

Reflection by Anne Lee from the Women's Overnight  
February 11, 2023

The world is too much with us ...

William Wordsworth's poem all too often describes my life. I am always busy. I teach writing classes in St. Bonaventure's Jandoli School of Communication. I edit student work for the online TAPinto Greater Olean hyperlocal news site. I regularly drive no less than two hours -- and sometimes six -- to visit family and friends.

On the second weekend of February, I literally took a break from it all and enjoyed an overnight winter retreat for women at The Mountain. Two friends from my college years (both regulars at The Mountain) invited me. One I had roomed with at Bona's, and at The Mountain we shared a bedroom, just the two of us, for the first time since 1974.

She and I talked, and we walked -- alone with each other and together with the other 13 women also on retreat. The sun shone on both days, and it was not too cold. Our daytime walks were strenuous yet peaceful. The Saturday night walk uphill (and later, downhill) to the Chapel scared me. I had a hard time seeing in the dark as we walked single file, many (but not me) holding flashlights, lanterns or phones.

During the scheduled conversations, the potluck meals and informal chats, I realized I certainly was not the only person who felt the world too much with us. And I found myself getting to a more comfortable place.

Those 24 hours truly were a gift.

- Anne Lee, professor at St. Bonaventure University

