



Ram's Horn

Marriage Retorno Newsletter
Winter 2008 Vol. 119

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

PRAYER REQUEST: Please keep Adrien & Mary Clare Auger and Adrien's medical team in your hearts, thoughts, and prayers.

SAVE THE DATES: Here are the dates for the next two national conferences: (1) **October 30 – November 1, 2009** at the Hyatt Summerfield Suites, in Gaithersburg, MD (see Item 6 of this issue of the **Ram's Horn**); and (2) **November 5 – 7, 2010**, at St. Francis Springs Prayer Center in Stoneville,





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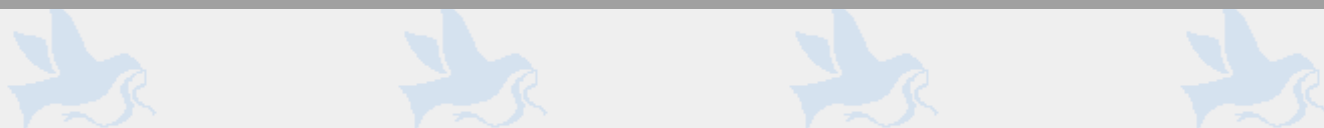
REMEMBRANCE OF BROTHER BERNARD FREY, OFM, CAP: This year's Thanksgiving holiday time was not the same somehow. Sadly, there was no Christmas card from Brother Ben. His card was always the first to arrive. It was the unofficial start of the Christmas season for our family.

Brother Ben passed away quietly in his sleep on December 29, 2007. His caring nurse, Pat, called us soon after he died. We were not shocked to hear the news. We had visited him a few weeks before and he was peaceful and quietly sleeping, although he did perk up when we started to say the rosary. This was the norm for our visits the last year of his life. However, during the visit before our final one, Ben was like his old self. His first question was, "How are the boys"? These "boys" are our 4 grown sons who had a special relationship with Brother Ben for many years. In fact, our sons began to call Brother Ben, "Moses", since he had grown a long, very Franciscan-like beard the last 5 years or so of his life. During that great visit we went through some photo albums and talked about the people in them. We reminisced about his 50th anniversary celebration. A grand event!

We first met Brother Ben soon after we had moved to central NY in 1980. While recuperating from a long illness with pneumonia, he lived at a Capuchin rest and retreat center on Cayuga Lake. We joined a Marriage Encounter sharing group in Ithaca and Brother Ben was part of that group. We felt an instant rapport with him. We told our new sharing group about *Marriage Retorno* and they encouraged us to set up a weekend in the area. We did so. Fr. Gene Tucker, S.J. (RIP) flew up to do the weekend with us. Brother Ben was one of the first to sign up. He LOVED the weekend. He fell in love again with the Scriptures and dialogue. At the end of the weekend, he shared that he felt called to this ministry. We were thrilled. The three of us soon became a team and served together for the next 20 years. Brother Ben loved *MR* and the couples on the weekend quickly fell in love with him as well. We could tell about all the things this Friar did in his lifetime but we will share who he was by telling you one of the stories he shared with the couples on an *MR*. He told the following during the Spirit phase. It clearly illustrates that being a witness to love and unity is showing Jesus' love to all we meet.

Brother Ben was assigned to a church on the Lower East Side of New York City. Each day he opened the doors of the church in the morning and locked them every evening. While doing so, he spotted a man leaning on the windowsill of his tenement apartment. . Everyday, Brother Ben would look up and wave to him and greet him with a "Good Morning" or "Good Evening". It turned out that the man was a Hungarian dancer. After several months, the man started to come down to the church and eventually he began to attend Mass. One day he told Brother Ben, "Brudder, you brought me back to the church." He explained that he had been born a Catholic but hadn't attended Church or received the sacraments since he was a child. All it took was Brother Ben's continuing kindness and gracious welcome to stir his heart to seek the Lord again.

We could relate many other stories of Ben touching the people he met. His gentleness, his caring, his humor, his love for Scripture and God's people were apparent to all he met. Our family is richer,



stronger, and blessed for having known this wonderful servant of God. We know he is **deliriously** happy in heaven.

Rest in peace, O good and faithful servant.

Joe & Mary Ward

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2. Our new national team couple: Marianne & Tony Hartman

The pictures include the new and old national teams and, besides Marianne & Tony, there are Deb & Rick Giarusso, and Father Mel Hemann.



