



# San Damiano Sun

Volume 6 Number 1 Spring 2013

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## Sixth Spiritual Direction Class Graduate April 28



ters of Notre Dame Spirituality Center in Ipswich, MA. The retreat focused on discernment and was directed by Sister Joanne Meyer, OSF, of Milwaukee, WI.

Spiritual Direction is a growing ministry in the Catholic Church as well as in other faith traditions. It provides individuals the opportunity to meet with a trained spiritual companion who helps them listen to their inward journey of faith and develop a deeper relationship with God.

### Class of 2013

The sixth spiritual direction class of San Damiano House of Prayer will graduate on Sunday, April 28, at 2 p.m. at a Eucharistic Liturgy in St. John the Evangelist Parish, North Chelmsford, MA. The class has been meeting Saturdays, once a month, for two years. They also served as spiritual direction interns in their third and final semester of the program.

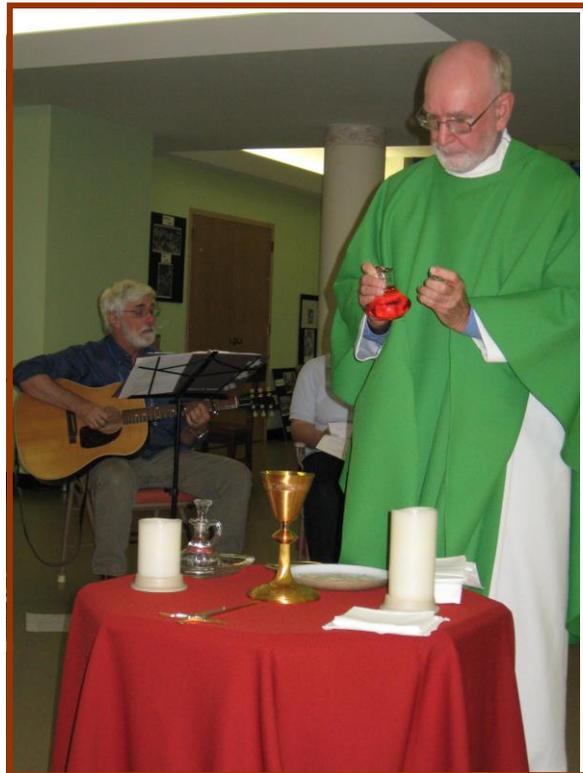
The class consists of 10 members (pictured above, front row left to right)

Jennifer Kelleher  
Maria Dzierzek  
Elizabeth McCarthy  
Mary Casey  
Virginia Chapman

(back row, left to right) Cynthia  
Stack

Geraldine Kelly  
Cliff Garvey  
Sister Mildred Rothwell, OSF  
Kathy Schlecht

As part of the two year training, students participated in a weekend retreat at the Sis-



Father Norman Comtois, OMI, presides at the retreat liturgy as Alan Hicks, Class of 2010, in background, leads the group in singing.

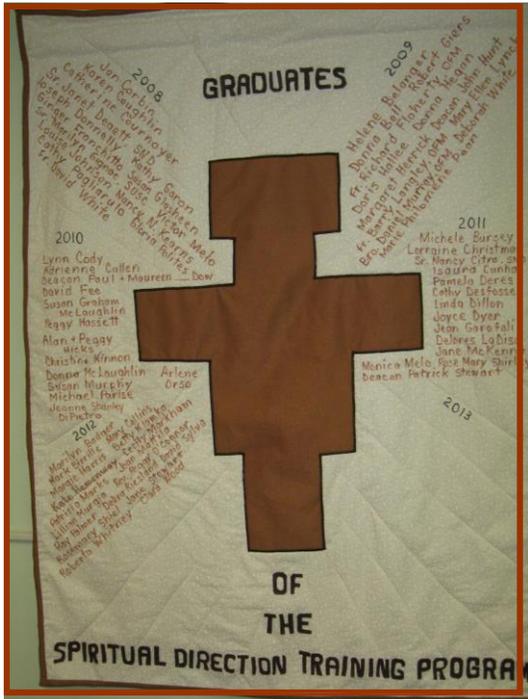
# San Damiano Alums Making a Difference!

by Fr. Barry Langley, OFM, Class of 2009

At St. Anthony Shrine in Downtown Boston, a significant core of the staff of the Franciscan Crossing in Boston, alums from the San Center for Spiritual Companionship at St. An-Damiano Spiritual Direction Program are making a big difference in the lives of people.

This group of men and women are both lay and religious, married and single, ordained and not. All of them give witness to the loving presence of God in our lives and in our world and offer a welcoming heart to all those who seek a companion on their journey through life with God.

