



*“Become a reservoir so as to become a channel.”*

- Fr. Pio Bruno Lanteri

## Meet the Lanteri Center

Welcome to the *Reservoir*, the first newsletter of the Lanteri Center for Ignatian Spirituality! We hope that here you will find a fountain of spiritual inspiration, as well as helpful news about what's happening at the Center. In this issue, we would like you to meet our current team of spiritual directors...

### Fr. Ernest Sherstone, OMV

Fr. Ernie was born and raised on the Canadian Prairies. After several years bumming around university campus, he finally heard the Lord's call to religious life and priesthood. He was ordained in 1978, and spent his first years of ministry at the Oblates' seminary in Boston. In 1985, he was sent to be pastor of a multilingual and multicultural parish in Montreal.

Over these years, he was drawn deeply into the mission of retreat work and spiritual direction. In 1991, he had the opportunity for a sabbatical in spirituality at the Gregorian University in Rome. Subsequently, he undertook a six year period of formation in spiritual direction at the Ignatian Spirituality Centre of Montreal. In 2000, he was invited to become the Executive Director of that same Centre.

Fr. Ernie's rich experiences in Montreal, combined with a retreat given to the priests of the Archdiocese of Denver, gave rise to the dream of an Oblate Spirituality

Center in Denver. This dream became a reality last Fall when he was sent to become the founder and Executive Director of the Lanteri Center. These first few months have been filled with many graces!



#### Special points of interest:

- *The Lanteri Center is accepting donations, books, tapes, and videos for our spirituality library.*
- *We are accepting applications to our Prayer Partnering Program that begins in October.*
- *Part 2 of Fr. Tim's workshop on the discernment of spirits is April 29! Read more about this and other event on page 4.*

### Fr. Daniel Barron, OMV

Fr. Dan grew up in Traverse City, MI. As a young man, he was privileged to learn from a true master of the Spiritual Exercises, Fr. James J. McQuade, SJ. After entering the seminary in 1987, Fr. Dan received training in spiritual direction throughout his formation as an Oblate of the Virgin Mary. He specialized in systematic theology during his studies, and wrote his thesis on Mary in the theological aesthetics of Hans Urs von Balthasar.

After ordination in 1996, Fr. Dan worked in parish ministry for eight years. Throughout this time, he was also involved in the ministry of spiritual direction

and retreats. Recently, Fr. Dan has been on the staff of the Institute for Priestly Formation at Creighton University in Omaha. He also serves as Executive Advisor to *MagnifiKid!*



Fr. Dan is blessed with a compassionate heart and the gift of counsel. He feels honored to help others to grow in holiness.

## Al Starkey

Al was born and brought up in New England where he attended a diocesan seminary for four years and received his bachelor's and master's degrees in sociology, psychology and organizational psychology. He was an executive and an independent consultant with a practice focused on individual growth and development. As a way of deepening his work with individuals, he trained for over six years in Jungian psychology and received his certificate as a spiritual director from The Mercy Center in Colorado Springs.

After a six month writing sabbatical on an island off the west coast of Ireland during 1999, he and his wife, Susan met a community of Carmelite hermits and entered formation with them as lay contemplatives. They subsequently lived and worked with them for 13 months at their monastery in County

Sligo, Ireland where Al offered spiritual direction and days of recollection while also providing professional support to two local dioceses and a Catholic University.

As a spiritual director, Al's gift for deep listening and his belief in the uniqueness of each person as an expression of God, encourages people to discover the felt presence of God in their lives and to courageously follow the particular, often subtle, path on which God is leading them. Al and Susan have two grown sons, and live in Evergreen with their two Siberian huskies.



## Book Box—*The Shattered Lantern*

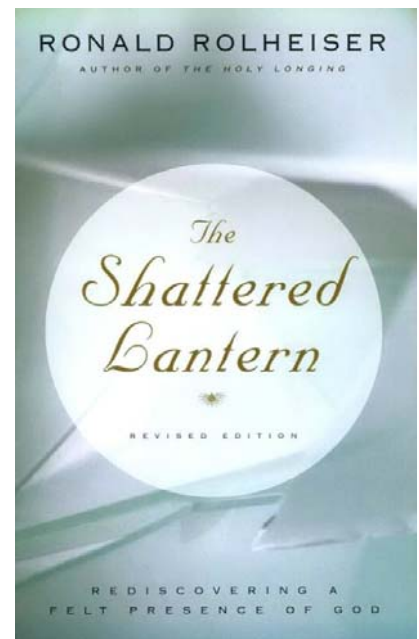
reviewed by Catherine E. Hubka

In *The Shattered Lantern*, Ronald Rolheiser, OMI, explores our struggle with unbelief in Western culture. He proposes that this struggle is actually the struggle with contemplation; that we are all called to live in contemplation, an awareness of God.

