



The *Transfiguration* Quarterly

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Fall 2024



Fall colors on the property of Community of the Transfiguration

Our Mission

Inspired by our enduring faith in the love of Jesus Christ, we improve the lives of youth and adults in our community by nourishing the body, mind, and soul.



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Letter from our Sister Superior

Dear Oblates, Associates, and Friends of the
Community of the Transfiguration,

I am so excited that our Oblate, the Rev. Carol Ruthven, has agreed to take over editing the *Quarterly*. It's been a long time since anyone had the time to write and edit it, and to have Carol step up is a great joy.



There is no way to do all the catching up that you deserve, so I'll leap to the present. Sadly, two Sisters have elected to leave the Community. Former Sisters Rachel and Nadine, who have been living in Butler, OH, and serving their neighbors there, reached the conclusion that the way they are called to live the religious life differs too much from the call to those of us living and serving at the Mother House in Glendale. We wish them well in their endeavors and have blessed them on their way. There are many legitimate ways to serve Jesus Christ, and there are many legitimate ways to do that within the religious life. It was a long and difficult

discernment process, but we believe all will be healthier for it.

We have been enormously grateful for the work done on the north side of the Convent grounds (the side of the convent away from the school). The initial goal was to control the stormwater, which was not only raining down, but flowing onto our property from further upstream and down into our neighbor's yards and basements. A series of bioswales, which capture, filter, and slowly release stormwater while adding beauty to the landscape with a variety of plants, is working exceptionally well. Invasive plant species have been removed or are in the process of being controlled. Native plant species are restoring the beauty and health of the land. Winding paths welcome people to wander, think, pray, and be renewed by being in the midst of God's creation. A recirculating stream provides the music of flowing water three seasons in the year. An outdoor altar, consecrated by our new bishop, the **Rt. Rev. Kristin Uffleman White**, greatly enriches the property. The wonder of worshipping in God's outdoor cathedral is difficult to describe.

Blessings,
Sister Superior, Sister Diana Doncaster

Society of the Transfiguration: Ways of Working Together

◆ We see our ministries as an expression of God's love in the world for all people we serve and work with.

◆ We strive for best practices, subject matter, expertise, and collaboration for sustainability of the Sisters' resources.

◆ We invest the time to listen to one another, accepting who we are and valuing our unique gifts.

◆ We serve others with generosity and compassion as inspired by one's deepest personal convictions or faith commitments.

◆ We treat one another as we would like to be treated and show respect in every interaction even when we disagree.

◆ We care for ourselves so we can effectively care for others.

◆ We are clear and forthcoming in our communication.

◆ We maintain confidentiality where or when appropriate.

◆ We own and are accountable for our actions.

◆ We are empowered and responsible to provide excellent care and service.

◆ We seek a broad perspective ask for and offer help, opinions and involvement.

◆ We are dependent on one another to achieve optimal results.

◆ We will be respectful and open-minded to others, keeping in mind how our actions/responses may impact them. We welcome and encourage new ideas, input, feedback, and change.

◆ We demonstrate relentless pursuit for improvement.

◆ We learn and grow from our mistakes without fear of blame or shame.

◆ We learn from others, both internally and externally.

Inspired in our Episcopal faith tradition, our core values create an unwavering and unchanging guide for how we work with one another.

Society of the Transfiguration: Our Core Values

Relationships

Recognizing and believing all individuals have an infinite worth and deserve respect.

Integrity

Acting under the highest ethical standards with honesty, trustworthiness, transparency, and sincerity.

Engagement

Participating in decision making to improve our work environment and ministries

Inclusion

Valuing collaboration and diversity of thought, experiences, and perspective.

Appreciating that we are better together, leveraging our strengths and differences.

Progressive Thinking

Encouraging innovation and respectfully challenging the status quo to create more effective ways of working. Encourage life-long learning.

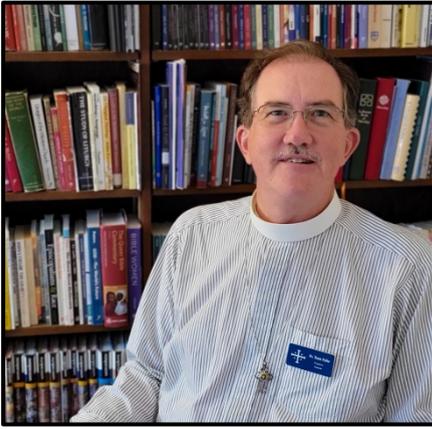
The Newly Landscaped North Campus

The Community of the Transfiguration has invested in a project to provide an environmentally sustainable landscape. The newly landscaped north campus features an outdoor altar and fountain, a stunning landscape of native plants, a private “hermitage” for silent prayer and writing, a swing, and beautiful walking paths and streams.



