

Ram's Horn

Marriage Retorno Newsletter
Winter 2008 Vol. 115

Strengthening Marriages
Through Scriptural Prayer



**Journey Together
To God**

FROM THE EDITORS: Mike & Maureen Oates

Greetings! In this issue of the **Ram's Horn** you will find:

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1. News and Notes

Bob Nicholson died on November 17, 2007. He & Diane were Executive Team couple for *MR*. She writes to say "The whole family was with him and his death was peaceful and filled with courage, prayer, and grace." Please continue to hold Diane and the family in your prayers.

Mary Ward writes:

God bless you all and thank you for all your prayers for me. I am back to normal life and have only a scar and a slight "bump" in my left shoulder area to show for my surgery. The Lord is so good to me.

I got a note from Jack and Vicki Owoc (Florida). Vicki went to the ER for diverticulitis and after many, many tests they determined that she has a 4:00 cm. mass in her kidney and a 2 cm mass in her ovary. She had a full body scan and it all seems isolated in those two areas. She will have her kidney and ovary removed after Christmas. Please add her to our ever-growing list of people to pray for a healing. Jack and Vicki's address is: 5124 S. University Dr., Davie, FL 33405 phone:(407-833-5008)

We thank all of the community for prayers for the December 7-9, 2007 **MR** held in Washington DC. The weekend was very successful and the team, Fr. Mel and Adrien & Mary Clare Auger, are planning another **MR** weekend in Washington March 14 - 16, 2008.

Maureen is now walking with a cane inside the house. With ice, snow, and cold outdoors, she still needs the walker or wheelchair. Progress is continuing, thank God. Thank you all for your thoughts and prayers.

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2. Recap of the Fall 2007 National **MR** Conference

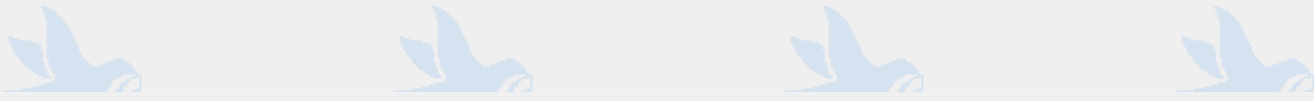


Composite picture of the group attending the **MR** Conference

GRAYMOOR (November 2 - 4, 2007)

By Rev. Mel Hemann

I vividly recall, during the height of World War II, one of my high school teachers, a Franciscan sister, told us about a group of Friars in New York who were praying for Christian unity. She said, in the beginning, the monks in a place called Graymoor were Episcopalian (Anglican) and had converted to



Roman Catholicism in the process of this prayer. The whole concept fascinated and intrigued me so much that, after my ordination, I led my parishioners each year in the January Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. The decision that the 2007 Marriage Retorno conference would be at Graymoor had a very special appeal for me. A people and a place, that had piqued my interest for over half a century, would be a weekend home for me and the **MR** community. It was here on Friday, November 2, 2007, five couples and three priests met to share love, prayer and commitment and, for me, a life-long dream became reality.

The conference this year opened on All Souls day. In keeping with the stated ideal of our hosts, "that they all may be one," the leadership team decided the traditional Friday night sharing should focus on loved ones from our past who had influenced and helped form us into the persons we are today. Due to work-related conflicts the Exec team couple, Rick and Deb Giarusso, were unable to attend the conference. The spirit of all in attendance brought to fruition planned hopes and dreams. The evening concluded with a Mass in honor of All Souls and the Sacramental anointing of the sick.

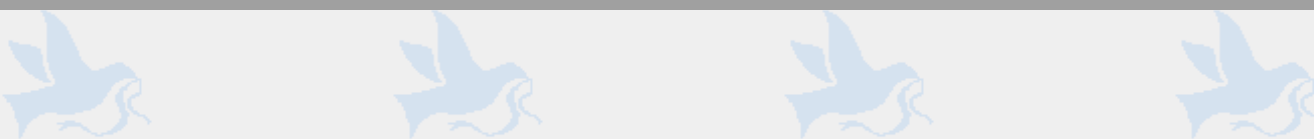
Saturday morning Adrien & Mary Clare Auger provided food for thought and discussion by sharing their experience of finding God in the small events of daily living. The focus of their particular event was a problematic and ancient garage door that needed more attention than replacing old batteries in an old opener.

