

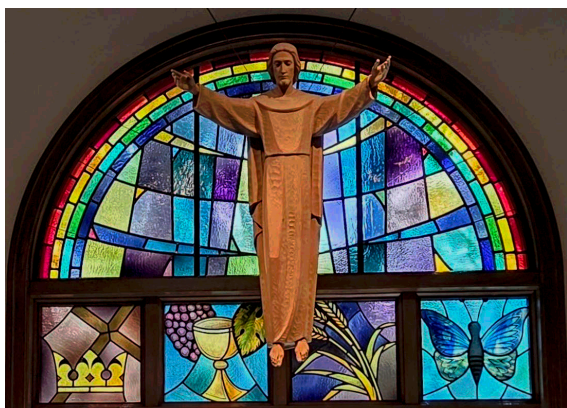


The *Transfiguration* Quarterly

Vol. 78 No. 2

Summer 2025

**Benignitas—Simplicitas—Hilaritas
Kindness—Simplicity—Joy**



St. Mary's Chapel at the Transfiguration Spirituality Center

“Jesus took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white. ...Then from the cloud came a voice that said, ‘This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!’” Luke 9:28, 35

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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James Harwell, Foor for the Soul CT

Letter from our Sister Superior, Sister Diana Doncaster

Dear friends, Associates, Oblates,
and companions on the road,

Things have been incredibly busy here, both in bringing hope and in responding to sorrow. It is as people of the Resurrection that we do both to the best of our ability.



Along with many others, we have been struggling with the horrors that are happening in this country and around the world and feeling a sense of helplessness. We have felt unable to do anything to make a real difference. But that's not true.

One afternoon Sister Teresa shared her experience of being part of the International Fast for Life which started on August 6, 1983, the anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. That it was also the Feast of the Transfiguration is a painful irony. On that day, people around the world started fasting to draw attention to the desperate need for nuclear disarmament. It actually got the attention of many world leaders. See Sister Teresa's account of her experiences with that powerful time elsewhere in this issue.

Hearing that story – that life-giving history – was a catalyst for us. We realized that we are not powerless, that we actually can make a difference. We can pray. It is our primary offering, our top ministry. We believe that prayer actually does make a difference in ways we cannot begin to understand. That's not our business. It is God's business. All we have to do is make the offering. We were also reaffirmed in our awareness that fasting is an offering that strengthens and focuses prayer if that is our truest intention.

We committed to dedicating each Monday to setting aside as much work and other distractions as possible and focusing on fasting and intercessory prayer. Each week we will concentrate on a different need. We've developed an initial list of concerns, which you will find at the end of this letter. Each week, the subject will be posted on the Transfiguration Facebook page and on our website (ctsisters.org) where you will also find a series of resources we have developed about fasting, some helpful scripture passages,

and a series of prayers. They are free to use and to share if you are so inclined.

Some are prevented from fasting from food due to health issues. Some are able to skip a single meal or eat smaller meals. Some cannot. Some have chosen to set aside all electronic devices for the day. There are other choices that people can discern thoughtfully. What we fast from is not nearly as important as that we fast to enhance our offering.

We've been asked for how long we will make this part of our ministry. For that we don't have an answer. There never will be an end to the needs, the nightmares that people endure; their struggles for which we can offer the support of our hearts and trust that God uses our prayers as God wills to do – always with love. We will offer what we can as we can.

If you would like to join us, here is our current plan for the next few weeks. It will change as events continue to unfold, but it's our starting place. Please join us if it feels like part of your call. Prayer matters. It makes a difference. Together we stand for love.

“While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.” Acts 13:2-3

August 18

- Our sisters and brothers who are immigrants in this land of immigrants, and who are being targeted for arrest without cause or warrant, suffering imprisonment and deportation.

August 25

- Our sisters and brothers in places of war, terror and flat-out genocide: Ukraine, Gaza, Myanmar, South Sudan, and too many others.

September 1

- Our sisters and brothers, the Israeli hostages taken in the attack by Hamas on October 7, 2023 and their grieving families.

September 8

- Our sisters and brothers living in places of famine, in food deserts.

