



# Blessings

SACRAMENTORS®: A Process of Sanctification for Catholic Men and Women

**Christmas 2008**

## Meaningful Prayer, Exchanges at Annual Leadership Retreat

*By Scott Webster, St. James Cathedral, Seattle*

A poignant SacraMentors membership meeting took place on Saturday, November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2008, at St. Charles Borromeo parish in Tacoma: which made for a strong Annual Leadership Retreat.

Earlier this fall, the current SacraMentors Board, comprised of Interim Executive Director Frank Peace, Finance Director Seamus O'Brien, and Communications point person Scott Webster, sent a heartfelt letter to membership. The letter acknowledged that SacraMentors has needed to table its efforts for continued growth in Western Washington, until a future date to be determined, when a full complement of 10-plus working board members can be prayerfully discerned and assembled. Regular series trainings, events, breakfasts, and SacraMentums have

also been scaled back in recent years. A new surge of interest among current membership is needed to fill many board positions that currently remain open.

In the spirit of our Leadership Retreats in the past, this year's event gave membership an opportunity to gather, talk, listen and pray together. A strong gathering of members from 8 parishes, (both men and women's Apostle Groups), attended this year's retreat, from Sacred Heart, (Enumclaw), Holy Family, (Kirkland), Our Lady of the Lake, (Seattle), St. Benedict, (Seattle), Sacred Heart, (Lacey), St. James Cathedral, St. Louise, (Bellevue), and St. Charles Borromeo, (Tacoma). Those gathered were also grateful for the presence of Lory Misel, SacraMentors' co-founder. Though Fr. Bob Camuso was not able to attend, he

conveyed his best wishes and prayers for a successful meeting.

The retreat took place at the old convent building on the St. Charles campus, with a continental breakfast and lunch provided by the St. Charles women and men's groups. Frank Pease was the master of ceremonies. The retreat, which lasted better part of the day and culminated with moving to the church for the Vigil Mass, had the common through-line of love for the SacraMentors organization. Membership had the chance to share ideas, concerns, and opportunities, on how the 11 year-old organization could move into 2009 and beyond.

Ron Reierson, of the first Apostle Group founded at St. Charles Borromeo, and Mary Anne Reynolds, who attends the Apostle Group at Our Lady of the Lake, gave

*See "Retreat" on page 4*

## Tacoma SacraMentors Host Advent Dinner

*By Ron Reierson, St. Charles Borromeo, Tacoma*

On Saturday evening, December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2008, the 4<sup>th</sup> annual Advent Dinner was held at the Clubhouse Grill on 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Tacoma, sponsored by the SacraMentors of St. Charles Borromeo Parish. The dinner celebration included

the presence of St. Charles' parish priests, Fr. Mike McDermott, pastor, and Fr. Mel Strazicich, parochial vicar. Seventeen SacraMentors from both men's groups and the women's group attended, along with spouses and guests.

Attending this year's event were: Jeri and Mike Wilson, Barbara and Pat Roddy, Rick DeChaineau, parish coordinator for the new men's group, Fred Benz, our Priests, Seamus O'Brien, Cherie and Chuck Dusek, Patsy and Rick Maloney, Sandy and Jim

*See "Dinner" on page 4*

### Inside this issue:

Leadership Retreat <i>by Scott Webster</i>	1, 4
Advent Dinner <i>by Ron Reierson</i>	1, 4
Grace <i>by Lory Misel</i>	2, 3
Incarnational Revolution <i>by Mary Anne Reynolds</i>	4, 5
What Does SacraMentors Mean to Me? <i>by Linda Moran</i>	4, 7
Testimonial <i>by Carbery O'Shea</i>	5
Spiritual Goal-Setting <i>by Lory Misel</i>	6

### The purpose

of the SacraMentors® movement is to provide men and women with small communities of other men and women, who will support and sustain them in their efforts to live a Christian life which calls them to forgive themselves and others, bless the world, and serve the Church.

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*Mary said,  
“My soul  
proclaims  
the greatness  
of the Lord;  
my spirit  
rejoices in  
God my  
savior.”*

*Luke 1:46*

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## Grace

*by Lory Misel, Co-Founder, SacraMentors*

Within the embrace of grace

One opens the door of feeling truly alive  
Belonging with the oneness of Creation  
Life,  
God.

Hidden waves of unspeakable gratitude surge upwards

Finding release through tears,  
Even unashamed weeping.

Tumblers of mind and heart surrender

To this heaven-sent electric peace and love  
Opening an unfathomable yearning for Heaven,  
My Home  
My Father.

