

<p><i>Gifts of Grace Ministry</i> <i>January/February Newsletter</i></p>
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Greetings Friends and Saints,

Happy New Year; I hope this will be a good year for you. I know this is going to be a great year for Gifts of Grace because it has started out so well. I'm happy to announce that, on this past Sunday, I did my first book presentation in a Catholic Church. This was a small, independent Catholic community, *Mary Magdalene*, run by my former priest from Spiritus Christi, Rev. Denise Donato. Reverend Denise was the second woman in our parish to be ordained. I had the privilege to be there for it. Several years ago she left our church to start her own in another town outside Rochester, NY. The talk at Mary Magdalene was well received and the parish bought a box of books for their members!

Upcoming Events

I'm also excited about several other upcoming events in February. I will be presenting at my first book club. *Inspiritual*, a non-profit group chose to read *The Communion of Saints* for their monthly spiritual book club. Not only will I be doing an in-person presentation, but also a Skype event. This is a world-wide book club in which people can participate via Skype. Here is the info:

**February Spiritual Book Club: Featuring Mary Grace, author of:
The Communion of Saints, Talking to God and Grandma
Thursday, February 14, 6:30-8:30
@ Inspiritual, 25 Bernie Lane, Rochester**

**Also, Thursday, February 20
7:00 – 9:00 pm
Join the conversation with Mary Grace on Skype
Limited to first 9 people who RSVP to:
inspiritual@ymail.com**

Also in February, I will be doing my first Barnes & Noble book presentation. Although the book is not available for sale there, they have a community room that many meet-up groups use. *Lightworks* is the name of a local metaphysical group sponsoring the event.

Book Signing & Presentation
The Communion of Saints, Talking to God & Grandma
By Mary Grace
Wednesday, February 19
Barnes & Noble
Park Point, RIT, Jefferson Road, Rochester
7:00 – 9:00pm, Upstairs Conference Room
\$5.00 donation to Lightworks.

Marketing

Being a first time author, and having my own non-profit organization, I thought that I would share my growing pains with you. I am technologically challenged, which is the first handicap I need to work on. This only makes it more difficult when it comes to marketing my book and workshops. Marketing is a whole new ball game from writing and publishing.

Although I want to do all that I possibly can to get the message of our book out to the world, at the end of the day I have to remind myself, “I’m retired.” Gifts of Grace is my hobby, at the same time it is my soul mission in life. I was given a second chance at life and I want to do all I can to make God proud of me. But, I am reminded that I need to keep things in perspective; don’t take life too seriously. After all, this is only a temporary position. I need to keep it fun.

These past eight months, since our book was published, has indeed been great fun. I had the opportunity to meet so many wonderful people. I was thrilled with being able to travel, which meant that I got out of my home town of Hemlock, NY. I am blessed to live in one of the most beautiful places on earth; it is my slice of heaven. But, prior to the book coming out, I spent more time talking with animals and “dead” people than with living human beings. My life on a 6,600 acre state forest is wonderful, but also isolating. Getting out into the big world to promote our book and do presentations is a dream come true.

Some of the places I traveled to last year was Cape Cod, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Gettysburg, PA, Fairfax, Virginia, Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, Lily Dale, NY and Maryland. I also did many talks and workshops near home in the Western, NY area. I literally met hundreds of people. For this reason, I want to give back to all of you who have supported me on this amazing journey. One way I can do this is by sharing a bit of myself through newsletters.

By the way, I need to clarify something. I often refer to the book I wrote as “our” book and not “my” book. This is because it really took the communion of saints to write it and

to get it published (it took four years to publish). Hundreds of angels, both in heaven and on earth helped to make the book a reality. It truly was a team effort and therefore, is “our book.” As part of the communion of saints, it is also your book. I am counting on you to help spread the message, we are all saints, we are all one, and everything is going to be all right.

The Social Media Dilemma

Now that our book is published, I am starting on a whole new adventure in which I know very little about, “marketing.” I have taken some webinar classes to learn more about it and the vast amount of information is overwhelming. And when it comes to marketing via the internet and social media, I go tilt.

