

Dear Friends of Bethany Ministries,

"And he will raise you up on Eagle's wings..."

Anna and I were singing that song to her mother, Mary Tantsits, on April 7th of this year, two days before she died.

We were interrupted after two verses by a nurse who needed to change some dressings. As we waited outside the cubicle, we were moved to tears as the nurse finished the song which we had begun, a song which we sang at her funeral on April 12.

One month later, I heard that song once again in my heart. I was approaching Middleburgh, after visiting Rose Walker in Calvary Hospital. I was reluctant to leave because Rose was very close to death, but the doctor assured me that it would not happen that day.

As I passed Vly Pond, 5 miles from home, I saw a beautiful bald eagle on a small island in the middle of the pond. It was as if God were telling me that Rose was going to be raised up on eagle's wings and welcomed into heaven.

A few minutes after I walked into my house, the phone rang. It was Celeste with the news that Rose had died at 3:30, while I was driving home.

We celebrated her funeral on May 12th, exactly one month after we had commended Anna's mom to heaven. Mrs. Tantsits had been praying for Rose and now they are both ministers of prayer for Bethany Ministries from their place in heaven.

From Celeste Wadowski

Rose Walker 1959-2000

My friend Rose came with me to hear Peter preach in Manhattan in 1995, just prior to the founding of Bethany Ministries. However, Rose did not go inside to hear Peter - she never went inside churches, as she felt unworthy, unclean... She had grown up having suffered unspeakable forms of abuse.

Consequently, as an adult, Rose battled multiple addictions and engaged in many self-defeating behaviors.

Over time, however, and through God's grace, Rose began to allow others to love her, including God.

Be careful what you pray for, you may get it!

We prayed for Anna to be able to collaborate more fully, and she lost her full time job with the Diocese of Albany. This painful and unexpected event set her free to do more of the proclamation and hospitality of Bethany Ministries.

As of October 1st, her full time ministry has two parts. One of them is Coordinator of Initiation for two parishes in Rensselaer, NY, and the other is leading Parish Missions, retreats, days of reflection, and catechist formation presentations for Bethany Ministries.

The furniture from her mother's house that is now in her apartment in Middleburgh makes it possible for her to welcome guests. In these ways she is able to be more of a partner in the adventure she helped to found.

We prayed for healing and discernment for Kathy and she has been given a ministry of healing through native rituals and Reiki. She has left her job as a counselor with an agency, and she is now moving towards a new career as a psychotherapist in private practice.

She also has been welcoming guests at her apartment, particularly those who have been wounded by institutional religion.

God's abundant answers to prayer have made it difficult to get a newsletter published for almost a year. We thank you for your patience with us, and your continued prayer and support.

We pray that God may continue to bless all of you as we have been blessed through you.

Peace and Good

Friar Peter Chepaitis, OFM

From Sr. Anna

Dear Friends,

As you can see from Peter's letter much has happened since you last heard from us.

I would like to thank all of you that have reached out to me at the time of my Mother's death.

The day before she went into the hospital for the

Many people were God's channels in loving Rose into healing, not least of all the folks she met at Bethany Ministries.

I was one of the first guests at Bethany Ministries, and continue to go there for retreat. I was happy to encourage Rose to come with me, and later to go on her own (at no cost to her).

During one of her visits, she decided to ask to be baptized. She told Peter and Anna that she had wanted to become a Catholic for 13 years.

When asked why she had waited so long, she said that if she were baptized she would have to live her life as a child of God, and she was not ready until then to change her lifestyle.

Soon after this, she was diagnosed with cervical cancer and it spread rapidly. Rose decided to continue with the RCIA process (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) in preparation for her initiation as a Catholic Christian and engaged in her catechesis with Peter and Anna and myself as her sponsor.

Members of Bethany Ministries were present when Rose was baptized and confirmed by Peter and received her First Communion in the midst of her friends at St. Francis Xavier Parish in New York City on January 2, 2000, the feast of the Epiphany.

My friend Rose died on May 8th at Calvary Hospital in the Bronx. Peter visited and played his violin for her shortly before she died.

Bethany Ministries had helped Rose ease into her new life through their constant prayers, phone calls and visits.

Peter preached at the Funeral Mass, and Fr. John Bucki, the Jesuit who had first welcomed her to St. Francis Xavier, presided.

Anna and Kathy joined her friends at the liturgy to commend her to God.

Rose loved Bethany Ministries and she allowed God to touch and open her heart there.

As a result, I have no doubt that she is now united with the God who has always loved her.

Celeste Wadowski,
Brooklyn, NY

Dear Friends, continued

last time she told those who were visiting her that it wouldn't be long now and she would soon be dancing with Daddy.

My Mother was one of the people commissioned as a minister of prayer for Bethany Ministries. She took this responsibility very seriously and was concerned about how the people she was requested to pray for were doing.

When we would visit her my mother would love to hear stories about the missions and retreats we conducted, and would usually end up by saying, Keep up the good work.

While she was in the hospital that week she promised that she would continue to pray for all our intentions from heaven.

Someone has generously offered Bethany Ministries a \$200- a-month matching grant. So we sent out letters a few weeks ago to some people on our mailing list hoping we would find forty people who would be able to donate \$5 a month to match the original promised monthly donation.

So far we have heard from nine people in response to the letter. Only thirty-one more to hear from!

We would like to thank all of you that are a part of Bethany Ministries. We appreciate that you recommend us for parish missions, retreat days, etc.

The support of your donations helps us to even reach out to people who spend some time here in Middleburgh with us and groups who want to hear the Good News of the Gospel yet can not afford a donation.

But most of all we would like you all to join us in prayer for all of the requests, people make for their needs and intentions.

Remember, Francis encourages all of us to . . .

*“Preach the good news always,
and, if necessary, use words.”*

Wishing you and your families
God's abundant blessings,
Anna