



Whale Spouts

*inspiration & information
to nurture spiritual vitality in everyday living*

A monthly newsletter of Belly of the Whale
Spiritual Direction & Retreat Ministries LLC

May 2015

Dear friends,

Spring has sprung and to that I say, "Amen and Hallelujah!" During this season of renewal & new life, I invite you to prayerfully ponder what brings renewal & new life to your spirit. What brings spiritual vitality to your daily living? Is it a deeper look into the scripture; longer walks in the park; adding a few moments of sacred silence into your daily routine or inviting God into creative moments of artistic expression (painting, beading, coloring, dancing, singing, etc.)?



Whatever your style - embrace it! Nurture it! Allow your spirit to bloom with the tulips. Dance with the daffodils. Blessings to you this Easter season as we blossom into this new season of our lives!

*Peace and joy,
Sharon Seyfarth Garner
Spiritual Director*

Commencement

Watching my children grow up has been one of the great privileges of my life. Both of my children were in High School this year and I stand in complete awe that my "baby" is graduating next month. I like the way we call this a "commencement." Rather than mourning the end, we celebrate the beginning. I am reminded of the beautiful words of the Hymn of Promise below. As we enter into spring and this season of "commencements," I invite you to stroll through the flowers, sing with the birds and savor these hopeful words of Easter resurrection promise...

In the bulb there is a flower; in the seed, an apple tree;
In cocoons, a hidden promise: butterflies will soon be free!
In the cold and snow of winter there's a spring that waits to be,
Unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.

In our end is our beginning; in our time, infinity;
In our doubt there is believing; in our life, eternity,
In our death, a resurrection; at the last, a victory,
Unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.

- Natalie Sleeth



Our mission

is to nurture spiritual vitality in everyday living through personal spiritual direction & small group retreats.

Our name

is a reminder that, just as Jonah encountered God in the "belly of the whale," we also long for a safe space to encounter God - space where we can express our spiritual longings, ask the challenging questions and nurture a genuine relationship with God.

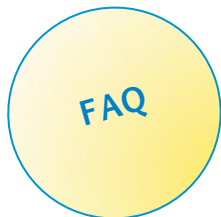
Spiritual Direction and Spiritual Formation Retreats

provide just this sort of safe space - amidst our often stormy and busy lives - to nurture a deeper and more meaningful relationship with God.

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Whale Spouts



What is sacred silence and how can I learn more...?

Sacred silence is an invitation to slow down and listen for God's still small voice - an opportunity to rest in God's presence and be renewed by God's grace. Sacred silence can be as simple as pausing for a moment to intentionally focus on God right in the middle of your daily routine. Or, sacred silence can be a longer period of time, set apart from your daily routine, where you are freed from ongoing responsibilities and distractions. This dedicated time apart is a tremendous opportunity for discernment and renewed spiritual vitality.

If you have been wondering how to find time and space in your busy life for a deeper experience of sacred silence, consider registering for "Sacred Silence 101: a 24-hour silent retreat." This retreat is designed to provide a gentle and meaningful introduction to an extended experience of sacred silence. Retreatants will be introduced to a variety of contemplative prayer practices, experience meaningful worship opportunities (opening devotions, Taize prayer, Holy Communion) and have ample time for silent rest and reflection.

Please prayerfully consider this powerful opportunity. Contact Pastor Sharon (spiritualdirection@att.net or 216-224-7452) for registration details.

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Sacred Silence 101

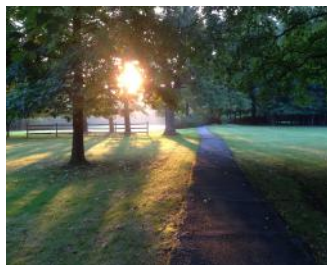
~ a 24-hour silent retreat ~

July 10-11, 2015 or **October 4-5, 2015**
(registration deadline July 1) (registration deadline Sept. 27)

Location: The Jesuit Retreat House (5629 State Rd, Parma, OH 44134) is a spiritual oasis located on 57 beautiful acres of forest, meadow and meandering pathways. For more information about this historic and sacred space, go to jrhcleveland.org.

Cost: \$175 (Single bedroom & 3 meals included.)

- Day One:** 1:30-2:00 Arrival/Check-in
- 2:00 Opening Devotions/Orientation
- 3:00 24-hours of sacred silence begins
- 7:00 Taizé prayer service (optional)
- Day Two:** 3:00 Closing Reflections/Holy Communion
- 4:00 Return home rested & renewed



Retreat Leader: Rev. Sharon Seyfarth Garner has been an ordained United Methodist pastor for 20 years and is certified as a Spiritual Director through the Ignatian Spirituality Institute. She considers it a personal joy and sacred privilege to walk with those who seek a deeper relationship with God and renewed spiritual vitality in their daily lives.

...planning ahead...

Fall Program Suggestions

Looking for ways to nurture spiritual wellness and vitality in your group programming for the upcoming year? Consider these themes offered by Belly of the Whale Ministries. We can adapt these programs to any length of time or location depending on your unique situation.

- **Seasonal**
Advent Speed Bumps
Lenten Practice of Lengthening Silence
- **Contemplative Practices for Contemporary Living**
Seeking sacred silence
Mandala Meditations
Ignatian Daily Examen Prayer
Lectio Divina
Spiritual Journaling
- **Your Prayer Personality (based on the Myers Briggs Type Indicator)**
- **Creative Pray-dates (Artistic Prayer Workshops)**
Prayer Beads
Spiritual Journaling
Pottery
Create-your-own Mandala
Picture Book Prayers

Please contact Pastor Sharon for additional information about scheduling and fees.

Belly of the Whale Retreat

3-day/3-night
(Coming March 2016)

Just as Jonah was in the belly of the whale for 3 days and 3 nights, immerse yourself in prayer and reflection. for 3 days & 3 nights.

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Savor an extended time of sacred silence enhanced by short devotional reflections based on the book of Jonah.

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Stay tuned for specific dates & details.