

## News to Note

- Abbot John Klassen, OSB has named Br. Luigi Bertocchi, OSB, as spiritual liaison for the Institute. Fr. Kilian McDonnell remains as President, and Br. Wilfred Theisen remains as program liaison.
- Discussions continue with Cuninghams Architects regarding the building of the new Pavilion. We hope to have it completed and ready for use by next summer.
- Over 120 workshop, retreat, seminar, and consultation participants experienced the Collegeville Institute throughout summer 2010.
- A few comments from summer 2010 writing workshop evaluations:

*This place is magical. It is, hands-down, my favorite place to write.*

*I feel part of a writers' community in a way that I never have before.*

*The hospitality was absolutely OUTSTANDING-A+, A+- and I never give that grade. I took lessons to take back to my staff.*

*I want to come back!*

INSIDE  
THE

# COLLEGEVILLE INSTITUTE

FOR ECUMENICAL & CULTURAL RESEARCH



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## Meet *Believing in Writing* summer workshop participant, Shahnaz Habib

From a geographical standpoint, one must cross several countries and an ocean to travel between India and the United States. Culturally-speaking, the passage is even wider. From a religious perspective, the countries are worlds apart.

All of which makes Shahnaz' discovery of the book last summer in southern India even more surprising.

Feeling restless about the visa problem that kept her in India one month longer than originally planned, Shahnaz aimlessly wandered into a make-shift bookstore. Without knowing author Kathleen Norris' name, she picked-up and subsequently read *The Cloister Walk* which chronicles Kathleen's time of residency at the Collegeville Institute and Saint John's Abbey.

Shahnaz recalls that the book relaxed her. She began to experience the extra month in India as retreat, rather than as interruption. She began to treasure the extra time with family. She began to accept the notion that faith *and* doubt can be held in equal measure. And she began to wonder about the Benedictine, religious, educational community described in Kathleen's book—a place

that captivated her because it opened its doors to lay writers.

As a faithful woman fascinated by words, Shahnaz applied, and was accepted, to the Collegeville Institute's *Believing in Writing*

workshop, a program designed for writers who explore religious themes in their work. While attending the welcome dinner the first evening, she perused the Institute's bookshelves. She noticed a book she now recognized.

Quickly, the revelation set in.

Almost exactly one year after wondering about the Benedictine place that encourages lay people (and others) to write about religion, she realized she was here. ***This*** place was ***the*** place described in *The Cloister Walk*!

Shahnaz, delighted that she would now experience in full color what she had only previously read about in black and white, exclaimed, "now, this is coincidence coming to the foreground!"



The staff completed three major projects during the summer months: the lakeside brush was cleared away, most apartment appliances were updated, and all the living room furniture was replaced. The original Breuer sofas previously used in the apartments will be moved to Jonah House, the new space for the scholars' studies.



## Collegeville Institute Seminar on Vocation and the Professions

This summer the *Collegeville Institute Seminar on Vocation and the Professions* completed the first year of its grant project by hosting several meetings of scholars and ministers whose work intersects with the question of vocation and the professions.



The groups included theologians, pastors, ministers and researchers of young adults, educators, and scholars. The project also hosted a weeklong consultation with eight members of the Collegeville Institute board, entitled "Illuminating Vocation."

Drawing on the Institute's first-person method, each meeting began by sharing stories of call. These stories confirmed the working definition of vocation that emerged from the Seminar's first year of research. Vocation is a call from God that is relational and dialogical; relates to the whole of life, and is not restricted to a single type of work or way of life; is a dynamic reality; involves service and self-giving within the context of community; and is both general and specific, as it refers to the general calling of Christians to follow Christ as well as specific callings to particular work, relationships, and professions.

Several themes emerged across the conversations. One is the evolving nature of vocation through the lifespan, from childhood and youth through mid-life and old age. One unexpected insight on vocation is the extent to which retirement heightens a sense of call. Another important theme is the multiplicity of callings people experience as they embrace vocations to work, marriage, and family.

To engage participants on the question of vocation and the professions, we discussed a widely-used definition of a professional: *someone who professes a body of knowledge, engages in skillful, competent practice, on behalf of others, in the setting of colleagues, for the purposes of serving the common good.* For many participants, this was a new way of thinking about professions, and it was easy to see how the Christian understanding of vocation connects to the profession's commitment to service for the common good. One Institute board member, a highly successful researcher and manager, admitted that he had never thought of his work as a vocation until our conversation this summer.

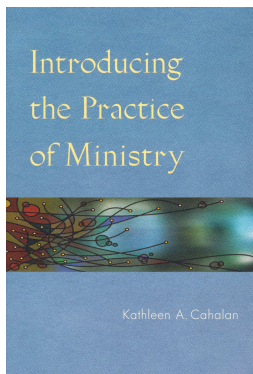
Participants shared ideas of how congregations can help professionals to think theologically, ethically, and spiritually about their work as a calling. But many bemoaned the fact that there are few resources available today to explore a multi-faceted understanding of vocation or to connect vocation to professions in creative ways.

Overall the meetings generated excitement around the questions of vocation and the professions. Participants shared a sense of urgency about vocation's centrality for today's Christians. As one of the pastors noted, rediscovering the importance of vocation could become the next reformation of the church.



## The Book Nook

Recently released from Liturgical Press (2010), Collegeville Institute Seminar Grant Director **Kathleen Cahalan's** newest book, *Introducing the Practice of Ministry*, is an ideal companion for those discerning a call. The book explores several questions, such as: What do ministers do that is unique to ministry? Why is there ministry in the Church? Is ministry a distinctive vocation and practice to which some are called?



**Krista Tippett's** (Summer 1995) new book, *Einstein's God: Conversations About Science and the Human Spirit*, (Penguin, 2010) features a set of interviews from her public radio program *Speaking of Faith* about the spiritual life as it relates to biology, ecology, medicine, physics, and the arts. Krista's book, a New York Times bestseller, is one of The Huffington Post's Top 20 recommended summer reads.