September 15

- Our sisters and brothers who are victims of gun violence, those working to get sensible gun laws, and those who are afraid they might lose their guns.

September 22

- Our sisters and brothers; dedicated civil service workers who have lost their jobs, and those who do not know from one day to the next whether they have a job.

September 29

- Our LGBTQI+ sisters and brothers wherever it is unsafe to live or to admit to an identity other than on either end of the gender spectrum.

October 6

- Our sisters and brothers; victims of sex trafficking, including countless indigenous women and girls.

October 13

- Our sisters and brothers who live in fear because they speak with a different accent or have darker skin or worship differently.

October 20

- Our sisters and brothers; victims of climate change; enduring increasingly powerful storms, extremes of heat and cold, famine, and those working to protect our environment and all of God's creatures.

October 27

- Our sisters and brothers in spite of themselves who order and enact inhumane policies.
- Other humanitarian crises which arise around the world, and which continually break our hearts. We offer that brokenness as part of our prayer.

We have also been praying for the victims of the shooting at Church of the Annunciation in Minneapolis. Along with the

murdered and injured children, we pray for those whose injuries are not physical. We pray for survivors inside the church, family members, first responders, the family of the shooter, and parents everywhere who had to put on a brave face and send their children to school the next day.

Those include parents of our Bethany School children. We pray also for teachers and staff members and their families, other employees whose hard work maintains the School, the Transfiguration Spirituality Center, Food for the Soul, St. Monica's Recreation Center, and the Convent itself. We all know that yes, it could happen here. We pray that it will not, and we take precautions, and we continue to serve to the best of our ability and not let it overwhelm our minds.

As with schools, synagogues, churches, mosques, and public facilities of all kinds, we have taken stock of our security measures. We have grieved for the days when we didn't have to keep the Convent doors locked, didn't have to have guests sign in and out, didn't have to have security cameras everywhere. And we are increasing protective measures.

None of us wants this, but we are responsible for so many people who come here to learn, rest, pray and worship, work, and find peace. What is most important for us is to take what precautions we can, continue to pray, continue to live our lives with love and compassion. We are determined not to let hatred and evil change us except to call us into deeper, riskier, more radical love.

"Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? – Isaiah 58:6

We are to be living witnesses to Jesus' teachings about the Reign of God being with, in, among us and to invite people to explore what that means in daily life, in the circumstances we are living now. Only God knows what that will look like from moment to moment. We can only offer what we have to give and welcome those who feel drawn to walk with us in whatever way they are moved.

May God bless you in your own lives of prayer, of love and service. Pray for us as we pray for you. Many blessings to you all,
—Sister Diana

An Experience with Political Fasting



In a recent Community discussion, we were feeling a sense of individual helplessness in the face of the news of so much injustice, pointless gun violence, inhumane policies and cruelty. I happened to mention my experience with political fasting when I was living in Eureka, California, with Sister Alice. This quickly developed into exploring the possibility that we might begin to do something similar here.

As Sister Diana said, “It is hard to describe the light and hope which flowed around the room as we realized that we're not helpless. We might be aging and few, but we specialize in prayer and understand the strength and power that fasting can bring to intense intercessions.” So, we began to explore how we as a Community can incorporate the concept of Biblical fasting to help respond to the needs of the world. We have decided to use Monday as a day of prayer and fasting and have had a wide response and a number of people joining us weekly. Sister Diana has asked me to describe more fully my experience with fasting in California.

In our travels on the West Coast in the early 1980s, Sister Alice and I became aware of the intensification of the Nuclear Arms Race, and we took part in some anti-nuclear demonstrations. In 1983 we began to hear about the International Fast for Life, which was beginning on August 6th, 1983, on Transfiguration Day. The first nuclear bomb had been detonated in Hiroshima on August 6th, 1945. A group of very committed people had decided to offer their lives to resist in a water only fast. There would be groups of people fasting in Oakland, California, Bonn, Germany, and in other places around the world. Thousands of people joined in support. Sister Alice and I felt called to join in by some days of fasting ourselves.

