



The
Transfiguration
Quarterly

Vol. 79 No. 2

Summer 2026

Benignitas—Simplicitas—Hilaritas
Kindness—Simplicity—Joy



Statue of Blessed Virgin Mary and Jesus
Community of Transfiguration Garden

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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Photo Credit: Faith Lang, Oblate CT

Letter from our Sister Superior, Sister Diana Doncaster

Dear Companions on the Way,



One of the first things Sister Teresa reminded us, after being elected Sister Superior, was “We are a resurrection people.” I’ve reflected on that a lot in the years since, especially as we Sisters face the fact that we are few, aging, and not currently attracting new people. What might resurrection look like

in our situation? More on that later.

A recent event brought new thoughts about resurrection. It started with a call from the Bethany Head of School saying that one of our families had just lost everything but their lives in an apartment fire. Did we have a place they could stay for a while?

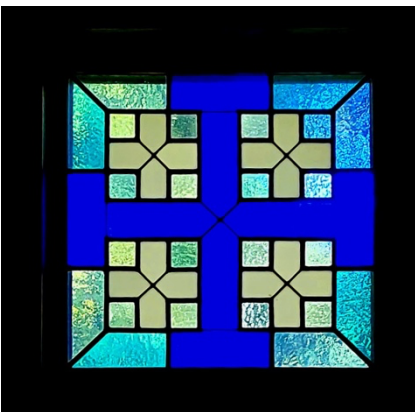
As it happens, yes. We can put them up for several weeks. That was a tiny glimpse of how Christ invites us into the privilege of resurrection life. We use the gifts we have for the good of others. Beyond that, and truly worthy of praise, has been parents, teachers, staff, and so many others asking, “How can I help?” A Go Fund Me page was started by the Bethany Parents and Educators (BEAP) who also moved quickly to replace school uniforms and supplies. Store cards are being dropped off. We are juggling the family’s needs for space to grieve together, with practical needs, and with their struggle over wanting to give, not need to receive. They know they will be able, in the future, to help others, but it’s hard right now. Death and resurrection are happening for them in many ways. We are so blessed, so grateful, to be part of an extended community of employees, affiliate members, friends, caring people, who drop everything in the face of need and do what they can. Resurrection, it seems, is, partly a choice in how we act.

Yes, Jesus literally did rise from and defeat death. The meanings and implications of that glorious mystery are endless and can be overwhelming at times. We can only reflect in awe and ask the essential question, “How then shall we live? This event –

this frightening, shattering loss in the life of one small family – this rapid response by people who see needs and respond – reveals glimpses of ongoing resurrection life in the midst of everyday joys and sorrows.

Another glimpse comes through our worship. We pray Psalm 93 every Sunday (except during Lent), daily throughout Eastertide, and on major feast days.

- ¹The Lord is King; he has put on splendid apparel; *
the Lord has put on his apparel and girded himself with strength.
- ²He has made the whole world so sure *
that it cannot be moved;
- ³Ever since the world began, your throne has been established; *
you are from everlasting.
- ⁴The waters have lifted up, O Lord, the waters have lifted up their voice; *
the waters have lifted up their pounding waves.
- ⁵Mightier than the sound of many waters, mightier than the breakers of the sea, *
mightier is the Lord who dwells on high.
- ⁶Your testimonies are very sure, *
and holiness adorns your house, O Lord, for ever and for evermore.



There is so much in this Psalm. To the original composer, it seems to have proclaimed the strength and power of God being greater than destructive weather events, and possibly a metaphor for life under the heels of a conquering empire. Certainly, in these days of chaos, it can serve as a reminder that God is greater than the evil being arrogantly unleashed around the world and in our own country. A gift of

sacred hope-writing like this Psalm is that its meaning is no more limited than grace is.

What if it can serve also as a reminder of incarnation; showing that splendid apparel is human flesh? We human beings are made in the image and likeness of God who chose to become fully human, to dwell in our flesh.