We are all grateful for our time traveling to Lowell and to the wonderfully gracious and home-like atmosphere of the San Damiano House of Prayer. Our sessions there during our training enlightened us and further opened our hearts to the multiple ways God is made manifest to us every single day.



A quilt, made by Fr. Barry Langley, showing all of the graduates, hangs in the classroom at San Damiano House of Prayer.

The graduates are:

- Fr. Richard Flaherty, OFM, Class of 2009;
- Jean Garofoli, Class of 2011; Robert Giers, Class of 2009;
- Nancy Nichols Kearns, Class of 2008;
- Fr. Barry Langley, OFM, Class of 2009;
- Br. Daniel Murray, OFM, Class of 2009;
- Rev. Peggy O'Connor, Class of 2012
- Clara Wood, Class of 2012;

also, Fr. Jim Czerwinski, OFM, who is currently a student in the program. They are a



Father Barry      Father Richard      Brother Dan



Nancy Kearns      Jean Garofoli



Robert Giers      Peggy O'Connor      Clara Wood

# Days of Enrichment Being Sponsored by San Damiano Alumni Committee



Sister Caroline Smith, SSMN

San Damiano House of Prayer in Lowell, MA offers enrichment days sponsored by the Alumni of the Spiritual Direction Training Program. In 2013 there are two such days being offered that are open to the public:

On Saturday, June 8, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. at Franco American School in Lowell “Finding God in Your Dreams” will be presented by Sister Caroline Smith, SSMN.

Sister Caroline is Provincial of the Sisters of Saint

Mary of Namur in Buffalo, NY. She holds an MA in Theological Studies with a specialization in Spiritual Direction from the Jesuit School of Theology in Cambridge, MA and a Ph.D. in Pastoral Counseling from Loyola College, Baltimore.

She received additional training in Spiritual Direction and Ignation Retreats at Guelph Spirituality Center in Ontario, Canada.

A licensed Counselor, Sister Caroline has worked extensively in Jungian dream work and the integration of the spiritual and psychological. She has been leading retreatants through the 30-day Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius for over 25 years.

The Suggested donation is \$30 (lunch included). Please register by Friday, May 31, 2013, with your name, address, phone num-

ber (see form below) and mail to:

Sister Linda Greenwood  
333 Pawtucket St.  
Lowell, MA 01854

or you may email Sister Linda with the information at [lgosf@netzero.net](mailto:lgosf@netzero.net).



Saturday, November 9,  
2013  
10 a.m.—3 p.m.

An Enrichment Day will be offered to those in the Ministry of Spiritual Direction  
“Supervision: Individual and Group”  
Led by Lucy Abbot Tucker

At the same time and date  
“Bereavement... touches us all... how do we touch it?”  
Led by Thomas Tucker

## From the Desk of Director Sister Linda Greenwood, OSF



Sr. Linda Greenwood, OSF

Dear Friends,

Spring is here and although we still have snow outside my window, I believe that new life will be appearing very soon!

In this newsletter you will see that we are moving along with our dream of offering a variety of opportunities to the bereaved. Saint Francis of Assisi, often referred to death as "Sister Death".

I am the oldest of seven in my family, plus I have been a sister with the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi for 43 years. I have come to know that a sister is a person who loves you as you are, in good times and in bad...in birth and in death...in awaiting life in all forms of life. I wonder if this is what Francis of Assisi saw in the naming of "Sister Death"?

Sister Kay (Kenan) and I have been ministering here at San Damiano House of Prayer for thirteen years. We have striven to listen to the needs of this local community and connect the talents of the many to help respond to those needs.

It is very clear to us that we are willing to serve people who voice two very basic needs in their lives - Spirituality and Bereavement. As you read through this Newsletter, you will notice the many ways we have come to know these two needs as our daily friends.

We also know that we need the money of many to provide the services we continue to offer. Just this past week, I received one e-mail requesting a scholarship to participate in our fall Spiritual Direction Training Program, an individual wanting to participate in our coming Retreat Day for Parents who have lost a child, and another person wanting spiritual direction, but unable to pay at this time in their life.

I try to welcome all...and yet I do know that in order to do this, we need to

have people like you to help us financially. On the next two pages of this Spring Newsletter you will find information sharing how we are trying to respond to these needs.

As I bring this article to a close, I want to say thanks in advance to anyone choosing to financially support us and for all who are keeping us in their prayers. I do hate asking for money but I believe in what we offer. Please help us if you can!

