

## Confirmation and Encouragement

Generous responses to requests for financial support of Journey Resources encourage us greatly.

We anticipate that Journey Resources' operating expenses for 2002 will be \$115,000, fifty percent of which, we believe, will be met with retreat fees, conferences, and other Journey Resources activities. Our Board is committed to raising the balance of our operating budget.

We are still in need of additional gifts and pledges. If you have not yet made a pledge, would you consider pledging financially toward the work of Journey Resources? Your pledge would be gratefully appreciated. No level of support too small to be considered insignificant. Gifts of cash or capital gain property, such as appreciated stocks, are tax deductible. Your inquiries are most welcome.

## Reflections on Sacred Reading

"Books are our friends."

Those words, spoken by my middle school librarian 35 years ago, are etched forever on the wall of my mind. I remember thinking, "She must be crazy!" In those days, I hated reading books.

Today her face would glow to hear me agree that she was right. Books are our friends.

The beginning of a new year is a good time to reflect on such things as friendships. So, we'll ask you to consider the question we pondered at the start of 2002. "How have you been treating your 'friends' (your books) lately?"

Have you allocated sufficient time in your busy life for sacred reading? We hope so. Finding time for reading, sacred reading, is a difficult challenge for today's busy person. And who is not busy? Early, when the day is young, we are often and easily preoccupied with getting out of the house and into the workday, or perhaps, preoccupied with feeding and caring for our children before heading them off to school. After a long day's work, we feel the need to unwind, to have dinner, and more often than not, to shift our focus toward other interests that occupy our children's and our evening schedules.

According to Robert Mulholland, a noted seminarian in the field of spiritual development, there are two ways to read: informational reading and formational reading.

Informational reading is the type of reading that most of us do most, even unthinkingly, of the time. It's reading stop signs and billboards, headlines and magazines, it's the reading that we do to stay in touch with our work and our world and our day-to-day life. It's reading for information.

The other kind of reading, formational reading, is not so much working on the page, paragraph, or book we are reading as it is letting what has been written work on us. Formational reading focuses on 'depth' rather than 'distance'. With formational reading, the key question is not "how much," but "how."

In the popular book, *The Life You've*

*Always Wanted*, author John Ortberg expresses a perspective we share, "we have largely traded wisdom for information, depth for breadth. We want to microwave maturity."

Perhaps the following are the most significant challenges we must face.

- **We must be deliberate in our scheduling.**

If we fail to be intentional in the rationing of our time, we may never find the time for reading. Careful planning is necessary. Often it requires some type of sacrifice. Perhaps it involves refraining from television for an evening every week in order to read.

- **We must be deliberate in our selection of books.**

The volume of books being published is staggering. We are constantly being told by well-meaning friends, "You absolutely *must* read..." It's our hope the enclosed list of enduring spiritual classics will be a helpful lifetime guide to your selections.

- **We must be deliberate in our method of reading.**

A wise person once said, "if you read quickly, it will benefit you little. You will be like a bee that merely skims the surface of a flower." Instead in this new way of reading, with prayer, you become as the bee that penetrates into the depths of the flower. You plunge deeply within, finding its sweetest nectar.

Abraham Lincoln's law partner and biographer claimed, "Lincoln read less and thought more than any man in his sphere in America." Not a bad legacy for one to aspire to, especially today when superficiality runs rampant.

**Always when I was without a book, my soul would at once become disturbed, and my thoughts wandered. As I read, I began to call them together again, and, as it were, laid bait for my soul.**

Saint Teresa of Avila

## A Note From Fil

I hope you have enjoyed hearing from us again and have found our newsletter to be a helpful resource. Thank you for the interest you take and the care you demonstrate when you take time to read our letter to you.

At our most recent Journey Resources Board of Directors meeting, I submitted a report on 2001. It later occurred to me that you might be interested in hearing my reflections too.

Journey Resources is committed to offering the message of God's love, grace and mercy found through Jesus Christ for all people. Providing thoughtful and creative opportunities to discover God's loving care, our ministry extends as far as God leads and reaches through us.

### RETREATS

During the past year, I offered over a dozen retreats for people as near as

Greensboro and as far away as Sacramento. Some groups were as small as the six men who meet weekly in a small gathering to the 200 youth workers at a huge convention.

At the end of a recent retreat one person said, "I have never sensed God's nearness more profoundly nor have I ever been able to hear more clearly God's tender words of affection."

### SEMINARS, CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS

Lay renewal weekends for churches, Young Life family and outreach camps, staff and volunteer leader weekends, Youth Specialties Conventions provided opportunities to explore a variety of topics related to prayer, spirituality and ministry.

Recently someone wrote, "During the conference God interrupted my life. You were there to help me pay attention."

### PERSONAL SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

For most of the year I met monthly with over 20 individuals and assisted them in identifying the particular path on which God is leading them and offered encouragement to faithfully follow that path. Together we focused on being more open and receptive to God's *grace*, becoming more intentional in *prayer* and experiencing more fully God's *presence* in all aspects of life.

At the end of a recent visit, one of the individuals I meet with said, "Every now and then, God whispers to me like a gentle breeze, and everything that's been fuzzy becomes clear. Thank you for helping me listen."

Mere words cannot express the gratitude I feel for the privilege of

sharing these experiences and events with others.

## Fil's Winter Ministry Schedule:

### January

11-13<sup>th</sup> Speaking at Young Life Leadership Retreat, Lake Junaluska, NC

24-27<sup>th</sup> Speaking at Young Life National Transformational Discipleship Conference, [The Cove](#), Asheville, NC

### February

3<sup>rd</sup> Preaching at [Westminster Presbyterian Church](#), Greensboro, NC

6-8<sup>th</sup> Directing Solitude Retreat for [Young Life](#) staff from Nebraska & South Dakota, Sioux Falls, SD

8-9<sup>th</sup> Directing Solitude Retreat for Youth Pastors in Knoxville, TN

12-17<sup>th</sup> Preaching and Directing Solitude Retreat at Christ Church, Aspen, CO

### March

12-14<sup>th</sup> Directing Private Silent Retreat at Garden City, SC

16-17<sup>th</sup> [Preaching at Westminster Presbyterian Church](#), Greensboro, NC

22-24<sup>th</sup> Speaking at [YL Family Camp, Windy Gap, NC](#)

## Visit us on the World Wide Web

Journey Resources' newsletter, ministry schedule, and archives are available at [www.journeyresources.org](http://www.journeyresources.org)