

EPIPHANY 2010
~ Our Second Year ~

As we begin our third year as the Therese Community, a review of the year just past is in order. It was a year that was more calm and quiet, more settled and orderly than the first year had been – but certainly no less exciting or busy or innovative.

In January, following our celebration of Epiphany, Therese went *en masse* to the Edison Theatre for a new production of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, the Big Read book that we were reading and discussing in our Holy Ground meetings.

In recognition of racial harmony and thanksgiving for the election of our first US President of color, our Holy Ground members then collaborated on an Interreligious Prayer Service that was celebrated at Cornerstone Baptist Church.

In keeping with our unique relationship with Unitarian Universalists, Ree & Elsie were invited to a First Unitarian Women's luncheon, where we once again told our stories. And we did further networking at Fontbonne when we attended a Bishop DeRoo presentation.

At the end of January, the community came together for camaraderie and chili at the home of Ron & Laura Sonby.

In February, Elsie witnessed her first wedding, in a suite at the downtown Omni Hotel. And had another couple cancel wedding plans with her because they found that Therese was not "traditional"!

Our website went live as we began another Lent.

March found Ree in the hospital undergoing surgery once again. But within three weeks, she was beginning a new six-week program with area prison inmates. Her involvement in ecumenical services in Festus was also escalating.

Elsie told her story to a small group of religious sisters.

Therese filled three tables at a Feed My People Trivia Night, and two of the three were winners. (The one where the pastors sat was the third one!)

In April, we celebrated the Triduum and Easter. Marybeth preached and presided over an Agape Supper on Holy Thursday. Ree & Elsie attended the Women's Seder Supper at the synagogue on Easter Monday.

Rodger Kalbfleisch composed an incredible *MASS for Therese of Divine Peace*, which was introduced a little at a time throughout the Season of Easter.

On the Second Sunday of Easter, RCWP ordained four new women bishops in California. Ree represented our Great Waters Region at these episcopal ordinations, presenting our bishop, Joan Houk, for ordination. Two days later, the Archdiocese of St. Louis was informed of its new episcopal ordinary, Robert Carlson.

At the end of the month, Ree & Elsie drove to the Minneapolis area and participated in the diaconal ordination of Marty Meyer-Gad, a member of our Great Waters Region who has been preparing for ordination with Elsie.

May's celebration of Pentecost was huge, as Bishop Joan Houk ordained Marybeth a deacon at our regular Sunday liturgy, followed by a festive pot luck supper.

In June, Elsie buried her daughter-in-law's mother. Joe Kuciejczyk's house was shot up with an attack rifle. And area religious sisters began their personal interrogation ordeals at the hands of the Vatican.

June also saw the first formation retreat for RCWP, held on Kellys Island, with Elsie as a member of the retreat team.

July began with our second Board meeting.

Ree, Elsie & Marybeth all went to Chicago for the first RCWP national retreat. While there, one of our Great Waters women, Janine

Denomme, who is gravely ill with cancer, was spontaneously ordained a deacon by Bishop Patricia Fresen, with Bishop Joan Houk assisting.

From Chicago, Ree & Elsie went on to Columbus for the Federation of Christian Ministers conference. We returned home to attend the International Council of Community Churches conference at the Ballpark Hilton, and then headed to Pittsburgh for the International Association of Women Ministers conference.

In between trips, we blessed two of our own on their way to extended missionary work: Jennifer Lay, going to Peru; and Caitlin Gaskell, going to the Minneapolis area.

August saw much sickness, surgery, and death within the community of Therese and the larger community. We were constantly reminded of our mortality and our need of God's grace.

Into September, the cycle of sickness, surgery, and death continued.

Elsie returned to Kellys Island for a second formation retreat.

Marybeth was elected the new Rotating President of Holy Ground, a one-year stint.

Some of us heard Paul Coutinho speak at Saint Louis University. And some of us attended the Women's Ordination Conference gathering and/or the special awards conference and had an opportunity for a few words with Louise Lears and a host of other faithful and courageous religious sisters.

October's press release regarding Marybeth's upcoming ordination fell on deaf ears in today's St. Louis media void.

The community anointed Rodger Kalbfleisch in advance of yet another surgery.

A few of us went to Fontbonne to listen to and speak with Elizabeth Johnson.

Ree, Elsie & Marybeth traveled to Chicago for the priestly ordination of Alta Jacko, another Great Waters sister.

We initiated the Therese Preaching Community, with TC Parsons being the first community homilist.

We hosted a race relations forum in conjunction with the Holy Ground collaborative.

The first day of **November** brought the priestly ordination of Marybeth by Bishop Joan Houk.

The eleventh day of November was the second anniversary of the priestly ordinations of Ree & Elsie.

The annual Holy Ground Concert, again held at the Church of Christ, Scientist, featured a new piece that was specially written for the occasion by Rodger Kalbfleisch, and flawlessly performed by him at the piano and Pat Dineen on the flute.

And for the First Sunday of Advent, as we celebrated the second anniversary of the founding of Therese of Divine Peace, Marybeth celebrated her first Mass as a priest.

The first week of **December** found Ree & Elsie on a women's clergy panel at Webster University, Ree on a cultural awareness panel at the CRC synagogue, and Elsie leading an interfaith prayer service for World AIDS Day at Barnes-Jewish School of Nursing.

The last week of December found Marybeth baptizing her granddaughter Chloe.

In between, we celebrated Advent and Christmas in faith and with great gratitude for where we have been and where we have come to. For Christmas, we donated \$100 to Feed My People and \$100 to Karen Catholic Worker House.

The promise of 2010 stands before us. May it be a year that brings the cosmos closer to the perfection of Eden, that brings this planet closer to the peace of Christ, that brings all people closer to the unity

of God. May our God, who is truly beyond all names, continue to bless our lives, our loves, the work of our hands. And may we continue to say, Amen.