Come and experience the beauty of these sacred grounds.

Seasons



Years ago, when I was living in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, I began to miss the changing of the seasons. I remember when my first fall and winter came and the familiar changes in weather and life didn't come. There were no colorful leaves and no

leaves to rake. There was no snow on driveways or sidewalks to shovel. There was no changing out the closets with the proper clothes for the season. Perhaps most surprising of all, I didn't know what to cook! When should I make stew, chili, goetta and sauerkraut? They all came with the changing of the seasons, but the changes weren't there. Now living in Cincinnati, I'm back in familiar cycles and I like it. When I retire, I won't be moving back to Florida!

Hurricane Beryl brought unseasonable changes. Beryl was the earliest ever Category 4 and 5 hurricane. It brought death and destruction to islands in the Caribbean, Mexico, and the U.S. The scientific community is warning us that earlier and more powerful hurricanes are to be expected as the effects of climate change intensify.

We've just experienced Hurricanes Helene and Milton with their devastation and loss of life. Helene struck especially close to home in Western North

Carolina where the Sisters have their vacation/retreat house in Bat Cave. Bat Cave, Chimney Rock and Lake Lure all connected by U.S. Alt 74 are almost beyond recognition. This kind of news really hits home when it happens in places you've been, but of course not the same as for those who live there.

Our political seasons are beginning to feel more storm like. The vitriol, the multitude of misinformation and lies, the violence and the division are intensifying. I don't think anyone believes this will end regardless of how the elections in November turn out.

Having just reached the age of sixty-five, I'm more mindful than ever that I'm entering a new season of life. Some changes in life are welcomed especially those that are cyclical and bring expected and appreciated variety. The more I've experienced churches that do not use a liturgical calendar, the more I appreciate the changing seasons and the special feast days that we celebrate as Episcopalians.

Ecclesiastes 3

3 For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: ²a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted; ³a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; ⁴a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance it is God's gift that all should eat and drink and take pleasure in all their toil. ¹⁴I know that whatever God does endures forever; nothing can be added to it, nor anything taken from it; God has done

Some changes bring uncertainty about whether the changes are positive or negative and sometimes only time will tell. Some changes have a measure of both. Some changes come after careful discernment, and some come totally unexpected. Some blow in on a gentle breeze and some from a roaring storm.

Change can unsettle us, change our direction, find us on paths unknown, bring fear or peace, but whatever it brings the one thing that will not change is that change happens. Often, we cannot control how it happens or when it happens. Some changes in our lives are initiated by God or a response to God's call on our life. Some changes we would have liked God to prevent, though we know that given the freedom given in creation by the Creator, God cannot.

When change comes, we have a choice to make. Will we navigate the change by ourselves, or will we acknowledge that through it all God is with us? God can help us adapt to change, help us weather storms and navigate life if we allow God to do so. No matter what is happening in our lives we can find peace in that time, place, and silence when we are mindful of God's presence. There will be times when we don't feel it and then we simply must rely on our faith that knows God is present with us always whether we feel it or not.

No matter how change comes, it can always be an opportunity for new possibilities. It is often helpful for us to focus on this positive aspect when we are experiencing painful change.

We must remember that Jesus experienced these different types of changes in his own life. Being fully human, he was not immune to them. In him, we see someone who took everything to God in prayer. In doing so, he was able to move with the seasons, to stand firm in any storm, and to continue to journey forward along the path of God's will.

"We must trust him as absolutely with our future as with our now." — Mother Eva

We can do the same. As Jesus was an example for us, so are we to be an example to others in our own day. We journey through the seasons and storms of life, and we will continue to do so by the mercy and grace of God.

*The Rev. Tom Fehr, Chaplain,
Community of the Transfiguration*

The Prayer for the Gift of the Holy Spirit

Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in us the fire of your love. Send forth Your Spirit and we shall be created. And You shall renew the face of the earth. O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy His consolations. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Ministry of the Oblates

Have you heard about the Oblates of The Community of the Transfiguration? If not, you are not alone. Most people have never heard of the word “Oblate.” The word is related to the Latin word that means “to offer.” An Oblate is a person devoted to a monastic community. It is closely related to the word “oblation” that refers to an offering or gift to God. An Oblate is committed to devotion and service to a monastic community in the same spirit of love that Christ offered himself for us.



