

The Journeyer

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The Newsletter of

Mary's Hope Workshops

Spiritual Healing and Recovery from Childhood Abuse

RESURRECTION AND HEALING FOR SURVIVORS

This is an excerpt from an Easter sermon that speaks powerfully to survivors about the process of spiritual healing.

“The resurrection of Jesus Christ is first and foremost about seeing the power of God’s love working in and through the empty and painful places of our lives. But in order to surrender the wounds we have suffered, we have to see them clearly for what they are and surrender them to God. Such surrender and forgiveness is never easy. It’s often terrifying.”

The Rev. Craig MacColl

On this glorious Easter morning let’s hear from the well-known theologian Charles Schulz, the author of “Peanuts.”

Lucy comes up to Charlie Brown and says, “You know life is like an ocean liner. Some people take their deck chair and put it on the stern, to see where they have been. And some people put their deck chair on the bow, to see where they are going. Charlie Brown, tell me, where do you want to put your deck chair?” Perplexed momentarily, Charlie Brown looks at Lucy and says, “I don’t know. I can’t even unfold my deck chair.”

Today, Easter Sunday, may be a time for us to think more practically about the resurrection. What should we actually be doing to respond to Jesus’ raising from the dead?

This may be a more challenging approach. What Mark leaves us with is pretty stark: “For they were afraid.” Why were the disciples and Peter afraid?

Well, perhaps, like Lucy suggests in the Peanuts cartoon, they were afraid because they had chosen to set up their desk chairs on the rear of the ship of life. Perhaps the only way they could respond to the resurrection was by looking at the past, by looking at the events of the previous few days and weeks, the humiliating, painful events of Jesus’ trial, his flogging, his crucifixion. In addition to all these things, the disciples and Peter might have been reminded of their shame and guilt at not having been able to watch with him in the Garden and having denied him for fear that they would be captured.

Many of us have found this to be true that the empty tomb does not evoke joy so much as fear in us because it challenges us to look at all of the things that we have done (and done to us) and which have separated us from God and other people, and see that God can use them. But the reality of the empty tomb is not that these things we are ashamed or wounded by are not to be forgotten or repressed, but actually looked at and accepted as real and as having some meaning for us.

Author Keith Miller tells the story of a woman named Alice. They both belonged to a small group of adults who met to deepen their spiritual lives. One night Alice told her spiritual autobiography:

“When I was a tiny little girl, I was put in orphanage. I wasn’t very pretty, and no one wanted me. Still, I wanted to be adopted and loved by a family more than anything else. I thought about it day and night. But everything I did seemed to go wrong. I tried too hard to please everybody who came to look at me, and all I did was drive them away.

“Then one day the head of the orphanage told me that a family was going to come and take me home with them. I was so excited I jumped up and down and cried. The matron reminded me that I was on trial and that it might not be permanent. But I just knew it would be. So I went with this family and started to school in their town – a very happy little girl.

“But one day, a few months later, I skipped home from school and ran in the front door of the big old house we lived in. No one was home but there in the middle of the front hall was my old battered suitcase with my coat thrown over it. As I stood there and looked at the suitcase, it slowly dawned on me what it meant...they didn’t want me, and I hadn’t even suspected.”

At this point, Miller said that Alice stopped speaking to the group for a moment. Yet the group did not notice. They were waiting for her to continue, each member seeing in his or her own imagination the battered suitcase in the front hall, and trying not to cry.

God loves what in men and women is not yet. What we love in people is what already is: virtue, beauty, courage, and hence, our lives are self-interested and fragile. God loves what is not yet. Yes, God loves the negative in people not just the positive.

Carlos Caretto

“Alice cleared her throat. And then said, almost matter-of-factly, ‘That happened to me seven times before I was thirteen years old.’”