With a group of friends, we drove to Oakland to meet the people fasting, who were staying on the campus of Holy Names College in the Oakland Hills. Every afternoon there was a prayer service after which we could visit with those who were fasting. I had the privilege of meeting and talking personally with Dorothy Granada, one of those who was fasting. Dorothy and I quickly formed a bond. Dorothy is a nurse who, as a missionary was serving as Chief Nurse at St. Luke's Hospital and School of

Nursing in Ponce, Puerto Rico. She and some of our Sisters were living in buildings on the hospital grounds and had become good friends.

After the fast ended, I spent some time in Oakland with Dorothy and her husband helping to document it. The whole experience was life changing for me as it led to my going to Nicaragua with Witness for Peace and later teaching at the Anglican Institute in Managua, Nicaragua. Recently I had the joy of reconnecting with Dorothy, who is retired and living in Matagalpa after a remarkable career of more than 40 years of establishing health care for women in northern Nicaragua.

—Sister Teresa M. Martin

Transfiguration Reflections



Life is relationship – with oneself, with others, with creation, and with God. There are high points in each of them, but having just celebrated the Transfiguration, we all know we do not get to stay on the mountaintop. Life calls and we must respond. We cannot stay on the mountaintop, because on that one point of

land, we cannot fit all that life is. All of our relationships cannot exist in one place.

For a few days in July, my life was focused on my relationship with my nephew Emmanuel as we toured the architectural wonders of New York City before our return to Cincinnati and the start of his master's in architecture studies at the University of Cincinnati. The Transfiguration was just around the corner and I was looking forward to time with Oblates soon to arrive from all over the country. As great as our time in New York City was, we could not stay there.

The high of the mountaintop experience soon fades. Perhaps it fades even faster if we overstay our visit. If we do not come down from the heights to share our experience with others, we can soon find ourselves on the mountaintop all alone and feeling lonely. Without sharing the experience, its significance may soon fade. Stories are meant to be told and shared.

Many stories were shared by the Sisters and Oblates during their time together during the week of the Transfiguration. These

shared stories had a significant impact on each person. Each individual story became a chapter in a commonly shared story of the community. All of the people we need to share our story with are not on the mountaintop with us, so we must come down and seek them out.

As much as we all cherish our mountaintop experiences, we must remember that the mountaintop is for refreshment, rest, connection, and encouragement. The mountaintop must not become a place of escape or permanence. If everyone were sitting atop their own mountain, we would all be separated from one another. Our mountains would then become no different than the walls built down below to separate us from one another. Though the mountaintop is a good place to visit from time to time, we need each other and the place we gather is in the valley.

In the valley, the best place to gather is down by the river. Life is vibrant and abundant beside the river of life. The river is a metaphor for the journey of life, for the relational connections we discover, nurture, and cherish. It is a metaphor for the relational connections that may be both difficult and broken. To be the Body of Christ in the world means that we must engage with all of our relational connections. In Christ's sacrificial love, God unites us into one so that all are welcomed. We are called to do the same.

*"Proclaim the greatness of the Lord our God
and worship him upon his holy hill; *
for the Lord our God is the Holy One." Psalm 99:9*

Our mountaintop experiences are meant to bring peace, clarity, and unity to our relationships in the valley. Mountaintop experiences foster good living and good relationships in the valley. Our way of living and relating in the valley affect our mountaintop experiences and may even determine if we have these experiences. If our relationships are stressed, broken, suffering from abuse or neglect or in any state of division or exclusion, it is harder to climb the mountain. All the places where we live are connected and in relationship with each other.

So, the Transfiguration gives us pause for introspection and soul searching. Raiment white and glistening can be soiled in the valley, if our relationships are not in good order. They are meant to remain white and glistening as a witness to others.

The Transfiguration is not just the celebration of Jesus' Transfiguration; it is also a call for us to discover who we really are. It is a call for us to climb the mountain. It is a call for us to tend to our relationships in the valley with care. — The Rev. Tom Fehr, Chaplain, Community of the Transfiguration

My Life as an Oblate of the Community of the Transfiguration



An oblate is a lay person who has associated themselves with a monastery or religious order and its way of life. An Oblate makes Promises and discerns their own Rule of Life, while continuing to live in the world. My path to becoming an Oblate has not always been so exacting or as clear as the above describes. I offer my story for any Associate, who may be considering becoming an Oblate to see that there

are many paths.

