



PO Box 432 Middleburgh, NY 12122 ~ 518-827-4699 ~ bethmin@midtel.net ~ www.midtel.net/~bethmin

June, 2011

Dear Friends of Bethany Ministries,

It's early **June** and we are prayerfully looking at both our ministry and our future. Next week we will be attending a retreat sponsored by Holy Name Province of the Franciscan Friars for people who work and pray for Justice Peace and the Integrity of Creation. The next two weekends, Peter will be preaching on behalf of the Missionary work of Holy Name Province.

As we look back at the first six months of 2011, we marvel at how God has blessed us. In **January**, Peter participated in the provincial chapter of Holy Name Province held in Maryland. He received a call on his answering machine on Wednesday, **January 5** from a Baptist minister he had not seen in over 15 years. Harry had called to offer to donate a car to Bethany Ministries in response to our need for a new car mentioned in our latest newsletter.

The following Friday, **January 7**, as Peter was riding back from Maryland on the NY Thruway with five other Friars from Siena, he received a call from Anna that on her way to pick him up she had an encounter with slush and a pine tree. She was not hurt, but our "Teal Oldsmobile" was totaled. Since we only have one car between us since September 2009 –a choice we made to cut down on expenses [insurance, repairs, etc.]– this would have been a great problem. But through God's providence and our friend's generosity we had another car ready for our use by Friday, **January 14**, just one week after the accident. We now share a 2001 Subaru Forester. [You can find the whole story if you look on our website www.midtel.net/~bethmin/reflections *The Emmaus Journey of a Car*].

For the rest of January, at the request of the Albany Diocese, we travelled to Holy Cross parish in Morris, NY to assist in their grieving after their pastor had died suddenly and unexpectedly the day after Christmas. We were there every Sunday for 5 weeks to cover the Mass and to be available after Mass to walk with the people in their journey of grieving. We also led a retreat for an inner city youth group in Albany on **January 30**.

From **February 5th** until **March 13**, Peter covered for Fr. Tom Holmes, the pastor of Our Lady of the Valley in Middleburgh & sacramental minister for St. Vincent's in Cobleskill, while Tom was recovering from surgery. Peter also led the funeral services for his father's best friend, "Red" Ressler, in the Firemen's home in Hudson, NY. In **March**, we led a retreat in Pittston, PA and a Parish Mission for Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament in Bayside, Queens.

In **April** we did a retreat day for the Daughters of Charity of the Most Precious Blood at Villa Fusco in Niskayuna, attended the Prayer House Community gathering in Dingmans Ferry, PA and were at St. Joseph's in Greenfield Center for Palm Sunday, Holy Thursday and the Easter Vigil. On Good Friday, we helped lead the veneration of the cross at an ecumenical service in the Presbyterian Church in Schoharie, NY. On Easter Sunday, Peter presided at 3 Masses in Germantown, NY – one at dawn, and the others at 9 & 11 AM. Then we had a wonderful Easter dinner with Peter's family in Hudson.

In **May**, we travelled to Michigan to lead the memorial service of Gary Pierce, a long time friend of Bethany Ministries. In 2001, he had asked both of us to participate in the dedication of the Pierce/Cedar Creek Environmental Institute, which he had founded. Though an atheist, Gary believed that caring for creation needed to be grounded in spirituality and wanted us to provide that dimension to the weekend's festivities. When it became clear that he was close to death, Gary asked us to lead his funeral services. He died on **April 24**, Easter Sunday, and his memorial service took place on **May 9th**. It was a glorious celebration of his life and a tribute to his faith in the power of love.

As we returned to Middleburgh on **May 12**, we stopped in Buffalo to meet with the pastor of a parish that has engaged us to do a parish mission there in Lent of 2012. Our next engagement was to lead a retreat "*A Pilgrimage with Mary—Mystic and Prophet*" at Rosa Mystica House of Prayer. Peter has been asked to serve as chaplain for the Knights of Columbus council that meets at Our Lady of Fatima in Delanson, NY, a few miles from Middleburgh. On Monday, **May 23**, he was initiated into the 1st degree of the Knights of Columbus.

Our desire to be part of the answer to the Prayer of Jesus "...that all may be one", has led us to participate in various ecumenical events both locally and in our travels. Because of our commitment to reach out to the neglected, the grieving and the spiritually hungry, we have responded to needs which do not always have adequate compensation for our presentations, preparation and travel expenses. We had planned to do a Parish Mission in **June**, but for good reasons it was cancelled. Now, because of this, we are faced with expenses of \$3,500 more than our projected June income is. And the requests we've received to do various presentations, etc. during the Summer months will probably not bring in enough money to cover our projected bills for July and August. ~ ~ ~
[**Update:** *Since early June when this letter went out, through the grace of God and the generosity of those who sent donations, we ended our fiscal year on June 30 — \$1.07 in the black.*]

But as we look back over the years since 1995 when we began to follow God's call to do this work we are amazed at how God has always provided for us. Sometimes it is through an unexpected gift that comes just when a bill was due and at other times it comes as a request to do a retreat or mission when another one has been cancelled.

The Lord is still calling us to continue to share God's love and truth through the ministries of *Prayer, Proclamation & Hospitality*. We trust we will be able to continue because of God's Providence that often comes to us through people like you who have supported us in so many ways. Pray for us and for those we minister to and with. We will continue to hold you in prayer. Please consider sending a donation if you can.

All donations made out to 'Bethany Ministries' are tax deductible.

Peace and all Good,

Peter

Anna

Friar Peter Chepaitis, OFM & Sister Anna Tantsits, IHM