Do we believe that the whole world is so sure that it cannot be moved? Not when we experience events which make us understand the cry, “The waters have lifted up, O Lord . . . the waters have lifted up their pounding waves!” We understand that cry, not only because of worsening weather and other natural events, but because we witness in horror the systematic destruction of progress toward equality, care for each other, care for creation. Yes we believe that God is good and powerful – but there is so much evil. This Psalm reminds us that the holy reality of hope, of resurrection, is so sure that it cannot be moved even in the midst of chaos. We can choose to trust in and act on the fact that we are offered the privilege of living resurrection in our daily lives. We can rejoice that the glorious truth of Easter can jump-start us back into hopeful action whenever the waters of chaos threaten to overwhelm and tempt us to hopelessness.

Which leads back to the question with which we Sisters are wrestling. Is this Community dying, and, if so, what might our resurrection look like? We start with two convictions. 1. God is not finished with us. 2. Resurrection is our living reality and hope.

We rejoice that the Community is not limited to ten remaining Sisters. It includes our awesome extended family of Associates and Oblates. It includes our many dedicated, hard-working employees who truly get that what they do daily is more than just a job. It includes our advisors, our friends and families. It includes those whom God is calling in ways we can't yet imagine.

God, who invites, you invited Mother Eva, Mother Beatrice and all who came after them to live and serve as Sisters of the Transfiguration. We have come at your invitation, but do not know your way forward. Help us to listen to you in each other and in our hearts. May your Transfiguration light be our guide, and may we truly serve in your Name. *Amen.*

Will you join in our discernment? We need your focused prayers. We need your thoughts about what the Community has meant to you in the past; how God has worked in you through this extended Community. We need your dreams – wild and crazy, practical and seemingly impossible, idealistic and realistic – to help us listen for the guidance of the Holy Spirit going forward. We will be setting up a variety of both Zoom and in-person conversations to share and dream together over the next few months and hope you can join us for at least one – if not more.

As this is being written we are a week away from the startling adventure of Pentecost. The adventure of resurrection life in every season continues. Blessings, **Sr. Diana**

A Brief History of our Oblates



The Sisters of the Transfiguration have been blessed and upheld by affiliates since before the founding of the Community. The first seven Associates were formally admitted on August 5, 1898, at Evensong, the day before our Mother Foundress, Eva Lee Matthews, and Beatrice McCabe Henderson became the first Novices in the new Community of the Transfiguration.

Mother Foundress, Eva Lee Matthews

Over the years, Associates have shared in, supported and extended the life and ministries of the Community in numerous ways. Because God deals uniquely with each person, there have always been those called to a more intense commitment; to a form of the religious life deeply attached to but lived beyond the Community of Sisters. Tentative explorations of how to respond to this call were first initiated in the late 1980's. The arrival of "Oblates looking for a community" early in the new millennium renewed the interest of the Sisters. On August 5, 2004, the first four Oblates made their initial Oblate Promises. The Oblates and the Sisters have been growing and learning together ever since.

The Ministry of an Oblate: Community, Service and Prayer

An Oblate makes an offering of the fullness of their lives to God through the Community of the Transfiguration. An Oblate's service to Christ is strengthened by close affiliation with the Community of the Transfiguration through worship, prayer and frequent contact. In their turn, the Oblates greatly enrich and strengthen the Community.

Along with sharing in the prayer and worship with the Sisters, in whatever way is possible, the Oblate carries the charism (*Benignitas, Hilaritas, Simplicitas*) of the Community of the Transfiguration beyond the Convent walls. The Oblate is further called to spiritually support and make known the ministries of the Community.

Some Oblates live and serve in close proximity to the Community; whether the Convent or a Branch House. Others live at greater distances. The ministries of each Oblate are discerned individually and prayerfully with the support of a spiritual director, the Oblates' Companion, and appropriate others. All are called to reflect the Light of the Transfiguration.

However an Oblate is called to serve, all are linked to the Sisters and to each other through prayer and the Holy Spirit. These invisible links are powerful and support the Oblates in showing forth the transfiguring love and grace of Jesus Christ wherever they may be.