**Oblates,
August 6,
2024**

Renewal of their
promises as
Oblates on the
Feast of the
Transfiguration
of Our Lord.

An Oblate provides a link between a monastic community of nuns or monks and the community in which the Oblate lives. An Oblate can be a woman or a man and involved in any occupation in life or be retired. In addition to their devotion to a specific monastic community, their role is to share with others the monastic values that are important for living life as a faithful Christian. These values can include devotion to daily prayer, spiritual growth, service to others, hospitality, and a commitment to Christ.

The Oblates can be recognized by the blue scapular that they wear over a white shirt or blouse. The scapular is a short cloak that covers the shoulders and drapes over the front and back of the person wearing it. It is usually about knee-length. The Oblates also wear a silver medallion with the Jerusalem cross of the Community of the Transfiguration.

The Oblates of the Community of the Transfiguration include both men and women. They are Episcopal priests, Spiritual Directors (Spiritual Companions), directors of non-profit organizations and nursing homes, retreat leaders, Christian education leaders, as well as serving as staff at the Community of the Transfiguration in Glendale.

If you are interested in learning more about the Oblates of the Community of the Transfiguration, you can contact **Sr. Teresa** or our Oblate **Toni Thomas-Feren**.



Letter to the Associates

God, our Creator, the Source of all, you call us to kindness and may our lives reflect your love.

May our lives reflect your peace.

May our lives reflect your light.

May our lives be woven together in your love.



Sister Jacqueline

Greetings in the name of the Lord.

We are very grateful to be reviving the Quarterly. Our Oblate, the Rev. Carol Ruthven will serve as editor. We have really missed this important means of communication.

The renewal of the north part of the property is a great blessing. Stormwater is controlled, there is an outdoor altar, a gathering place and paths to walk. Come and see the beauty of nature.

You are a very important part of our Community. I pray that we can deepen and enrich our fellowship of prayer and mutual support as a widespread family in Christ.

You may wish to recall why you became an associate. A few reminders. You can contact me about prayer requests, dues, or other concerns. Your dues are a way of contact and support our ministries. We value sharing your joys and concerns. Please do arrange to have someone notify us of serious illness or death. We count on you to spread the news that our Community exists.

The Rev. Scott Gunn led a wonderful Associates Fall Retreat on October 11-13. He shared reflections on the teaching, praise, and poetry of the Collects of The Book

of Common Prayer. Associates from several different states joined us in person, as well as virtually on Zoom.

Associates of the Community of the Transfiguration are women and men who participate in the spiritual life of the Community wherever they live and work.

They are an integral part of the Community and share in its ministry of service and prayer. Associates may always ask for prayer and spiritual guidance from the Community.

Laughter is Healing



At the October 31 Zoom gathering of the Associates, **Ruth Wagner**, an Associate now living in Ontario, Canada, shared a wonderful story told by **Sister Olivia Mary. Sr.** Olivia was on a bus when a little boy sitting with his mother went to sit with Sister Olivia. He sat and talked with her until his mother said it was time to go because their bus stop was next. The little boy protested and said: “But I’ve never talked to a penguin before!”

Have You Considered Becoming an Associate?

Several years ago, a dear friend, **Flo Mayer**, who was a fellow Daughter of the King, Associate of Community of the Transfiguration (CT), and known by all as the “Prayer Warrior” of Christ Church Cathedral in Lexington, Kentucky, approached me and said, “Pat, you should consider becoming an Associate of CT.” I considered it a nice gesture from Flo but dismissed the idea. I had enough on my plate.

Then in 2014, I scheduled an overnight retreat at **Transfiguration Spirituality Center** for our Junior Daughters of the King at Christ Church Cathedral. The girls were blown away by the hospitality of the Sisters, **Sister Jacqueline’s** tour of the beautiful chapel, the BethAnna Cottage where we stayed, the meals, and the beautiful grounds. We attended Lauds at 7:30 a.m. and Morning Prayer at 8:00 a.m. with the Sisters. The girls loved Transfiguration Spirituality Center! When I mentioned the word “retreat” the girls loudly proclaim, “We want to go back to TSC!” So, we did, every year except during COVID.

I began to realize after a couple of retreats there that this Community was a special place. I had never experienced anything quite like it before. It was such a spiritual experience every time I took the Junior Daughters there, so, I inquired about becoming an Associate. ***On October, 14, 2017, I was admitted as an Associate of Community of the Transfiguration. It has been a spiritual journey and has influenced my life ever since.***

I've attended the Associate retreats that are held in the Fall and Spring, sometimes in person and sometimes virtually. I've had a couple of mountaintop experiences while attending retreats in person, which made an enormous impact on my life. One such experience was on October 14th, 2017 when I was admitted as an Associate during the fall retreat and the **Rev. Phyllis Spiegel** led the retreat entitled "Sensing God." She spoke on how our senses can enable us to see, feel, taste, and smell the presence of God.