Forgotten and skeptically acknowledged spiritual gifts

Now arise to honored awareness  
Expanding themselves into comfortable visions, understandings  
And knowings.  
For within grace  
We remember who we are truly  
And what we are truly capable of being.

The grace-filled mind and heart opens to embrace all who pass through

Stirring more gratitude, love and forgiveness for all that has happened  
For everyone we have known  
For, you see, the experience of grace  
Is the pure experience of forgiveness  
That you are forgiven  
And that you have forgiven all as well.

Time collapses within this magnificent now

And with this, all is healed and straightened  
Comforted  
Blessed  
Loved  
Within you and all those you consider  
For when grace heals and straightens you  
It does for all.

Oh grace, let me swim within you

Throughout all of my days and nights here.

Remind me here

To open myself,  
Be sanctified by this ever-present grace  
That I may remember I am with You now, this instant, and forever.

*Please see next page*

## Incarnational Revolution

by *Mary Anne Reynolds, Our Lady of the Lake, Seattle*

As a painfully shy little girl, I used to pretend to have my very own TV show. Those were the days of J.P. Patches, Captain Kangaroo, Wunda Wunda and such. I would hide in the back room, chalkboard ready, pointer in hand, and I would be the star of my own show. I always knew what to say. I was always funny, song-and-dance talented. It was “The Mary Anne Show.” Of course, had my older siblings seen me, I would have taken a serious teasing around the dinner table.

Growing up, I often had an eye to how I was being received. What kind of impression did I make? Did I do OK in a social situation?

*“Grace,” continued from previous page*

### AN OPENING TO GRACE

(To begin, practice this alone when outside in nature and verbally speak the words.)

Grace before me.  
 Grace behind me.  
 Grace to the left of me.  
 Grace to the right of me.  
 Grace above me.  
 Grace below me.  
 Grace within me.  
 I live because of Your grace  
 I am because of Your grace.

And now, my only wish, my only desire.

I see only grace.  
 I hear only grace.  
 I smell only grace.  
 I breathe only grace.  
 I taste only grace.  
 I touch only grace  
 I know only grace  
 And I am Home.

Did I sound smart? Funny? Insightful? Was I pretty? Too often it has been “The Mary Anne Show.” Too often it has been all about me, conversation based on what I had to say next, instead of listening.

I am privileged to be training for Cabrini Ministry, a pastoral service program. I am learning how to listen with intent, how to honor confidentiality as a sacred trust. I am remembering the gift of presence. The training has prompted me to reexamine my faith life, my way of interaction. Since the “Mary Anne Show” is in syndication, so to speak, I am learning to recognize when I engage in reruns (so as to avoid those pesky

marathons). SacraMentors has served me well in this endeavor.

What does this have to do with the Incarnation? Everything. If we are self-absorbed, there is no room to discover the Christ Child anywhere. In anyone. Especially when we look in the mirror. We have forgotten we are precious, we are holy, and God delights in us. My sister (a calligrapher) gave me, years ago, a quote from Isaiah encircling the perimeter of a mat cut out for a picture. It said: *You are precious in my eyes and I love you.* (Isaiah 43:4). I put in that frame the grouchiest, smudged-up face of my youngest child, probably a photo taken as she was stamping her 3 year-old foot saying “NO,” yet again. (As an aside – she is a special ed teacher, and there is a certain sort of justice in that). At the time, I needed that visual to be reminded how precious she was (and is) to me and to God. Maybe we should inscribe that scripture on ALL our mirrors. We are made new. We are precious, we are holy, and God delights in us. This is the Incarnation.

“All of the ages of history resist the consequence of the Mystery made flesh, for, if this Event is true, then all aspects of life must revolve around it”. (Monsignor Luigi Giussani, *Magnificat*, December 2008 edition). Day by day, even maybe minute by minute we need to examine what our

See “Reynolds,” p. 5



“If we are self-absorbed, there is no room to discover the Christ Child anywhere. In anyone. Especially when we look in the mirror.”

~ *Mary Anne Reynolds*



## What Does SacraMentors Mean to Me?

by Linda Moran, St. Charles Borromeo, Tacoma

In 2001, three things happened to me and all the while I really felt like God was calling more closely to him.

You see, back then, I was not attending church regularly. I was living as what I now call a “Cafeteria Catholic. This means, as many of you know, pick what you like about the faith, and leave the rest.

I was raised Catholic, went to CCD weekly for many years, received all the Sacraments and was adamant about a Catholic wedding when a fellow Catholic who I fell in love with asked me to marry him. At the time, I was of the age (and state of mind) when my “checklist” said it was time to marry and have a family, as my career was in good stead, and I had found the “right one.”