Miller and the group, looking at this tall, forty-year old woman sitting next to them, silently wept, as one member stood to give her a hug. That is until Alice startled them by saying, “Don’t be sad for me. I needed my past. You see, it brought me to God.” ●●●●●●●●●●

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is first and foremost about seeing the power of God’s love working in and through the empty and painful places of our lives. But in order to surrender the wounds we have suffered, we have to see them clearly for what they are and surrender them to God. Such surrender and forgiveness is never easy. It’s often terrifying. How can we really believe that God can heal the wounds of the past? Wouldn’t it just be better to pretend that things that hurt us from the past really weren’t so bad and just forget them? Well, the experience of the disciples at the empty tomb says, “no.” You can’t ever forget these things. But you can let God heal them...if you are willing to trust God enough to surrender them.

Carlo Carretto, the Franciscan Little Brother of the Poor who ministered to the Tuareg Bedouin people in North Africa, describes how he believes we are to respond to Easter. He says,

God loves what in men and women is not yet. What we love in people is what already is: virtue, beauty, courage, and hence, our lives are self-interested and fragile. God loves what is not yet. Yes, God loves the negative in people not just the positive.



The Rev. Craig MacColl is the rector of Good Shepherd Episcopal Church in Centennial CO.

To say that God loves what is negative.... what is not yet.... means that, in order to experience Easter Day, we have to experience Good Friday and the fact that Jesus was defeated...dead...gone. Easter Day is nothing by itself. Easter Day and the resurrection are part of a larger event. Jesus died on Friday for us, just as on Sunday morning he rose for us.

It also means that Jesus died for us for the purpose of reconciliation...so that we might be people of reconciliation even as Christ Jesus himself was...people who can see the negative in life....see what is not yet and, witnessing to the risen life of Christ, bring light and hope and new life to others.

So, today, our gospel invites us to ask “how will I respond to the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead?

By looking behind and trusting God enough to surrender our shame and guilt?

By looking ahead and, through hope in the power of the resurrection, live into a new and unexpected future?

By looking at what is broken in our lives, remembering that God loves the negative, not just the positive in people?

As Easter people we look behind, look ahead, and look at our painful present. And each time we do, we see Jesus – not dead, not distant, but alive and close. And that’s why we say, Alleluia, Christ is risen! He is risen indeed, alleluia!

Amen.

For a copy of the full text of Fr. MacColl’s sermon, please go to <http://www.maryshope.org/helpme.htm>

Web Redesign Completed—Check it out—www.maryshope.org

In response to our plea in our last newsletter—a wonderful young woman named **Crystal German**, senior at Colorado Art Institute called to help with our website redesign. Crystal got a redesign project for her senior portfolio & we got a fabulous new look. The new expanded website is now online. Visit us soon at www.maryshope.org.



Our I.T. Angel is Working I.T. Wonders



Lee Smith from Centennial CO started working his wonders with our computer systems in December of this year. Lee used his gifts to tame our systems and convince them to listen to one another. Now our 3 computers are “Playing well with others.” Our work is much less stressed these days. Lee is indeed our I.T. Angel.

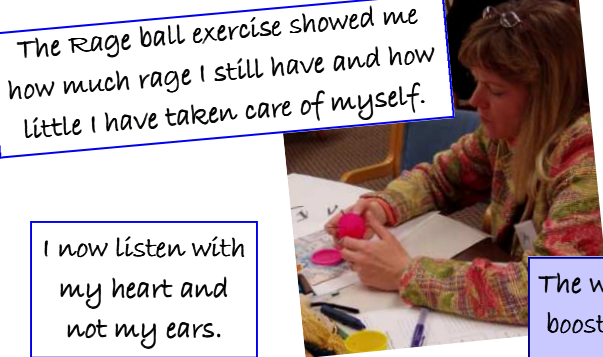
Advanced Class Inaugurated in Colorado and Texas

"This class has given me hope and light at the end of a very long and dark tunnel."