Life is the gift of God to us, full of promise and opportunities.
What we make of life is our gift back to God.
Mother Eva, Feb. 9, 1926

Are you interested in becoming an Oblate? Please contact the Convent by calling 513-771-5291 and ask to speak to or leave a message for Sr. Teresa or Toni Thomas-Feren, OBT CT.

Living Life as an Easter People

In one of my former parishes, there was a young man who often answered a question about how he was doing with, "It's all good."

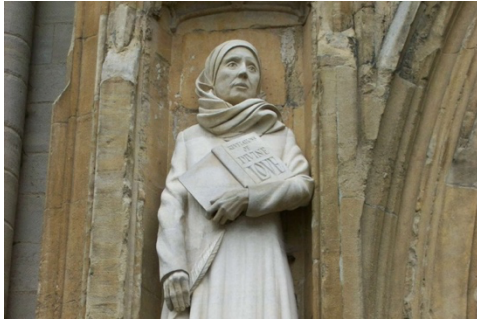
Sometimes I'd let him slide and other times I would challenge him. I mean it sounds too good to be true doesn't it? Because it is.



This idiom can mean general approval, unconcern, disinterest, or things are okay. Of course, idioms are not meant to be taken literally, but this one, “It’s all good,” is a pet peeve of mine! In a world where so many things are not going well, it just grates my nerves.

Recently, we celebrated the Feast of Julian of Norwich. There is a familiar quote of hers that says, “All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well.” That can sound like (can I use another idiom?) “pie in the sky”. All things have never been well. Is this just a whimsical saying or wishful thinking? I mean I wish it could be true.

Then I read the story of Julian in Lesser Feasts and Fasts 2024 and I had an aha moment. It’s really not a quote of Julian at all. It’s the voice of Jesus speaking to her in the quiet stillness of her contemplative life and it’s more nuanced than the words we are used to hearing.



Statue of Julian of Norwich by David Holgate, west front, Norwich Cathedral. Image by Tony Grist, in the public domain

Jesus said to Julian: “I can make all things well; I will make all things well; I shall make all things well; and you can see for yourself that all manner of things shall be well.” When we hear

the whole statement coming from Jesus, suddenly it is full of meaning and fills us with hope.

First, Jesus said, “I can.” The Word through whom all things came into being is capable. Jesus is almighty and omnipotent. Secondly, Jesus states his intention, “I will.” Jesus will not hold back. That which Jesus can do, he will do. Thirdly, Jesus makes a covenantal promise, “I shall.” There should be no doubt in our minds that what Jesus said he can, will, and shall do, shall be done.

As we come to the end of the Easter season, it’s important for us to remember this. Jesus’ words to Julian are nothing more than the promise we have in Jesus’ resurrection from the dead. Evil is conquered and life triumphs over death. It is done. Even as this truth continues to break into our world, we hold on to this truth when things are tough, when we are facing life’s struggles.

To be sure, there is a future tense to Jesus’ words. The promise is now and not yet. In faith, we have the blessed ability to allow God’s future to enter into our present so that living in hope, we can know the consolation, and power of his promise now. It shapes our approach to life living as we are, an Easter people. Indeed, living in this hope is the making of a saint.

In whatever way we are part of this community, let us encourage and remind each other of this truth. Then be watchful and wait. See how this hope transforms us.

Father Tom Fehr, Chaplain

Letter to the Associates



Dear Associates,

Greetings in the name of our Lord. I pray that you are well, enjoying life and looking forward to the future. We continue to value your prayers and support. We are praying and discussing to discern God’s will for the future. The ministries continue to do well.

I hope you are enjoying the Quarterly to keep up with the news. I enjoy contacts with you. Your annual dues are a sign of your commitment as an associate. What does being an associate mean

to you? How does it affect your life? I welcome hearing about your responses to these questions. We value you and you are a vital part of our community. Please keep in contact and let me know if you have moved or have a change in your address. Let me know if I can assist you.