We have been blessed abundantly...May we give thanks to our loving God.

Peace and all good,

Sr. Linda Greenwood, OSF  
Director

San Damiano House of Prayer



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# Projected needs for the near future:



**Foundational Funding...**Caring for the next three to five to seven years...

Projecting goals: presented to the New Stewardship Committee 2/28/13

2 years from now by 2015

**Staff** Administrative Assistant—20—25 hours per week  
Coordinator of the Bereavement Ministries—20 hours per week  
Co-Director of the Spiritual Direction Ministries—20 hours per week

Can we project in the next two years to have enough money to hire staff?  
What can we do to achieve this goal?  
What amount of money will we need? How can we generate these funds?

5 years from now by 2018

## Residence/s in House

Have other lay people living with us.  
They will take on some of the work load to continue to care for this house.  
We are discerning various possibilities around this goal.

7 years from now by 2020—the Fall after our 20th Anniversary

OSF Sisters will remove themselves completely from leading this ministry...

## We have created three different “Fundraisers”.

- ➔ One is our “**Begging Bowl**” requesting “monthly giving”. We have 10 people now sending us a monthly donation. They range from \$5.00 to \$200.00
- ➔ “**Stones for San Damiano**” We are hoping to install a memorial walk connecting our Peace Garden to the Peace Walk and the outdoor Pergola Sanctuary. Each stone will have the names of those wanting to be remembered by those who use these areas. The names can be in gratitude, in memory, etc. Stones will have varied sizes—each one having a price tag based on the size of the given stone. The suggested donation for the stones will range from \$25.00 to \$1,000.00.
- ➔ “**Internal Grant Building**” for Two Annual Events:
  - Emmaus Ministry to grieving parents who have lost a child in death.**  
We are offering two Retreat Days per year. It costs approximately \$1,000.00 per retreat. Would you like to sponsor one of these retreat days? Last October we had 17 parents participate. One parent lives in a shelter in Boston. How could we ever take a penny from her, or, even worse, refuse her this retreat experience?
  - Enrichment Days for Adults** sponsored by our Alumni Committee from our Spiritual Direction Training. We offer these one in the fall and another in the spring. We bring in good speakers. These were originally designed to enrich on a regular basis our alumni, but now we open these to any adults who wish to come. Funds could help us in this program. These also cost around \$1,000.00 for each.

## Step Four of Recovery Process Available

On occasion, we at San Damiano House of Prayer, receive requests for someone to participate in the Fourth Step of the Twelve Step Program. This article was written by an anonymous author. Hope you find it to be helpful.



Step Four in the Twelve Step Program is a personal inventory. The directions for the inventory are given by a sponsor and God, never done alone. Follow directions and take it one day at a time. The process is completed in one time if written each day for an hour. It is a fact-finding and fact-facing process. The process is an effort to discover the truth, to stop fooling about value.

Self, manifested in various ways, is defeating.

Set the resentments on paper. List people, institutions, or principles that cause anger. List the causes and effects of these resents. Go back through life, nothing counts but thoroughness and honesty.

This is not enough! People are wrong. This list holds the key to the future.

Referring to the list again, now “turn it around”. Resolutely look for mistakes. Now look for selfishness, dishonesty, self-seeing, and fears. In each case find the fault. The inventory is personal. Admit the wrongs honestly.

Next, list our fears. They are the evil and corroding thread, the fabric of existence. Again going back to each and “turning it around”. Then review them. They are there because self-reliance fails. Trust and rely on God!

In the third and final part of the inventory, review sex conduct over the years.

There are nine questions to ask. Shape a sane and sound ideal for the future. Remember, pocket the pride! Faith is doing what we can not do for ourselves.

Romans 8:28 “We know that all things work for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.”

Reference: “Alcoholics Anonymous” Fourth Edition.

Tradition Eleven: Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always to maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and films. We do have names and phone numbers of adults willing to walk with you in this Fourth Step. Call us at 978-441-0988 if you are in need.

## Spiritual Support Group for Grieving Parents

by Donna McLaughlin, Class of 2010

The next meeting of the new support group for parents who have lost a child will take place on Saturday, May 25th. The group will meet every last Saturday of the month from 10 to 11:30 am at San Damiano Prayer House. All parents are welcome to attend regardless of how long ago or how recent their loss has been.

Our flyer reads, “Join other grieving parents in a safe, comforting place for short scripture reading, sharing, fellowship and healing.” It is the hope of the team that parents will find it a comfort to be with other parents who have shared the same pain – to be able to say their child or children’s name out loud and tell their stories – and not to have to explain anything.

