service. You know that I am pleased with your progress. Do you wonder why your Jesus calls you constantly further into holiness? Do I do this for My benefit? Yes. I do. I take great joy in seeing you advance, it is true. And yet, it is for your own personal benefit, also, that I call you to strive for higher heights. I want you to become as holy as you can. As your holiness increases, my friends, so does your peace. As your peace increases, so does the peace in this world. It is for many reasons, all similar to these, that I beckon you to come further and further into My heart. You are called to come closer to Me and move further from distractions. You turn your face toward heaven and in doing so you turn your face away from the world, which seeks to draw you away from Me. For today, pledge your allegiance to the Father and then strive to become holier. "Father, help me to be good." In each moment of your life there is an opportunity for goodness. Find the opportunities and try. Exert yourself, my beloved ones. Work for your holiness. If you were participating in a game, you would try to win. I want you to participate in your movement to holiness. I want you to make efforts throughout each day to choose the holiest course. I am with you in each moment, helping you. If you, my beloved apostles, will work with Me to become holier, I can reach others through you. You are loved.

August 1, 2007.

Conchita (Venerable Concepcion de Armida, the grandmother saint of Mexico who I have mentioned earlier in this journal) from Seasons of the Soul:

"In wintertime, the soul does not have to wander, but to recollect herself...for veteran souls, I might say, it is the period in which they fly to the tabernacle with greater enthusiasm, and there they allow the poison to drain away, the bad blood to run off,

burning at the feet of Jesus all the wood that has been pruned, watching it kindle, in the pain, but at the same time consoled for these pieces of the heart are incense for the Beloved.”

Me: Reading Conchita – I will never be like her, loving suffering and abasement.

Jesus: Now, she had a saint for a mother and a beautiful childhood. From where you come up from, you are doing fine. Leave it to me. I have St. Conchita; I want St. Ronda.

Me: I keep thinking now things will be easier because the outer form of my life is easier.

Jesus: Only I know what you need to be unified, so lie still under the knife of life as it comes to you.

Me: I will try to surrender.

(I asked Mary to pray in me, and she seemed to say):

Mary: Pray Yeshua Shalom

August 2, 2007

Fr. Ken likes the idea for a Returning Catholic like program but with another title. The idea is to have us go 2x2 with each pair having a Hispanic and an anglo and have the group including planners, speakers, intercessors as well as door to door people all be magisterial Catholics.

Jesus: You see I am working on you to be less pessimistic. I want to channel angry energy into good plans.

Me: Great joy in finishing final version of EWTN widow series outlines.

Mary: I will give you joy in having sister souls as you live this way. Be of good cheer.

August 5, 2007

Jesus: We, Jesus, Mary, and Joseph,, will help you now that you have made prayer your priority after daily Mass, to make us the center and highlight of your day, gradually subordinating the works so that our spirit may be infused in them more. I want you to have plenty of time for all widows: dedicated or otherwise.

August 6, 2007

Mary: Dear little one, busy and troubled about many things. Of course, we have used you in spite of your faults which you are so ashamed of. I want to teach you to breathe better, as my son Fr. Ken suggests, especially when you pray. Let me breathe in you for the rest of this prayer time.

August 6, 2007

Ragpicker Priest

We clutch our rags of sin

tightly around us

as if adornments

or, at least, necessities.

Our priest deliberates:

tear off those rags?

I've power and wit

But, maybe not.

Naked, they might rush

to buy but another

tattered coat

from Satan's supermarket.

I prefer to weave

a cloak of hope

and offer it from

Jesus' bargain basement.

Sundays,

I invite them:

“Come and get it,

Confession is at 4.”

“Robes of hope

for rags of sin,”

The rags they shed

I offer to the Prince of Peace

For nothing less than heaven!

August 7, 2007

Me: I feel as if almost everyone has some impossible trait that blocks them from progressing.

Jesus: That is true, but they survive and make slow advances. That is grace. You also have impossible blocks but with my grace you make slow advances!

The parish had a cook-out for altar servers. I brought Maxi. He loved playing with groups of boys: hoops, volleyball, and touch football. I came back to news of more Book Nook interviews at EWTN. I felt overwhelmed with joy that these books will get more publicity and readership.

Jesus: You wrote all those books for Me. Of course I want them read. Let us rejoice together with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

August 8, 2007

I am having anxiety about the EWTN trip.

Jesus: You are not going alone! Your Holy Family is going, too, and we will help you. It will be easier than you think. We want to “show you off.” Take everything that is difficult from moment to moment and see it as humorous.

From Conchita – A Mother’s Letters

“Love achieves all things! Love is giving. When this donation is not yet perfect it is desire; when it is accomplished, love is peace; when it is eternal it is bliss.”

August 9, 2007

A delightful sign from God. During Mass yesterday I got as a possible name for the outreach to Catholics no longer attending Church could be “Home is Where the Heart Is.” Father Ken liked it. Then last night Mary Schunke, who is one of the team, handed me a note saying she got in prayer that a possible title would be “Home is Where the Heart Is!”

Jesus: See, we are encouraging you.

Me: Also eleven people are interested in a follow up for Spirituality of the Emotions. This feels like a confirmation that it is something good to continue. More people than I guessed. Alleluia (You can find audios of this series on www.rondachervin.com audios)

Today I added up all the different things I will be involved in at the parish in the Fall and was delighted: Eucharistic Adoration, Christian Writers, Support Group for Spirituality of the Emotions, Why Catholic, Widows and Grieving, Home is Where the Heart Is, Library Expansion, RCIA, Hispanic Charismatic Praise and Worship

I feel giddy with joy that all this has unfolded for me. I am so happy.

Also, as if in confirmation of Association Widows of the Holy Family, Fr. Ken gave me a beautiful icon of the Holy.

Envy: We are seldom envious of others for being more loving. We are envious mostly of their natural gifts and that is a form of spitting at God for giving us less natural gifts than someone else – telling Him that natural gifts, which are only means to building the kingdom of love, are more important than love which He gives each of us abundantly for the asking and is the greatest gift!

I am thinking of the envy I saw in women who used to come up to me at talks and say “I can’t say anything to someone like you with all your credentials and accomplishments because I’m only a housewife,” as if loving many children every day were less important!

This must be related to “blessed are the poor in spirit?”

August 20, 2007: End of 7 Day trip to EWTN potentially reaching 70 million people and re-runs! So draining and awesome. Draining because most of the series was taped and present were only the camera and the tech men who don’t smile and clap – they sometimes smiled or affirmed after a show but not during it. I live so much on affirmation!

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph: We saw you through. You were too tense to talk to us much, but we understood that. We used Recovery International techniques to help you. We and your angel use everything we can to help you.

Me: Thank you, thank you, thank you.

Jesus: Now we will bless the effort. Let go. Be at peace and be carefree, do everything slowly.

August 22, 2007

Von Balthasar The Three Fold Garland: “When giving her assent Mary was alone, since at receiving one’s decisive mission for life, everyone must stand alone before God and say yes.”

I was thinking that my decisive mission in the Church is to popularize Catholic wisdom for the laity and being a wife and mother made that mission different than if I had tried to reach the laity as a single person or a Sister. But there was always tension between home and apostolate and I need to accept that this was a cross to have to feel inadequate as a mother because of always having my mind, if not my hands, on my spiritual work. Golda Meier wrote eloquently about that. Even though she deeply loved her children she felt called to her political work and always felt she had cheated them even when they didn’t feel that.

Because popularizing Catholic wisdom is my vocation, I think that brings me especially close to seminarians and priests who have the same call.

The class at Lenoir Rhyne College in Spirituality of the Emotions went wonderfully. It was so healing after the miseries of last year this time to have students who liked me and were eager to hear what I had to teach vs. so many in the core required courses who either tolerated or persecuted me.

August 23, 2007

It was a joy to go through my EWTN series using Recovery techniques of pre-spotting the averageness of the problems and working around them vs. being overly angry at every glitch.

(This idea in Recovery, Int’l – not 12 Step – is that we should be happy to have average problems and not thinking we are so exceptional that everything should go smoothly.)

I see that now that I have no huge “glamorous” projects in the offing or the intense creativity of writing, that I need to follow Mother Teresa’s maxim: “to do little things with great love.”

I am also reminded of my friend and publisher Jim Gilboy who says of difficulties “I will do whatever it takes to get this done.” I am thinking of the many steps to make it possible for Senora Magdalena to get that video. (I had Terri, at the parish, make a photo of myself with Senora Magdalena, who I described earlier in this journal, who walks 3 hours to get to daily Mass. We drive her home when she comes. So I featured her photo on the EWTN widow series as an example of making sacrifices to get to daily Mass and then got a copy of the video of that program to give to her and her family.

August 25, 2007

I was anxious about a car glitch and so worried about what it might cost I got into endless speculations of ways to get rid of the car and pay someone to drive me around. I asked St. Joseph for help. He seemed to suggest calling my son-in-law, Steve, who remarked wryly: A person doesn't cut off his foot because he has a splinter in it. Why not wait until you have the estimate?"

It turned out to be a little thing Steve could fix himself in a few minutes.

I went to the charismatic Hispanic prayer meeting and sat through the whole meeting understanding the Spanish better. Miguel, who wants to be a deacon, is such a strong leader. My thought was that since when we go door to door doing Home is Where the Heart Is we cannot know until the door opens whether the person is Hispanic or Anglo it is especially important that we go 2x2 with a Hispanic and an Anglo evangelist. It also shows that our parish is both.

Jesus: I want you to see what I am doing with the Hispanics – the fire, the energy, so that they can feel your appreciation as an old charismatic speaker, and you can be a bridge.

August 27, 2007

Ruth, my friend the icon-writer gave me the exquisite large icon she made of St. John the Baptist. She said that the Holy Spirit told her to give it to me.

Jesus: About John the Baptist, if you want to suffer for Me, like him, you will not be afraid and peace-less.