May God bless you, **Sr. Jacqueline**

Molly Lin Dutina, an Associate, is also a poet. When recently asked to define poetry, she said that it is a heart expression of her walk with the Lord. Her second book of poems has recently been published: *Poems: My Faith Journey Through Prayerful Observations*. It is available to purchase on Amazon.

Reflection on Testament of Devotion

Continuously
Renewed
Intimacy
I need sanctuary, but I see altar – stone altar of sacrifice.
Yield my wishes to
His ways
Give myself to
Continuously renewed
Intimacy
Burn off dross of distracted
Wait yielded
Focus all of self
Here Hear

Molly Dutina, *Treasures in Plain Sight: Growing Closer to Jesus in Prayer*.

A Reflection on St. Mark and Simplicity

In his final published journal titled *The Road to Daybreak*, Catholic priest Henri Nouwen writes the following reflection on the captivating story of the rich young ruler in Mark's Gospel (Mark 10:17 – 27): "Jesus loved this young man and desired to

have him with him as a disciple. But the young man's life was too complex; he had too many things to worry about, too many affairs to take care of, too many people to relate to. He couldn't let go of his concerns, and thus, disappointed and downcast, he left Jesus." [1] According to "The Promise of Simplicity" from *Living the Oblate Promises*, "Simplicity encourages receptivity to God's gracious gift of letting go of attachments that can become stumbling blocks to us. It encourages clearing space for God to work in our lives. Whether the clutter contains papers, mementos, books, old hurts and resentments, judgments of others, high tech toys, 'my way', unconsidered, unprayed attitudes, or necessities from the last five all-consuming hobbies, the Promise of Simplicity is a challenge to ask God what can and needs to be released."



What I find so fascinating about Mark's story of the rich young man is the fact that he includes a detail that is not included in the Gospels of Matthew or Luke, Gospels that both recount this same story of the rich young man. [2] Mark, who is typically known for his sparseness and *simplicity* and for omitting details that often clutter the flow of the narrative, adds a key detail here.[3] In verse 21 of Chapter 10, he writes, "Jesus, looking at him, loved him." [4] Have you ever been

in someone's presence and felt their love for you just by the way they looked at you? They didn't have to say anything. They didn't even say, "I love you." They just look at you and love you. Imagine Jesus looking at you and loving you. What might prevent you from experiencing and receiving Jesus's look of love? What needs to be released and decluttered from your life in order to become more receptive to the gaze of *agape*? And why do you think Mark added this detail while others left it out?

Nouwen's reflections on this passage continue: "Jesus was sad, the young man was sad, and today I feel sad because I wonder how different his life would have been had he been free enough to

follow Jesus. He came, heard, but then left. We never hear of him again. Every year we remember Peter, John, and James, the three disciples Jesus loved so much. But this man whom Jesus also loved in a special way and also invited to become a witness to the good news, remains unknown. He never became a follower of Jesus and never made his mark on the history of the church as these other disciples did. If Francis of Assisi had remained in business [as a cloth merchant], he would certainly not be remembered so fondly today.” [5]



St. Mark

Is it true that this rich young ruler never made his mark on the history of the church as the other disciples did? Is the legacy of this rich young ruler simply a *via negativa*, a negative example, a kind of Francis of Assisi who never embraced poverty? Or did this disciple leave his mark on church history by being a kind of proto-St. Francis?

Let's look briefly at another section of Mark's Gospel in which the "Evangelist of Simplicity" once again includes a unique (and, in this case, fairly bizarre) detail that the other Evangelists leave out: "A certain young man was following [Jesus], wearing nothing but a linen cloth. They caught hold of him, but he left the linen cloth and ran off naked." (Mark 14:51 – 52)

In Mark 14, we read about a young man (*neaniskos*) [6] who initially follows Jesus wearing nothing but a linen cloth, but when he is caught by the armed men, the linen cloth falls off and

he runs away naked. While the early Church Fathers suggested that this unnamed disciple was either James [7] or John, [8] many biblical scholars today believe that the naked man was Mark himself who added this detail as a personal signature of sorts. Others also highlight the fact that the naked man was originally wearing a linen cloth, an expensive commodity during Jesus's day and therefore largely worn by the wealthy elite. This detail leads some to suggest that the naked man is not only Mark but also the rich young ruler who eventually decided to sell all his belongings, except for his linen cloth. Remember that Mark is the only one who adds the detail about Jesus looking at the rich young ruler and loving him, a detail that makes sense if Mark himself is the one who is on the receiving end of Jesus's loving gaze.