I met the Community in 1997. It has had a long presence in Northern California since the 1980's. Sister Alice was returning from being Sister Superior and Sisters Teresa and Lydia were living in the Victorian Village of Ferndale. Sr. Diana would come later. I was still a Roman Catholic and was invited to attend the monthly Quiet Days. After a time, I asked if I could be accepted as an Associate. It's a long story, but I was received as an Episcopalian and an Associate in 2000. The Sisters became my mentors, teachers and friends.

My desire was to be closer to God, and I thought being closer to the Sisters was a good way to do that. I was attending Education for Ministry (EfM:<https://theology.sewanee.edu/education-for-ministry/>), gatherings of the Associates, weekly Holy Eucharist with the Sisters and Associates, as well as Associate retreats at St. Dorothy's Rest. An Oblate has a closer relationship with the Community in Cincinnati and is asked, if possible, to spend a week each year participating in the life of the Community. It was at a retreat where I found out one could be married and still be an Oblate. I became an Oblate in 2013.

As an Oblate I have been able to deepen my relationship with God, my spouse, family, church and larger community as well. After my discernment process, I was to visit the Community for the weeklong retreat prior to becoming an Oblate. I called the

Sisters and let them know I had entered an outpatient treatment program for drug addiction. They very kindly gave me love and support and asked if it was the right time to make my Promises. For me, I needed my connection to the Community more than ever. After discussion, it was recommended that I use AA as my spiritual practice and attend church on Sundays. That is how I have lived out my Rule of Life these last 12 years. It has been the best of both worlds.

The Sisters possess a strong spiritual thread that runs through their day; prayer, the offices, service and community. Their values are expressed in their many ministries, but I was reminded that prayer is first and foremost. We live in a world in need of God's healing. The 12 Steps and the Oblate Promises are ways to live out my deepest values of love, compassion, and patience to name a few. On my best days, I put my whole trust in the grace and love of Jesus.

The Promises include poverty, chastity and obedience. These Promises and the Twelve Steps require surrender and renewal each and every day. Mother Eva, our Foundress, has left behind a treasure of her wisdom when seeking guidance.

"The vision of the King in his beauty is given that the light may shine through us and guide others to know, love and glorify him."

Mother Eva Mary, CT

Maybe this is what the Transfiguration is really about, taking up God's call and shining His light and love on others. I will with God's help. — Stephanie Schultz, Oblate CT

Letter to the Associates



Dear Associates,

Greetings in the name of our Lord. I pray that you are enjoying blessings and grace in your life. We had a wonderful celebration during the week of the Feast of the Transfiguration on August 6. We considered ways of closer collaboration with the Oblates. If you have ideas about closer collaboration between Associates and Sisters, please let me

know.

Molly Dutina, one of our Associates, has written a book entitled “Treasures in Plain Sight”. It is a good guide to living a deeper spiritual life. It is available on Amazon in paperback or hardback.

Your prayers and support are very important to us. The next Associates retreat will be October 17–19 and will be co-led by The Rev. Peter Doddema, Rector, Church of the Ascension, Frankfort, Kentucky, and his wife Nicole Burchinal Doddema. It will be in person and virtual. Please let me know if I can assist you. You can contact me by e-mail at sr.zach1@gmail.com, snail mail, or by phone at 513- 888-7439. God bless you, Sr. Jacqueline

“Awe, Grace, & Hope: God’s deep love walks beside us in hard times”



The Rev. Peter Doddema is a husband, parent, and priest. He was ordained in 2011. He delights in serving as a pastor to his people: worshipping, working, and walking with them in the seasons of their lives. He is an active practitioner of centering prayer and draws a great deal of strength and stability from times of silence spent in God’s presence.

Father Peter and his wife Nicole

Want to deepen your spirituality? Learn more about the Associates.