August 29, 2007

I was upset about a Sister who gave a talk here. I endorsed for progress not perfection in correcting her without being as harsh as I formerly would have been.

Jesus: I am working with those who are still in the Church. Offer it up. Stay in those situations which arise and when you feel you have to correct someone always do it "speaking the truth with love."

August 30, 2007

I somewhat comically told Father Ken I was going to ask him before next Lent what was fundamentally wrong with me. He replied immediately:

"You don't have to wait. I know exactly what's wrong with you: it's that you think there is something fundamentally wrong with you."

I laughed and laughed but saw the truth in it. In Recovery, Inc. terms it is the tragedy queen syndrome. I want dramatic things to be wrong with me vs. I'm just the usual careless but ardent Catholic who sins many times a day in spite of all the effort and that's okay (it's not going to earn me hell, I mean.)

September 1, 2007

Thinking about women past a certain age not wanting to have photos made, my experience was that I felt much more ugly after my husband died because even though his attitude toward my looks was sometimes critical, he could remember what I looked like when I was younger. And, besides, he often touched my face and that made me feel loved.

It is important, I think, that when we look at ourselves in the mirror or in photos that we look to see if our expression is loving vs. do we look good. It helps me to think of how beloved the old lined face of Mother Teresa is. We should also think of how the Ascended Jesus must have looked down at Mary's face on earth which was surely older than her face when he looked up at her from his babyhood!

Sept 1, 2007

Jesus – from Anne of Direction for Our Times:

Dear Apostles, I send you a spirit of gentleness. Because you are called to treat others as I treated others, you are called to be gentle with all those around you. This call to gentleness in no way diminishes the call to live in the truth. If you preach the truth as I did, gently, you will draw others to us and to unity of thought and action. In this time, when it is so important that souls be brought back into the family of God, we must be ever so careful to be gentle with others in each interaction. I am Jesus. I am filled with love for each soul you encounter, regardless of their condition. View each person through My love and treat them with My gentleness. My dearest apostle, in order to allow yourself to heal from any wounds you yourself suffer, you must allow Me to minister to you. I am tender hearted with your failings. Remember this and do not turn away from Me when you feel you have failed. If you do not allow Me to minister to you during periods of unrest, you will be vulnerable to the distortions which can be sown by the enemy. Apostles walking with Me inspire hope in the world. This is the plan. But My friends must remember that apostles walking with Me also inspire fear in the enemy. The enemy's fear causes him to lash out at the friends of the Returning King. Be at peace in this as it has always been this way and there is no reason for anything but confidence in My plan for each day of every life. At the same time, be prepared to do battle for your holiness as I did battle. If you remain with Me, the battles will make you stronger and holier. That is My goal. Accept the gentle ministrations of your Savior in silence and you will then be an able carrier of this gentleness to others. Beloved friends, so loyal to your God, you will stand out if you are gentle and it is this that I need from you. I need you to stand out as calm and gentle representatives of the different way. The world will remember you for your gentleness if you allow Me to teach you. You are not called to change the world. I am called to change the world. You are called to represent Me accurately so that I have the opportunity with each soul you encounter. Through your love, your kindness and your gentleness, you will create heavenly opportunities for Me in the people around you. I will never miss an

opportunity, I promise you. I make the best possible use of your efforts. I thank you dear friend. Your fidelity to the Father will not be forgotten.

When I was thinking of leaving North Carolina, I heard these words in my heart:

Jesus, Mary and Joseph: Just trust. You belong first to us in the Church. You are a pilgrim widow. We want it all for us now.

September 4, 2007

Amy suggested I do a 365 meditation book since she likes daily meditations.

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph: Yes, but do it slowly and of course we will help you to transfigure it so it is not too “just do it, folks!”, but really possible for the reader to combine the insight and the prayer.

First sample meditation:

CONTROL vs. RELEASE

“...that your goodness might not be by compulsion but of your own free will.” (Philemon: 14)

Parenting, managing a work place, or policing, are examples of necessary control. Micro-managing or trying to fix everyone, however, is excessive and inappropriate. Why is it wrong to try to straighten people out? Isn't loving concern a virtue? Yes and no. Wishing others to do what is good is right. The fault lies in trying to override their right to make free decisions.

God, whose judgment is perfect, rarely coerces us. When Eve ate the apple and Adam followed suit, God did not blast the apple out of their hands or reduce the serpent to ashes. At the Passion, God did not annihilate His son's torturers. So why do *we* think that we have the right to badger others? “Let go, let God,” is a phrase we need to tell ourselves frequently, so that we can release others into the hands of the Lord.

Prayer: Father God, you are the Lord of our lives. I want to release to you each person I try to control. (List each person) I release (name) _____ into Your heart and hands. Forgive me for my controlling habit. If you want to use me to help them, show me a way not to command but to suggest in a gentle and loving way. Please pour out Your graces on them that they may be ultimately saved.

“Into Your hands I commend my spirit and the spirit of (name)_____

The idea for these meditations eventually became *The Way of Love: a 100 Day Spiritual Marathon*. See my web for information.

Sept. 6, 2007

A friend said that he had given up even wanting to control other people. Astounding!

Talking about Recovery, Intl. and why I am so fond of the phone members even though I cannot see them, a friend said, “it is not because you have the same problems, but because you have the same lifeboat.”

September 8, 2007

Hispanic Prayer Meeting.

I wanted to say: do you pray for us? Do you think I am the only Anglo who needs to cry aloud to God?

Me: Jesus, why do I like this so much in spite of everything that is different from my beloved 9 AM choir with beautiful traditional music?

Jesus: It gets you out of yourself and your little mental knots and worries into My reality. Also because of the force of the others – you experience the Mystical Body through them.

Regarding a dispute with some others, I wondered if I was wrong to press the Church’s teaching.

Jesus: No. That’s why I gave you the icon of John the Baptist. He was murdered over a sex issue. You must fight for what is right and even if you slip into uncontrolled anger in spite of your efforts not to, that doesn’t mean you are wrong in this case. Accept the cross of fear of being alienated if that comes. I will be with you.

(The following Stations of the Cross for Widows I put up on my web. I did it myself a few times with each widow reading a Station in various parishes)

STATIONS OF THE CROSS FOR WIDOWS

Blessed Mary, exalted widow, you followed your son Jesus on the way of the cross. Show us how to unite our sufferings to those of your son.

The First Station: Jesus is Condemned to Death

Mary, did you wonder why your son, who was to be judge of all the living and the dead, had to stand before a Roman judge to receive an unjust sentence? Now that we are widows, we sometimes question God’s providence. Where is the drunk driver whose hit and run sentenced a husband to death? Why did God permit that a doctor made a mistake which led to a husband’s death? Why did God permit that a doctor made a mistake which led to a husband’s death? If the paramedics came one minute earlier could they have saved him? If there was anything we did or didn’t do that hastened the day or the hour, why did our husbands have to suffer death instead of us?

Jesus, You are the Lord of my life. I know that you only permit to happen those things from which You can bring good. Help me to trust that You knew the day and the hour of my husband’s death and that he is enfolded in Your Sacred Heart, now as then.

Second Station: Jesus Accepts the Cross

Mary, nothing you could say would have persuaded Jesus to evade the cross. At the time before our husband's deaths, many of us spent long hours at their bedsides, anticipating the separation that would come. We had no choice but to accept what we could not change. The heaviness of the cross often drained us, even as we persevered in hope of remission.

Jesus, You accepted all the crosses of enduring the human estate which lead to this end-time final wooden cross. Help us to know that You were with us during the drawn out pain of our husbands' last times on earth. Many times You wanted us to rest our weary heads in Your lap so that You could console us, but we were too busy coping to come to You. Now, as we look upon the second station and see You accepting Your cross, let us also see that You were holding us up as we helped our husbands.

Third Station: Jesus Falls the First Time

Mary, you had to see your strong, manly son, fall down under the terrific weight of those beams. Did the waves of weakness you felt in your own body remind you of the grief you felt when Joseph died? We felt our own physical strength dwindle slowly until post-funeral time when we could hardly rise from our beds.

Jesus, when widows collapse under the strain of early widowhood, You never chide us for not taking up daily life tasks with our usual efficiency. Instead You are at our sides each day and hover over us in our now solitary beds, sending invisible graces. May we never doubt Your love for us as You bring new strength to our new state of life.

Fourth Station: Jesus Meets His Mother

Mary, since the film, *The Passion*, we have no trouble imagining that encounter. Deeper even than shared joy is shared agony! Some of us widows looked into the eyes of our husbands as they left this world. Some of our spouses die away from us, or, instantaneously, without warning, with no chance to say goodbye.

Jesus, You knew Your mother's heart inside out. It comforted You to receive that last touch and glance, but also grieved You that You must be the cause of her pain. We thank you for family, friends, priests, and parishioners who were with us as we made the way of the cross with our husbands. And even if we were alone we believe that You, Jesus, Your mother, our angels and the widow saints were there. Let us never be so frantic in our widowhood that we push away the love of those who reach out to us.

Fifth Station: Simon Helps Jesus Carry the Cross

Mary, you wished you could carry that cross for your son. You must have sighed in relief to see Simon bearing the weight. As widows, even after many years, we can feel lonely, overwhelmed, and hopeless, desperately wishing for help.

Jesus, You, the God-man, let another help You when You were unable to keep going. Why, then, should we be too proud to beg? So often a cry brings assistance that never comes when we hide our weakness. In the Scriptures the Holy Spirit promises rewards to those who aid widows. Show us who can help us in our neediness...and, if there is really no one, let us always fall back on You, second bridegroom of widows, to strengthen our backs even if You allow the cross to still weigh us down.

Sixth Station: Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus

Mary, most likely you knew this valiant disciple and saw the imprint of your son's face on that cloth, long after His ascension. Did you wipe the face of St. Joseph, and was the image of his face with you long after? When words can do little, gestures can do much. Some of us wiped the feverish sweat from the brows of beloved husbands. All of us treasure the image of our husbands, if not on a cloth, then in photographs.