*"Mary took a litra of very costly pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped His feet with her hair, and the house became filled with the fragrance of the perfume."—
John 12:3*

On that Saturday evening, the last sense she talked about was smell. **The Rev. Speigel** had been to Jerusalem where she had purchased a small container of nard. She passed the small container of nard to the first person in the front row and asked her to put a small drop on the back of her hand and pass the container to the next person. Sister Jacqueline was sitting next to me, and she put a drop on her hand and passed it to me. I put a small drop on the back of my left hand and when I smelled it, I broke down in tears.

I closed my eyes and could see Mary anointing Jesus' feet and wiping His feet with her hair! The sense of smell was so powerful, it took me to that very scene, and I was moved to tears. I had to leave that Saturday night due to responsibilities at my church the next morning. However,

I kept smelling my left hand and crying all the way back to Lexington. That was truly a mountaintop experience for me. Needless to say, I didn't wash the back of my left hand until that scent wore off!

I will never forget the profound way the sense of smell affected me that night at the TSC retreat. It heightened my awareness of our senses and what a role they can play in "Sensing God." I am so thankful for the retreats that I can attend and learn from and receive a blessing at the Community of the Transfiguration.

Something that we are doing as Associates is getting together via Zoom on the last Thursday of every month at 11:00 EST for prayer, sharing, discussions, and getting to know each other better as Associates. If anyone is interested in joining this group, let Sister Jacqueline know and you will be invited to join us. We share the fact that we are Associates of a special Community and can make a difference in our parish, city, state, and our world.

Community of the Transfiguration is truly a beacon of light in our dark world. I feel so blessed to be an Associate of such a wonderful place and I'm inspired by their ministries, hospitality, and mission. May God Bless the Sisters and their work at Community of the

Transfiguration.

Pat Arnold, Associate CT



Transfiguration Spirituality Center

*Hospitality is not to change people, but to offer them space where change can take place.
— Henri Nouwen*

Transfiguration Spirituality Center (TSC) is the retreat ministry of Society of the Transfiguration (SOT). We have two large buildings for groups and a few spaces for singles or couples to enjoy a peaceful getaway. St. Mary's is the larger guest house on the SOT campus. It was originally built as a nursing home for the Sisters' families and was converted into a retreat center when the ministry launched in 2010.

There are 20 rooms, 3 of which are doubles, all with private bathrooms. There is a large meeting space/ chapel area, with a library, conference room, two kitchenettes and two lovely patios for guests to enjoy. BethAnna is the other group space. It was a boarding house back when Bethany was a boarding school. It has 17 guest bedrooms (with shared bathrooms), a lovely living room for group gatherings, a basement flex space and a full kitchen. Many groups who stay there cook their own meals. Meals that we provide for our guests are prepared by Food for the Soul, our own food rescue ministry.

The Lodge and Cottage each have a space for a single guest (Simplicitas and Martha Grace) and a space for a couple to stay (Hilaritas and Mary Grace). Guests enjoy the quiet simplicity of these spaces for a night, a



weekend, or longer. The retreat center is open to guests of all faith backgrounds, as well as secular groups. We host everyone from Buddhist Meditation Groups to the Weaver's

Guild of Cincinnati, from Women Writing for a Change to Parents of Murdered Children. We also host many church groups – both Episcopal and other denominations. Our guests enjoy our lovely grounds and gardens, especially the updated North Lawn with its walking paths, outdoor altar, and stream. There is also a labyrinth for their use, as well as the Stone Chapel for any spiritual services.

People gather here to learn and exchange ideas, and share with us in friendship, worship and appreciation of nature. It is our hope that every guest will experience refreshment and renewal here with us. In prayer, we strive to be a place of outrageous hope and extravagant hospitality for everyone we meet.



We would love to give you a tour of our facilities. To arrange this, please contact **Liz Keuffer**, Director, at liz@ctsisters.org.

MAY YOU FIND PEACE HERE

Food for the Soul



Food for the Soul (FFTS) is a food rescue, kitchen, and pantry, designed to stop food waste and eliminate hunger by creating access to nutritious food for people experiencing food insecurity.