In 2001, the first two things that happened to me were: 1) I lost the sight in my right eye, and was initially diagnosed with Brain cancer; and 2) I was told I might have only three months to live and spent a week in the cancer ward at St. Joseph Hospital.

While I was there, I prayed and got reacquainted with the Lord as many do in a crisis situation. As I prayed, I asked the Lord to show me what I was not seeing in my life and I asked for Him to lead me, during this difficult time.

He showed me such kindness and mercy. He surrounded me with good friends and family. A lay minister from St. Charles brought me Eucharist every day and prayed with me.

I “owned” that I had turned away from the Lord.

Like the “White phone” he was always there with me and ready for me to pick up the phone, but I was listening and answering the “Red phone.” I was focusing on my busy life, my status and all those other RAPs trying to “get” things.

The third thing that happened, (after joyfully learning, after a long week of testing in the hospital, that I was *not* going to die and I did not have brain cancer), was that I did have optic neuritis and, likely, multiple sclerosis. My doctors recommended that I step back from the new and very stressful high profile job I had just taken in Seattle, until we knew more.

(Thankfully, the sight in my right eye returned the same week I returned from the hospital and have not had any sight problems in

the years since. In addition, I no longer have any serious or lingering problems associated with MS. God continues to bless me and today, I am blessed with good health).

Shortly after returning home (and after the earthquake that year), I attended Mass at St. Charles Borromeo, in Tacoma. I saw a poster asking “Do you want a closer walk with God?” The poster announced that a SacraMentors training series was about to begin, and it would be held there at St. Charles over a four-week period. When I called about it, I felt like it might be too “new age” for me, but the woman I spoke to was so kind. She told me how it had changed her life, giving her a deeper spiritual

See “*Moran*” on page 7

### “Dinner” continued from page 1

Ferris, Linda Moran, parish coordinator for the women’s group, her friend Jack Jori and Ron Reiersen.

The room was set up in a “U” shape, with the priests at the head table, along with the Advent Wreath, provided by Linda Moran. Small candles graced the tables, and reduced light set a very suitable atmosphere. After a short prayer, Fr. Mike lit the 3<sup>rd</sup> week Advent candle to add to the others from weeks 1 and 2. Ron Reiersen, Parish Coordinator for the original men’s group, coordinated this event as he has in years past.

Amid snowfall outside, everyone seemed to enjoy the camaraderie of the evening, enriching our spirits. It was a chance not only to celebrate the birth of Our Lord, but to share among those present the true spirit of SacraMentors, as well as to acknowledge the wonderful work of our parish priests.

(Ron Reiersen can be reached at (253) 209-2329 or [ronusnrret@aol.com](mailto:ronusnrret@aol.com))

### “Retreat” continued from page 1

poignant witness talks on how SacraMentors has worked in their lives to bring them to a closer walk with our Lord. Frank Pease also read a moving testimonial by Carbery O’Shea of Holy Family, Kirkland, who could not be present, but was with us in spirit and prayer. (See his testimonial, on page 5).

Following a break, Bill Wiebe of the AG at Sacred Heart, Lacey did a wonderful job helping us revisit the “Letting Go of Grudges” presentation from the Series Training. Themes were getting ourselves “unstuck”

from the unholy triangle, giving our grudges and our hurts over to God, and the healing of our family tree through divine mercy and prayer. Breakout sessions in small groups allowed us to revisit these themes in a safe and confidential environment.

After lunch, Lory Misel gave an inspirational talk that focused on spiritual goal-setting. (For a list of bullet points on Lory’s talk, please see page 6). Always an inspiration, it was great to have Lory with us!

Board member Seamus

See “*Leadership Retreat*” on page 6

## Testimonial

by Carbery O'Shea, Holy Family, Kirkland

*(The following was taken from an email to Frank Pease, acting Executive Director of SacraMentors, prior to our Leadership Retreat on November 22nd. Frank had previously asked Carbery if he would give a Witness Talk at the retreat. The following was read to those present).*

Dear Frank and my SacraMentor Sisters and Brothers: Sorry I won't be able to join you (at the retreat) as I will be recovering from cancer surgery. I really wanted to give a Witness Talk on the power of prayer and blessings in our Apostles Group, (as indicated by) the resultant healing and small miracle that is occurring in me through the intercession of St Peregrine, patron saint of cancer patients, and St Thomas Aquinas, of whom relics have been loaned to me, and all those

people who have prayed for me.