If you know of anyone who could benefit from this, please have them call either Sister Linda at 978-441-0988 or Donna McLaughlin at 978-658-2410.

Many of us have received support from other parents who have lost a child, who have a common belief, that we will see our child again in the future. Yes, 'Heaven' has made a place for all of us to unite. Please pass the word!!

Serving the Needs of Grieving Parents on Their Spiritual Journeys  
at  
San Damiano House of Prayer, Lowell, MA

**A Spiritual Retreat For Parents  
Who Have Experienced The  
Death of a Child  
Of Any Age, By any Cause**

Losing a child of any age by any cause is horrific. Focusing on the spirituality of the grieving process can help tremendously. Just as He comforted his grieving disciples on the road to Emmaus, Jesus comforts us and we comfort each other through this very special ministry.

Join other grieving parents and Religious in a warm and loving place—to think, to talk, to feel, and to pray. Find compassion, rest, and peace, at least for a time.

**The Emmaus Ministry for Grieving Parents  
At San Damiano House of Prayer  
333 Pawtucket Street  
Lowell, MA 01854**



**One-Day Retreat  
Saturday, June 22, 2013  
8:30 a.m.—8 p.m.  
\$50/person; \$75/couple**



Scholarships are available. Registrations must be received by June 1, 2013.

A Retreat Day is also scheduled for October 26, 2013.

Call Diane at 800-919-9332 for more information

Or complete the Registration Form on the next page and mail to:

**The Emmaus Ministry for Grieving Parents  
San Damiano House of Prayer  
333 Pawtucket Street  
Lowell, MA 01854**

## San Damiano Graduates Carry Out Mission in Jamaica

by Elizabeth McCarthy, Class of 2013



Elizabeth McCarthy, left, and Nancy Nichols Kearns with special needs children in Jamaica as part of their mission ministry. Note their Cardinal Stritch University tee shirts.

(Picture taken at Sophie's Place, Gordon Town, Jamaica, January 2013)

care for and house for life abandoned mentally and or physically disabled children in Kingston, Jamaica. Today Mustard Seed Communities serve these children, children with AIDS and other populations in Jamaica, Dominican Republic, Nicaragua and Zimbabwe.

For many years my husband and I have led a mission trip for Boston College Alumni and friends each January. In Jamaica, we live for one week in one of the many communities in dormitory style housing. Each day we assist the children's care givers, perform work project at several locations, pray at mid-day and each night reflect on the day's experiences.

Since first meeting the children of Mustard our experience that the children teach us Seed Communities in 2001 they have stayed how to live in Joyful hope with trustful dependence on God and gratitude for His love close to my heart. Msg. Gregory Ramkissoon founded this organization in 1978 to provide loving care.

Although we go to serve the children, it is

Serving the Needs of Grieving Parents on Their Spiritual Journeys

One-Day Spiritual Retreat

Saturday, June 22, 2013

San Damiano House of Prayer, 333 Pawtucket Street, Lowell, MA 01854

### Registration Form

Must be received no later than Saturday, June 1, 2013

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
Street City State Zip

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

Please register me for the One-Day Emmaus Ministry Retreat at San Damiano House of Prayer on June 22, 2013. Enclosed is my check made payable to "San Damiano House of Prayer" for one:  
8 Individual @ \$50      8 Couple @ \$75

Please be sure to cut out and send this Registration Form and your fee by June 1, 2013 to The Emmaus Ministry at San Damiano House of Prayer, 333 Pawtucket Street, Lowell, MA 01854

# The Seed of Prison Ministry

by Ray Palmer, LCG, Class of 2012



Some years ago, I was sent to St. Louis by the Boston chapter of Contemplative Outreach to prepare to serve as a Certified Prayer Group Facilitator or, one who trains

others to lead Centering Prayer groups. One day, I was speaking with a man from Texas who shared with me that he had served in prison ministry. I asked him what that was like. I can't remember his response but a seed was planted; a seed that would grow beyond my expectations.

During the time I was preparing to be a spiritual director, from time to time the suggestion was made that we could serve in prison ministry. As graduation time approached, I received an invitation to serve in prison ministry at a medium security facility.

I began a new journey and was asked to facilitate a prayer group. Our time together in the chapel is limited to approximately 50 minutes. We begin with Centering Prayer for just a few minutes. Then we practice Lectio Divina using the Scripture for Sunday's Gospel. The men are then invited to discuss openly what is important to them and how the Scripture readings may pertain to their lives. Stories are shared that one could not begin to imagine in the context of our lives but they are real examples of the pain and suffering that Christ endured for us all.



