

Dear Friends,

♪ Those magic men, the Magi, some people call them wise,
Or oriental, even kings, well anyway, those guys.
They visited with Jesus, they sure enjoyed their stay
Then warned in a dream of King Herod's scheme,
.....They went home by another way.
Yes they went home by another way, home by another way.
Maybe me and you can be wise guys too,
.....and go home by another way.
We can make it another way, safe home as they used to say.
Keep a weather eye to the chart on high
.....and go home another way. ♪

That song by James Taylor is a good description of 2012 for us. In our 2011 newsletter, we said that our ministry center on Mill Lane which is also Peter's residence would be ready for occupancy by mid Feb.2012. It is January, 2013 and it has not happened yet. This past year has truly been a journey of going "home by another way."

Our Journey Home

In June, with the help of the K of C and the Cursillo Team that Peter served on, we moved the furniture that **Jim Kelly, OFM** gave us in Oct 2011. That move went from a POD stored in Albany, NY to a storage barn on the Schoharie farm of **Matt & Terri Fagnani**. Then in early Oct 2012 we moved it to the garage at the house of Laura Dam where Peter and Anna had stayed since Sept 7, 2011. In March 2012, Anna had been able to return to her apartment in Middleburgh. Concurrently, we were given a TV, a file cabinet and two bookcases by **Lynne Bolstad**, a friend in Oneonta whose mother Peter had buried in Hudson, NY a week before the flood. For now they reside in Stasia's garage waiting the next move.

Thanks to **Jean & Bob Brew**, in Sept. we were able to spend some vacation time at their Bolton Landing cabin. Lucky for us it was during the [free] Lake George Jazz Festival, a few miles away.

At the end of Oct., we narrowly escaped being caught by 'Sandy' while in PA for a meeting her impending arrival canceled. We were happy to be home before she hit and doubly glad that as she came north to our valley she didn't want to go where her sister Irene had done so much damage last year. We all breathed a sigh of relief.

In mid Nov., Peter rented a small apartment on Main Street in Middleburgh, 2/10 of a mile from Anna's apartment. It took a few trips and help from **Mick Uveges**, his daughter **Abby**, **Angela Warbach** & others to move most of his belongings from Terrace Mountain in Schoharie, NY down to what he now calls his "oasis".

Major Life Milestone Celebrations

In February Anna turned 70. August 26th was Peter's 40th Ordination Anniversary & August 21st was Anna's 50th Anniversary of her Religious Profession. They celebrated both of these Jubilees at two combined events, one was at Our Lady of the Valley in Middleburgh, NY, where Bethany Ministries has been located since 1995, and the other, for their families, was at the Poor Clare Monastery in Wappingers Falls, NY, where **Kim & Reggie Harris** led the music. Two Golden Jubilarians friends, Sisters **Rose Marie Mozzachio, IHM** & **Pio Ferrario, IHM** were able to attend the family celebration and Anna was able to attend their Jubilee celebrations in May and June. Anna & Peter also attended the July celebration for all the IHM Sister-jubilarians at the IHM Center in Scranton, PA.

A Ministry of Presence

Since Hurricane Irene we have been involved in a *Ministry of Presence* that has continued throughout 2012. Like the Magi in the song who visited with Jesus, we have met Him in many people in our own valley and beyond. From July 1 until Nov 4, Peter was the only priest living in Schoharie County. In July **Fr. Tom Holmes** was transferred from Middleburgh & was not replaced until **Fr. Bill Gorman** came in early November. We had previous weekend commitments, so priests were sent there by the Albany Diocese for the weekend Masses, but Peter regularly covered the Wed. Mass.

Both of us visited many who were sick, walked with some on their journey to the next world and attended & led some of their funerals. Among them were **Josephine Amaro**, the mother of Anna's good friend, **Sr. Ann Fulweiler, IHM** who received Anna into the Sisters of IHM, **Joan Pizano**, a good friend of Peter's whom he met in 1971, **Joan Quinn**, whose family are long time parishioners in our Valley, and **Sandy Breitenstein**, the wife of one of the Knights of Columbus that Peter is the chaplain for.

Peter became a 3rd degree Knight in February. Through the year, we have been present to the Delanson, NY K of C, at many of their special events and projects. We also met Jesus in an inmate at Woodbourne prison whom we visited several times, correspond with and regularly speak with on the phone.

We attended Schoharie County meetings for the dams which had overflowed during the flood caused by Irene. We participated in the weekly Saturday morning vigils in Cobleskill, NY as a part of the Schoharie County Peacemakers whenever we could. At their request, Peter reserved the community room of the Middleburgh Library to host a gathering to write letters to the DEC and governor of New York State questioning the safety of "Fracking."

Ecumenical Sharing & Outreach

In August we participated with all the other local clergy to open Middleburgh's 300th Anniversary Celebration with an Ecumenical Prayer Service on the steps of the high school with most of the town gathered on the front lawn. Because of the positive response we promised to have another town wide service in August, 2013.

