



A LEAF FROM THE SYCAMORE TREE

“So Zacchaeus ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree,
in order to see Jesus who was about to pass that way.” Luke 19:4

THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD ~ NEW YEAR 2018

Dear Friends and Family,

Christ is born! Glorify Him! Christ is born in Bethlehem...Christ is adored by the Magi...and Christ is baptized by the Baptist. Liturgically, the Christmas season has come to an end. But Love is always its own beginning, and the Lord of the Holy Night is the Lord of all our days and nights. So we come to drop you this “winter leaf” in January, with our all-season good wishes ... and our year-round prayers that He hear *your* prayers and that He give you His gracious protection.

We have “Christmas’ed” merrily at The Sycamore Tree and had the joy of celebrating a simple, holy Christmas Eve in our small chapel with Father Tallman and a small flock. I’m a Christmas traditionalist, slow to “un-Christmas”, and the manger stays up till the Feast of the Presentation on February 2. It’s good to live in the presence of the Holy Family and under the loving gaze of the Christ Child.

And it’s good to be reminded that the consoling God-Child of Christmas remains the God of challenge throughout the year. I was reminded of this in my Advent reading of the writings of the heroic Jesuit, Father Alfred Delp, in his book, “**ADVENT OF THE HEART: SEASONAL SERMONS AND PRISON WRITINGS - 1941-1944**”. Some of you may have discovered his profound reflections in the meditations in the monthly *Magnificat!*, as I did.

At Christmas-time 1944, just a few weeks before he was executed, Father Delp wrote from prison:

“These smiling eyes of the Child will someday focus on us in mature, solemn examination and judgment. (...) Oh, the Child is really already judging the world now! ... How much of what we are living through today cannot stand in the presence of the Child!



How would our own lives, and life in general, be different if we remembered that life’s greatest hour was when God became man, a child?... From Child to Crucified, every hour of His life that healed and liberated us is a judgment over the way we live....We ought to take the Child very seriously.”

Yes, the God of consolation is the God of challenge, too. For many of us who participated in the Discipleship Program at The Sycamore Tree over the years with Father Okorn, our founder, Father Delp's words will have a familiar ring to them. As we make our New Year resolutions, let us renew our resolve to live as faithful disciples of Jesus. The world needs Him now more than ever and needs credible witnesses now more than ever. We are called to believe; and we are sent to help others to believe. "The true evangelization can happen only by those who are authentic disciples, those who know Jesus and are not afraid to believe and to suffer."

Thank you to each and everyone for the most welcome Christmas greetings and gifts, for your 2017 family photos and chronicles, for your prayers, support and encouragement throughout the past year. We think of you often and pray for you daily. May God grant us, one and all, an authentic life of integrity, courage and Christian discipleship for all seasons.

We've noted a few of our own 2017 chronicles and a few of our 2018 expectations with this letter. Please visit our website at www.sycamoretreeretreat.org for updates and upcoming events.

We hope to see you ... and hope to write more often to you... in the New Year of Grace 2018.

Glory to the Newborn King!

Michelle Jenkins
Director



*To be a child of God...
is to be a child of silence.*

CARDINAL ROBERT SARAH



Anno Domini 2017...



- ★ Paul & CeeLee Wiley win the 2018 Subaru in the Sonlight drawing!
- ★ Centennial of Our Lady of Fatima – Monthly First Saturdays & July Jamboree with Fr. Elias Mary Mills, FI
- ★ Into the Deep Silent Retreats (3) with Father Jeremiah Shryock CFR
- ★ St. Matthew's Homeschoolers May Crowning.
- ★ IMPROVEMENTS: A new roof on Nazareth ~ new porch light fixtures on the cabins ~ a new electrical panel in the kitchen ~ new porch furniture for the cabins.
- ★ An Advent St. Nicholas retreat.



February 9-11, 2018

Friday Evening ~ Sunday Mid-day



MARIAN APPARITIONS

OF THE 19TH CENTURY IN FRANCE

1830: Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal - St. Catherine Labouré – Rue de Bac in Paris

1846: Our Lady of La Salette - Mélanie Calvat and Maximin Giraud- LaSalette France

1858: Our Lady of Lourdes - St. Bernadette Soubirous – Lourdes, France

Presented by

Father Elias Mary Mills, FI

RECTOR OF THE SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE
LACROSSL, WISCONSIN

Coming in July, 2018

Details to be announced.



Into the Deep

growing in intimacy with God through silent prayer

A contemplative retreat by Fr. Jeremiah Myriam Shryock, CFR
SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR ~ ST. CLARE HOUSE OF PRAYER MONTICELLO, NEW YORK