Jesus, we hope our husbands asked forgiveness for their sins before their deaths even if we did not witness this, and so we believe that they are either in purgatory or heaven. We know that the full resurrected body will not be theirs or ours until after the Last Judgment. Yet, as we struggle along without them, we like to imagine the faces of our husbands looking down on us with compassion and, often, humor.

Seventh Station: Jesus Falls the Second Time

Mary, refuge of sinners, more than any other witness, you understood how the cross of Jesus was part of the Father's plan of salvation. In your terrible distress at seeing your son fall once more, did you think of us sinners, through the centuries, coming to repentance? Did your heart rejoice to see us repenting as we prayed these very stations? During our long widowhood we have ample time to remember our fall from grace, those times when faults and sins hurt our spouses.

Jesus, give us courage to confess the major sins of our married lives in the sacrament of reconciliation. You want us to have peace. Help us to believe that, now in eternity, our husbands have repented of their sins against us. They are not now judging us harshly because they are participating in the compassionate love of Your sacred heart for themselves and for us.

Eighth Station: The Women Console Jesus

Mary, we imagine that the women who braved the jeering crowd to console Jesus on the way of the cross, may have, also, surrounded you when Joseph died. Surely they would not have left the mother of Love alone in her hour of need!. When we first became widows, more seasoned widows came forth to comfort most of us and inspire us with their survival skills and their trust in you and in Jesus.

Jesus, deep is the consolation You wish to pour into our frazzled and forlorn widow hearts. You would have us know that we are never, never, never, alone. But we need much grace to stretch ourselves beyond our senses to know You now in an even more intimate spiritual way than before. Only You can settle us down in the peace that comes with Your presence.

Ninth Station: Jesus Falls Again

Mary, in spite of your exalted unique privileges as Mother of God, you must have felt your status in the world fall when you were no longer known as the wife of Joseph but, instead, as a poor widow. Most widows in our times find our new state to be a “come down.” We find that instead of checking the “married” box on forms, we must, now, check the “widow” box. Sometimes our social life falls because we are not part of a couple. Often, our income falls as well.

Jesus, throughout Scripture, Your people were exhorted to honor needy widows. Purify our minds from negative images of widowhood in our society. Show us if You want to provide us with second husbands. In your new covenant we are offered a new consecrated state, living to serve Your church. If our new vocation is to have You as our second bridegroom, show us how.

Tenth Station: Jesus is Stripped

Mary, stripping the clothing off a person by force is always a violent act. We wonder if you kept some of your son’s things after His death? Perhaps, you even kept some of Joseph’s belongings? We cannot know for certain. After the death of our husbands, many of us found it a painful process to go through their possessions. It is as if we were stripping away those clothes, and stripping away the memories connected to those clothes. In another sense we feel stripped of everything our husband’s presence meant to us, especially on anniversaries, birthdays, family holidays, and religious holy days.

Jesus, even though You teach us not to grieve as unbelievers do, You wept at the death of Lazarus and surely at the death of Joseph, (though it was not recorded.)

We might be surprised at some of the forms that grief takes, such as mourning over the clothing of a husband, We beg You to turn each experience of loss into gratitude for the good times and hope for reunion where our resurrected bodies will be clothed in unimaginable splendor. Let us also be glad to be stripped of the need for any useless things that we might have more money to give to the starving and homeless.

Eleventh Station: Jesus is Nailed to the Cross

Mary, you had to watch one of the worst deaths ever devised. Nails, blood, wounds, horrible agonizing pain. At the crucifixion your face was surely not the beautiful one we know from the apparitions. As widows many of us witnessed the awful, gut-wrenching, unforgettable miseries our husbands had to go through. Crucifixion is ugly. Death is ugly. We watch ourselves

becoming ugly –and not only because of the inevitable aging processes. Faces, previously more often expressive of light hearted joy, now, manifest more heavy sadness.

Jesus, our spiritual journey is to be an imitation of You. Can we imagine You running from the cross out of fear of marring the beauty of Your countenance? No.

We should wear our lines of grief, created by the endurance of love (till death do us part), as badges of honor. It is not wrong to dress attractively if we are hoping for a second husband, but if we want to live only for You, forgive us our feminine weakness in being overly-concerned about looking good and feeling depressed when we can't. Substitute for vanity with beauty of soul; shining in eyes that brim over with empathetic love for each other suffering person we encounter.

Twelfth Station: Jesus Died on the Cross

Mary, how often God surprised you, from the Annunciation on through all the mysteries of your life. Perhaps, you were hoping that somehow the resurrection would occur right at the time of Jesus' crucifixion. Instead Jesus gave you the gift of the motherhood of His church, symbolized in the person of John, the beloved apostle.

Jesus, until the last moments, most of us prayed our husbands would be restored to health and in accidental deaths or those by suicide or murder, we might even have prayed over their bodies that they, like Lazarus, they could be raised from the dead to be with us on earth. Even as we pray for the souls of our husbands, show us who You want us to love in an intimate close way now. As we mourn, let our tears never blind us to the need for love in the people around us.

Thirteenth Station: Jesus is Taken from the Cross

Mary, great artists and sculptors have depicted the tender moment when you held the body of Jesus for the last time. Did you also remember holding the body of St. Joseph for the last time? How often we, widows, wish that we could see our husbands, once again, in the flesh and embrace them in love.

Jesus, You want us to grieve but not to beg for what is not Your will. Instead of physical contact with our husband's bodies, You want to stretch us to make contact with them through prayer. Please wean us from wanting what is gone and help us to want what we can have in a spiritual way now, and in eternity. Some widows experience the souls of their spouses with them always, and others, rarely, if at all. Help us to trust in the signs of eternal life You choose for each of us as individuals, Many of us have found healing graces through groups on bereavement and grief. If we could benefit from such ministries, help us to overcome our desire to hide our pain. Let us not reject what would bring hope.

Fourteenth Station: Jesus is Buried

Mary, some who write about you believe that Jesus first appeared to you, His mother, privately. We do not know how that was, but we do know that you understand how we feel at the burial of those we love. Even with the numbness that often comes with a death, the farewell at the gravesite is always poignant.

Jesus, You want to increase our faith in life eternal. In the meantime, You teach us to believe in Your mystical body, experienced in its highest form on earth at Holy Mass and in the reception of Holy Communion. Help us to believe that our communion with You at the sacred rites is also a communion with the one to whom we were joined in the sacrament of marriage. You have made saints of some widows, known to us, or hidden from the public eye. What more can we pray for than that, like them, our hearts be free from doubt, bitterness, anxiety and despair and be filled, instead, with the joys You send us (even as we suffer) and with love, love, and LOVE.

September 11, 2007

I am all tense about the announcing by me of the talk on Natural Family Planning I arranged. Suppose people hate me. I ran this through Recovery Inc. They said I was taking on too much responsibility. Yes! As coordinator, I only have to set it up. It is not my task to force others to come, or to make them agree.

September 12, 2007

Note: many of the alleged locutions that come to me from now on seem to come from the common voices and Jesus, Mary and Joseph. I interpret this to mean that they want me to be close to them as a family since the name of my little group is Dedicated Widows of the Holy Family.

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph: See how we use the orderly traits in your personality to have you do positive things for the kingdom because of the required organization skills. Stop flagellating yourself. Your virtues from us outweigh your faults from you! Rest under our smile. You were hoping you could become peaceful all the time? It is all right. It is slow. We have to do it slowly because without your tumultuous excitement you would

September 13, 2007

First group of Personality, Character and Prayer at my dear friend Karen Miller's house in Hickory, NC. 12 came. It went even better than I thought. It was more intimate because we know each other better from the previous series, Spirituality of the Emotions, and because it was in the small room. I felt the Holy Spirit with me in my responses.

September 14, 2007

I am reading Benedict XVI book *Jesus*. His theme is so simple and beautiful: Jesus brought God to man in a new way and to all.

September 16, 2007

Charismatic prayer meeting:

In the midst of the loud music, with a woman drummer who looks like a little girl, I was feeling delight, but then I felt my soul kind of leaving the world, not words, just taken up, lifted up in a soft quiet way.

After releasing a person I was mad at to God, I felt lots of sweet love for her.

September 17, 2007

What a beautiful end to Abishag, the lady of the Song of Songs, a novel of Pat Looper (a member of our Christian Writer's group.) I cried. I realized that my Song of Song times with Martin were real; that my hopes gave way to disillusion didn't mean the ecstatic love wasn't real. Like Ecclesiastes, - a time to sing, a time to mourn. In emphasizing that fantasy and idol worship leads to fallen idols etc. I had lost the memory of the joy in that romantic love.

RCIA about the first rituals for our candidates and catechumens Fr. Ken emphasized the need for touch – sacraments are physical. Laying on of hands give a sense of support. We experience God in things as Catholics vs. just thoughts or visions.

September 18, 2007

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph:

You can't figure it out when you think about people you love but can't help much with advice. You must trust. Remember we want to make you into a saint and you cannot become holy by figuring things out and trying to tidy them up, but by trust. Pray "Jesus I trust in You, throughout the retreat this weekend. Pray "Jesus, Mary, Joseph, Trust" on your chaplet beads, since there is no peace without trust.

September 19, 2007

I went through a horrible mess with a scam. (It seems as if some Nigerian and South African thieves hi-jack g-mails – a known scam - and wrote to all friends in my name out of my whole 400 or so contacts on e-mail, asking them to send money to get me back to the USA from Africa where I had lost my wallet and papers and was marooned, presumably. I was very upset but didn't all together lose it. There was so much love from those who called, worried about me, and even strangers wanted to give money. I thought I should be in solidarity in my small way with all those who have been hurt much more by criminals. Some actually went to their banks to get money orders to send but, happily, bankers know all about this and disabused them of the need to send me money.

September 20, 2007

I suddenly saw a photo of a beautiful red poppy. It reminded me of Frank Sullivan on his death bed back in 1975 and how I got not a direct word from God to console me, but suddenly saw a beautiful poppy growing out of the crack in the sidewalk outside the hospital and it consoled me with a message of resurrection because of its beauty.