On Thursday evenings we regularly meet with **Stasia Hagan, David Nidey, Joan Miller, & Darlene Rinaldo** -our centering prayer group. Sometimes others also join us. Recently the Middleburgh Churches decided to begin **Neighbors Eating Together**. Every Thursday evening people that usually eat alone, families with children, and others get to be with each other & socialize over meals prepared by the Methodist, Lutheran, Reformed and Catholic congregations. In this way the community gets to continue the sharing that went on following the flood and throughout the recovery process. None of our prayer group wanted to miss either Thursday evening event, so we now choose to go as a group to the community meal before we pray together. At the end of Nov, we contributed to 2 Thanksgiving Services: an Interfaith Jazz Vespers Nov 18 in Schenectady, & an Ecumenical Service Nov 21 in the Middleburgh Lutheran Church.

We participated in several events sponsored by the Albany Diocese. In May Peter presided & preached at 2 Masses for TV and we both attended Spring Enrichment to hear Fr. James Martin, SJ. The Kateri Institute for the formation of lay ministers had us present an all day workshop for designing & leading prayer services.

Two parish leaders with whom we have collaborated, **Maureen Joy** in Morris, NY & **Eva Swiontkowski-deNardis** in Grafton, NY invited us to be present at their installation ceremonies, as did Fr. Bill Gorman in Middleburgh. In late June, Peter was a chaplain for an Albany Men's Cursillo held in Niskayuna, NY.

Family and Friends

We visit Peter's sisters **Marita, Norma, Barbara** and their families for holiday meals or just to hang out when we find ourselves in their area. During the summer we were able to do a healing ritual with Barbara. Anna's family welcomes us in NJ when we have meetings to attend in that area. Both of us connect regularly with our religious communities [the Friars & IHM Sisters] in various ways. When they were in the area [and we were home] we had the joy of attending the concerts of **Kim & Reggie Harris** and Magpie [Greg Artzner & Terry Leonino]. We also welcomed our Michigan friend, **Mary Pierce** when she was visiting in N Y State.

God's Providential Care

Financially, the dust has not yet settled after the flood. We received a settlement from insurance policies held by Holy Name Province which has been paying the expenses of replacing things, installing internet access and phone service in the two places Peter has stayed while waiting to move back into his house on Mill Lane. Stipends from Parish Missions, retreats & weekend Masses as well as unsolicited donations have paid our regular bills to date, but donations are still welcome & needed.

Based on the recommendation of our Advisory Board [Barbara Chepaitis, Rose Marie Mozzachio, IHM, Russel Murray, OFM], we have placed any unused insurance money in a savings account to supplement our regular income & provide for our needs into the future.

We continue to share a car, which is much easier now that we live two tenths rather than nine miles apart. A few times a year, when we need to go in different directions, we rent a car for the weekend or the week. However, our 2001 Subaru now has 175,000 miles on it and is showing its age, so we are still looking for another car, hopefully before this one dies. Our desire is for one that is good on gas and has enough room for our ministry baggage.

Peter's diabetes is under good control. However, he was diagnosed with sleep apnea just before Christmas. Now that he has learned to use a CPAP machine he is sleeping much better.

Our True Way Home - Love

After the tragedy at Newtown, CT, we all were called to pause in our journeys and to look within and beyond our everyday experience. These words are from Barbara Chepaitis, a member of the Bethany Ministries Advisory Board and Peter's sister. They express our hopes and dreams very well. They were written after the shootings and before the Winter Solstice.

"In this season of miracles, I am reminded that our true power resides not in money, or status. Not in rage or fear. It resides in our capacity to love. In the strength it takes to choose love over fear. That's the miracle of being human.

As we all wait for the darkest night of year, after having lived through one of the darkest moments we share as a nation, that's all I want to say. That we're here to move beyond our fear and learn love, to live love, in all that it requires.

May the darkness bless you with dreams of light. May the returning light bless you with lessons of love."

[the rest of story, is at "Comfort & Love" the Dec.17 entry on *A Literary Lunch*, -Barbara's facebook blog]

<http://aliterarylunch.blogspot.com/>

We hope to be back in our primary ministry site/Peter's residence in early Spring. Please keep us in your prayers that all goes well. May the Lord bless you & your family with light, peace & joy on your life journey, & may you always be able to go home by another way.

Fr. Peter & Sr. Anna

We try to keep our schedule updated on our Bethany Ministries **website**

and to put photos of the rebuilding progress on our **facebook page**.

You can find the **website address** and our **facebook page** with all of our contact information below.

THE FRANCISCAN MINISTRY OF THE WORD AT BETHANY MINISTRIES

is how **Friar Peter S. Chepaitis, OFM** & **Sister Anna Tantsits, IHM** earn their living.

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WELCOME TO THE
EUCCHARISTIC CELEBRATION
OF THE
50th 'GOLDEN' PROFESSION ANNIVERSARY
OF
SR. ANNA TANTSITS, IHM
AND OF THE
40th 'RUBY' ORDINATION ANNIVERSARY
OF
FR. PETER CHEPAITIS, OFM

- August, 2012 -

Please join us after the Mass to continue the celebration at the reception.