So here is a brief bit of what I was to say. My brothers laid hands on me after one of our recent Apostle Group meetings and my bleeding stopped, and I didn't have to return to the hospital. I kept telling the doctors and nurses when they did all the diagnostic staging my cancer, they wouldn't find anything. Lo and behold the spots on my lung and liver were nothing significant, and the doctor couldn't find anything when they did the ultrasound, except the spot where a malignant polyp had been removed. Nothing. So instead of what my oncologist said from the catscan, I am now a stage one cancer, which is very survivable.

Staying strong in our faith and leaving our lives in the Lord's hands and trusting in

Him are keys, as well as believing what St Peregrine said, "All is well; All will be well." May the same be said for our SacraMentor movement: All is well, and all will be well.

Blessings,

Carbery O'Shea

P.S. As a result of my small miracle, Fr. Kurt Nagel at Holy Family Parish in Kirkland has given us permission to have a Novena to St Peregrine at our parish before or after daily Mass. (This is to benefit many people) who have cancer in various stages, or (who have) survived cancer, or know someone who suffers from this disease.

Blessings,

Carbery

### *"Reynolds" continued from page 3*

lives revolve around. Sometimes it's worry and concern, sometimes it's insecurity and self-doubt. Maybe it's just those darn reruns of the "Me" show. And in the remembering of Who is the center of it all, we are leading (or should I say, being led to) a life revolving around the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Because it isn't about me anymore (mostly). That's a pretty bold statement these days, certainly not what the world tells us. Maybe knowing it's not about me comes with age, or maybe it's from repeatedly falling on my

face and getting back up after an attack of ego. I might finally be getting the point. Or maybe it's just grace. And lots of it. I feel less inclined to tell my story and more inclined to draw out another's. We have our sacred stories revealed as we tell them nurtured by a gentle listener. When we tell our stories we affirm each others' holy and human path into the heart of Christ. Into that simple, sacred manger.

My wish for you this holy season, my present would be presence: of a baby in the manger who is the Presence; of companions on the jour-

ney who listen with intent and gentleness. What a gift it would be to recognize the face of Jesus in everyone, even in the mirror.

Remembering Who is our center.

Incarnational Revolution.

*(Mary Anne can be reached at mareynolds@com-cast.net)*

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**A**  
*little child is  
born for us,  
and he shall  
be called the  
mighty God;  
every race on  
earth shall be  
blessed in  
him.*

*Isaiah 9:6;  
Psalm 71:17*

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## From “Spiritual Goal Setting” Presentation at 11/22 Retreat

by Lory Misel, transcribed by Scott Webster

Lory gave a great talk at our Leadership Retreat on Nov. 22<sup>nd</sup>, which focused on “Spiritual Goal Setting.” Below are some bullet points I took down. –Scott

- Much of the focus on the spiritual journey is letting go of the ego.
- Ego is always crucifying me. It is at its most powerful when I’m alone.
- Law of Cause and Effect: Cause = ego, Effect = sin.
- Sin is anything we think or do without love.
- The “desert” is the psychological place where there is no response.
- Only my thoughts give me pain. If I change my painful thoughts, through God I will find peace.
- Always at the end of the dark night of the soul is an epiphany.
- Jesus is my elder brother, who adores me.
- If I look for Christ in you, I will find it in me.
- The ultimate of forgiveness is that no harm has been done.
- The best gift we can give God is who we are. Warts, loveliness, rage, and all.
- If there is no death, no sin, no ego, what’s left? God’s holy child, which is us.

### “Leadership Retreat” continued from page 4

O’Brien gave a financial report, which included the cost of legal work earlier this year to renew the SacraMentors trademark. A portion of this cost was written off by the attorney. Seamus also reported that the organization is in the black, thanks in part to contributions from this year’s Annual Appeal. Use of funds will continue to be prudent as we move into 2009.

Board Member Scott Webster spoke about the *Blessings* newsletter. There will be four editions in 2009, which will be liturgically themed for each quarter, starting with Easter. Membership was (is!) encouraged to contribute articles on what their Apostle Groups are up to, as well as personal testimonials on how SacraMentors has enhanced their journey to God and their walk with Jesus. The submission of more

articles focusing on service projects or events within Apostle Groups were also encouraged.

Of note was the announcement that a Series Training for women out of St. Charles, Burlington, in Skagit Valley is currently in the works, and will take place during the first quarter of 2009.

A discussion on potential events for 2009 then took place. Under consideration are a SacraMentum during the first half of the year, regional breakfasts hosted by individual AGs, marketing to younger men and women, better “branding” as a Catholic organization, reaching out to those who have stepped away, and a retreat with a theme to be determined. A Leadership Retreat will occur in the fall.