September 22, 2007 On Retreat at Cistercian Center in Georgia:

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph:

We have brought you away so that you can see what is important. See how much you love your little apartment where you live with us! See how much you love St. Charles Parish and Fr. Ken. Even though living away from the family is more detached, you will be able to love them better because of being more detached.

I had lots of prayer of quiet in the monastery chapel.

Jesus, Mary, Joseph: Here let us drown your anxieties in our love for you.

At confession I talked about not trusting that God can help my dearest ones even in a pit. The monk said that you can't just try to trust, you have to ask for the gift of trust. I did and I felt much peace.

More from Pope Benedict's Jesus book. He writes that the prophet does not have human security but talks to God as a friend. I thought, this is like Jesus, Mary and Joseph wanting to talk to me as a friend day by day!

Jesus, Mary, Joseph: Because you half don't believe it is really us, you don't take what we say to heart enough.

The Beatitudes are, first of all, says Pope Benedict, about how the disciples are poor, hungry, persecuted. He mentions that after the Babylonian exile 90% of the Jews were poor, so that it could no longer be thought that goodness leads to riches as many thought before that.

Writing about the Beatitudes, Pope Benedict says that anawim means meek. I thought that since anger is pseudo-power I need to be much more meek. Jesus wants to build a kingdom without power.

He notes that the diaspora was to make space for God in other lands.

Jesus, Mary, Joseph: You cannot have it easier. If you have a prophetic gift, you cannot think that those who will not follow the truth will always still shower you with love for other reasons. You can speak the truth with more love, definitely, but still you will be persecuted.

September 23, 2007

I am re-reading *Cry the Beloved Country* by Alan Paton about South Africa. How it fits Benedict's Jesus book since it is about building the kingdom through love not violence.

Dealing on retreat with fear of being alone, I realize it would be good to think that even if everyone I love would die today, I would not be alone because Jesus, Mary, and Joseph would be with me. Let me ponder that and throw myself into their arms.

I thought, Jesus, you have not asked me to be alone on earth. You know, that as a twin and one with a mother who was so close, that it is worse for me than for some others to think of being alone. But You want me to ponder it so that You can deliver me from that fear. I am one with you, the Holy Family. It is not an accident that I call myself a Dedicated Widow of the Holy Family.

In my mind's eye I danced the hora with all three of them: Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. They seemed to tell me that I am a Hebrew Catholic woman and should be very joyful, exultant as in the Magnificat.

Mary: I am your mother. I danced with Jesus and Joseph in our home. Don't you want to dance?

As I often do, I am attracted very much to monastic ways, but also feel alienated when I am there. Mary seemed to say: we do other things with monks. You are not a monk. You are an old ecstatic charismatic, Catholic woman, one of a kind, so dear to us.

September 27, 2007

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph: Mass and adoration are the intense times of focus on God which will gradually expand to all day. Start the Jesus prayer to pray constantly.

September 29, 2007

My printer broke down and Carla and Alex couldn't fix it. I called a few places and they said it was probably dead. I felt led to go to a Knights of Columbus dinner and lo and behold there was a young man who fixes these things and comes to the home. Alleluia. Thank you St. Joseph for this help. (I always pray to St. Joseph for material helps.)

September 30, 2007

After a long hiatus 9 year old Zacko, one of my grandsons, suddenly said he wanted to go to Mass and then even though he seemed bored during it said he wanted to make his first communion and go to the little catechetics class! Alleluia.

October 2, 2007 Feast of Guardian Angels

I have prayed more this year to my guardian angel than previous years but still I could be more conscious of his presence and guidance and so today I pray:

Guardian angel, how much I need you. In spite of being a spirituality teacher, I have so much more to be purified of in my knotty, feisty little soul. Jesus, Mary, and Joseph joked they would like to micro-manage me if I would let them. Join them in that humungus task. Is there something you want to say to me today?

Guardian angel: Yes. Go more with the heart even if it hurts.

I am typing Charlie's suicide letter and Martin's poem, for Carla to send to a poet who lost someone to suicide. I had a sense of how only a suffering that great could make Martin cling to You, Jesus, as his only hope.

October 3, 2007

Fr. Ken went on priests' retreat this week. At the same time roofers hammered away during Adoration. I realized Mary must have heard this sound of carpentry. She probably prayed in depth in the night. But after half an hour I decided she probably went out to milk the goats when it got too bad. I wrote this poem about the week without Fr. Ken's music.

Sede Vacante – September 30 – October 6

No glorious organ music –

Instead

Bang, bang, bang

Vile hammering on the roof...

Beneath, your flock

Abandoned,

Grazed aimlessly...

Ruefully we pondered

in our fright

“with what could we dare

to bribe God

to make it

that our returned

shepherd

live so long

that he will

bury each of us

before, for good,

he also depart.”

October 1, 2007 Dictated to Anne of Direction for Our Times

Jesus

My beloved apostles, please be alert to My will. At no time should you fear that I do not have a perfect plan for you. Sometimes you make decisions that are not consistent with My plan. Sometimes these decisions cause you pain and cause others pain. It is most especially at these times that you should seek Me because I will adapt My plan for you to fit your present circumstances. I am always seeking to bring you closer to Me, never more so than when you believe you have left the path through temptation or sin. When should you believe that you are on your own? Never. In which circumstances will My heart be so hardened that I will refuse to rush in with forgiveness and grace and an alternative plan for you? Such circumstances do not exist. My dearest little apostles, be assured of My willingness to work with you in each moment, regardless of your condition in that moment. In humanity, there are moments of such holiness that even heaven stops to marvel. In humanity, there are also moments of weakness and cruelty. Please believe that heaven takes the bad with the good and moves each willing soul toward greater and greater good. Heaven draws you away from temptation and away from the pain of sin. I am good, My friends, as My Father is good. You, My beloved apostles, are called to resemble Me and be good also. You strive for this, I know. Today I ask that each apostle consider that I treated others with kindness. I have instructed you about gentleness and today I instruct you about kindness. Little apostles, the hearts of others are easily wounded. Can you remember when someone treated you unkindly? Do you remember your pain? I was treated unkindly at times and My heart felt this same pain. We do not want this for others. We want others to understand that God loves them and you, My friends, will do that when you treat them with the kindness of the Father. I will help you if you allow Me. I will teach you to remain silent in the presence of other's faults and I will teach you to speak openly about their strengths. Pause again and try to think of a kindness that was shown to you. Do you remember how you felt at that time? You felt grateful, did you not? You felt steadied. I want to flow through you to others. You will allow Me to do so if you work each day on being kind to each person you encounter. Their pain will lessen because of your kindness. The pain of the whole world will be reduced if each of My beloved apostles learns to be kind. Begin by being kind to yourself. I accept you, My friend. You must accept yourself. Be at peace in My love for you. I do not give you an instruction without also giving you the grace to carry it out.

October 4, 2007

I am feeling anxious about the new group in the parish I will lead.

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph: You are pre-carrying the emotional brokenness of the ones who will come. We don't want you to do this as a sage only, but also as an intercessor, which means suffering with them.

October 7, 2007

I felt your blessings, Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, on all the work I did in the parish announcements at the Masses of activities some might feel alienated by such as the talks on why contraception is wrong and natural family planning right or the door to door effort.

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph: We do bless you. We know what it costs you and it is good and we will bring the fruit.

October 9, 2007

Pope Benedict XVI "It is not the word of the prophet mainly but the sufferings that bring down grace." I realized that there is no way I can take a prophetic stance in the parish without suffering.

October 12, 2007

It seemed like a hard day. Then at the Hispanic Adoration where they prayed and sang in tongues with tears and there was one who swooned in the spirit, I realized it was a day of love, even if it was hard.

October 15, 2007

Another Personality Typology – this is a summary of points in this typology.

This is a typology many centuries old. I, Dr. Ronda Chervin, believe that it is separable from its history and its real value lies in helping us see the negatives and positives of nine basic ways that we may choose to deal with the basic difficulties of life after the Fall. As you read, see if one of them fits you a lot of the time and pray for insight and grace, and a plan to avoid the negative side of your predominate way of dealing with the evils and pains of the world.

1. Crusader – come against evil forcefully

Positive: energetic leadership and courage

Negative: rage and vengeance

Suggested prayer: deep, quiet prayer for divine help

2. Helper – desire to help with any need of others at any time

Positive: good-hearted, compassionate, good deeds

Negative: smothering, nagging

Suggested prayer: trust in God to help when your help fails or is rejected.

3. Organizer – tries to overcome conflict and chaos through harmonizing needs

Positive: prudent, dedicated, moderate, sense of balance – good administrator

Negative: sometimes fails to acknowledge depth of problems and pain involved in an effort to smooth things over. Can compromise in illegitimate ways as in appeasement.

Suggested prayer: ask to be more in touch with the Cross of Jesus and of others

4. Creative Person – tries to bring beauty and innovation to ugly or dull situations

Positive – brings more beauty, delight, freshness, breakthroughs

Negative – in transcending to creativity sometimes ignores small important needs of others, may dislike necessary detail and shirk it.

Suggested prayer: Ask the Holy Spirit to show you in each moment what is good to do even if it is dull or annoying.

5. Thinker-Spectator – seeks truth and wisdom

Positive – sees overall picture, wise, sage counsel

Negative – can become too detached, may seem cold to family and friends, may not see what needs to be done in the small picture.

Suggested prayer: Pray to the Holy Spirit for greater commitment to God's will in daily life, and more warmth of heart.

6. Follower – is willing to obey and serve a leader

Positive – will do much work as a humble helper without questioning everything or rebelling. Great when it is a good leader.

Negative – may follow a bad leader out of weakness and then feel crushed if the leader fails. Lacks initiative. Lost when there is no leader around.

Suggested prayer: Study Church teaching and history to avoid exciting but false leaders. Pray for discernment about leaders.