Furthermore, I do consider myself pretty much a loner, which has made my shy away from social media. The pressure to join Facebook, from so many friends who are willing to help with marketing, made me disheartened. I can barely keep up with my two e-mail addresses (personal and business). In addition, I do not check my e-mail every day.

When the warmer weather hits, I spend as much time outdoors as possible; I may only check e-mail once or twice a week. I would much rather be taking a walk to the nearby lake and spending time in prayer and meditation, than on the computer. For me, social media would simply take time away that would be better spent with God.

One day in December, I got overwhelmed with all I thought I needed to do, including Facebook. On top of that, I had a stomach issue and didn’t even want to get off the couch. Finally, I threw my hands in the air and said, “This is too much for me God. I give it all to you and the saints to deal with!” In other words, I let go and let God.

I trusted in God and the saints to get our book written and published. Why did I not trust that the same method would work to publicize the book? So I continue to meditate and pray every morning and every night to the higher powers. In the end, my guidance led me to make the conscience decision not to join Facebook, yet.

This does not mean that I have anything against Facebook; I just don’t have the time. If, on the other hand, you would like to promote our book or presentations on Facebook, twitter, or anywhere else, Go for it! I love the fact that some of my readers and students already have. For that I am truly grateful. I admire tekkies (geeks) and wish I had one of my own. Maybe someday I will be able to hire someone to help me out with social media (by the way, I am on LinkedIn). Whether it’s writing, publishing or marketing, it takes a village.

E-Mail List / Newsletter / Website

My priority right now is building my e-mail list and keeping in touch with my readers and students via a nice, professional looking newsletter. I am now exploring different ways to do this. I have signed up for something called Mail Chimp. I needed a way to keep my e-mail list separate from my cell phone. I did not realize when I created the group list in Outlook that you all would show up on my phone! So a friend suggested Mail Chimp. If this is something you are familiar with, please let me know, I could use some help.

Once I get my e-mail list with a server, and have a nice newsletter to send you, I will be updating my website. I am looking for endorsements for the book and/or workshops to put on the website. If you would like to participate, please write a two or three sentence blurb with your name and town in which you live. I do not have to use last names, but it makes the endorsement more credible. Just e-mail it to me and, when I collect a few, I will post them.

Advice Column: Writing a Book?

Several people have come to me looking for advice on how to write or publish a book. I do have a bit of knowledge on the subject, but there is so much more I don't know. That is why I thought I would share my journey with you. I am still very much a newbie to this whole book world; it will be interesting to see where it goes. However, if you are writing a book, I do have some suggestions:

Just write from your heart and get your story out on paper. Do not worry about the details, such as grammar, punctuation, or even getting it published. Just write!

Once you finish a draft, you can work on the nuts and bolts of writing. I used *The Idiot's Guide to Writing Well* and the *Idiot's guide to Grammar and Style*. There is also something called *A Writer's Reference*; this is a must have for your library. It is a reference book for writing style, as well as punctuation and grammar. If you are looking for a publisher or an agent, the bible for this is called *Jeff Herman's Guide to Book Publishers, Editors, & Literary Agents*. This book also shows you how to write a proposal. In addition I bought a book specifically on proposals for non-fiction books; there is another one for fiction. You may also want to check out the *Idiot's Guide to Getting Published*. I hope this helps.

Closing

Thanks for reading all my ramblings. I hope to have a real newsletter format for next time. For now, I thought it more important just to get the letter and information out to my loyal readers and students. One of my mottos is "baby steps." Whatever your goal is in

life, try to do just a little each day to make that dream come true. I'm still working on my dream of having our book in many languages and in many countries. I also dream of teaching in some of those places. Thank you for joining me on the journey. I appreciate any feedback or advice you have for me. Take care and may the saints be with you.

Love,
Mary Grace

<http://www.giftsofgraceministry.org/>

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