

Everyone at the Table

I know of no more poignant moment in the history of the Christian faith than the hour when Jesus, knowing on the night before he died all that God had put into his path, wrapped himself in a towel and moved deliberately around the table, to wash the feet of his disciples. The image is so powerful in the memory and psyche of the church that the Johannine tradition records it instead of the institution narrative, as the key teaching that unlocks the meaning and memory of that evening. When the author of John's writings asked the question, "What did Jesus want us to remember?," the answer was this story of service, compassion and care in the face of pain.

The picture Jesus chose for His disciples to remember was "Everyone around the table." He told them: when you remember me, remember this night and what we did. Remember we were together at table... serving each other...breaking the bread ...telling the stories that stir God's love in our midst, choosing to be who we are and knowing what it is to be with God by serving and caring for one another. When you think of this night, remember me and you will be, again, what you remember, my disciples!

During this past year, many of us tested the limits of remembering in faith. I lost a brother to cancer, others lost jobs, agreements failed, friends stumbled, families struggled to stay afloat together and to maintain their way of life. People shared stories of pain, endured stretching of their financial, emotional, physical and spiritual limits. We struggled with a recession, challenges about health care, job losses, and shaken personal, family and community dreams. We made difficult decisions about how to allocate resources and we ad-

justed our sights and worked as we could to support our common and individual missions in life. Few easy answers appeared, for our times and challenges were hard. And still, through it all, Jesus stood in our midst, calling us to re-member who we are, what we are about and inviting us to see God in our midst, washing our feet, keeping us close, inviting us to be of good hope.

That invitation encourages me to choose a special focus for our programs and efforts at the Spiritual Center during the coming year. I do not believe this is a place to "hide away." People do not come here to escape their challenges. You come, hand in hand with God, to face them and to discover a positive energy, a "graced" sharing that recognizes in our weakness how the power of God encourages, engages and sustains us. From our inward journey to discover the peace and power of God here, we will equip and support each other for the outward journey of service, care and compassion for others in God's name.

During 2010, join us to consider how we can be Good Help in the name of God, who does not forget or flinch from the challenges of life. Be with us to ponder and accept our vocation to wash the feet of life's challenges and transform them into pathways of peace, hope, and healing for our families, our neighbors and our world. Be with us to understand and equip ourselves to be compassionate instruments of God's love. Grow from our rich spiritual traditions and resources you will find here.



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Sisters of Bon Secours Restructure Their Governance

WHEN SISTER ALICE TALONE, CBS, returns from the General Chapter meeting of her order in Rome, Italy, in October, she will no longer be President and CEO of the Sisters of Bon Secours, U.S.A. In fact, the American province, along with all the other provinces, will cease to exist.

“This will be a good thing,” Sr. Alice says. “It means we won’t have so many people caught up in community administration, so more sisters can perform their missions externally.”

The restructuring, which was approved at the 2004 General Chapter, streamlines the governance structure. The congregation leader will be chief executive of the international order, along with a small congregational team. Each member of the team will also be an “area leader,” with administrative duties for a geographic region. Sisters in each region will decide whether to have a regional leadership team as well.

“We’re doing away with provincial boundaries,” explains Sr. Alice, “in order to



Sr. Alice Talone

have ‘mobility for mission.’ In other words, sisters can move between geographic areas in pursuit of their missions.”

The international headquarters is also relocating from Paris, where the order was founded. The location was to be announced at the General Chapter meeting. The sisters are currently active in France,

Ireland, Great Britain, the United States and Peru.

“We are not changing for the sake of change,” Sr. Alice says. “The main reason is to revitalize our mission and our ministries.”

The ministries on the Marriottsville campus are quite viable, she adds. In addition to the ministries of the spiritual center and the healthcare system, they include vocation, formation, associate membership and volunteer ministry. More information on the history, mission and service of the Sisters of Bon Secours can be found on their website, www.bonsecours.org. ♡

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Learn and be responsive to God’s invitation to care. Join us and others as we explore the hope that encourages us and the dream that sets us free.

On that last night, Jesus showed us that God is uniquely among us when we gather at the table, tell the stories, become bread broken and shared, serve one another and recognize Jesus doing God’s will in our midst. Come. Be with us. Lift each other up and bring to the world the promise of God’s care, who will change hearts and ultimately the world. Here we will learn again to be the promise of God that heals and makes us whole. Join us. We are here, waiting for you, around the table, re-mem-bering. ♡

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