

Letter from the Executive Director

March, 2007

Bon Secours Spiritual Center
Marriottsville, MD

Dear Friends,

It is amazing how quickly a month can go by, and how much can actually happen in a short 30 days. During February the first phase (deconstruction) of our room renovation project came to an end with the demolition of the bedrooms in the east and south wings of the house. By this time next month we will see framing in place for the new rooms with the wiring and plumbing starting to be placed. It's all very exciting. Each time I go on to the bedroom floors and take a look at those thick outer walls I am amazed at the strength of this place and I think how it has sheltered so many and will again be a spiritual haven for you and those who will come here next year. The picture to the right is the view of the 2nd floor looking east, just above the dining rooms. What potential for the good things about to come! I am pleased with the progress and the plans to move from bare walls to a warm, welcoming facility when you return in 2008.

One of the graces the construction has provided the staff is the chance to create a slate of programs and opportunities for 2008. With that in mind, on February 1, the staff gathered with our program advisory committee to pray, reflect, discuss and discern programs we might offer to respond to your spiritual needs and the challenges of our time. The committee identified and discussed how to serve the variety of groups who come to Bon Secours. We also asked how to reach out to those who have not yet found a home here: folk from our city parishes, and women and men who are seeking a sacred space for their own prayer, peace and healing but who have not made the trip up our hill. In keeping with the Bon Secours tradition, we recommitted to serving the poor, the sick, the dying and the marginalized or forgotten among us.

We discussed how we can better use the resources of the 313 acres available to us and some of the ways in which the Spiritual Center can provide opportunities for quiet reflection, contemplation, and just spending time alone in the presence of God in nature. The day-long meeting was thought provoking and prayerful and I appreciated the group's commitment. I thank the members of our program committee for their fine work. They include Mr. Tom Adams, Dr. Gwen Bullock-Smith, Dr. Gloria Carpeneto, Sr. Dolores Glick, MSHS, Sr. Patricia Kirk, OSB, Fr. Joseph Lacey, SJ, Deacon John Langmead, Fr. Donald Sterling, Mr. Ned Tillman, and Mrs. Michael Wicks.

We have made some programming decisions that may be of help to you for your own planning. We will be sponsoring a full complement of summer retreat programs beginning in 2008. That information will be in Bridges, and in this newsletter, as soon as we confirm directors for the retreats. In addition we are also planning a 30 day retreat in 2010.

I am also grateful to Sr. Suzanne Delaney, IHM, BSSC staff participants and Joe Chamberlin, our facilitator, for the ideas and the opportunities that were generated. We look forward to presenting the results of this process in the summer 2007 Bridges. In the meantime, feel free to contact us with your ideas of how we can be more focused or effective in our programming and service to you.

We continue to work to improve the effectiveness of our website as a communication and listening tool. Our goal is to make the site more informative and easier to maneuver. We now have two new URLs to ease your web search for us, www.bonsecoursretreats.org, and www.bonsecoursconferences.org, both will take you to the website. When completed, our site will include program and retreat previews, ideas and resources for your prayer and reflection, suggestions for reading and opportunities for personal enrichment.

As we journey with you in this Lent of construction, we are very aware that we have no lasting home here, and that the Lord in His Easter promise remains our best hope for peace, renewal and healing. The Sisters of Bon Secours and the BSSC staff continue to hold you gently in our prayers. We wish you God's blessing and the healing of all those places in your life in need of comfort, reconciliation and new life.

Be "Good Help" to one another!

Dr. Thomas E Little
Executive Director