Since 2020, Food for the Soul has experienced incredible growth and

impacted the community in unimaginable ways. Organically grown out of a global pandemic, FFTS was an innovation the Sisters of the Community of the Transfiguration, unanimously voted to realign the resources to meet the needs of those experiencing hunger.

FFTS has become an essential part of the community, providing food distribution through hot meals, pantry boxes, education, and monthly self-select food pantries.

Community meals are one of many initiatives Food for the Soul provides. These meals offer free lunches to the community across Cincinnati and close partners. Receiving partners and organizations of these hot meals are St. Monica Recreation Center, Talbert House, Haven House for Men, City Gospel Mission, YWCA Domestic Violence Shelter, and Phil's Place.

Once a month Food for the Soul hosts free shopping experiences for the community. FFTS distributes about 10,000 pounds of food, hygiene products, clothing, shoes, and household items. Food for the Soul offers

...‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?’ ‘He will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.’ —Matthew 25:44-45



healthy cooking nutritional classes for the community. There has been more than 40+ graduates. FFTS also offers a workforce development program for their kitchen staff. Through a partnership with the Freestore Foodbank, FFTS sends their kitchen staff to get a free 10-week culinary art education in the

Cincinnati Cooks program.

In the fiscal year of July 2023–June 2024, FFTS reached a new record of rescuing over 200,000 pounds of food in one year. This shines a light on the dedication FFTS has in pouring its love on the community.

Food for the Soul has experienced significant growth with the number of pounds of food used and the number of people served. As a result, FFTS is under construction remodeling their existing kitchen. Through partnerships forged with local and non-profit organizations, FFTS rescued over 550,000 pounds of food between 2020–2024 that equates to more than 458,000 meals to the community. Although this milestone is big, the journey is not over!

Mary Knight, Director, Food for the Soul

St. Monica's Recreation Center

St. Monica's Recreation Center is a ministry for God's children founded in 1935 by the Sisters of The Community of the Transfiguration to serve children and youth of the historic African American neighborhood of **Lincoln Heights** in northwestern Cincinnati. Since then, the Sisters, staff, and volunteers have been a vital community resource providing education, crafts, sports activities, Vacation Bible School, worship services and prayer, as well as many different recreational activities.

On Saturday, July 13, 2024, St. Monica's, along with the **Transfiguration Spirituality Center** and Christ Church Cathedral, hosted a one-day Parent Retreat for mothers of some of the children. After dropping off their children at the Center, the mothers spent the day on the Society of the Transfiguration grounds in Glendale enjoying the beautiful convent grounds. The relaxing day full of many options included yoga, mani-pedis, massages, crafts, a delicious **Food for the Soul** lunch, as well as conversations regarding finances and parenting. The day concluded with a prayer service. It was well deserved beautiful day for these fabulous mothers!

In September, the Center hosted a successful basketball tournament for ages 12 years old and up. Fourteen teams in four age divisions, including co-ed teams, competed for 1st and 2nd place prizes. Everyone enjoyed the spirited competition. This fall, every Saturday morning from 8–10 a.m., St. Monica's is hosting a free Adult Open Gym. The Center also held its Annual Pumpkin Patch Event on Friday, October 11, that included free pumpkins to take home, hayrides, and some delicious fall snacks!

Transfiguration North Carolina: Ministry at Bat Cave, North Carolina



Church and school built
in 1900 on the Bat Cave
property



Guest House today

The Community of the Transfiguration has been deeply connected with western North Carolina for more than 100 hundred years. **Mother Eva** and **Mother Beatrice** worked themselves to exhaustion and needed a place to go to be restored. They found that in the tiny mountain community of Bat Cave. (Yes, there is a literal bat cave there – hence the name.)

Over the years Sisters have gone there to rest and serve, and have developed deep relationships. Our Oblate, **Mattie Decker**, has been living there and we decided to make her work a formal ministry of the Community. It would take too long to tell you about all she has done there and the ministry she has built up. Suffice it to say, it's amazing.

Sister Superior, Sister Diana

From Mattie Decker, OBLATE CT



One day, not long ago, I was walking here through the forest, and I paused to look up into the canopy of tall trees along the cloistered path above the Rocky Broad River, when I thought of Mother Eva's words written in this letter below to her sister and realized— "This IS a convent! It's an enclosure—this is why people who come here feel the safety and the sacred here!" It made me think how, we are all living out Mother Eva's dream from almost 130 years ago.

"I have been longing ever since we have been here to have a convent here someday, where our busy city workers could come for rest and change, and which might be a center of religious life and work in this valley"—
Eva Lee Matthews, September 1897

(Letter written to her sister
at the Esmeralda Inn, Bat Cave, N.C.)