I have some wonderful memories of becoming acquainted with the Community. As I reflect on them now, I wonder. Was God calling me through them? Today I am about to start my 2nd year as a seminarian. It is an exciting and important time. I kind of think the Community of the Transfiguration had a big part to play in my formation. And I am so grateful!

Photo credit: KathyMorrowStudio.com

I can't say that they suggested this for me directly. They didn't. But they created an atmosphere of such love and kindness and generosity that it changed my life! God spoke to me through them.

The Sisters had a house in Eureka, California, and they attended Christ Church. That's where I met them. A few of the parishioners wore a beautiful red and white cross, the Jerusalem cross. I liked it so much I asked where I could get one.



That led to the first of the regular weekday visits to the Sisters' house to share an early morning Holy Eucharist, followed by breakfast and great conversation. And eventually I received one of those crosses. The red and white ones that used to belong to former Associates and now were on loan to newbies like me. I had become an Associate, Rule of Life and all!

The Sisters had a great library. I loved Sr. Alice's practice of answering my many questions, with a question! I learned Centering Prayer which became a daily practice and brought me even closer to the Holy Spirit. Sr. Teresa loved photography and nature walks. Since I loved those things too, we had lots of field trips together. It was a way to discover God in creation.

My love of photography as an expression of my love of God grew into a website. It now includes a few theological reflections. You might enjoy the one under the Zapata Falls page that talks about rebirth through all that water as a life force.

Perhaps you'd also enjoy this from the Chaco Canyon called "Cold in the Canyon." Here is the link to the website:

<https://nancysphotogallery.com>



The Sisters offered many wonderful retreats, some took place at St. Dorothy's Rest, near Santa Rosa. My personal spirituality deepened through a combination of these retreats, learning prayer, great conversations and so many other

shared experiences. Every few months, all the Associates, Oblates, and Sisters would gather at an Associates' house for Holy Eucharist, potluck lunch, and fellowship. The group of Associates was quite large, including most of the clergy and the Bishop. Friendships were formed.

The Sisters offered many training sessions including one on how to use a labyrinth for prayer and meditation. Now that I am in New Mexico to help a brother in declining health, I hired a landscaper to place a labyrinth in my backyard. It would be perfect if I could just figure out how to keep my neighbor's dog quiet for a few moments!

Assignments to the house in Eureka changed over time, Sisters were rotated back to the Convent for a variety of reasons. That's when I got to meet Sr. Diana for the first time when it was her turn to be in Eureka. I learned about her many gifts. Her presence was important to each of us.

The excellent retreats continue, though most of the gatherings take place now at the Convent. Zoom comes in handy. The Sisters' sense of kindness and generosity envelops everything. Faith Lang, an Oblate, continues to share her soul through her lovely photography. Her photographs capture God's love in creation. It is a real blessing to see her work.

I always feel at home in any member's presence, even over zoom. I know that I belong with this most loving and giving group. What a gift they each are to this world. Thank you, God!

—Nancy Gregory, Associate, CT

Transfiguration Spirituality Center



Guests at the Transfiguration Spirituality Center have access to our gardens, walking paths, and an outdoor labyrinth. Groups both secular and religious, of any gender, from a wide variety of backgrounds and faith traditions are welcome.

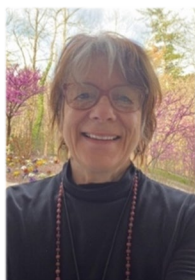
In the spirit of Kindness, Simplicity and Joy, hospitality has always been a significant ministry at all houses of the Community. Guests are welcomed to share in the worship and life of the Sisters. Some guests come for a time of quiet away from their lives in the world. Some come for a private retreat while others come with a group for a retreat or meeting. All are welcome in the name of Christ to a peaceful place apart to rest, reflect and pray.