So, the rich young ruler does indeed leave his mark on church history by selling all his belongings and following Jesus with nothing but a linen cloth, which he eventually relinquishes as well; and then by ultimately penning the Gospel of Mark. In the end, the young man who previously clung to his possessions became the naked man of the Gospel, entirely free of all possessions, even his clothes, thus embodying the radical poverty of the Poverello, more than a thousand years before St. Francis stripped naked in Assisi. And the radical simplicity of this disciple then becomes expressed in the simplicity and sparseness of Mark's Gospel, which omits extraneous details but includes perhaps the most important detail of all: that look of love from the eyes of Jesus which transformed him and inspired him to embrace a life of radical simplicity.

*This reflection was shared by **The Rev. Dr. Daniel Deforest London** at the monthly gathering of Postulants, Associates and Oblates of the Community of the Transfiguration on April 24, 2026 at Christ Episcopal Church Eureka, California.*

Sharing Good News

Cynthia Savage is a member of Christ Episcopal Church Eureka. She has been active in many of the parish activities organized by CT Oblate Stephanie Schultz. We are pleased to share one of her poems.



Step By Step
April 18, 2026, Labyrinth Walk

Placing each step, one in front of the other...
Asking petitions for others.
Step...please God, bless, heal, re-direct...step.
Step...God please remember...step.
Trying to stay within the lines of the path...
Step, step, step...Oops, there's a line!
Weaving, stepping, asking... "God hear my prayers!"
Around and back, around move over, around and finally moving
straight forward to the center...step, step, step.
Center...peace, no steps. Just stop and stay. Acknowledge God for
His great mercy; recite the Lord's Prayer, lips moving without
sound.
Turn around, step then step.
Carefully, one step in front of the other...
Moving out as moving in.
Praying for myself, "What is your will, Lord?"
Praying and stepping...
Finding the path back unfamiliar and yet...
Step then step to the final stretch, like being born from the
Labyrinth.
Turn around and face the altar. God is there watching.
Thank God for His great mercies...
Thank God for the journey.

Spring Retreat

The spring retreat at the Convent in May was led by Bishop Melissa Skelton, an Episcopal bishop (most recently Bishop Provisional in the Diocese of Olympia), who has also served in the Anglican Church of Canada. With joy and enthusiasm, she expertly illustrated how the emotion and grace of George Herbert's poetry can serve as windows onto the spiritual life.

The Collect for George Herbert (1593-1633) Priest and Poet, February 27

Our God and King, you called your servant George Herbert from the pursuit of worldly honors to be a pastor of souls, a poet, and a priest in your temple:
Give us grace, we pray, joyfully to perform the tasks you give us to do knowing that nothing is menial or common that is done for your sake; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Bishop Skelton discussed several of George Herbert's poems from *The Temple*, a collection of poems written by Herbert for devotional purposes. This collection is available in the public domain. In his poem "The Collar" the speaker is trying to talk himself into abandoning a vocation that constrained him. Bishop Skelton explained how this poem explores struggles in relation to vocation as a Christian, as a priest, and as a writer. In his poem "The Elixir" she suggested that Herbert seems to be saying that the attitude with which we do things can make the most menial tasks as an experience of God's presence.

Bishop Skelton explored the persistence and magnanimous love of God by discussing Herbert's poems "Love III", "Prayer 1" and "The 23d Psalme" (a translation). Herbert's poem "Love III" is probably Herbert's most famous poem. In that poem love grows increasingly assertive in seeking out the speaker. Bishop Skelton invited us to reflect on times when we experienced God's love in our lives. You can learn more about George Herbert on this website: <https://www.georgeherbert.org.uk/>



Did you know that four hymns in *The Hymnal 1982* are based on the words of George Herbert's poetry: hymns 382, 402, 403, 487, and 592. Check it out.

