



SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR'S THOUGHTS

Each advent season we are invited to enter the journey with God that takes us toward Bethlehem. As I think about that journey it becomes apparent that this is no easy trip for any of us. Just as it was difficult for Mary and Joseph to travel on foot over rough terrain at a slow pace from Nazareth to Bethlehem, so it is with us. Each of us took the Walk to Emmaus and found the agape love of God available to us. We came off the walk and tried to share that love with others but sometimes we found the journey of the fourth days to be slow and often times in rough terrain. This is just the time when we need to be renewed and refreshed as we travel through our fourth days.

As we travel from our own place of spiritual need toward the place of a new spiritual birth and renewal we encounter our own rough terrain. The commercialism of the Christmas season beckons us to rush head long into—buying gifts beyond our means, finding the latest electronic gadgets that seemingly no one can do without and finding the true meaning of Christmas in the gifts we get instead of the gifts that are given. The pitfalls of this rough terrain can be seen in the busyness that saps our energy and makes us tense during the season that should give us energy as the Peace of God renews our spirit and mind.

The rough terrain of our spiritual journey during this Advent Season can be met with slow, methodical steps—steps that create peace and not chaos, steps that will move us forward on toward the birth of new life and steps that will cement our Emmaus experience and return our hearts to the One whose agape love meets us on our journey. The first step is to spend time in the Word of God each day. Reading a few verses of Scripture each day will renew our minds. The second step is to spend time meditating on the Scripture which has just been read allowing the scripture to speak to us about how it can relate to our own life at this moment. The third step is to spend a few moments in prayer—praying for the Emmaus Community, our church and our families and friends. Then take the fourth step by praising God in singing some Christmas carols.

These four steps will keep us walking with God at a slow, methodical pace that will surely bring us to the place where God's light shines brightly, renewing and refreshing us. God's agape love, joy and peace are ours as we travel with God toward the birthplace of His Son, Emanuel—God with us.

De Colores,
Carolyn Peacock
Co-Community Spiritual Director

GREETINGS TO THE EMMAUS COMMUNITY

Well, here it is December already and the year is just about gone. What a wonderful year this has been for all the new pilgrims as they have grown in their walk with God and for all those who have served this year on teams and in various positions for the walks this past year. I want to thank you all for your service to the community and to our Lord and I would like to wish you and your families a very Merry Christmas. I especially want to thank the board for your time and input this year. Along that line I want to talk a little bit about the walks and how they seem to have gone this year. Even though we are a community of four thousand people, we seem to be struggling when it comes to supporting the Emmaus community at gatherings and other functions. Our commitment is to support Emmaus, not only during walks, but at all times. Along with being in a share group and serving at walks, supporting Emmaus at other times is all part of being selected to serve on teams. Now in other news that should be of interest to the community is the success of our walks. The walks have been having problems in that we have been coming up short on funding the walks. Now while we do not look to make a profit on the walks, we do need to pay all bills for the walks and we have been coming up short. When we do a walk, there are things we pay that I don't think everyone is aware of like, paying for the use of High Street UMC, sending money to Upper Room for each pilgrim on the walk, cleaning cost after the walk, printing cost for the walk, supplies for the walk and finally, food for the walk. Out of all these things, food costs are the most and are about the only thing that we can control substantially, so with that in mind the board has taken steps to try and reduce costs for the walk and we are starting in the kitchen. The board voted at last board meeting that effective immediately, we will no longer be serving any food to the kitchen help. We serve approximately 150 extra meals per walk to the help in the kitchen and we can no longer afford to do this. We can no longer ask the community to contribute to the costs of walks and then feed some of the help. We need to remember we are asked to be "servants", and that is what we need to be. We are trying to keep the cost to the pilgrims and the team the same at this time, so we will just have to learn to be better stewards of God's money. There are some changes in the way the kitchen will be run and in some of the menu items. Jean Stout has agreed to become the new kitchen coordinator for the time being to help us with this transformation.

If anyone has any questions regarding the new policies, please feel free to contact me by email; jonbau@iapdatacom.net or by phone at 937-284-0630. I know these may not be popular with some folks, but changes just need to be made sometimes.

Once again, thank you all for your service, and Merry Christmas to all.

God Bless,
John

CALLING EMMAUS TO PRAYER

Our country is in dire need of divine guidance. The only way we will receive God's help for our country is if we, as His children, ask for it. We MUST pray as never before for God to direct our leaders and fellow countrymen. In II Chronicles 7:14 (NIV) God says, "*If my people, who are called by my name, will **humble** themselves and **pray** and **seek my face** and **turn from their wicked ways**, then will I hear from heaven and will **forgive their sin** and **heal their land.**" We cannot ignore God's Word. He is telling us what to do when our country is in trouble. We MUST do it!!*

It's time for a bodacious (bold or blatant) prayer revival!! It's time we prayed without ceasing for our country. "*And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.*" (Ephesians 6:18) God is waiting to hear from us. Again in Chronicles it reads that God heard His warriors cry out to Him in the midst of battle for they needed victory over their enemies. God answered their prayers and gave them victory because they trusted in Him! Over and over in the Holy Scriptures we can see how God waits for His children to call upon Him for He wants to grant their requests. He always keeps His promises. Jesus continually went to His Father when He was troubled, needed encouragement, or just wanted to say thanks. How can we do any less?

Do you have God on your Christmas list? If you do, what do you think He desires most? I believe it's to talk with you and me. When you think about it, talking to God it is an awesome gift. What other King or high authority do you think you could talk directly to?

Emmaus community, let's make prayer our very first priority everyday. Let's pray for our country, our leaders, and our churches. Prayer changes things. Prayer can change a country, leaders, churches and us. If you don't believe it, talk to God about it and see what happens!!

Blessings for God's Holy love to embody you and yours this Christmas season,
Mary Faith

A message from Max Lucado's *No Wonder They Call Him the Savior*: "In our world of budgets, long-range planning and computers, don't we find it hard to trust in the unbelievable? Don't most of us tend to scrutinize life behind furrowed brows and walk with cautious steps? It's hard for us to imagine that God can surprise us. To make a little room for miracles today, well, it's not sound thinking. When was the last time you imagined the unimaginable? (or prayed for it?) Has it been awhile since you claimed God's promise to do "more than we can ask or imagine?" (Ephesians 3:20)"

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UPCOMING GATHERINGS!

Sunday, December 13, 2009 at 7 PM
Praise Gathering

REUNIONS:

Sunday, December 13, 2009 at 6 PM
Women's Walk # 57
Shelly Canan

Sunday, January 10, 2010 at 6 PM
Men's Walk # 30
Mark Weatherman

FOOD & FELLOWSHIP:

After each gathering, there will be a time of fellowship and food.

If you plan to stay, please bring a dish to share.

2010 WALK DATES:

Women's Walks

- # 58 FEBRUARY 18-21
 LD: SARAH COGAN
- # 59 JUNE 24-27
- # 60 NOVEMBER 4-7

Men's Walks

- # 39 APR. 22-25
- # 40 AUG. 12-15

HELP!

We are in need of applications.
Please consider sponsoring a pilgrim!

"Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life.

No one comes to the Father except through me."

John 14:6