This past year the Sisters decided to create their "5th official ministry" here at Bat Cave and asked me to be the director. It made sense, as so many factors have come into play here. The events we have had since the pandemic, have continued to grow, as I had become certified as a Nature and Forest Therapy guide and had begun offering "Forest Bathing" walks here. We say, "the forest is the therapist, the guide opens the doors."



Our neighbor and skilled local naturalist, (<https://www.batcavebotanicals.com/>) **Sara Jackson** teaches me how everything here is either food or medicine. Thanks to our conservation easement with **Conserving Carolina**, (conservingcarolina.org/forest-bathing) this has provided a means for offering an increasing number of events including now, “Art in Nature,” “Writing in Nature,” “Yoga in Nature,” and even “Fly fishing as Contemplative Practice.” Soon we will have a shelter which is in the process of being built for gatherings. We will need to always have small groups, in keeping with our stewardship of the land and promise to keep a light footprint. This is, after all, the ancestral land of the **Cherokee** and we are making friends with members in the Eastern band of the Cherokee. I hope to have gatherings here that can increase our awareness of responsibility and care.

At our preserve we have been able to collaborate with others in our community in wonderful ways by hosting events and providing respite for clergy. I have been active in the vestry and serve as chalice bearer at

the early service of **The Episcopal Church of the Transfiguration** in Bat Cave. Last year, one member of our church began “Wild Church” services in nature (“Wild Church Network, (<https://www.wildchurchnetwork.com>), which became well attended both by members, as well as many who had never been to church inside a building. We are discovering new ways to collaborate and to grow our church’s ministry, which we see as increasingly part of this land the Sisters have kept since the founding of the community. There are so many stories and so many ways that the Sisters influence over the years continues. I ask for your prayers as we discern how we may honor this pristine land in the future.

Mattie Decker, Oblate CT



Broad River on the property of the Community of the Transfiguration in Bat Cave.



Bat Cave after Hurricane Helene

Hurricane Helene and Bat Cave Update

We know that God is ever present even amid the upheaval and destruction that came with Hurricane Helene. Thankfully Mattie and our caretakers, **Craig and Michelle Aubert**, are safe on our property at Bat Cave. We praise God that Mattie's house, our retreat house, and the Aubert's house all survived the destruction. Thankfully, they now have food, water, and electricity. We are investigating options to install solar panels to replace the use of propane.

It has been painful to witness in news accounts the incredible destruction of homes, businesses, and entire towns, along with the loss of life, in western North Carolina. We are committed to help with long-term recovery, though we do not yet know what that looks like. As you are essential parts of our lives and

ministries, we are asking for prayers for wisdom, and especially for all the people who are now struggling to figure out how to rebuild their lives. We are open to ideas—no matter how wild, crazy, and creative—for ways of raising relief funds and for providing emotional and spiritual support for people who have lost everything. It is very hard that we cannot go there in person to help. Aside from the fact that every road and highway is badly damaged and impassible, the professionals who are working hard to save people don't need us in their way.

As we wait and pray, we start planning possible ways to help in the long term. It is an invitation for us all to come together to find ways to make even a small difference in the immense need created by the hurricane

Thank you for all you are and do. As always, we are in this together.

Blessings, Sister Superior, Sister Diana

For a Natural Disaster

Merciful God, you know of the suffering in place due to disaster. Give the people their strength to endure and give us generous hearts and willing hands that we might respond to their needs so that your benevolent grace might be known. Amen.

Bethany School

Bethany School is the only Episcopal school in Ohio. It is a vibrant place where curious learners in kindergarten through grade 8 thrive! Students are provided with experiences both inside and out of the classroom to help build strong character, with a focus on empathy, responsibility, independence, and a passion for service and leadership.



Be a buddy, not a bully.

In recognition of October as National Bullying Prevention Month the school administration and staff provided lessons and experiences for students to create awareness of this. The event culminated with a Wear Orange Day on Wednesday, October 23. The entire campus, including everyone at The Community of Transfiguration, joined in by wearing orange clothing, hair bows, and ribbons.



Sr. Hope and Luke: Ambassadors of Hospitality

Sr. Hope is the Sacristan for the worship space in the Convent called the Oratory. Some of you have worshiped with the Sisters there when visiting. Sr. Hope and her faithful Luke care for that worship space. You may meet them when walking the campus.