Mary's Hope Workshops was excited to create and present the first set of "Advanced Techniques in Healing and Recovery" this spring. The focus of this workshop is in developing a "Spiritual Healing Toolbox" for use individually or others. With a focus on tactile and interactive experiences, the attendees found new depths of healing and recovery. Below you will find images from the workshops and quotes from many of the attendees. (quotes are not those of attendees shown) For information about our next Advanced Workshop, call the Mary's Hope Workshops Office.



Drawing the feelings of the story became my child's feelings.



The Rage ball exercise showed me how much rage I still have and how little I have taken care of myself.

The exercises gave my self a voice.

I now listen with my heart and not my ears.



God wants me whole the way he made ME.

The workshop totally boosted my healing process and my ideas of what I can do for myself.



I know what to work on and how to ask my counselor to help me.

It completely opened me up to the void I have towards God.

I have more tools for my spiritual toolbox, to be used for me and for my ministry.



I am able to see the spiral of healing and I do have hope thanks to Mary's Hope.

As a child I was 'taught' God was abusive. I've relearned—am relearning.

Theory is great, but sometimes you need something to do—something directive.

Sherry and Diane combine a teaching style that engages interest, excitement and hope with the deep expertise that comes from personal experience combined with professional education and training to provide a truly empowering training. In addition, they provide a variety of tools for ongoing learning after the workshop. Their relationship models collegiality in a wonderful way. And, surprising for such a painful and heavy topic, it's a lot of fun! Dr. Lynn Huber

88 Cents Out of Every Dollar You Donate Helps Survivors Heal

I want to partner with Mary's Hope. Please accept my tax-deductible donation in the amount of \$ _____

or my pledge of \$ _____ per month.

Mail to:

Mary's Hope Workshops
2558 E. Geddes Place
Centennial CO 80122

Name: _____

Address: _____

State/Zip: _____

E-mail/phone: _____

Upcoming Workshops & Events

April 25

Church of Santiago, 422 Simpson, Lafayette CO
Email: maryshope@qwest.net for information on registration
Level 1 Workshop—"Overview of the Wounded Soul" 7pm

April 29

Church of Santiago, 422 Simpson, Lafayette CO
Email: maryshope@qwest.net for information on registration
Level 2 Workshop—"Spiritual Healing and Recovery: Introductory Workshop" 9-5

June 25

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, 2015 Glenarm, Denver CO
Preaching

Mid summer—Colorado

"Advanced Techniques in Healing and Recovery" - time and place to be announced.
"Healing and Recovery Introductory Workshop" - Granby CO exact date TBA.

August 25-27

Amarillo TX
26th—"Eucharistic Congress" sponsored by the Diocese of Amarillo Eucharistic Congress—3 Workshops
27th—"Journey into Healing Silent Retreat"—Bishop DeFalco Retreat Center 12pm—5:30 pm; bdrcl@ls.net.

September 20

Denver CO
"Feeding the Soul Conference" sponsored by the Samaritan Counseling Center—Keynote Speech and Workshop. Information and registration available this summer.

February 22-25 2007

Moye Retreat Center, Castroville TX - for information email—moyecenter@aol.com
"Overview of the Wounded Soul"
"Healing and Recovery, Introductory Workshop"
"Journey into Healing" Silent Retreat

Please check our website for updates and additional information on these events.

Mary's Hope Workshops has a New Address

After 2 1/2 years in our Lakewood office, we are in the midst of a move to new quarters in Centennial Colorado. Centennial is Colorado's newest city, located south of Denver and north of Highlands Ranch.

We will have the same amount of space but Diane's commute will be reduced by 34 miles a day—a good

idea in this time of conserving natural resources. **We will have the same phone number and email.**

Our new address:

**2558 E. Geddes Place
Centennial CO 80122**



Check out our 'new improved' site— www.maryshope.org

MARY'S HOPE WORKSHOPS

12182 W. Asbury Place
Lakewood CO 80228

Phone: 303-377-0293
Email: maryshope@qwest.net

**See above for
our new address**



Spiritual Healing and Recovery for Abuse Survivors

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