Pray to serve what is good in what leaders want vs. blind service.

7. Pleasure Seeker – full of love of life, wants to maximize joy and avoid pain

Positive – fun loving, brings joy to others through cooking, celebrations, humor, lightness.

Negative – can be unfocused jumping from pleasure to pleasure and/or addicted to destructive means of lightening pain

Suggested prayer: Gratitude for the good in life, but praying for acceptance of pain in life and for courage to avoid addictions.

5. Controlling – Protective - to avoid evil, chaos, and suffering for others tries to control misguided others.

Positive: Willing to go to great sacrificial lengths to protect others. Is often right about what needs to be changed in others so they will suffer less.

Negative: domineering, micro-managing, coercive

Suggested prayer: Pray of trust that God can ultimately protect others. Accept God's love for free-will.

6. Peace-making – eager to bring peace to self and others by avoiding task-oriented blind sighted mechanisms for living that ignore deepest needs of human beings.

Positive: available for counsel, good at overcoming anger in self and others. Can be mediators.

Negative: Can be too optimistic. Can be inefficient and unreliable due to lack of attention to needed requirements of family or work life. Can seek “peace at any price.”

Suggested prayer: Ask the Holy Spirit to show you what is needed moment by moment to bring a limited peace even if overall peace is difficult to achieve. Ask God each day – what can I do more to make life better for those around whether it is congenial to do it or not.

October 17, 2007

I felt deflated, crushed, by the tiny attendance at the anti-contraception, natural family planning talk. Only the Pastor and two others people came and the Natural Family Planning doctors had come from hours away on a Sunday to give their talks.

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph: We bring good out of all these snarls and seeming defeats. Each defeat has much to learn from. When they happen, run into our arms and hide until the storm passes and steadily and slowly do deeds of love to regain peace and steadiness of soul.

October 18, 2007

At Adoration prayer:

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph: "Now, little Ronda, you have done a lot for us and our Church. You still have many details to work on in your family life but these are not hard for you, so we want you to start now to breathe in our names and go very slowly and know that we love you for your efforts and we will take care of your family and everyone you pray for so faithfully. Trust!"

I was wondering how it is that Fr. Ken understands me so well but I don't really understand him? The Holy Spirit seemed to say that since he is my pastor and director he has a special grace to understand me and others. I don't have to understand him, it is good enough that I love and admire and pray for him.

October 20, 2007 from a letter to an old friend who is a Jewish seeker,

Is there a feminine spirituality? Yes and no. Many think spirituality itself is feminine whether attempted by a woman or a man because they think the soul is feminine in the sense of receptive.

I disagree. Even though there are mystics like John of the Cross who are very poetic in a surrendering feminine way - though his commentary on his own poems is supremely logical and masculine - I think in general women have more what is called Braut-mystique (Bridal Mysticism) - which is a bridal type of sense of surrender to God as the beloved and men tend more to think of God as a leader, the following of whom leads to eternal happiness.

There is lots of this in my book *Feminine, Free and Faithful* which I will send you if you want it. (This book, one of my best, by the grace of God, is still in print. It is now distributed by Enroute Books and Media.)

I had a student last year who seemed in hopeless difficulties. I prayed for her and gave her extended time to finish her work thinking she would never do it. Along came a whole folder of wonderful work. Alleluia.

October 21, 2007

Thou shalt not judge! I was busy judging certain people for not coming to Mass this morning and discovered that they had come in behind me so quietly I didn't realize they were there! I think You laughed at me, Jesus.

Charismatic Hispano/a Prayer Meeting

Miguel told us: the praise of God makes us humble, to forget ourselves and praise God.

I was thinking about the contrast between the 9 AM Mass high choral music and this charismatic electric guitar and drums....

Holy Spirit: The great music takes you from your head and will to your soul. Charismatic music takes you from your head and will into your heart. Both are good.

Fr. Ken thought I like the charismatic because it is so emotional. True – Jews are basically Mediterranean in our emotions. He said he thought Gregorian Chant might have been a controlled form of praying in tongues also in its Jewish origin.

I thought of how, in a certain sense, the Sunday 9 AM Mass is in a minor key and the prayer meeting a major key – Is Jesus, perhaps sometimes heard in a minor key (source of all beauty and hope) and sometimes in a major key (purifying fire)?

October 22, 2007

After the Meeting of Home is Where the Heart is – Hogar es donde esta el Corazon – our joint hispanic anglo door to door effort, I was so exhausted. I saw why the Legion of Mary has it so organized so they can know what each team member is doing, etc. Fr. Ken said that this is better for us because the emphasis shouldn't be on what we are doing, but on each person we meet. How challenging. I realize I often substitute hard work and planning for that sense of one on one relating.

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph: Now you don't need to push for any of these apostolates. We want you to let go of all of that right now. For Home is Where the Heart is, be now a team member and facilitator, not a leader. The framework is in place and what is left is you following the Holy Spirit in little deeds of love, the Mass, prayer and talking to us all day from the heart. Measure the day by love.

October 24, 2007 Adoration

Jesus: I know how weak you are, especially being brought up as a hedonist. So I don't want you to look ahead to horrible crosses and shudder. I give you remissions and then crosses which seem unbearable and remissions because I want most of all not sacrifices but trust which brings peace.

October 25, 2007

Going door to door, the people were so sweet. A special grace to encourage us certainly but also I think an old granny like me and a youngish looking Mayan woman, who could seem like a grandchild, appear harmless.

October 26, 2007

Holy Spirit: The world will not get better unless there is real conversion. Don't expect good news about the world. Treasure each good thing you hear about and pray for mercy on individual souls and for the conversion of the world. They need to see where sin leads.

I am reading Von Balthasar's 3 Fold Garland about the sorrowful mysteries. I am thinking, only You know how superficial I am; maybe not compared to many others, but in my constant flight from suffering. Even a little down feeling because of rain and gloom is enough to throw me.

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph: Don't worry. We are deepening you.

Von Balthasar says about Jesus "You squander Yourself in the Eucharist."

What a poignant observation. Yes, because even with we who want You each day, we are mostly distracted!

October 27, 2007

Scare from Carla, my sister, that her husband might be close to death. I was anxious all day without knowing why (twinny ESP stuff?) I became more anxious afterwards as I busily collected phone numbers to call to cancel all my activities if necessary to go to be with Carla in Berkeley, California. Seems the prognosis was exaggerated. I spastically prayed the rosary and night prayer and morning prayer but only now am calm enough to talk to you, Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, about it.

I am playing Bach's violin concertos – they are Your PEACE. Let that peace flow over my frantic little soul.

About the Hispano/a Prayer Meeting: Jesus, Mary and Joseph: We wanted you to experience our joy in these children, to share it with you.

October 28, 2007

I am reading Hans Urs Von Balthasar who writes in an intriguing way that many reject the real God who is Jesus because He didn't win us by power to remove all sufferings on earth.

Me: But we want to remove those sufferings out of compassion.

Jesus: Yes, but the compassion is more important than the suffering. The compassion opens the heart. I want to open hearts, not to remove all suffering. The poor you will always have with you. So it all comes down to trust in My promises of heaven. I can take care of the poor and the sinners."

I didn't take this to mean that we don't need to do everything possible to help others, but that we shouldn't let it lead us into despair.

November 1, 2007 – from locutions given to Anne of Direction for Our Times

Jesus

My beloved apostle, I understand your struggles. You are becoming holier and yet you do not think you are making progress. Dear one, can you accept that the holier you become, the more holiness you crave? Can you accept that the more you become aware of your own flaws, the more willing you are to accept flaws in others? I am at peace that you are coming to know Me better. Each day brings growth of some kind for you, even if that growth originates in mistakes acknowledged and corrected.

I understand you dear apostle. I know that on some days you are ready for the battle of holiness and that on some days you feel you are not strong enough for the battle. This is what I want to tell you. You rise each day and pledge your allegiance to the Father. This commitment of your day insures that your Father takes you each day in the condition He finds you. Each weakness is used to increase your humility and illuminate for you the path to transformation. Do not become discouraged by the need for improvement. If you but continue on the path you have embarked upon, you will experience greater holiness. It can be no other way because those who pledge allegiance to the Father are cared for in every detail. Our greatest goal for you is holiness because only in holiness will you find peace and joy. Look around you. How many have committed themselves to holiness as you have committed yourself to holiness? If you look at others, you will see that the Savior can count only a few as His committed apostles. And yet, every person, regardless of their condition, longs for the holiness you seek, even if their longing is denied and ignored (R.C. by themselves). My heart is moved to such pity for those who do not seek Me. Let your heart also be moved to pity. Show constant compassion, never judgment, to those who do not understand what they lack. I am trying to show you, My beloved apostle, that you have begun a journey that must be taken by each person who will spend eternity in the family of God. If others delay the journey, that is their affair. My beloved apostles understand that this journey, the journey to holiness, is the most important journey they will ever take. This is your first priority, My friends. Continue to make your pledge and I will see to it that you become holier.

November 1, 2007 All Saints

I desire to learn Spanish more quickly. I asked Fr. Ken whether he thought if I learned it they could let me be a teacher in the Hispano/a prayer group. He said it was a very good idea and he thought they would. I am feeling exultant about this possibility. Fr. Ken also said I could be a Eucharistic Minister and bring Holy Communion to Mary Jo, another daily communicant in the hospital. This filled my wish of many years to be able to bring Holy Communion to the daily communicants who would want Him more often than the once a week possibility.

In prayer today Jesus, Mary and Joseph told me that since I am too weak to want to suffer in union with them except with tiny penances, they have to use passive purification and by accepting heavy sufferings in my life I will be sanctified.

Nov. 5, 2007

Jesus, Mary and Joseph: Every day for you will be cross and resurrection. There is no escape from the cross and, for you, part of the cross will be that it is unpredictable so you cannot evade that.

Me: Yes, Jesus, Mary, and Joseph.