Hymn 487 "The Call"

Come, my Way, my Truth, my Life: Such a way as give us breath:
Such a truth as ends all strife; Such a life as killeth death.

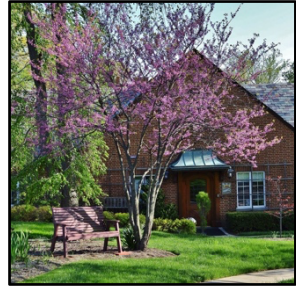
Come, my Light, my Feast, my Strength: Such a light as shows a
feast;
Such a feast as mends in length; Such a strength as makes his
guest.

Come, my Joy, my Love, my Heart: Such a joy as none can move;
Such a love as none can part; Such a heart as joys in love.

George Herbert, first published in *The Temple* in 1633.

Respite Days and Retreat for Women Clergy

The Transfiguration Spirituality Center is pleased to announce the return of our Women Clergy Respite Days in 2026 on **September 10** and **December 3**. You are invited to take time to pause, reflect, and renew yourself. The mornings will include refreshments, reflection, prayer, and sharing, followed by lunch at a nearby restaurant.



We will gather at 9:30 a.m. The program will be from 10 a.m. to 12 noon, followed by lunch. There is no charge for the morning program, but please consider making a freewill offering to cover costs.

Rest and Rekindle Women's Clergy Retreat: October 5–8, 2026

Opportunities for spiritual direction, massage and Reiki will be available. Our hope is that whatever your ministry as an ordained woman, you will return to it well rested and renewed.

More information about these events is found online at <https://ctsisters.org/ministries/transfiguration-spirituality-center/events/#/events>. If you have any questions, please contact Liz Keuffer at liz@ctsisters.org.

Transfiguration Gardens

In 2023, the Community of the Transfiguration undertook a major land renewal project in their backyard, formerly called the North Lawn. The project was completed and the land was consecrated in 2025. It has been christened Transfiguration Gardens. This gently wooded area features walking paths, benches, an outdoor altar, a fountain, a recirculating stream, and a small cabin. This shady space provides a verdant retreat for our Sisters, employees, students and guests. Be sure to visit. More information is found at online at <https://ctsisters.org/transfiguration-gardens.html>.



You can explore the spectacularly beautiful and peaceful grounds of the Transfiguration Gardens with a self-guided tour by using this QR code.

St. Monica's Recreation Center Receives Award

On May 21, 2026, St. Monica's Recreation Center was honored for their work serving the kids and families of Lincoln Heights. They received an Award of Excellence from One World One Family Foundation (<https://www.oneworldonefamily.foundation/>) for their shared commitment to support, value, encourage, and love others in ways that align with the very heart of God.

While only a limited number of staff members were able to attend and receive the recognition, this honor belongs to the entire St. Monica's family. Every staff member, volunteer, supporter, and community partner including Food for the Soul, a ministry of the Community of the Transfiguration, played a role in the impact being made every single day in Lincoln Heights.



Sister Carina and staff of St. Monica's Recreation Center

Supporting Students at Bethany School

Anyone who is a resident in Ohio can support Bethany School students through the Ohio Tax Credit Scholarship Program. This program offers state income tax credits that support scholarship granting organizations, nonprofits that provide private school scholarships for students in need. Bethany School is such an organization. This is a wonderful opportunity to help empower students to succeed academically and thrive in a diverse world. More information is found at <https://bethanyschool.org/sgo>.

Ministry at Bat Cave, North Carolina

Mattie Decker, an Oblate of the Community of the Transfiguration and Director of the Bat Cave ministry, is also a Nature and Forest Therapy Guide. The Rev. Dr. Daniel London, Rector of Christ Episcopal Church Eureka, is also a Nature and Forest Therapy Guide. On May 4, 2026, they both participated in the Mepkin Abbey Forum on Contemplative Ecology and Rev. London was the guest speaker for the program. It's an interactive series of virtual interviews with leaders in the field conducted by Sam King, who is an educator, writer, and contemplative ecologist. The forum is held on the first Monday of each month at 7 p.m. EST via Zoom.