Zuleikha¹

Genesis 39

“My request won’t go away no matter how long you try to hide your face from Me,” commented YHWH Tzevaot.²

Angel Strong-in-Capacity-for-Righteousness-and-Upholder-of-Perfection-in-Everything shuddered, but finally looked into the Face of Love. **Scrupe** winced at gentle amusement on the Holy Face.



“We understand,” came the Voice. “You are not ready to laugh about it yet. Thank you for your honest struggle.”

“How can I possibly care for Zuleikha as well as Joseph? I can’t *stand* her!”

“Perhaps not. But you can love her.” “UGH!”

A great gasp sent seismic shudders through the wings of the angelic host. More than one angel looked around to see if the Tempter had slithered back amongst them. Even the most experienced, revolted by the worst evils and arrogant self-delusions in which humans can choose to be entrapped, do not say “UGH” about anyone who is Created in the Image and Likeness of the All-Holy.

“And that is precisely why you need to serve and guard *her* as well as Joseph,” said Eternal Truth. “Until you can see Me in her, you will be maimed in love.”

¹ Zuleikha is the name attributed to the wife of Potiphar in Jewish and Islamic tradition.

² YHWH of Hosts

Scrupe whipped out a beautifully bound copy of the King James Version of the English Bible and began to read . . . “*and she spake unto him according to these words . . .*”

The Eternal waited while Scrupe read the story which would be another excuse for treating women as scheming temptresses of no real value.

“Yes, We know how it is written. It casts Joseph as a pious hero. It removes Zuleikha’s identity and name, leaving her only as Potiphar’s wife; not My desperate, lonely daughter, married off for gain. It ignores how Potiphar ignores her and the many gifts I give her, how he spends all his time building his power base and crushes her inner beauty. It ignores her lonely fear. It overlooks My Grace – Grace you need to be part of working in her.

Scrupe sighed and set the book aside, rolling eyes like a first-year high school student claiming expertise in all things. “How are *You* in *her*? *You* cannot *approve* of her actions – trying to use Joseph as a boy-toy and then accusing him of trying to rape her!

“*Is that what We said?*” asked the Almighty. Misusing the Divine Word for self-justification is sure to annoy the Triune One. Still, God is all-compassionate and forgiving.

“To you that hear prayer shall all flesh and angels come,” murmured Michael, “*because* of their transgressions.”³

“*What* did you just say?” Scrupe demanded. “*What* transgressions?!”

³ As should be clear, Michael is quoting Psalm 65:2 in a special translation used in Eternity. It is called HALO (Heavenly Angelic Loving Opus).

Glancing to the Throne for permission, which was readily granted, Michael asked, “Do you really want to know or are you just spoiling for a fight?”

Scrupe’s glare intensified. Michael’s brow rose higher. Scrupe laughed sardonically. “Are you trying to imitate that character in the TV show Star Trek – the Vulcan – Spock?”⁴

“Fascinating,” responded Michael, studying Scrupe closely.

“*What* is so fascinating?” Scrupe demanded, sinking into sulks.

“You are. You are so afraid to admit that you struggle with Holy Love for one who is beloved of her Creator that you hide behind anger, self-righteousness and pomposity.

There is no shame in the struggle. We all struggle and grieve at the resistance humans make to Love. The shame is in refusing to face your own fear and hurt. It is in not bringing it to the One who Loves and Knows you far better than you can know yourself.”

Scrupe cast a wary glance toward the Throne of Grace, then quickly looked away. “She is hurting Joseph.”

“Yes, she is. But you are missing the point. Scrupe, this is not the first time you have fallen into fear and fought to keep from admitting that you need help to defeat it again. You know and dread the grief and pain of facing yourself in the Light of Grace. You forget the joy that comes with growth. You forget that you are not alone.” The Archangelic voice was strong and tender; echoing the Great Voice which Speaks the Word of Life.

“And how would *you* know what is in my heart?” Scrupe asked angrily.

⁴ It will be noted by the observant reader that angels are not limited to linear time but are created with the freedom from such constructs.

“Because it is in mine,” Michael responded. Do you think that just because I was Created as an Archangel, I am spared these struggles? Perfection does not come with the Office. Grace strengthens you for the struggle and the struggle hones you.” A murmur of experienced agreement rose from the angels gathered around the Throne.

Scrupe’s eyes closed and head bowed in reluctant acknowledgment. Michael smiled gently, gratefully. The privilege of serving as a channel of Grace brings intense joy.

Steps dragging, wings drooping, halo hanging from one ear, Scrupe moved toward the Throne, but halted a long way off. “What do You want me to do?” the angel asked, dread and trust battling for supremacy.

