



THE TWELVE STEP REVIEW

Fr. Emmerich Vogt, O.P.



Summer 2018

Dear friends,

Here are some future retreats and parish missions:

☛ September 28-30, Retreat at Casa Maria, 3721 Belmont Rd, Irondale, AL 35210. (205) 956-6760

☛ October 22-25, Parish Mission, Sacred Heart Church, 414 N Allen Ave, Farmington, NM 87401. (505) 325-9743

☛ November 5-8, Parish Mission, Immaculate Conception, 320 N 21st St, Mattoon, IL 61938. (217) 235-0539

☛ November 12-15, Parish Mission, Holy Spirit Church, 421 Bluff St E, Carroll, IA 51401. (712) 792-4386

☛ December 3-6, Parish Mission, St. Ann Church, 182 Church St, Morganza, LA. (225) 694-3781

☛ December 10-13, Parish Mission, Immaculate Heart Church, 11385 Grant Dr, Northglenn, CO 80233. (303) 452-2041

☛ December 17-20, Parish Mission, St. James, Clearbrook, British Columbia, Canada

☛ January 25-27, 2019. Student Retreat, York University, 4700 Keele St., Toronto, Ontario, Canada. (416) 736-2100

In addition, check the schedule for my Serenity Retreats at St. Albert Priory in Oakland, CA on page 2.



Please always check with the parish or retreat center, as schedules sometimes change.

Recovery and Discipleship

A part of any serious 12-step recovery is discipleship.

A group of high school students put on a skit about the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:35-37). They had no costumes as such; the characters simply wore a paper bag over their heads with eyes, mouth and nose cut out. The character representing the priest had a Roman collar drawn on the lower edge of his bag. I don't remember how the Levite was portrayed. The parable is presented in Luke's Gospel, which is not surprising since the main character—the Good Samaritan—was not a Jew, and Luke was a Gentile, directing his Gospel toward an audience larger than simply Jewish Christians, and thus Luke presents episodes in the life of Christ dealing with non-Jews.

As the story goes, a traveler who has been stripped of clothing, beaten, and left half dead alongside the road, is first encountered

by a priest, and then a Levite comes by, but both avoid the man. Finally, a Samaritan happens upon the traveler. Samaritans and Jews generally despised each other, but the Samaritan helps the injured man. Jesus tells the parable in response to a lawyer asking Him, "Who is my neighbor?"—for the Hebrew Bible says he should be loved (Lev. 19:18). In response, Jesus broadens the Old Testament teaching by telling the parable, the conclusion of which is that the neighbor figure in the parable is the man who shows mercy to the injured man who happens to be an enemy—i.e., the Samaritan.

As the skit was portrayed by the high school students, the traveler who was beaten was lying on the ground with his bag having been torn to pieces. The Samaritan gently picked up those pieces, and as he turned to the congregation, we could see that the Samaritan once had had *his* bag torn apart. But it was now pieced back to-

gether. It was clear then why the Samaritan had compassion on the beaten traveler and stopped to help him.

It is often questioned why God allows suffering, and we can perceive one of the reasons from this parable. People who have never had to endure serious suffering in their lives often lack the impetus to transcend their egocentric and superficial lives. Suffering can call us out of superficiality into a life of mercy which, St. Thomas Aquinas says, is to have a pain in our heart over the pain of another and to take pains to relieve their pain. This is what God did for us in becoming man and suffering His passion and death on the Cross to free us from sin and death.

I can't help but think it was Mother Teresa's having to suffer the loss of her father, who was murdered when she was a child, that directed her to a life of mercy. And it was a recovering alcoholic that directed

Continued on the last page.

SERENITY RETREATS WITH FR. EMMERICH

Father Emmerich is offering weekend retreats at St. Albert Priory, which is the Dominican House of Studies located in Oakland, California. Below is a list of those retreat dates. St. Albert Priory is conveniently located near the Bay Area freeways, as well as the two Bay Area airports—Oakland International Airport (OAK) and San Francisco International Airport (SFO). The stop for the metro train (called **BART** for “Bay Area Rapid Transit”) is just one block from St. Albert’s.



St. Albert Priory
Cloister View



St. Albert Priory
Typical Bedroom

As you can see in the above photo, the bedrooms are simple. Unfortunately there are no accommodations for couples. Men are on one floor, and women on the other. Bathrooms and showers are located in the wings where the bedrooms are. Meals are taken on the first floor, in a dining area adjacent to the friars’ refectory.