November 6, 2007

Regarding few people taking advantage of my Healing of Emotions groups, Fr. Ken remarked “people are looking for relief more than for healing. That’s why some prefer drugs to religion.”

November 7, 2007

I was discussing with Fr. Ken the sentence I got through Anne from Jesus: “I don’t lead all to Daily Mass.” I had asked her why it wasn’t part of the rule of the Returning Jesus Apostolate and she said that Jesus said He does not lead everyone that way.

Fr. Ken said he thought that since daily Mass is not obligatory it is more of a spirituality than a necessity for those who can go who are seeking holiness, but he said he wasn’t sure about that answer.

I asked Jesus again, and it seemed He told me that it is such a source of pain to Him to have so many at Sunday Mass receive Him by obligation not out of love and that He wants the daily Mass time to be just those who love Him in that way. There may be many reasons why someone who loves Him doesn’t respond to Him in the Eucharist the way those who go to daily Mass do. But, whatever the reason, (I thought, suppose they dislike the priest, or don’t like leaving the house, or don’t like being in groups and being seen by others, etc.) He leads them in other ways. He didn’t mean that He doesn’t wish they would love Him in the Eucharist enough to come if they could.

I thank you dear Jesus that by bringing me into the Church with the Von Hildebrand circle of daily communicants I could come into this mystery which is the center of my daily life. May I always receive You with fervent love.

November 10, 2007

Poem about a spiritual friend:

How heavy love is!

Were not my own sufferings

heavy enough

not to have to,

inescapably,

bear yours, too?

And, added on,

our differences,

like a tug of war.

How much it

sometimes costs

to have to hold hands

so tightly

that we can't

be pulled apart.

Jesus smiles at me,

waiting for me to see

that the weight of

the bond of love

is better even than

voluntarily

giving up candy for Lent!

November 12, 2007

Regarding conflicts and plans, the Holy Spirit seemed to say "Don't do anything you don't have to do that involves confrontation or fuss. That will give you more peace. Just pray and put these matters into the hands of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. This is the spirituality they want from you now."

November 13, 2007

Why am I so rattled?

The Holy Spirit: Because you are afraid to confront men. The answer isn't to avoid men or avoid speaking the truth if you disagree with them. I want you to speak the truth, but then to receive the healing in the fact that good men don't reject you for it. Accept as a cross that you will feel a little rattled just the same when you do it.

November 14, 2007 – day my mother died in 1987

God bless you, mother, on your eternal journey on this anniversary of your death so long ago!

Happy comic incident:

Since even though I adore my dentures now, I still don't chew well, I have nightmares about having someday to live on that awful stuff they put in feeding tubes - Ensure, and I have been dreaming of French potage soups for years with no idea how to make them.

A friend I haven't seen in 50 years sent me an old food mill and a recipe for leek soup. This is a simple manual gadget that dates back a century at least. I was afraid of the mill and decided to try it out on apple sauce first. I didn't know how much water to use so I threw the whole water and cooked apples into the mill and got a sort of non-cider drink instead of apple sauce.

On the soup, the amounts were right but I never noticed it had 2 notch-like links to put over the bowl the puree seeps into so I had it slanted badly and then realized it is probably made for right hand people since the left hand way didn't seem to work well. Finally I noticed the second notch to balance the mill over the bowl and then realized you have to keep pouring the liquid through again and again, not just once.

But it came out silky, and tasty, just with salt, and exactly that fabulous taste of French soups in the winter I remember from some trip.

And now I can make lots of these soups and live happily ever after....fat chance....but at least I don't have to worry about only having tube-feeding stuff – Ensure.

(Note in 2013 – I never stopped making these soups with this grinder. The leeks were too expensive, so I started making the potage with left-overs, especially when visiting homes where lots of left-overs get dumped, and calling it “garbage soup” for fun. You will read more about this in subsequent journals.

November 17, 2007

I am thrilled with the door to door evangelization – how welcoming people have been to us, even inviting us in. Another Anglo woman going door to door was so edified to learn that her hispano partner, who is being deported after living here 8 years,

instead of being bitter thinks that Jesus wants him to go home so he can witness there to family and thrilled with another partner who told her about how he found Jesus who healed him of alcoholism and other vices.

During the Hispanic prayer group I felt such a soaring of soul and then these thoughts:

We think of heaven as

absence of tears and sin

But what about the positive?

What will it be like to have

Nothing ugly...only beauty!

Nothing gauche...only graceful!

Nothing discordant...only harmony!

Nothing clawing...only peace!

Nothing sour...only sweetness;

Nothing perplexing...only clarity;

Nothing frightening...only love.

Only Jesus can bring us there!

Maranatha!

November 21, 2007

Thinking about the affinity of the dedicated widow with her pastor: of course, like nuns we are doing the same liturgy of the hours every day and going to the Mass and less busy with family, so, like him, just living for Christ and the parish.

November 24, 2007

I went to Asheville to visit Ruth and Richard Ballard (a couple, Lutheran ministers, who became Catholics a few years ago). I went out with Richard in the cold to pray in front of the abortion clinic. It is so wonderful to see a woman speaking into a

microphone since we can't go into the parking lot saying in a sweet Southern accent: "I had an abortion years ago and it always hurts even now to think of it, please come and talk to me before you go in." Also there was a Black Pentecostal man who goes to Messianic Jewish services and who comes every day they do abortions and blows the shofar for repentance. It sounded like such a lament. I was thrilled with the zeal of my friend Richard to go out in the cold every Saturday to pray.

I talked to Ruth about my anxiety and frantic driven-ness. She thought I should avoid being *consumed* by the projects. If I am letting God work through me it would not be frantic. Franticness is from Satan. He takes our virtues and distorts them. He wants to turn my intensity into frantic activity. She thought I should hope to be not carefree but crush-free.

November 27, 2007

A not so secular secular Christmas? (I always get bent out of shape because of my daughter making a glorious early Christmas but does not go to Mass for Christmas. This poem gives her side and brought tears to my eyes. If you don't get the poem right away, her explanation (included below) of it does make it clearer.)

Near the Beginning

We've made an early tree.

We'll halt for bliss

you see.

You don't? You do! We're taut, we're skinned,

we're night: we're hosting suns. We entertain

our blasts of music: velvet, pierced and aching,

spilling comets. When

all our lost ones, slight as lights, as broad

as sound come winking, stand alive, we'll know.

We'll know to bow and weep; to weep and bow.

Our tree will die

early, before the kings arrive, but we
have licked a finger, pointed at the sky,
and written something / nothing / radiance
exploding, losing light;
our strong amen.

=====

(explanation for a friend not me)

CL: for you, I'll unwrap at the risk of boring everyone else: it's Christmas, yes it is already, and I insisted on starting it immediately after Thanksgiving, as I'm usually not let to do. Last year, times were even more straitened and my mother bought us a little plastic tree. It was a good brave soldier but this year, Steve who doesn't really love the holiday so much, nevertheless felt it might be important to get a real tree and soon. He and second-oldest son (Alex) are half murdering this 10-footer through the door and it tilts naturally into a ramp or slope and so then we are holding it up with wire loops and Steve laughing and involved and looking like a ranger in a plaid lumberjack shirt and Alex wondering if one might fall asleep holding a tree and me with 12 huge boxes of "things" to put on a tree or the windows or everywhere there's a little slot...oh, and the last-year tree mounted just outside the front window, still the sturdy little soldier and Martina and I going out into the freeze to put plastic bright ornaments on it because it was otherwise sad...anyway, finally it's all done. 18 Santa's beam or glare from behind various plaster or fur beards: they stand on the window shelf looking like God or Fr. Ken dolls (the local priest who comes to call now and again and is very enjoyed so long as he promises not to proselytize), a very loosely-slung net of lights around any window that can take it, and oh, the TREE, the huge TREE. I sit in the dark-that-can't-anymore-be-dark and through my fuzzy eyes (terribly near-sighted without contacts) each light practically booms with halos, winks bigger and bigger. The mind explodes in a muddle-works of Christmases, each one full of whatever brand of hope that this big-little and really terribly tough family of mine has wintered in the past decade. Last year, the boys had a father and he arrived in a large white limousine to collect them. He arose from the back seat and executed a bow. Another year, whilst that father and I were in our own death-throes (of divorce) we nonetheless struggled together with just the same sort of tree, for the sake of the children, yes, but maybe for ourselves as well. There were trees cut from the mountains of Sedona: thirty dollars and you cut it yourself. Those were strange, spare, haunted and very tall beings - but oh, what you can do when you decorate such a tree on three levels: the in, the middle, the out. And I spiral gently

backward, down and through and there is the small fake tree Diana and I put up every Christmas: a glum and gloomy and ancient fellow with red, blue, yellow-tipped branches (not many of them and all bent and twisty) but still loved, so very, very loved. And the first-ever house we saw in California that was so brilliantly garish with decor that all the adults snorted in distaste but the little twins in their blue coats knew they were in heaven and danced their strange dances and told each other stories in strange tongues as twins must always do. Anyway...trees. This is an early one, by which I simply mean that it will be very shaggy and dry by Epiphany (by which day even Christmas-mad Mama will admit that the tree should come down). But we will make ourselves a grand Christmas this year, oh we WILL. Everyone very much wants to do so: it's been a tough, tough, year and even tough, tough, children get scraped down to the bark sometimes. But you see, CL, the whole black night of the soul is taut and stretched and too many people bowing their last bow and then dying...going where? Going. But I give you this: whilst there are two or three little mamas, you and I, anyone else who needs this year to glow, there will be houses wreathed in magic, dancing children, spots of brightness, and you know, CL, YOU KNOW: we are enough. We have our dead ones coursing through our own blood now. We are enough.

November 28 2007

Great answers to prayer: A woman in one of my Spirituality of the Emotions groups was having difficulty with her son-in-law. The Holy Spirit told her to try to see him not as an in-law but as if he were her own real son and it changed her whole attitude.