His title comes from the atheist philosopher Nietzsche's book, *The Gay Science*, where a madman lights a lantern in broad daylight, runs into a marketplace, shouting: "I seek God!" The people laugh at him, and the madman shouts, "God is dead, I tell you, and we have killed him, you and I...." The suggestion is that unbelief has crept into the lives of those who claim to be "believers". God is "absent from the ordinary consciousness and lives of believers" because He is "not alive enough or important enough" to us.

Based on Jesus' Beatitude, "Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God", Rolheiser explores what the factors are that block our purity of heart. We are unable to "see God". He dissects a few of the many causes for the myopic and dulled existence that we so often live. He asserts that contemplation restores our God-given, childhood instinct for astonishment. This astonishment gives our lives a sense of gratitude, beauty, and peace.

This book is not a contemplation "how-to" book, but explores the factors that block contemplation. It challenges us to an awareness of our own contingency, our dependence on something outside of ourselves. *The Shattered Lantern* asserts that awareness of this contingency is the key to the happiness for which we all long. We are created to contemplate God. The challenge is to choose—even in the distractions of our lives—to cultivate an awareness of his presence.



### By the way... Who is Lanteri ?

Fr. Pio Bruno Lanteri (1759-1830) is the founder of the Oblates of the Virgin Mary. He worked in Turin for fifty years, seeking to guide people "to the truth in love", showing utmost goodness to all, trying to help everyone take responsibility for his or her

vocation with an authentic Christian spirit. He always pointed to fidelity to the Church and fidelity to Mary as the unflinching guiding lights along the path of the Christian life. Lanteri had a keen sense of the Mercy of God, and an ardent apostolic zeal. He believed that the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius were "a most efficacious means for making a person a saint, a great saint, and quickly."

## An experience of the 30-day retreat

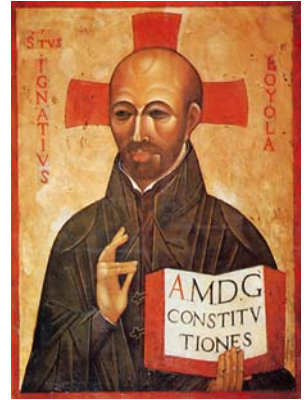
by Steve Fahrig, Oblate novice

During the first week of the Ignatian retreat, retreatants reflect on sin and disorder in their lives, and consider what obstacles they place in the way of a deeper relationship with the Lord. Using prayer and imagination, I found myself in a dead forest, where the trees bore no leaves and no grass grew on the ground. Directly in front of me was a huge stone wall covered in barbed wire. I climbed one of the trees and could see a beautiful castle in the distance. Light poured forth from this castle, and all the people living there were happy and content. Clearly this was the dwelling place of God. I wanted to be there, too, but from my vantage point in the tree I could see that my way was blocked not only by the stone wall and the barbed wire, but also by a deep moat filled with alligators and a column of heavily armored soldiers.

Faced with these enormous obstacles blocking my path to God, I wanted to give up, but then I realized that I could break through them if only I had the right tool. At first I asked my friends to help me, but they could not do so, and only then did I turn to God. Once I did that, He sent my friends back to me, who gave me the tools I needed to break through the barbed wire and to knock down the stone wall. I tried to cut through the wire and break down that wall alone, without asking help from the Lord, and my own efforts were useless. Then Jesus appeared to me, and helped me to work the tools, so that I was able to cut through the wire and tear down the wall. He then helped me to pacify the alligators in the moat, allowing me to cross over undisturbed, and finally gave me the courage to confront the soldiers guarding the castle, who allowed me to pass through and enter the Kingdom of God.