The cost of the weekend retreat is \$196.00 per person, \$270.00 per couple (which includes two overnights and five meals), and for commuters \$110.00.

If arriving by flight to San Francisco, the BART train to catch is the **Pittsburg/Bay Points train**. You purchase your ticket at machines before entering the train area. Taking this train, you will **NOT** have to change trains. It takes about 50 minutes (going through downtown San Francisco and across the Bay). You get off at the **Rockridge** station. Then you walk one block north and turn right on Birch Court. That street dead ends at St. Albert’s (5890 Birch Court, Oakland, CA). If you fly into Oakland, you catch the connector train that takes you to BART. At the BART (Coliseum) station, you purchase your ticket, then head downstairs to catch the **Richmond** train, taking it a few stops to 19th street. Get off at 19th street and cross the platform to catch the **Pittsburg/Bay Points train** and (as above) get off at the **Rockridge station**. (See: www.bart.gov)

To book a retreat

Email Rebecca, the Coordinator for the Preaching Office: preaching@opwest.org, or call her at 510-646-0007.

Retreats with Fr. Emmerich being offered for 2019 are:

1. February 8 - 10
2. March 1 - 3
3. April 5 - 7
4. April 12 - 14 (Palm Sunday Weekend)

Retreatants are welcome to attend the Divine Office, chanted by the Friars in the main chapel each day.

Check-in begins Friday afternoon at 3:00 p.m. Each retreat begins on **Friday** with Holy Mass at 5:00 p.m. After Mass we gather in the retreat lounge for a rundown about the retreat and housekeeping matters. Dinner is at 6:30. Night prayer follows at 7:15, with adoration until 8:00 p.m. We begin our first conference at 8:30 p.m.

On **Saturday**, optional morning prayer is at 7:30 in the main chapel. Mass follows at 8:15. Breakfast follows Mass. The second conference goes from 10:00 - 11:00. Confessions are available from 11:00 - 12:00.

Optional Rosary is prayed in the main chapel at 11:40, followed by midday prayer and then lunch. Quiet time goes until 2:30 p.m. The third conference is from 2:30 - 3:30. The fourth conference is from 4:00 - 5:00, followed by Evening Prayer in the main chapel. Dinner is at 6:30 and Night Prayer with adoration is at 7:15.

On Sunday, morning prayer begins at 8:30, followed by Mass at 9:30, and brunch after Mass. The fifth conference is after brunch. The retreat ends after the last conference. ❀

RECOMMENDATIONS:

FOR YOUR PARISH PAMPHLET RACK We have a series of pamphlets that you might consider ordering for your parish pamphlet rack. There is a series on the steps, one pamphlet for each step, thus a 12-pamphlet series. Then we have individual pamphlets on various topics, all in beautiful color:

- * *Twelve-Step Series*: 12 in all. They can be sent as a set of 12 or individually. \$1.00 each; \$10 for the set of 12.
- * *Detaching with Love*. Detachment means we stop depending on what others say, do, or think in order to determine our own well-being. This pamphlet explicates the meaning of detachment, in contrast to those we don't detach from but amputate.
- * *The Passions*. This pamphlet lists the major passions and explains the role they play in our moral lives.
- * *Friendship in Christ*. Jesus makes an amazing statement: "I don't call you slaves but friends." It's amazing that the God who created the universe calls us into friendship with Himself and then into friendship with others. This pamphlet explores the nature of friendship in the light of the Gospel.

FATHER EMMERICH'S CDS

The Mysteries of Faith

NEW

Father Emmerich's latest CD set of four conferences and three sermons in retreat format concerns the living out of the mysteries of our faith. These retreat conferences explore the classical definition of prayer: "A raising of the mind and heart to God, whereby we receive the grace to carry out His will" (which is said to come from St. John Damascene in the 8th century). Prayer whereby our hearts *and* our minds are involved capacitates us to be the loving beings God created us to be. This retreat spells out how our minds need to be illumined by grace and our wills strengthened to carry out God's will. But it also points out that the heart has equal place with the mind and the will. All three aspects of our soul—the mind, the heart, and the will—are to be part of our spiritual lives, but all three need to be baptized because of the wound of original sin, which tends to darken the intellect, as well as the wounds inflicted by our past sins. Offered for the suggested donation of at least \$35 plus shipping and handling.

RECOVERY AND THE MESSAGE OF FATIMA: In the 100th anniversary year of the miracle of Fatima, Fr. Emmerich—in this series of four lectures, Benediction and two homilies—expanded on his *Recovery from Addiction* theme by showing how Fatima is relevant not only to today, but also to our recovery. The series consists of 5 CDs offered for the suggested donation of \$35.00 + P & H.