Cindy is a woman who wandered into our Church with her husband one evening. She has terrible problems with alcohol and nicotine addiction. She is becoming a friend. She told me today that she had a dream vision of Jesus and peace. She recently moved here and said I was her only friend.

November 29, 2007

Fr. Ken thought of a metaphor he told us about during a dialogue at a daily Mass last week. Just as before the rocket goes beyond gravity there is this enormous concentrated energy and power for the lift off, so, by analogy, the part past the gravity of our daily life concerns and terrible earthly conflicts is where we enter into the place beyond gravity, the kingdom of God. This seemed to me also a metaphor for death struggle and then liberation into the eternal. Later I thought, was the resurrection of Christ from the tomb that kind of lift off of His body beyond time and space and gravity into a new form – his Resurrected Body?

I took a nap and woke up feeling as if Fr. Ken and I were at the top of a Chagall painting, flying. Then like the line from Goethe Martin loved so much which Mahler enshrined at the end of the 8th symphony: “Alles vergenliche nur est un gleichness.” (sp.) I felt reconciled and blissful and something to do with the idea of Scripture as archetypal – a category above literal or false and that after all the battles in the Church, one day we will be lifted off and up into the pure kingdom of God.

On another subject, I thought the good part of being a twin (I have a twin sister, Carla De Sola, the sacred dancer) is wanting to be so close to others; bad is how awful it feels that the fit is never perfect. (Since this time, my twin and I with my daughter twins have spend a lot of time analyzing this state of being. The point is that the fit with the original twin was never perfect

either, but was so much closer than what came afterwards in friendships or, or sometimes in marriages that we look back and pretend it was.)

November 28, 2007

Nothing difficult going on. Why do I feel so anxious and fluttery?

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph: If it is important for you to know why, we will tell you. Otherwise pray against the devil, St. Michael's prayer, and just keep going with what you planned to do, and offer it up. Believe that offering it up *is beneficial*.

November 30, 2007

I was thinking about how easy and good my life is right now and wondering why I wasn't happier about it. I thought with horror, is it because there is nothing I do now that brings the type of applause speakers get? Do I want admiration instead of love?

Jesus, Mary, Joseph: Silly. We applaud you for all your efforts and intense desire to be a more loving person. Now is a kind of sea change to a quieter life in your old age. You must quietly trust as this process goes on. Be of good cheer. We are helping you. Just pray "Jesus, Mary, Joseph give me trust" when you feel anxious.

Fr. Ken said that it is not wrong to think of the priest celebrating Mass as a performance. Ideally performance = forming something into the perfect shape, which is the way Fr. Ken tries to celebrate Mass, and does, so beautifully.

I could think about performing my little deeds of love as perfectly as possible.

December 1, 2007

At Spanish prayer meeting, a sense when reading the Gospel of St. John in Spanish that these were the words read by our De Sola ancestors who were Catholic.

On my grandfather's side we were the Jewish branch but there was a part who converted centuries back who probably prayed for the Jewish ones to know Jesus, and who read Scripture in Spanish.

December 1, 2007 Message to Anne Direction for Our Times

Jesus

We are a faith of waiting. You wait for Me to return to the world and I wait for souls to return to Me. You feel a longing for Me and for goodness that causes you pain at times. I feel a similar longing for souls in the world who have rejected Me and so suffer the pain of separation from Me. How they hurt. How their wounds disturb them and cause them to hurt others. My heart sighs with loneliness for them. I ache to comfort them and console them. I long to heal their wounds. You, My beloved apostles, comfort Me in this grief by sharing this experience with Me. I am comforted by your fidelity to Me which is reflected in your

fidelity to the cause of your brothers and sisters. As I wait, so do you wait and as I suffer, so do you suffer. I speak to you today, though, to remind you of something. As I rejoice, so should you rejoice. Rejoice with Me at the return of many souls just as perhaps others rejoiced at your return. Rejoice with Me at the healing of many souls, just as perhaps others rejoiced at your healing. You will rejoice that others return to Me through your consistent and humble service. We are a faith of waiting, it is true, but we are also a faith of rejoicing. The Father's goodness spreads out over the earth in this time in waves of kindness and benevolence. You, My beloved apostles, gently push these waves out with your commitment to My service. The great mercy of the Father draws souls to My heart, the heart that burns steadily, a furnace of divine compassion and love. We are waiting, yes. But while we are waiting, we are preparing. You prepare to receive your King and I prepare to receive the fruits of your service. Be at peace, My beloved friends. We serve together, we suffer together, and we rejoice together. Be assured that you are loved and that your loneliness is temporary. I am returning.

December 6, 2007

A milestone: a Hispanic neighbor woman in our apartment square, mother of little ones, knocked on my door when it was dark already. She mentioned she needed diapers. I offered her money but she said she didn't need dinero; she needed a ride to the store. Of course I took her. She only asked me, I realized, because we had gone door to door and stopped at her house. It felt so good that someone was not afraid to ask me. That's how neighborhoods used to be before everyone became afraid of each other. I could speak to her well enough in Spanish.

December 8, 2007

Make a hermitage of our hearts Jesus, Mary and Joseph seemed to tell me.

December 9, 2007

In a sermon Fr. Ken said that Advent is about awaiting the joy of salvation and we cannot do that if we don't remove from our hearts the obstacles. Then we will be lighter. I thought without self-righteous anger I will be lighter.

December 7-11 two dear old friends, Daniel Varholy and Anne Lassiter from Corpus Christi, Texas, visited me Morganton, North Carolina to do videos and discussion of my Spirituality of the Emotions for Watershed – a Catholic media enterprise in Texas.

Dec. 10, 2007

In a beautiful poem to St. Philip Neri by the English martyr priest Robert Southwell Daniel read these lines:

“Thy soul became as purest glass/Through which the Brightness Incarnate/

In undimmed majesty might pass/Transparent and illuminate.

It seemed like an image of Fr. Ken's way of pouring himself into his Masses.

Poem written by Daniel – some read at my Writing Group – much appreciated by the members.

Night Fishing

The water's flow that frames the night

And passes round our ears at rest

In Jesus' presence held aloft

On monstrance height directs our hearts.

The flow of prayers that guide the soul,

The tide of holy fond desire

Is brushed like ocean's breath to press

The sails that bear our souls to God.

And in the night of vigil tasks

Our souls will call for other souls

To gather here at prayer and have

Their angels carry grace upon

The water's flow of night that waits

For dawn to bring to those who hope

For prayer and those who have lost sight

Of hope's embracing harbor hold

Something of peace and holy rest

To form the heart and hold it dear.

Southern Coasts

On southern coasts amidst the palms and oil,
Between the big box stores and malls who spread
Their coats like ranging cattle on the plain,
There still remains a gentle sense of place
To screen the heart from toxic gasps that lull
One mightily away from home, the hope
Of being true to something resonant
Within that finds a super-store a chore,
That shopping heavy labor is indeed—
What loneliness there is in concrete spread
In vastness forming full consumer shrines
With holocausts on offer that attend
And wait for purchase, friendly wave and swipe
Of credit card for satisfaction spent.
Away from here my heart in yearning calls
And then so far removed from AC gasps,
The stir and whirl of fetid air I turn
To hear the bay front winds and smell the fog
And sense the fish and creaking sound of boats
That brush their docks and paint the night with sounds;
This coastal bend is here waiting for hearts
To listen in their stead, recalling still

The simple life that's lived within a place.

December 13, 2007

It is the first day of the car being up for sale. The idea is to quit driving and hire the grandsons who need the money to schlep me around. I feel a little anxious but basically light and joyful . I feel more drawn to the quiet life.

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph: We appreciate all the work you have done for the kingdom with cars and the great sacrifice it was to drive (being a zero-sensate- that is a personality type that is poor at sensory things, preferring intellectual concepts - I am a very tense driver). We honor your sacrifice of 43 years of bad driving. Now we are releasing you from that burden. Your angel is relieved also. Trust in us.

December 14, 2007

From a letter to friend with 4 children under 7.

"I think Christmas is a difficult time for Moms. My daughter Carla is the only one who loves it - she sets up zillions of lights on Thanksgiving day, inside and out, has 25 Santa Clauses, 3 Nativities and 5 presents for each family member bought on e-bay. I supply the Advent wreath and prayer and the Mass - guess what? Christ-MASS I usually intone sarcastically every few days. Maybe she'll come this time. I have 3 grandchildren going to Mass and catechism, so that's pretty wonderful. One is an altar boy at our fantastic polyphony incense English high Mass.

"I finally figured out why Christmas is hard for me. I remember with joy Christmas as a child. Even atheists give in and have a tree and presents. By contrast as a mother you have all the work and none of the childish unencumbered glee.

In any case, this is probably the most difficult time in terms of burdens of parenting you will ever know. The only mothers I ever saw who were easy with it were this kind that let the kids run the house totally while they sit and drink coffee and eat cake. I knew 2 of these - one had 10 children, the other had 5 (she said finally she realized that the best answer to grandparental criticism of her as a mother was to say "I let my kids bring themselves up!" So just figure if you can survive each day you are doing A plus for you. Only God knows the sacrifice and the love behind the sacrifice."

Shalom, Ronda

December 17, 2007

A beautiful reading from William of Saint Thierry Office of Readings: Everything that Jesus did appeals to us, stirring up our love "You know that this disposition could not be forced on men's hearts, my God, since you created them; it must rather be elicited. And this, for the further reason that there is no freedom where there is compulsion, and where freedom is lacking, so too is righteousness."

Jesus, please gentle my heart to believe this and not dream of coercing people to do the good.

From a letter to a friend who was complaining that her husband won't help her clean up the house for Christmas guests.

“From praying for you sporadically throughout the night and early morning I came up with a fantastic solution that will keep you laughing all day long: Imagine a new TV series where you have this gimmick: The living room of a couple: Each wife and husband secretly writes a list of all the qualities he or she has difficulty with in the spouse and a hidden list of all the virtues and other attractive traits of the spouse. Only the viewers get to see the list of positive traits.