There is no cost to participate. More information is found at <https://mepkinabbey.org>.

Reconciliation and Wrestling with Complicated Truth Genesis 45

Angel Strong-in-Capacity-for-Righteousness-and-Upholder-of-Perfection-in-Everything danced, sang, floated and flipped around the Heavenly Court – delight shimmering and soaring.

“You are in a joyous mood, My friend,” commented the Most High God.

“With good reason,” Scrupe responded, doing a quadruple back flip with a triple twist thrown in for the fun of it. “Joseph has finally stopped playing games, has decided to forgive his brothers and now there is reconciliation and it is *fabulous!*”

“And they all will live happily ever after?” asked the Eternal One. The Love of God does not always come across sweetly. Sardonic insight is also a gift it is possible to receive.

“Of course they will! That’s the whole purpose of reconciliation, isn’t it? They die to resentment and rise to love. It’s the way You Created it to work. It’s how Your children need to grow into living Your Love. I’ve been giving him all kinds of dreams about how important reconciliation is and now, just look! They are hugging each other and crying happily over each other.”

“This is such a hard lesson even for experienced guardians to learn,” whispered one archangel to another.

“Over and over and over again,” responded the other. They deepened their intercessions with compassion as Loving Wisdom



drew Scrupe’s attention.

“Scrupe, you have been caring for My children since before they grew into sentience. Will you please list for me those who

achieved perfect reconciliation and healing of relationships in their life on Earth after they hurt each other significantly?”

“Of course!”

It would be inaccurate to say that the silence lasted for all eternity, but it would be accurate to say that the struggle to find even a single true example was intense and seemed impossibly long to the idealistic angel.

“Wait a minute. I don’t understand.” Many of the beloved people for whom Scrupe had cared in their earthly lifetimes gathered around the Throne of Grace. Some were smiling gently. Others were sobbing. Some stood in silent awe and worship. Still others were laughing with grateful joy as the harm that had been done to them gradually healed under the tender Hand of the Great Physician.

“What’s so funny?” Scrupe demanded with indignation.

“Dear Guardian Angel Scrupe,” said one of them, “you worked so hard with me to help me reach reconciliation. Truly you were amazingly patient as I see now. I tried to be generous, forgiving, kind, and pious, but the injuries needed more healing than I wanted to admit. All your whispers to me about what God requires filled me with guilt and shame. I pretended so hard that even you could not see into my heart. I really thought I had succeeded.” This one gestured to massive piles of spiritual trash and claptrap – to the damaging demands for trite forgiveness and one-sided reconciliation that were being gently peeled from their heart.

“I was taught that all I had to do was will to forgive and then forget about what was done to me. I tried. I really tried. I failed.” Shame filled the voice of another soul standing apart from the others. Tender, healing love without impossible demands embraced that wounded one and many others who had endured such devastating spiritual abuse.

“I tried to tell about what happened to me and the person I told said they had never seen that, so I was wrong. I felt so alone. I see now that I am not.” Hurt and anger were offered on the Altar of Redemption.

Stories of so much damage that humans inflict on each other, even unintentionally, were shared. Stories of attempts to force appropriate religious feelings poured out. Stories of external righteousness which covered up internal bitterness, stories of

pretended goodness, of manipulated shame, all of these and countless others shook Scrupe.

“How did I never know this about any of you?” the angel demanded. “How did you keep me from knowing?”

“You didn’t want to know,” one of the wisest, most healed of the souls said softly. “You want to rescue us so badly that, even in the face of some of the worst things we humans do to each other, you urged us to reach perfect, holy responses before we were free to do so.”

“That’s not true! That can’t be true! I’m an angel assigned to love and guide and guard you. How could I not know these things? I live in the Eternal Presence of Holy Truth.”