I learned an important lesson from this imaginative meditation—namely, that I often place obstacles between myself and Jesus, but more importantly, that He wants to help me to remove them. This was not the end, however. A few weeks later, as I was nearing the end of my retreat, I was concluding several days of meditation on the passion of

Jesus, and preparing to meditate on his resurrection. I came across an ancient homily on Jesus' descent into hell, which imaginatively pictured him appearing to Adam and Eve, summoning them to come with him to heaven. "I did not create you to be a prisoner in hell," Jesus told them. As I read these words, I could somehow feel that Jesus was saying them to me. As I went on to meditate on Jesus'



appearances after he rose from the dead, it occurred to me that Jesus came to set his friends free from something that had been imprisoning them and holding them back from recognizing him, whether it was Mary Magdalene's grief or Peter's remorse or Thomas' doubt. Suddenly I found myself returning to the scene of my earlier meditation on the obstacles, standing with Jesus on the grounds of the castle. I imagined him telling me to turn around and look at all the obstacles that he had helped me to break through, and as I did so, I could see that the obstacles - which represented my fear, anxiety, pride, and wayward passions - were not arranged around the castle, as if to keep me out, but rather, they were arranged around the forest, keeping me trapped inside and unable to approach God. Jesus had come to help me break down the barriers that were imprisoning me so that I could follow Him more closely.

I was given the tremendous grace to experience intimately who Jesus is for me - the One who loves me and gave His life so that I might be set free from all the things that distance me from Him. I always knew this on an intellectual level, but I experienced it very powerfully in my heart during my retreat.

## One Catechumen's Journey Into Spiritual Sight

by Jennifer Fairfield

As a child, my family would go to the local Presbyterian Church for worship. Even though the church was within walking distance from our house, we never quite seemed to make it there on a regular basis. We were mostly "Holiday Church-Goers." You know the ones, Christmas & Easter, and the occasional wedding or funeral. For the rest of the year, we lacked the spiritual guidance that is inspired in a house of worship. My parents read the Bible to my brother and me before bed and we would all occasionally pray. We were raised as Christians...but as non-baptized Christians.

As we all know, Christ works in mysterious ways. After growing up with preconceived notions about the Catholic

Church, I met a man who was known as a "Cradle Catholic" and whose faith was unshakable. (Believe me, I tried.) Slowly, I would attend mass with him and slowly, my arms would unfold. I found myself thinking about the liturgy later in the week. I asked questions and would think about the answers. I attended mass with him more regularly and eventually developed an open mind about Catholicism. After marrying the "Cradle Catholic" at Holy Ghost, I yearned for more spirituality. I desired to be baptized.

That's when the RCIA classes at Holy Ghost began. Week after week I would learn more about faith, from sacraments, to the life of prayer, to Christ's mercy and beyond.

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*This is the will of God, your  
holiness. (1 Thes 4:3)*

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## One Catechumen's Journey Into Spiritual Sight (continued)

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I was hearing prayers for the first time – actually listening to the words. It was a beautiful feeling to participate in the sacraments that were created to respect, love and honor Our Father and His Son. The RCIA teachers developed a caring atmosphere where truly no question was too simple or stupid. Because of that, I asked away and my knowledge and understanding grew.

As days went on, my husband and I would read the Bible and pray. I found that with each passing week, there was a little less of me and a little more of God. I have always felt very fortunate because my life has been full of love. I honestly thought my life was fulfilled. However, the feeling I have now, after completing RCIA, shows me the true feeling of fulfillment. There is a real purpose in my life now -- a Spirit who infuses me to be a better person.

After 7 months of classes, my baptism, confirmation and first communion took place on the Easter Vigil. That night I experienced an amazing and intimate moment with Christ. As my sins were forgiven; reverence, adoration and humility replaced them. I feel extremely blessed to have a relationship with Our Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. I look forward to Mass and formal prayer time. Sometimes, I find myself praying while doing daily tasks. The most important change in me is this: Christ is number one in my life. He inspires me throughout the day and I relish in knowing there is so much more to learn from Him. I am excited that our relationship will become deeper with every new day. Now with the Grace of God, I go out into the world as a proud Catholic with the Spirit of Christ dwelling within.

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## Upcoming Events...

**– Please call or e-mail us for more information**

**Apr 29-May 1** *Understanding the Movements Of Our Heart (Part 2—Rules for the Second Week)* with Fr. Tim  
**Sept 1—29** *Prayer of the Heart: An Introduction to Ignatian Spirituality* (Thursday evenings, 7-9, with Fr. Dan)  
**October 6** *Prayer Partnering Program* (Thursday evenings, 7-9) Our 2-year program for spiritual directors begins  
**Feb 17-19, 2006** Seminar with Fr. Timothy Gallagher exploring the spiritual themes of the *The Lord of the Rings*