Browse our Books, CDs and DVDs page for this and other 12-Step favorites at:

www.12-step-review.org.

PRAYER CARDS AVAILABLE. Our series of eight recovery prayer cards is available for free. A free set is sent with each order. In addition, if you would like any of them as a series or individually, please give us a call. All we ask is a donation to cover the shipping and packaging costs.

ORDER FROM THE 12-STEP REVIEW

me to learn the wisdom of the 12 steps. I would often tell her, "Antoinette, I'm so glad you're an alcoholic in recovery!" Her suffering from alcoholism and the consequent embracing of the 12 steps changed my whole life and priestly ministry.

We believe as Christians that God who is love would never allow anything to happen in the past that's not part of His loving plan for the future. Jesus is the perfect manifestation of the Father's love. And when suffering comes our way, we know through the certitude of our faith that God will bring a great good out of that suffering, great good that would otherwise not have occurred. The suffering He allows has the power—if we let it—to contribute not only to our salvation but to help others toward their salvation (for an explanation of this in the context of the message of Fatima, see my CD series entitled *Recovery and the Message of Fatima*).

The founders of the Twelve-Step movement realized that in order to get healthy and stay healthy, to get sober and remain sober, they needed to have an apostolate. They needed to find someone who still suffered from alcoholism and come to that person's aid. There is a wonderful book that reflects this called *The Anonymous Disciple* by Gerard E. Coggins. It is based on the true story of two alcoholic Jesuit priests who eventually get into recovery in AA. At one point one priest says to the other, "I think we need to do more in order to safeguard our recovery. I think we should go to the prison and the insane asylum. There are people there who are misdiagnosed. So Father Fred, what would you prefer?" Father Fred says he is afraid of the insane asylum, so he takes the insane asylum! And there he finds a woman who is not insane. She is an alcoholic. And he is able to introduce her to AA 12-step recovery. Step Twelve is a step all Christians should be living:

Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

When we can share our experience, strength, and hope with others, and when they see what embracing the spirituality of the steps has done for us (see the 3rd step prayer), they emerge from the darkness into the light. It is the living witness of what grace has achieved in our lives that brings hope to others. We are called to be disciples. As mentioned in our last newsletter, this is not about shaming people with the Gospel, for that is not truly Christian, although some portray themselves as Christians in condemning others for their behavior, forgetting that Jesus said, "I haven't come to condemn but to save what was lost" (cf. John 12:47).

God, I offer myself to Thee To build with me & to do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy Power, Thy love & Thy way of life. May I do Thy will always.

Third Step Prayer

Jesus also explains, "Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am with them." By going to meetings, a person is witnessing to what God has done in his life, and this can become a sign of hope for someone who attends the meeting and is lost. Now inspired by hearing someone's story, the newcomer, although not completely sold on the program, nevertheless has been inspired to return to the meeting and learn more.

Jean Vanier is a French Canadian Catholic who, through his friendship with Dominican Father Thomas Philippe, started communities for mentally handicapped people. They are called

"L'ARCHE" communities, *l'arche* being the French word for Noah's ark. He's written books that stress the healing power of community. He notes: "Our community life is beautiful and intense, a source of life for everyone. People with a disability experience a real transformation and discover confidence in themselves; they discover their capacity to make choices, and also find a certain liberty and above all their dignity as human beings." These communities have sprung up all over the world. I visited one in Calcutta where the property was given by Mother Teresa. Here is how the US branch of L'Arche expresses its mission:

L'Arche communities in the United States provide homes and workplaces where people with and without intellectual disabilities live and work together as peers; create inclusive communities of faith and friendship; and transform society through relationships that cross social boundaries.

L'Arche USA exists to amplify the voices of people who have intellectual disabilities; provide growth opportunities for people of all abilities; nurture the faith life of local communities; strengthen communities with resources and collaborative leadership; develop strategic partnerships; and found new communities.

As the third step prayer highlights, our problem is "self," and self cannot overcome self. It's only by the grace of an apostolate, where I am of service to suffering mankind, that I can be relieved of the bondage of self. Discipleship brings us to the heart of what it means to follow Christ: loving others as we see ourselves loved by Him. The measure we measure out is the measure that will be ours in heaven. Like the good Samaritan, through what we suffer we are able then to show mercy to someone who still suffers. It's our calling as Christians: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" (Matt 7:12). ❀

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