West Point graduate Ben (Gladys) Whitehouse had offered a Saturday afternoon tour of nearby West Point Military Academy. A last minute family crisis necessitated canceling their presence. In Ben's absence, a regularly-scheduled professional tour was arranged which lacked the personal touch of an alum. Be that as it may, Ben could not have done anything about the 60+ mph winds from the passing hurricane making its way up the eastern coast at that time.

Back at Graymoor after the evening meal the group gathered for Mass and the annual board meeting. The Saturday evening concluded with the usual festivities.

Sunday morning we gathered for Mass once again. (Three priests in attendance so each of us got to do our thing). The Whitehouses were to be the Sunday morning presenters and their absence required another adaptation of plans. Saturday night each couple and/or individual was given one of the Beatitudes for prayerful meditation to continue the Friday night process. The morning reflection and sharing took us to the departing Sunday lunch time. All left looking forward to meeting in Chicago in 2008 and perhaps the Tampa, FL area in 2009.

We went our separate ways having experienced the gracious presence of the Friars of the Atonement and their counterparts, the Poor Clare sisters. Personally, I left with a renewed sense of the ongoing need for Prayers for Christian Unity. I didn't realize until Saturday night that next January 17-25, 2008 is the 100th anniversary of that prayer and tradition. May we continue to pray that all may be one.





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From Marianne & Tony Hartman

The conference was a living sign of the Holy Spirit at work. The Friday night session where we all shared on people who had influenced us who were now among the souls of the day. It was very inspirational and gave us a glimpse into another part of each other's lives. It set the tone for the weekend. Many of us commented that we felt much more connected with each other than when our usual litany on Friday evening of how the children and grandchildren are growing.

We were blessed with three Masses since Fr. Ed said the Mass first and then Fr. Mel celebrated on Saturday evening. Fr. Julian felt left out and wanted to celebrate with us so we had Mass on Sunday morning also. It was great!

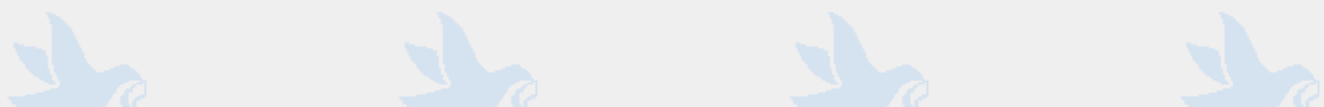
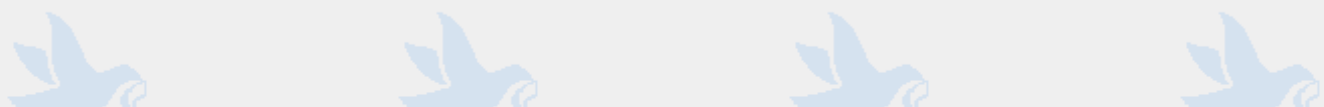
We decided to share again on Sunday morning on a specific beatitude so at the party on Saturday night Mary Clare made up papers for each of us to choose from and that was our beatitude. We wrote on it as individuals, shared as a couple and then shared in the group. Lots of new insights.

Lloyd & Kathy Christensen are going to host the **MR** Conference next year in Chicago and will do some research on speakers suggested by the group. All in all, we left feeling lifted up and inspired. We certainly missed you, Rick & Deb and Ben & Gladys but look forward to all of us being together next year.

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3. Report on a *Marriage Retorno* weekend in Moodus, Connecticut

The **MR** weekend, pictured above, was held on 11/09/07 in Moodus, CT, at "My Father's House" a retreat house run by Father Bill McCarthy, MSA, and a resident staff. It was interesting, to say the least. We were told there were 4 couples registered but 8 showed up! Some at different times during the weekend. We scrambled to get handouts copied and other things that had to "multiply".





Despite this situation, it was a good weekend. One of those couples is a ME team couple and has been looking for "more" and this seemed to be it. Another young couple said they had been thirsting for couple prayer. Many of the couples are regular attendees at functions at this retreat house. They will spread the word about **MR** and we hope to hold another **MR** weekend there this Spring. One of the couples on the weekend are lay missionaries and live at the retreat facility. They didn't really share until Sunday morning and it was dynamite. They see the beauty and depth in couple prayer and are committed to integrating it into their lives. It seems the Spirit truly worked hard this weekend for us and the couples.

Upcoming **MR** weekends scheduled:

March 14 - 16, 2008 in the Washington DC area

April 5 - 6, 2008 in Cedar Falls, IA

May 31-June 1, 2008 in Cedar Falls, Ia

July 12-13, 2008 in Paoli, PA.

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