Interested in making future arrangements to stay at the Transfiguration Spirituality Center? Information is found at this link: <https://ctsisters.org/ministries/transfiguration-spirituality-center/>

On Tuesday, June 17, several busloads of members of the Association of Anglican Musicians arrived here as part of their annual conference being held this year in Cincinnati. Before arriving, they were at our local Christ Church Glendale for a service where Sr. Diana preached and Sr. Carina sang. The weather cooperated as 245 guests wandered the grounds and enjoyed box lunches provided by Food For The Soul CT while a carillon concert could be heard from the Chapel tower. It was all hands-on deck for several ministries and departments worked together to make this a lovely time for the musicians! We hope many of them come back! — Faith Lang, TSC Guest Services Manager and Oblate CT

*"If it is possible, so far as it depends on you,
live peaceably with all."
Romans 12:18*

Ministry at Bat Cave, North Carolina: "Bearing Witness"



An update from our ministry here at Bat Cave includes an exciting idea from the Sisters that the Retreat House be used for respite for any person who needs a place to come and rest, read, sit on the porch, do their laundry, or take a nap! We haven't put this into practice yet, but my hope is that our Church and the Bat Cave Fire Station will be involved.

Following below is the article “Bearing Witness” that I wrote for our *Mountain Breeze* newspaper:

It is being with what is. The mountains came down. The river and streams moved boulders and houses downstream. People were displaced; many not only lost their homes, but the land on which their houses once stood. The unimaginable happened. Inhabitants of the Hickory Nut Gorge learned over time, the difference between an inconvenience and a problem.

We learned that patience is not waiting. Patience is surrender. “When are your roads going to be back to normal? Relatives and well-meaning friends from afar ask and keep asking. We learn to pause, breathe, and smile. Or not. It is not easy. But we are *bearing witness* every day in a thousand ways.

We wait at stop lights (stop lights in Bat Cave!) and we “Yield” to allow the construction workers and debris removal trucks to have pride of place. We wave. We say thank you.

Bearing witness can be a deeply moving experience, when driving on any of our roads in or out of the gorge, we finally get to the person holding the ‘SLOW’ or ‘STOP’ sign, we look into each other’s eyes. I shall always remember the man, an elder, holding the sign, whose eyes filled with tears when I rolled down the window to greet him and say thank you. It was a brief moment but never to be forgotten. It was early on, when we were all fairly tender, and barely able to be present. Still in shock. Eye to eye, we were bearing witness. We are here. We are doing this.

Then my refrigerator finally died, after the freezer went first after the storm—no doubt because of the on and off again of the generator or the many power surges. Two men delivering the new refrigerator, drove through Chimney Rock to get here. When they arrived at my door, they asked, “When we finish, can we pray for you?” So, there we were, after they brought out the old refrigerator

and installed the new one, standing outside by their truck, holding hands, and their prayer of thanks for my safety during the storm and a blessing on the house. When I shared this story with my dear friend and neighbor who is also a volunteer at the Fire Station, she said, “Yes, there’s a lot of that going on here.”

It doesn’t make the news. The Good News is everywhere!

“Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.”

Romans 12:12

All we have to do is pay attention. Why I am grateful to share these thoughts here, now. What if, each of us were to tell all the stories we have experienced or witnessed of complete strangers helping other people, about the people who drove miles to come here with equipment and supplies or simply befriended a neighbor or spoke with others who, perhaps under less dire circumstances, we might never have!

The goodness and mercy extended here in our little part of the world has been monumental, and as many have said of the storm damage here, “this is Biblical.” Whether or not we choose to see it this way, no one can dispute the pure selfless awareness we have born witness to since September, 2024.

— Mattie Decker, Oblate CT, Director of the Bat Cave ministry, and Mindfulness Instructor and a Nature and Forest Therapy Guide.

Food for the Soul Ministry

Food for the Soul was presented the Enhancement Provider Award during 513 Relief Day by the Hamilton County 513 Relief Bus. This recognition is a celebration of our ongoing commitment to nourish, uplift, and strengthen the community with compassion, excellence, and hope.



Food for the Soul celebrated five years of service with a Community Health Day at Quinn Chapel A.M.E. Church in Forest Park on May 23, 2025. The celebration was filled with life and joy and included healthcare services, barbers, hairstylists, makeup artists, free food, dancing, and one of their largest food pantries yet.