“Come to Me. You are weary and heavily burdened. Let Me remove that weight from you and replace it with My Yoke which is far lighter than anything you inflict on yourself.”⁵

Healing was offered to the increasingly willing angel. A heart grieved and angered by the brokenness of God’s beloved human children was flooded with compassion.

The One Whose power, working in angels and people alike, does infinitely more than we can ask or imagine,⁶ held up the Mirror of Truth.

“Wait. I don’t understand. What’s that about?” Scrupe asked, pointing at the mirror.

“Tell Me what you don’t understand.”

⁵ Matthew 11:28 (HALO)

⁶ Ephesians 3:20 (HALO)

“I felt you mending my heart. But what are those torn places where You just embroidered around the edges?”



“I am so glad you noticed. Your willingness to struggle with your fear, judgment and resentment is breaking your heart open to Me so that it can grow. If I were to stitch those parts together, there

would be no room for your heart to stretch, to hold more love and compassion. So We strengthened the frayed edges. Now, if you are willing, My Compassion can flow freely to Zuleikha through your heart.”

Scrupe plunked down on the nearest cloud.⁷

“Why make me choose? Why not just do whatever You want?”

“Growth of any kind, especially growth in Love and Grace and Compassion can only come through willingness. You can choose to allow Us to work in and through you—to redeem your pain and struggling for greater good. Or you can refuse. Others can work with Zuleikha and Joseph. But I have chosen *you* so that the three of you, together, will be part of My work for your good and the good of many others.”

“Wouldn’t it be better to work through someone whose heart isn’t such a mess – doesn’t need so much fixing?” “Look again, Scrupe.”

⁷ Angel painting by Karen Tarlton at www.karensfineart.net Used with her generous permission. Check out the variety of work on her site and on Amazon.

Scrupe peered more intently into the Mirror, and gasped. “You have created a clean heart within me and are still renewing a right spirit within me!⁸ But it’s the same frayed heart with tangles and thorns. But it’s not. How?!”

The Creator pointed once again to the Mirror of Truth, and now Scrupe could see glimpses of growth in Zuleikha’s heart—a beautiful garden in places. Tangles of brambles in others. Brokenness and new life together. Fearful efforts to root out the healthy growth intertwined with longing to nourish it and risk letting it show.

“Her heart . . . her heart is a lot like mine. I mean . . . there are differences. But not really. Or are there?”

“There are glorious differences. She is My unique creation, My much-loved human daughter. You are My unique creation, my much-loved angel.”

“But we both have hearts which need healing and growing,” Scrupe whispered in awe and wonder. And so does Joseph.”

There was silence in Heaven. From deep within Scrupe’s being a tiny snicker erupted, then great guffaws rolled out and rollicking, joyous, grateful laughter as Grace flowed and Scrupe once again set a self-constructed, crushing yoke on the Altar and received the yoke of Freedom in Love.

“I Love her! I truly Love her. I choose to love her!!” The astonished angel bowed in delighted gratitude and soared gladly, willingly toward Egypt.

Sister Superior, Sister Diana

⁸ Based on Psalm 51:11

Celebrating Bishop Michael Curry and Bishop Sean Rowe

With deeply grateful hearts we give thanks and celebrate the wonderful legacy of leadership by **The Rt. Rev. Bishop Michael Curry**. His joyous laughter, prophetic preaching, dedicated ministry to racial reconciliation, creation care, and evangelism, teaching the Way of Love, and faithful leadership will continue to inspire generations of Episcopalians and leave a wonderful foundation for our newly elected **Presiding Bishop, The Rt. Rev. Bishop Sean Rowe**. May God guide and bless both of them.



The 27th Presiding Bishop Michael Curry presents 28th Presiding Bishop Sean Rowe with the primatial staff during Rowe's investiture Nov. 2 at Chapel of Christ the Lord at the church's headquarters in New York City.

Photo: David Rider/The Episcopal Church

Calendar of Upcoming Events

Sunday, November 24: Christ the King Sunday

Thursday, November 28: Thanksgiving Day

Sunday December 1: First Sunday of Advent

Tuesday, December 24: Christmas Eve

Wednesday, December 25: The Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ

Monday, January 6, 2025: The Feast of the Epiphany

Further Information and Resources

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495 Albion Avenue, Cincinnati, OH 45246

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Transfiguration Spirituality Center

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retreats@ctsisters.org (Also on Facebook)

Transfiguration North Carolina

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<https://ctsisters.org/ministries/transfiguration-north-carolina/>

Food for the Soul

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St. Monica's Recreation Center

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