



Jesuit Retreat House
4800 Fahrnwald Road
Oshkosh, WI 54902

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The Jesuit Retreat House in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, fosters spiritual enrichment rooted in the Gospels, the Catholic tradition and the spirituality of St. Ignatius of Loyola. Our ministry is dedicated to creating a rich variety of retreat experiences and providing an atmosphere of quiet, peace and prayer in which men and women of all faiths are encouraged to discover and respond generously to God's personal invitation to wholeness and holiness.

www.JesuitRetreatHouse.org

Home Away From Home

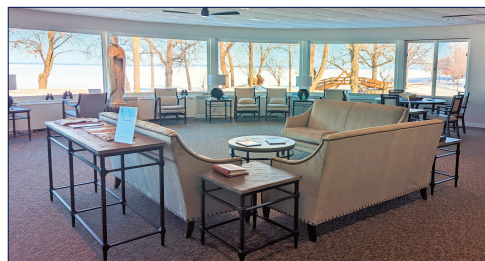
A special aspect of the Jesuit Retreat House is its hominess. One retreatant wrote to us about "this very special place, a home away from home." Another commented that JRH is "a beautiful retreat center where so many things are done to make us feel at home and invited to prayer." And all would agree that "the meals are superb—healthy and nutritious. Good home cooking!"

A few years ago, in its annual Life at Home Report, IKEA, the popular homewares and assembly-required furniture store, pointed to five common elements that make a home feel like home: privacy, comfort, ownership, security, and belonging.

Many of us regard JRH as a home, a "second home," a "spiritual home." We enjoy privacy—having individual rooms with bathrooms and beautiful lakeside property reserved for retreatants. We have comfortable places to rest, read, pray, and gather ranging from the newly redecorated Loyola lounge to the fireplace lounges, LaStorta conference room, St. Ignatius chapel, and Annunciation chapel. Because of attending retreats for many years, forming

relationships with fellow retreatants and staff, and supporting JRH financially or by volunteering we feel a sense of belonging and ownership. We also feel secure.

To that last point, in January 2023 JRH began keeping its exterior doors locked during retreats. This is another step JRH is taking to follow the recommendations the county sheriff made in a security assessment of the retreat house. It also responds to comments we have received, like the follow one, brief and to the point: "Doors should lock earlier—we have keys." Because retreatants already have key cards that gives them access, not only to their bedrooms, but to primary exterior doors, this change should be at most a minor inconvenience and make JRH feel even homier.



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Community, Friendship, & Neighbors

I always enjoy observing the community that is part of each weekend retreat. Often people who belong to the same parish or city attend a retreat together. Sometimes weekends include friends or family making a retreat at the same time. The roster of the first retreat of this calendar year had several members from an extended family! Other times retreatants know each other from their workplace. On our 12-Step retreats it's common for some retreatants to know each other from a recovery group or to be on retreat with their sponsor. Even with these relationships that already exist, each weekend retreat seems to form its own community. Retreat coordinators are often the caretakers of, and sometimes caregivers in, these communities. New retreatants feel welcomed almost immediately. Veteran retreatants are happy to reconnect on an annual basis, even if the connection is mostly in the graced silence of a retreat. The silence, I believe, helps foster community.

As a symbol of world-wide community and friendship, last December the retreat house welcomed the Peace Light, a flame originating in the grotto marking Jesus' birthplace in Bethlehem. Many of those who came to see the flame were visiting the retreat house for the first time. The light that continues to shine from Christ's birth is a wonderful place to make new friends and nurture old friendships.

This month the Jesuit Retreat House begins its Lakeside Speaker Series. These evenings are ways to foster new relationships within the local community, to hear new voices, open ourselves to new perspectives, and grow spiritually. The evenings are open to the public. Future speakers are scheduled for March 8 (two Jesuit novices speaking about their vocations and formation experiences) and May 10 (a local pastor speaking on the issue of food justice). Information on these lakeside chats is posted on www.jesuitretreathouse.org.

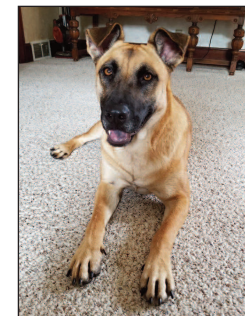
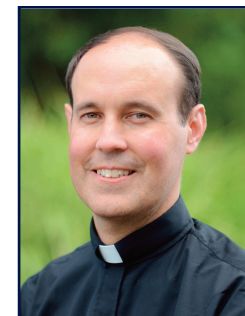
Another new outreach to the local community is the Jesuit Retreat House's recent partnering with the Diocese of Green Bay's *The Compass* newspaper to offer complementary retreats to those the newspaper recognizes in its "Your Catholic Neighbor" column. This column spotlights individuals who, in living their faith, contribute to the well-being of their communities. JRH is proud to invite these neighbors to its holy grounds.