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3. From Tony & Marianne



Dear *Marriage Retorno* family,

It is with great joy that we introduce ourselves to you. We are Tony & Marianne Hartman and we were elected as the Coordinating Couple for the next three years at the annual conference last October in Chicago, IL. The first good news we would like to share is that Father Mel Hemann has agreed to continue in his role as spiritual leader on the team.

We made our **MR** in 1975 in Virginia Beach, VA and have been active in the ministry ever since. We have presented week-ends in MA, NH, and GA. As well, we have attended almost all of the yearly conferences. We have also

hosted **MR** board meetings in our homes in MA and TN.

We have six children and since they all live in the northeast, we spend several weeks a year traveling north. Tony is a retired Naval Officer and we moved frequently, so it wasn't unusual for us to decide to move to TN when he retired from his second career at GE.

Tellico Village in Loudon is our home in eastern TN. We live on Tellico Lake and can see the Smoky Mountains as well as the beautiful countryside that surrounds us. This is truly a gift from God!

We are here to serve you in whatever way we can. Our primary goal is to continue to make **MR** available and we have wonderful teams to meet your needs. Dave & Lillie James will provide teams for weekends when committed couples and facilities have been arranged. Mike & Maureen Oates are editors of the **Ram's Horn**. Norman & Delores Schauls do the web design so that the **RH** can be e-mailed to the **MR** family 4 times a year. Joe & Mary Ward keep **MR's** data base current and they notify the **MR** family that the **RH** is available on the [Marriage Retorno](#) web site each quarter. Please inform the Wards when you have a change of e-mail or home address. You will find contact information about each of these couples on the web site, as well. We ask you to keep us in your prayers as we begin this journey and please feel free to contact any of us if we can be of help. In Christ's peace and love,



Tony & Marianne

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4. A report about an *MR* weekend, presented by Adrien & Mary Clare Auger and Fr. Mel Hemann

1st row: Ed and Garland DeMarco, Judy Dinges (seated), Jane Tseronis (seated), Joan Feffer; 2nd row: Bill Dinges, Mary Clare Auger, Fr. Mel Hemann, John Tseronis (with hand on Jane), Jed Feffer (with hand on Joan), Nancy Wheeler; back row: Adrien Auger (behind Mary Clare) Gary Wheeler (behind Nancy)

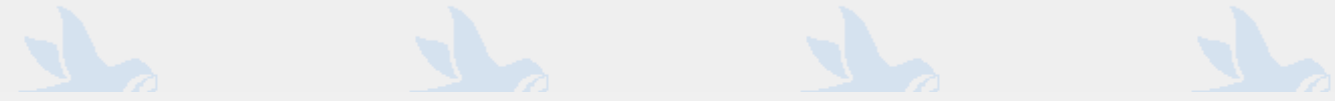
The five couples who made this weekend are all long-time members of a Team of Our Lady, located in the Silver Spring, MD. area. Fr. Phil Brown, the Team's current chaplain, attended part of the weekend, and co-celebrated a Mass with Fr. Mel.

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5. Recap of the Fall 2008 National *MR* Conference

Our presenting couple was **Bob and Rita Boeke**. Together, Bob & Rita provided the couple-centered and Scripture-based retreat for those in attendance. They shared their own story, as well as coping skills for perseverance in our marriages. There was plenty of material for reflection and sharing. The election of the new *MR* Coordinating Team took place – our new leaders are Tony & Marianne Hartman and Fr. Mel Hemann (see Item 2 in this issue).

Everyone present enjoyed the time to listen, time alone and together as couples, and the time to



socialize. Thank you to our hosts, Kathy & Lloyd Christensen, for a great site and all their work to make this a meaningful conference.



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6. Announcement of the Fall 2009 National *MR* Conference

**Fall 2009 National *MR* Conference
Oct 30-Nov 1, 2009
Hyatt Summerfield Suites, Gaithersburg, Md.**

Our host couple: Adrien & Mary Clare Auger.

The guaranteed rate of \$180/couple for a suite with complete kitchen, full private bathroom, for 2 nights, 5 catered meals, use of the conference room and other free amenities is a bargain, especially for the Washington, D.C. area. This place is close to 3 major airports (Reagan Washington National, Dulles International, Baltimore-Washington International) and minutes away from Montgomery County Airpark.

Chez Auger and our family and friends have overnight accommodations for those who wish to come early and/or leave later. You are within easy distance of metro rail to downtown D.C. with its free monuments, museums, visit to your elected representative, etc.

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