

# AMA International



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Dear AMA's,

Well...the groundhog saw his shadow! So we are headed for six more weeks of winter here in frosty New England. But Spring is right around the corner. With the Spring comes Lent, which comes from the Anglo-Saxon word *lenten*, meaning springtime. Lent. What does it really mean in our lives? Lent is preparation for Easter. Easter is rising from the dead. What is there in me that is dead? Where do I need to let in life? Where am I stuck? Where do I need to enter the tomb trusting that the stone can be rolled back? Consider these questions as you prepare for Easter. God Bless and keep up the great work you are doing!

Beth

*"A candle loses nothing  
by lighting another  
candle."*

*Erin Majors*

**AMA Mission:** AMA is a lay community of persons whose life and mission are rooted in the love of Jesus Christ and His Church. Their lives are marked by bearing witness to:

- a community life characterized by a commitment to personal and communal growth, the values of a simple lifestyle, and the spirituality of the contemplative in action, and a spirit of trust;
- a prayer life deeply rooted in Jesus and Mary, the celebration of the Eucharist, and the celebration of prayer in community;
- a life in mission impelled by the faith to work for the Christian transformation of society, which comes from faith.



Ancient Celtic Prayer

God to enfold me,  
God to surround me,  
God in my speaking, God in my thinking.  
God in my sleeping, God in my waking,  
God in my watching,  
God in my hoping.  
God in my life, God in my lips,  
God in my soul, God in my heart.  
God in my suffering,  
God in my slumber,  
God in my ever-loving soul,  
God in my eternity.

**Mother Marie Eugenie: Love (Taken from Marie Eugenie Milleret by Helene-Marie Bories, R.A.)**

...Out of the four great rules of religious life in the western Church, Marie Eugenie chose the rule of Saint Augustine (to which were added the particular constitutions of the congregation) for the Assumption because it is centered on the single commandment of love. She said that it was necessary to speak often and virtually only about faith, hope, and charity, and very little of other virtues. The "Prologue" to Augustine's rule affirms this insight:

Before all else, love God and love your neighbor, for these are the first commandments given to us.

To love in community or elsewhere is to forgive, to lose one's life and not expect a return because God alone suffices. It is to find one's pleasure in service. Augustine concludes his rule with this prayer, which must have been Marie Eugenie's prayer for her Sisters as well:

The Lord grant that you may observe these rules out of charity, as lovers of spiritual beauty, discharging the fragrance of Christ from the holiness of your lives, not as slaves under the law but as free persons under grace.

**"MAY THE GREATEST OF ALL DIVINE ATTRIBUTES,  
THAT OF...UNFATHOMABLE MERCY, PASS THROUGH  
MY HEART AND SOUL TO MY NEIGHBOR."**

St. Maria Faustina Kowalska



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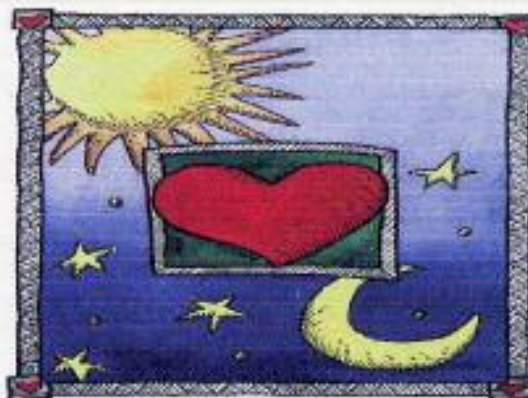
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**KEEP IN TOUCH.....**



## **A Moment in the Life of a Volunteer**

Thank you to everyone for sharing how you each uniquely spent Christmas this year! **I will share a bit of Laura's experience...you can almost picture her in the conga line!**

From Laura: "I was blessed to spend Christmas in unique ways this year. On December 24th, l'Abej hosted a traditional "reveillon" Christmas Eve party for all the residents who had nowhere else to spend Christmas. We shared a very international meal, as many of the residents prepared dishes from their homelands. (I made real American Christmas cookies!) We sang songs, played some games, danced and were even graced by a visit from Pere Noel who gave presents to all the children. The party lasted until 3AM--The French really know how to celebrate!--and although it was exhausting, it was worth all the hard work to see the joy on people's faces as they shared a special night together. After only a few hours of sleep, I was up for Christmas Mass at the parish and then a wonderful holiday meal at the Sisters' house! They had gathered a nice group of friends and parishoners, and we shared good food as well as interesting conversations among another diverse and international group. Finally, the night of the 25th was spent with the whole gang at l'Isba. Everyone was dressed up for the holiday and we even finished the meal by dancing a joyous line all about the house! I love those spontaneous expressions of joy that some of the l'Arche residents give so freely. All in all, it was a holiday season unlike any other, but I felt the wonder and blessings of Christ's birth in a whole new way."

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***"Walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in everyone." George Fox***

Everyday Simplicity Robert J. Wicks

(This excerpt was taken from the book *Everyday Simplicity: A Practical Guide to Spiritual Growth*)

## **Openess**

Loneliness and alienation are cogent reminders of how fragile and valuable life is. While our natural response to such experiences is to close ourselves in a defensive posture, there is also a way in which these experiences can open us up. This happens when we begin to acknowledge and welcome God in a humble way. At times of crisis we know how much we take for granted, how precious life is, and how easily we can be set off the course we think is so permanent. When we feel our heart is breaking or the energy for life is slowly draining away from us, if we can see beyond the feelings of loss and alienation, if we can be open to hope, we may experience a softening of our soul. We may actually notice "the gestures of God who reaches out to us". While our pain will not be less, it will not be without meaning.

While we sometimes notice these gestures or gifts suddenly, more often the search requires daily discipline. Without this discipline, we may miss the possibility amidst the quiet suffering. We can take part in the dynamics of hope if we can make a covenant with the living God to stay awake.

So often we sleep through life. If we only snap out of our complacency when struck by a loss or confronted by the fragility of life, any talk about spiritual life will be magical. There is no magic, though. Yet, when we do remain awake, we can sense the gestures of God. Sometimes we can even be awestruck.

**"  
Silver and gold I  
have not but what  
I have, I give to  
you."  
Acts 3:6**