The Hartwell community came together to celebrate the launch of the new Hartwell Pantry, hosted by Food for the Soul. More than 484 individuals received fresh produce, hot meals, and health screenings. Cincinnati Mayor Aftab Pureval attended to show his support.

It hosted a Community Health Day in Cleves, Ohio, hosted by Whitewater Crossing Church. More than 300 community members received fresh produce, free resources, and vital health services.



At Food for the Soul's weekly pantry at The Willows Apartment Complex residents received fresh produce and enjoyed a warm, welcoming atmosphere that nourished both body and soul. It was made even more special by the presence of Sister Jean Gabriel and Father Gerardo Romo Garcia, who translated upcoming event information into Spanish for Latino community members.

Mary Knight, Food for the Soul's Founding Director, joined a panel at the Cincinnati Art Museum as part of the exhibit "Farm to Table: Food and Identity in the Age of Impressionism". Alongside local chefs, farmers, and food advocates, she explored how our relationship with food continues to shape culture, identity, and community—just as it did in late-19th century France.



Food for the Soul attended the One-Stop Resource Center hosted by the Hamilton County Office of Reentry at IDEA Valley View Campus on July 25, 2025. Alongside the 513 Relief Bus and other partners, the team provided fresh produce, hot meals, and critical services like job readiness tools, healthcare access, and expungement help for citizens reentering the community.

The Cincinnati Recreation Commission's (CRC) RiverTrek youth program has joined forces with Food for the Soul. The youth participants enjoyed delicious, nourishing meals ensuring that every moment was powered by energy and encouragement. Upcoming pantry dates, volunteer sign-ups, and ways to give can be found on Food for the Soul's social media pages.

— James Harwell, Marketing and Communications Coordinator, Food for the Soul.

Be Still and Know

Genesis 41

"You are fretting, Scrupe," came the Voice. "Had you considered talking to Me?"

Angel Strong-in-Capacity-for-Righteousness-and-Upholder-of-Perfection-in-Everything jumped, startled.

"You were fretting so hard that you nearly shut Me out. That's not the ideal practice for angel or human."

Scrupe tried to struggle upright, having become entangled in worries and grief over the devastating choices humans too often make once they have power.

With gentle Hands, the Almighty Lover renewed the process of disentangling a beloved creature from insidious strands of



disquietude which slither around heart, soul, and mind until they are entrapped in hopelessness.

“Oh, thank You.” Scrupe sighed in relief as another thorny strand snapped and withered under the Light of Compassion.

“Be still, Scrupe. The more you fight against these fears, the tighter they hold you. You need to offer them to Me as you can. Will you give Me this one?”

A thin but thoroughly entangling strand was embedding itself ever more tightly. Scrupe flinched.

“It’s Joseph,” Scrupe admitted as Grace worked the strand away. “I’ve been reading the stories which will be written about him and looking at what will really be happening, and I am worried.”

Kindness flowed. “Tell Me what worries you.”

“I am worried because he has been imprisoned, enslaved, lied about, helpless, and angry for so long, and now he suddenly has so much power. Other people have to bow with their faces to the ground when he passes by. His ego is bloating again. Worse, he has the power of revenge.”

“He does, indeed,” the Holy One agreed, gently easing the strand loose, letting it shrivel to nothingness. “It is a fearful thing for a human to have power over others.”

“And that’s not all. When he starts gathering grain into Pharaoh’s storehouses, taking from every harvest, he’s going to cause a famine for some who are powerless, even before the weather patterns change. He is going to take so much of what they grow that some will have to choose between trading with what’s left of their crops and having enough to eat. He said one-fifth, but You know that the soldiers he sends will take far more and he won’t stop them.”

“That, too, is true.” Divine tears flowed.

“And the stories that will be written – how many people will use them to justify theft from the powerless?” “We know.”

Scrupe struggled harder against the many remaining strands of worry, frustration, and anger which responded by pulling tighter. “Then why don’t you DO something? Why won’t you STOP him? I love him so much and I hate that he is going to cause such harm to powerless people!”

“Because We cannot stop him,” responded the One of all Power and Might.