All in all, a good day. Special thanks to Lory Misel for his presentation at

the meeting, and to the Apostle Groups at St. Charles Borromeo parish for opening their doors to us and for providing food and nourishment for all the group. Ending the day with nourishment from our Lord at Mass was the perfect way to close our time together.

Though more discussion will occur to solidify the course of SacraMentors as we move into 2009, many felt it was a strong gathering centering around our Lord and God, with strong ideas to perpetuate our organization that we all care deeply about. Indeed, God was present! One of the prayers offered was that the Holy Spirit provide talented individuals who will step forward to aid and expand on the work being done by the current three-person board. Thank you, God, for our time of sharing at this retreat!

*The Lord  
has made his  
salvation  
known:  
in the sight of  
the nations he  
has revealed  
his justice.  
All the ends  
of the earth  
have seen the  
salvation by  
our God.*

*Psalms 98: 2-3*

*If you would like to send a comment to the Board, or if you are interested in finding out more about serving as a member of the Board, please contact Interim Executive Director Frank Pease at (425) 941-0775 or frank\_pease@hotmail.com.*



“SacraMentors and my friendships with my sisters and brothers turned me into a student of faith. I learned that I can live it, talk about it and evangelize, and still live in a secular society and thrive.”

~ Linda Moran



*“Moran” continued from page 4*

grounding, and had given her a small group of Catholic women to know and share fellowship with, in a large parish. I signed up. I went through the series.

That series was so good for me. I learned a lot and found a great group of women to meet and discuss our spirituality and how to walk more closely with the Lord. I learned I was a beloved child of God. I learned I was called to bless and be a blessing to others. I learned, regarding the “parent wounds” that many of us have, that if we shift our paradigms we can see that those wounds are really portals for the Holy Spirit to act in us and help us to become what God has always intended us to be. I learned that sometimes we let our egos take the lead in our lives and our hearts, and that usually takes us away from a Christ-centered life.

The next year had still harder challenges, but my life and journey with God grew and grew. I trusted Him and let go of things that were separating me from Him. It led me down a very unexpected, but incredibly grace-filled path.

My SacraMentors apostle group chose to meet on Fri-

day nights from 6:00-7:30 p.m. We have met most every week since that series. We’ve added a few more members, and though several had to move on as their changing lives could not let them join us, they will always be always near and dear, and we see each other at Mass. My prayer partner is my best friend.

My Apostle Group sisters and I took on becoming trainers for SacraMentors as a service project one year, and that led to five years as trainers and also gave us a chance to meet many others, through giving the training series.

Through giving the training series, and at events over the years, I was also able to meet and observe some wonderful men devoted to our Lord, wonderful Catholic laymen who are contemplative and spiritual and devoted to blessing others and serving the Lord. I realized that these qualities were not only in our priests, but could be found in many laymen as well.

I know that SacraMentors, like many organizations, is trying to sort out its place and determine how to move forward. I know that my small faith group still is

something I am committed to, as my sisters have shared and taught me so much, as have my SacraMentor brothers. They have supported me in volunteering for RCIA, (which taught me all the things I should have learned and retained from CCD!). Learning all of that really renewed my understanding of our faith. More importantly, that and SacraMentors helped me to stop being a Cafeteria Catholic.

I told my sisters in the early days that if we had Bible studies for our study portion of our SacraMentor meeting I might quit, but then I relented. We used a Bible study by Scott Hahn, and I became a huge fan. I attended several other Bible studies. SacraMentors and my friendships with my sisters and brothers turned me into a student of faith. I learned that I can live it, talk about it and evangelize, and still live in a secular society and thrive.

Being Catholic is more than just cultural, it is central to who I am and part of me. Walking with the Lord is something I am honored and privileged to do. It is in every facet of my life now. I love SacraMentors, and feel so blessed to share what it means to me.

I wish you and yours a very holy and peace-filled Holiday season.

Love, your sister in Christ,  
Linda Moran

*(Linda can be reached at lindy@harbornet.com)*

Many Thanks to  
**Steve Egge**  
for donating his talents (and fee!) in 2008  
to make additions and changes  
to our Website! *Thanks, Steve!!*  
**www.sacramentors.org**

*Do not be  
afraid;  
for behold, I  
proclaim to  
you good news  
of great joy:  
today a Savior  
is born for us,  
Christ  
the Lord.*

*Luke 2: 10-11*



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*F*ather,

*You make this holy night radiant with the  
splendor of Jesus Christ our light.*

*We welcome him as Lord, the  
true light of the world.*

*Bring us to eternal joy in the kingdom of  
heaven, where he lives and reigns  
with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

(Opening Prayer for the Nativity of Our Lord, Mass at Midnight)

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