



Bethany Ministries

PRAYER, PROCLAMATION, HOSPITALITY

Dear Friends of Bethany Ministries,

This year Bethany Ministries celebrates 20 years of Prayer, Proclamation and Hospitality. The Spirit of God has called both of us to be a part of this adventure and there have been many moments of *amazing grace*. Peter moved to Schoharie County on July 21, 1995. He did not have a place to live until Sept. 1st, but was offered temporary lodging by the pastor of St. Catherine's in Middleburgh. On Nov. 18, 1996, Anna began a job as Associate Director of Adult Faith Formation & Evangelization for the Albany Diocese. She had helped Peter move into his new place, a rented double-wide mobile home next to the Schoharie Creek, and visited often during her sabbatical. During the summer of 2000, after moving from the Albany Area to a small apartment in Middleburgh, she became a full time member of the Bethany Ministries Mission & Retreat team. We did many parish missions, retreats and workshops in the next 10 years. Over those years, we welcomed many guests for retreat & spiritual direction at the house on Mill Lane, which became our ministry center as well as Peter's residence.



The house on Mill Lane



104 Grove Street



Some of our "Preaching Puppets"

In August of 2011, as part of our commitment to the ministry of prayer, we went on retreat at the Poor Clare Monastery in Wappingers Falls, NY. During that retreat, we were praying for discernment about how we were going to pay our bills for the next year, since we had been ministering to individuals & groups that could not adequately compensate us for our work. In addition, the process of merging parishes limited our opportunities to do many parish missions. Anna had a sense that a big change was coming, and we wondered if that meant that we might each have to find a new ministry. On Aug. 28, 2011, Hurricane Irene blew through the Schoharie Valley – severely damaging the place where Peter lived – and destroying most of the ministry materials that were there. We thought Bethany Ministries was going to end, but the people of the area begged us to stay & God provided more than enough through insurance & donations to pay our bills and even reach out to help others who had suffered because of the flooding.

From August, 2011 until June, 2015 the money we received after the flood in 2011 allowed us to replace the supplies we lost in the flood & to move our ministry center and Peter's residence to 104 Grove St, the apartment beneath Anna's apartment. Earlier this year, while Peter was recovering from the effects of his gall bladder surgery in December, we put together & sent out our latest Newsletter & have gone to many parishes in the Albany Diocese for weekend Masses. At the request of the pastors of the Middleburgh Ecumenical Ministerium, we did Lenten presentations

after the community suppers in each of the four village churches. We called it ‘Lenten R[eflection] & R[itual]’. In April and May we taught both Ecclesiology I & 2 for the Kateri Institute of Lay Formation of the Albany Diocese & also continued to reach out to our neighbors in our “ministry of presence” that became so important after Hurricane Irene.

Even though our lives & ministry recently have been both rewarding and exhausting, we have not received enough recompense for it to cover all of our living expenses, so we have had to go into our “flood” savings to make up for the shortfall. That money will be exhausted by the end of September. This all reminds us of what we have always known, but are not always so conscious of – that Gospel poverty, [depending on God for all our needs, while reaching out to meet the needs of the ones the Lord sends us] is both a grace and a challenge. We continue sharing one car, a gift from Holy Name Province that arrived in June, 2014 –a white 2005 Pontiac Vibe.

You have collaborated with us over many of the past 20 years and your donations have enabled us to reach out to individuals and parishes that were not able to support us financially. Since 2011, we have not asked for anything beyond the monthly and yearly donations you have been able to send us – and we are deeply grateful for your generous support. However, we need your help now if Bethany Ministries is going to survive beyond 2015.

We believe that the Lord is still calling us to share the comfort/challenge of God’s love & truth through the ministries of *Prayer, Proclamation & Hospitality*. We trust in God’s Providence to be able to continue our ministry. St Francis told his followers to work for what they needed & when that was not enough, to go to the “*Table of the Lord*” & beg. St. Clare fought for the “privilege of poverty” & refused the security of land & Papal privilege. We are looking for a few more Parish Missions, but we are not able to travel as much as we have in previous years. Over the past 20 years, our needs have been met through our work & people like you who have supported us in many ways. Pray for us and for those we minister to and with. Please consider sending a donation if you can.

All donations made out to ‘Bethany Ministries’ are tax deductible.

Peace and all Good,

Peter

Anna

Friar Peter Chepaitis, OFM & Sister Anna Tantsits, IHM



Our Centering Prayer Group at a community supper



Final Blessing at Sunday Mass in Cherry Valley