“We will take it from here,” Gracious Compassion smiled. The souls of all the humans loved and guarded by Scrupe in their human lives continued their eternal journeys into love, mercy, forgiveness, reconciliation, healing, and resurrection joy. They gave thanks for the love they had received and continued to receive healing for the harm. They were taught and guided by other angels and a number of wise and experienced archangels, as well as by other human souls.

“This is getting really old,” Scrupe muttered.

“You sound frustrated,” observed Holy Truth.

When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom.
Proverbs 11:2

“I thought I finally got it right. I really worked hard with Joseph. He is growing in amazing ways. His heart was breaking open to his brothers even though they sold him into slavery because he was so obnoxious and favored and he is saving lives because he listened about how to set aside enough food to keep the people eating through the famine even though he is using the famine to build his own power and wealth and he’s giving good

advice to his brothers by telling them not to quarrel and . . .”

“Are you listening to yourself, Scrupe?”

“What do You mean?”

A Divine Gesture toward the Heavenly Sound Booth caused Scrupe’s frantic justification to replay. Several times. Reluctant insight began to reveal itself on the angelic countenance. Grief and shame emerged.

“I failed You. I failed them.”

“You got some things wrong.”

“And I made their hurt worse and I let You down!”

“You made some hurts worse. You got in the way of some real healing. You kept some of My children from seeing the harm they were doing to others.”

Scrupe’s ego deflated. The flattened angel sobbed, then began to swell with the kind of pride which suggests that the being can fail beyond the reach of Grace.

“That’s enough of that arrogance!” God held the Mirror of Heavenly Truth Revelation before Scrupe, inviting the angel to look at the self-destruction. Grace was offered.

Gradually false ego deflated. Self-awareness about successes and failures and everything in between restored Scrupe to realistic proportions. Thankful humility began to bloom – again – as the angel took a closer look at personal truth as well as at what Joseph truly needed.

“This is a lot more complicated than I thought,” Scrupe admitted. “This isn’t real reconciliation. It’s . . . it’s . . . In some ways it’s about Joseph still trying to control and manipulate. And I’ve been doing the same thing.”

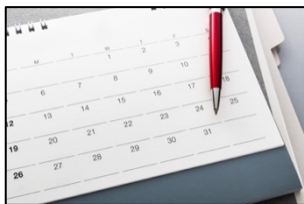
“Keep remembering that it’s always complicated. Neither My human children nor My angelic children are Created for instant, superfluous, easy, perfect answers. There is no growth, no hope, no real joy that way. Keep wrestling, My friend. Keep helping Joseph to wrestle with himself and with you.”

“Will you keep reminding me and helping me and showing me complicated Truth?”

“Absolutely.”

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Calendar of Upcoming Events



August 6, 2026: Feast of the Transfiguration

October 2-4, 2026: Fall Retreat

October 5-8, 2026: Rest and Rekindle Women's Clergy Retreat

A Reflection on St. Mark and Simplicity

Endnotes

- [1] Henri J. M. Nouwen, *The Road to Daybreak: A Spiritual Journey* (New York: Doubleday, 1988), 15.
- [2] Matthew 19:16 – 22; Luke 18:18-23. There is no account of the rich young ruler in John's Gospel.
- [3] Matthew has 28 chapters, Luke has 24, John has 21, and Mark only has 16 chapters.
- [4] The word for love here is *egapesen* from the word “*agape*,” which is sometimes translated as “charity” or “divine love.”
- [5] Nouwen, *Road to Daybreak*, 15 – 16.
- [6] Matthew uses the word *neaniskos* (Greek for young man or youth or simply man under the age of 40) to describe the rich young ruler in Matthew 19:20.
- [7] Saint Epiphanius and Saint Jerome think that he was James the Lord's brother and Eusebius of Caesarea also claims that James had worn a linen garment all his life until this moment.
- [8] St. John Chrysostom, St. Ambrose, St. Gregory, and Baronius think the naked man was St. John the Apostle since he was the youngest of the apostles and was the only one who did not immediately desert Jesus and flee.

Further Information and Resources

CT Quarterly issues are now available online at <https://ctsisters.org/newsletters.html>.



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