Then, presto, it's the next day and each one gets a look alike spouse who has none of the bad traits and none of the good traits.

So you have a man who looks exactly like J.R., for example, and he is a militaristic clean up order freak. The house has only one picture on each wall. Each kid has a closet with 5 of each type of garment, and 5 books. Hubby leaves for commute to work at 7 AM and returns at 7 PM. Wifey has the care of the children all day long since she home schools with no relief. Hubby never says anything interesting, amusing or delightful. All he says on the cell as he drives home is: "Baby girl, when I get home I am expecting the dinner on the table and the kids all bathed, etc. etc. etc.” Try it as a thought experiment!

December 20, 2007

I often think that God works with me especially by surprising me. What a surprise it would be if He mostly wants me to do little deeds of love in my old age vs. writing and speaking! This thought came after helping a Guatamalan grandmother, her daughter-in-law and baby take frozen turkeys from the parish to their homes.

December 21, 2007

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph: See how we are using everything in you for door to door evangelization and other works: your friendliness even to eccentric people, since you were so used to such as a child. Just relax and go with the Holy Spirit.

I was thinking during Las Posadas taking place in the Church for the hispanos (as) that the Church is their home, not just a place to go on Sunday for Mass.

And, also, how the widow is a sort of grandmother-figure in that home of the Church.

Because God released my tight grip on having to write books all the time between teaching and talks, I now have so much time to do anything that comes up around the parish and I see how God is using everything from the past - for instance now many of my friends are bi-polar people - two men came into the Church building and were perusing the library - one was a bi polar slow strange man with red around his eyes and the other a bi-polar ex Air Force man who takes care of the first one. I find I am so friendly to such people because we (my twin sister and I) were brought up to like eccentricity and even though this is different we

tolerate it much better than conventionally brought up people would. Also, going door to door, all the friendliness comes out as I try to link up with whatever is in that house when some invite me in - such as one is an older Episcopal couple with books and classical music around. It is a whole new adventure for me. I just invite them to visit our Church and make friends vs. apologetics which I thought I was going to do. My door to door partner, a young Mayan single mother, came by and saw my sister Carla's pictures and tells me she is longing to do sacred dance so I will loan her the video of my sister doing it.

December 22, 2007

Thoughts about the priest on or off the altar:

Some priests carry over a certain formality from the altar to the rest of their lives – a certain stiff distance that makes them not too approachable.

By contrast, some priests carry over from their life off the altar onto the altar an informal slightly ingratiating demeanor which distracts from the sublimity of the Mass.

Our priest is almost 2 different persons: with vestments (Mass, Reconciliation, Baptisms) and without

- one a sublime disappearance of personality into the august role;
- the other a delightful, wise, amusing, individualistic friend.

I realize, this is unusual, and makes it seem as if it is almost not the same man! As if I know 2 men: Fr. Ken, and Ken. Even though slightly disconcerting, I don't think this is a flaw at all. I think this is the way it should be.

At the hispano(a) prayer meeting I thought about how we talk so much about enculturation and that this is enculturation to the hilt, but not as we expected it. It is the baptizing of a very masculine culture and of the popular culture of electric guitars.

There was so much energy in the room filled with about 250 people, mostly very young. I thought of the Scripture "the violent bear it away." Being the only Anglo or Americano as they say, in the group, I feel by now like a sort of mascot.

The leadership seems to have accepted me. I am learning Spanish with a wonderful teacher from the group, Guillermo. We are working on a translation of my basic anger management talk to give as a teaching to this group.

I was happy with the meditation on Christmas given by Miguel Sebastian, one of the leaders who wants to be a deacon one day. He preached on the contrast between the way Christmas is prepared for in our culture and Mary pondering everything in her heart. He suggested that the best preparation for Navidad would be to go to Confession.

There was a special greeting one of another for Christmas at the end of the meeting. One of the leaders made a point of giving me a hug. I went up to commend the head, Rafael, on the excellence of the way the meeting is run. He said very simply, "Stay with us." I felt moved since I have been so hoping that I would be accepted by them even though I am so different.

December 24, 2007

Such a beautiful line from St. Augustine in the Office of Readings: (Men of good will) “sweetly linked by the bond of unity.”
Yes!

The Holy Spirit suggested to me to call godchildren and/or their parents this Christmas. I called an old friend of mine who honored me by having me be godmother of one of her children and confirmation sponsor of another. She shed tears of joy to hear my voice again. I forgot that even though she had 10 children when I met her, she somehow thought herself unworthy to receive Holy Communion even though she went faithfully to Mass on Sundays. I persuaded her to receive. Now, some 30 years later she says that she remembered how I went to daily Mass always and now she goes because she feels so lonely with the children all grown up! Jesus, in the Eucharist, helps her each day.

A charming incident. My daughter, Carla, thought Fr. Ken would be hungry saying all those Masses (7) between Christmas Eve and Christmas. She insisted we take him a plate of food and sure enough he had been eating fast foods and was delighted.

December 25, 2007

Due to large gifts from other family members Carla and Steve could have a lavish Christmas as usual for the kids, especially important because it was the first Christmas since the father of the boys died.

December 26, 2007

I got this wonderful e-mail from a Catholic Canadian man (not of Jewish ancestry) who is doing RCIA programs in Israel for Jews who I send a little money to.

“Dear David, Kathleen, Athol, Ronda (we are all part of the Association of Hebrew Catholic),

I just wanted to wish you a most merry Christmas season and update you on our Christmas event here. Christmas Eve was the most amazing evening. I gave my multi-media intro lesson to Christmas at Notre Dame of Jerusalem church. I advertised late and so I didn't know whether even 20 people would show up. But in the end the room was packed with some 150 Israelis – I taught all of salvation history leading to the coming of Jesus, Messianic prophecies and the gospel point blank, and they were all riveted. You could hear a pin drop. People were sitting everywhere on the floor, overflowing out of the back door. Then we had midnight mass and the auditorium was also packed with some 500 people! Wow. What is God doing with His people these days?
Amazing.”

December 28, 2007

A phone call apprized me of a new venture in Southern California some old friends of mine are starting. Immediately “visions of sugar plums danced in my head.”

I went to Adoration and Jesus, Mary and Joseph, seemed to tell me:

“Little one, for now peace and a more quiet life. Don’t jump. Let things unfold and then we will tell you what offers to take up and how such as if this California venture is really off the ground you could teach there for a month in the summer. How many times have we told you not to push? You can’t help getting excited about plans because that is part of your Crusader nature wanting things to be better for yourself and the Church, but if you rush and push and try to coerce, you are not respecting PROCESS and then a lot of peaceless energy is wasted.”

I was feeling bad about getting over-exuberant and a little sassy at a social occasion with two men friends. I asked the Holy Spirit why I was like that. The Holy Spirit seemed to tell me that because my father and Martin and Charlie never wanted to talk to me about my ideas, I get a little over excited when any men friends want to have conversations with me. That is not something bad to feel, but part of my need for greater peace. Over-excitedness should not lead me to self-flagellation.

Now comes the part I am not sure is the Holy Spirit since it could be just me analyzing something. It seems to me possibly that I am a little manic-depressive and that workaholism in the past and rage, hid this, but I don’t need to be afraid of it. It is not extreme. The Holy Spirit seemed to want me to see that they use my enthusiasm in good ways and the melancholy swings force me to be close to them for hope.

December 31 2008

Letter to my sister, Carla, whose husband is nearing death:

“I was reading a comic book in Spanish about St. Francis and I was thinking, of course, we need to pray for Sister Death as he did. Anyhow here is my attempt:

Dear God, you know how my sister is suffering, wanting this suffering to be beautiful in a spiritual way in the midst of so much practical turmoil. Please give her strength to live through this and let her fears be transfigured into awe at the mystery of Sister Death which brings us not to the nothingness we imagined as atheists, but to new eternal Life. Amen.

Jesus, Mary and Joseph seemed to want to tell me about my feelings of rejection by my family. The Holy Family used my family’s rejection of my writing and “wisdom” to have me put all that energy toward being a teacher and speaker to others. In what I thought was a charming joke I heard in my heart: “We use your journal writing to do a hermeneutic on your own neurotic interpretations of your life and also to counteract the devil’s hermeneutic” (as in my going into a guilt trip over being over-excited talking to male friends just because they actually like to dialogue with me).

Senora Magdalena, the 77 year old grandmother who walks to Church sometimes 3 hours was able to show me with sign language and mixed tiny bits of Spanish and English that after the noon Mass for day before New Year's she wanted to stay also for the 5 PM Mass and could she stay at my apartment. I was delighted. She had a long sleep in my chair while I went swimming at the pool and then I gave her some lunch and then I realized I couldn't talk to her. She only speaks some Mayan dialect. What could we do? I played the Kyrie of Bach's B Minor Mass and she listened very intently standing near the computer with the disc in it. It felt very good to have her here.

It was good to see our seminarian Ben visiting. He is radiant with happiness as a soon to be deacon.

New Year's Eve adoration I asked Jesus, Mary, and Joseph about the Consecrated Widows of the Good Shepherd, an emerging community who would like me to join them. (I met the foundress and one of the members during my EWTN widow's series where they came to talk about their community, so I knew I liked them). My spiritual director thinks it's a good idea. Jesus Mary and Joseph seemed to say "Yes, but don't push. Let it unfold in good order. Yes, a branch here in Morganton with you as the head here but under Sister Elizabeth Seton as the head of the wider group would be good. We would like this, but if there is too much opposition, realize it is not the key. Your vocation is to be some form of consecrated or dedicated widow, but it doesn't matter so much what form it takes. When you feel anxious and want to push sing "Ich bin dein, und du bist mein," (words from a famous Bach Cantata which mean "I am Yours and You are mine." I thought that if I become part of this Order I would take the name Sister Conchita (after the grandmother Mexican widow saint who wrote so many books.) Later I realized that this was the Vigil of the Feast of Mary, Mother of God, and that I almost always get special graces on her Feast days.