Scrupe’s mouth gaped open in a most un-angelic expression of disbelief. The angel pondered the wonderfully complex,

astonishingly, fearfully, intertwined beauty of infinite Creation. “You can’t? But You are the Creator. Nothing can even exist without You holding it in Love, not even the most delicate mitochondrial DNA. Of course You can stop him!”

“Scrupe, My beloved Upholder of Perfection, you are wrong. Love means that I AM powerless in many ways.”

Tears flowed down Scrupe’s face as further depths of that Holy Truth were opened. Memories surfaced of all those the angel had guarded and protected since their evolution gave self-awareness and choice. How often Scrupe had longed to intervene when those choices caused harm; yet had been given awareness that Love does not take back the terrifyingly glorious gift of freedom to choose. It was so hard to remember when so many were suffering. Angels, too, have free will, that frightening gift of Love.

“I don’t understand, Scrupe whispered. “What choice do the people being harmed have? Shouldn’t everyone have the same freedom? It doesn’t seem fair.” All of human time with horrors and hatred, deadly destruction, devastating infliction of power, passed before Scrupe’s vision.

“The kind of fairness you are thinking about would take away freedom,” Holy Wisdom said softly. “We grieve over the choices so many of Our children have made which have led to a few having power and wealth and many more suffering because of it. But every one of Our Children is still free to make choices about how they will respond to and treat other people and Our Creation. It is the holiest gift We give them. It is what it means that they are Created in Our Image.”

Awe and wonder swept through Eternity. The One Who IS had chosen powerlessness and all its consequences.

“I have tried and tried and tried to get through to Joseph, but he isn’t listening to me,” Scrupe’s complaints swept on. “He is soooooo excited to be the most important person in all of Egypt except for Pharoah and he has been given a wife from a very important family – who had no choice but to marry him – and she already is pregnant, and everyone has to listen to him when he says anything and so he just blocks *me* out.”

“As he is free to do,” came the Holy Whisper. As all of Our creatures are free to do. Even you, my beloved angel, are free to block out Wisdom when you think you are dealing with something more important.”

“But I would never . . .” Scrupe started to say indignantly, then stopped. A blush redder than sunsets through wildfire smoke stained the angelic countenance. “Oh.” “Yes indeed. Oh.”

“What shall I do? How can I help?”

“First of all, be still. Be still and know that I AM God.”

Scrupe obeyed, resting in the Great Mystery of Divine Love. Scrupe allow the Healer to ease away the many intertwined strands of fear, resentment, judgment, anger, helplessness which had been growing stronger and cutting deeper.

“There, Scrupe. That is all We can do right now. The roots of some of those binding strands are still embedded and you have not yet received the freedom and trust to allow Us to remove them.”

The angel stood upright, shaking out wings and adjusting the newly brightened halo. “What do You want me to do?” Scrupe asked, humility beginning to give renewed strength and hope.

“Take these.” Humble Love handed Scrupe a bright, orb of Divine Tears. “Let them flow into the hearts of those who are struggling to find goodness, to choose love in the midst of devastation. Whisper hope and truth to them as they are able to receive it. Pour them into the hearts of the soldiers and all who have any power over others. You will be astonished at those who will allow their hearts to become flesh, who will learn truly to see that those they look down on are as human and as important as they are. You will be saddened by those who refuse. It will be hard.”

Scrupe received the Tears with trembling awe. “And Joseph?”

“Pour these generously into his heart as well. They will burn in him, as he is not yet able to see beyond all he has suffered and all the new power he has. But leave them to work their Grace.”

“I will!” Scrupe’s renewed hope brought a soft glow to the moonrise over the great pyramids, offering awe and longing for True Goodness to all who were willing to receive. “I will as You give me strength. Thank You.”

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Calendar of Upcoming Events

October 17-19, 2025: Associates Retreat
led by The Rev. Peter Doddema,
Ascension Episcopal Church, Frankfort,
Kentucky and Nicole Burchinal Doddema

May 1-3, 2026: Associates Retreat

October 2-4, 2026: Associates Retreat

Further Information and Resources

Community of the Transfiguration

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Transfiguration Spirituality Center

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Transfiguration North Carolina

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

Food for the Soul CT Ministry

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