I attend mass with the men on Sundays. Father Donald does a wonderful job using Lectio Divina to discuss the Scriptures of the day with them. From time to time the sacraments of Baptism, First Communion and Confirmation are administered.

I also serve at a less secure or, pre-release facility. Men with lesser offenses, as well as those who have been transferred from the medium security facility to prepare for their release, live at this facility. It is here that I meet with the men on a more personal level.

Mass is at 2 o'clock on Saturdays. As men wander into the chapel, I greet them and introduce myself. Some share their complicated and painful stories which become lighter each time we come together.

Now that I have discerned and have entered the ministry, my prayer has changed. I find myself asking for the guidance to continue to listen to the Spirit, the grace to co-operate with His plan and be an instrument for His use.

## Peer Supervision Offered

An important part of the Spiritual Direction Ministry is supervision. San Damiano sponsors several peer supervision groups that are held monthly October to June at

San Damiano House of Prayer on the:  
1st Wed., 3:30-5 p.m. led by Amy Hunter  
2nd Tues., 1:30-3:00 p.m. led by Marilyn Kopriva

St. Andrew's, Billerica on the 3rd Thurs.,  
7-8:30p.m. led by Karen Coughlin  
For more information contact Sr. Linda,  
978-441-0988.

# The Gift of Sylvia

by Elizabeth McCarthy, Class of 2013

The announcement of a child to be born arrived as a gift on our fortieth wedding anniversary. Tiny red roses accompanied a beribboned scroll. Unfurled, it revealed the image of a new life growing and becoming within our daughter Susan's body. As the family gathered, Susan's response was consistent. "Do whatever is best for the baby." As the doctor tried one last measure to help progress the labor, I prayed the rosary. The rosary's medal portrayed the Blessed Mother cradling her baby. I thought of Mary so young and away from her family giving birth in a stable. Yet, she trusted God and accepted without question his plan for her. Mary knew God was with her, trusted His love for her and believed all would be well. I asked our Blessed Mother's help for Susan and her child and God for a faith like Mary's.

**"The beauty of her unconditional all-consuming love for this child whom she had carried but never touched, illuminated her and flowed through her."**

This news of a child to be born was the most blessed and treasured gift possible. To celebrate our wedding anniversary anticipating the newest fruit of our love and life together affirmed the life giving nature of love. It deepened and gave meaning to the marriage vows made so many years ago. Anticipating this child strengthened our family as we entered a kind of Advent a season marked by a spirit of expectation, anticipation, preparation, longing and hope. For our family, it was a time of waiting in joyful hope and preparing ourselves to be made new as an aunt, uncle, grandfather or grandmother by this child.

I was honored when Susan and her husband Rob asked me to be one of her birthing support persons. When her time was at hand,

When the procedure was successful, the doctor noticed my rosary and said. "Say another one; we are not there yet." As it became Sunday, I stood next to Susan watching her do all that was asked of her without hesitation. Rob's constant expressions of love support and encouragement strengthened and sustained her. Susan's whole being was concentrated on bringing her child into this world. She was beautiful in a way I had never witnessed before. The beauty of her unconditional all-consuming love for this child whom she had carried but never touched, illuminated her and flowed through her. This is the love our God has for each of us. Resting between contractions she was serene, purposeful and radiant. She looked like the Madonna.

The doctor noted both Susan and the baby were tiring and she needed to deliver soon. I prayed,



"God help Susan bring her baby into this world" I wanted to trust and to call to the baby to come but did not know her name. Then I remembered that God knew her from all eter-

nity and knitted her in Susan's womb. I recalled Isaiah's words of reassurance and Psalm 139. "Thus says the Lord who created you.. formed you ..Fear not I have called you by name: you are mine." (Isaiah 43:1),"The Lord called me from the womb, from the body of my mother he named my name." (Isaiah 49:1) and "Truly you have formed my innermost being ; you knit me in my mother's womb." (Psalm 139:13)

The moment of her birth was a sacred space. As I prayed the Hail Mary, Susan ministered to her child struggling toward the light. Bending down, Susan reached out her hands, grasped her child, brought her into the light and lifted her little one to herself to share her own warmth. The child now seen and touched was surrounded by her parents' love. I saw them as a trinity of love and felt God's presence with us. My husband joined us to greet his granddaughter and my joy was complete.

This beautiful dark haired child we now know as Sylvia is a gift. She is a unique expression of God's love. As her life unfolds, I will give thanks for her coming and pray that she will hear and respond to God's constant call inviting her by name to know His unconditional love for her and share this gift of love with others.