

Building a Relationship with God

There are so many joys connected with the building of our monastery. One of them is having the space and environment that are conducive to a retreat right here in our monastery. Now that we have our chapel completed and have living space that allows it, for the first time since coming to Montana we have asked a Franciscan sister, Sister Marilyn Joyce, to come to guide us in a retreat during the week of June 10 to 17. Until now we have had to travel far and wide to find a place to go for our annual retreat.

What will we do during this time? Sister will meet once a day with each of us and guide us individually in our journey of faith and prayer. She will assign Scripture reading for reflection and prayer and we will share our struggles, our joys, and our growth in our relationship with God in our meetings with her. The rest of each day will be spent in silence, prayer and reflection. Our beautiful surroundings will allow walking or sitting outdoors as well as some quiet leisure activities. It will be a grace-filled time for each individual and for us as a community.

Religious and priests are not the only ones who need such time. Every person who is truly seeking to grow in his or her relationship with God needs to be willing to give time to that relationship. Just as friendship with another person lies stagnant and even dies when it is not nourished by time spent together, in order for our relationship with God to grow deeper, we need to nourish it by giving quality time to it.

You may say, "I go to Mass every Sunday and take some time to pray each day." In addition to weekly Mass and whatever daily prayer time a person takes, it requires time set apart just for God, a time of retreat. Your response is probably, "I don't have time," or "Who will take care of the children (or my elderly parents or my business or my farm or my ranch, etc.)?" Of course, you may not be able to take a whole week, but what about a weekend or even a full day? Everyone is *busy*. The question, then, is not whether you have time, but rather: "Is my relationship with God really a priority in my life?"

There are some opportunities in Montana for people to find the quiet and peace and perhaps someone to guide them in a retreat. For example, in the western part of the state there is Swan Lake. In eastern Montana there is the Prayer Lodge in Busby and the Ursuline Centre in Great Falls. The Poor Clares will soon have accommodations where people may come to make quiet retreats, with the possibility of one-on-one direction. There are opportunities offered through the parishes and retreats offered through the diocese. Check *The Montana Catholic* and your diocesan website for these.

In the meantime, think about who God is for you and how important it is to you as a Catholic to grow deeper in your relationship with God.

Sister Maryalice Pierce, OSC