Finally, for the past few months, I have enjoyed the company of a new neighbor most days. In late October, Sue Philipp, our business manager, started bringing her dog Livvy to work. Livvy, a german shepherd mix—who spends most of her time behind the scenes in the office area—has become an integral part of our retreat house team and truly lives up to dogs' reputation of being "man's best friend." Not only has she become a good friend to the staff here, but she made a new friend with our facilities manager Chuck Linde's yellow lab Gordo.

Ultimately, our communities and friendships are most enriched by rootedness in Christ. The Jesuit Retreat House's regular retreat programming provides a wonderful opportunity for men and women of all faiths to grow in their relationship with Christ through the Spiritual Exercises and to do this together as a people of God.

In Our Lord

Mark A. Carr, S.J.
Fr. Mark Carr, S.J.

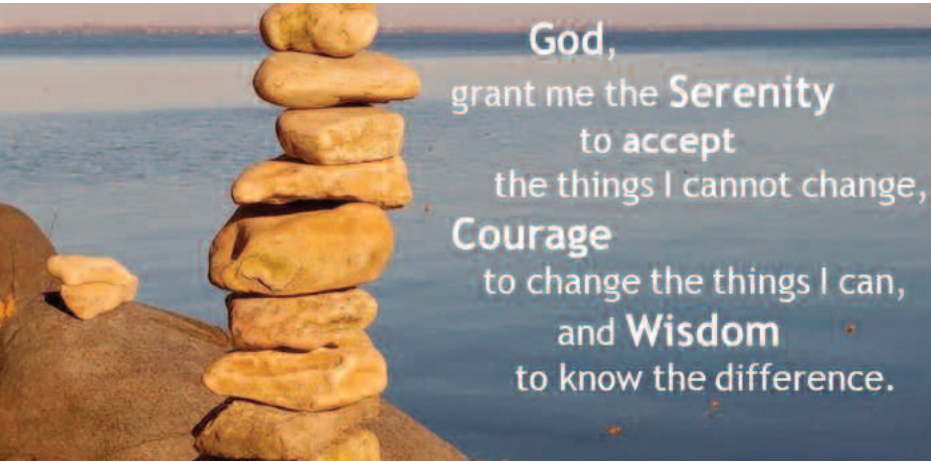


12-Stepping

Each year the Jesuit Retreat House offers six 12-Step retreats. Unlike other retreats at JRH, these retreats are not explicitly based on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola, but on the 12-Steps of recovery. However, given that Alcoholics Anonymous co-founder Bill Wilson had Fr. Ed Dowling, S.J., as his spiritual director, 12-Step spirituality and the Exercises share many similarities. Even if a director that preaches a 12-Step retreat does not mention or emphasize these shared qualities, a 12-Step retreat is always flavored by Ignatius’ Exercises.

Like all JRH weekend retreats, 12-Step retreats include eight conference talks, daily Mass, a healing service, and opportunities to meet with a spiritual director. Often JRH invites one or two additional spiritual directors who are experienced in the 12-Steps to be present and available to meet with retreatants. Candace B. is a regular guest spiritual director at JRH. She sees this ministry as part of fulfilling an obligation she made long ago when she began her own 12-Steps, an obligation of living in a spiritual way based on action that comes from love. “This ministry”, she says, “broadens my life by working with people who are also trying to follow a path of recovery and abstinence. It’s another way of me being of service to my fellow sufferers and the larger community. It helps my own recovery immensely.”

Unlike JRH’s standard weekend retreat, 12-Step retreats include time on Friday evening for a closed meeting open to those already actively participating in a 12-Step group. Often the closed meeting breaks apart into smaller meeting groups based on retreatants’ involvement in Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), Al-Anon (family and friends of alcoholics), and those in other recovery programs such as overeaters anonymous (OA) and narcotics anonymous (NA). Then, on Saturday evening, 12-Step retreats have a large group sharing session where retreatants can name aloud graces and insights received during the weekend, share progress they have made



in recent months, and express gratitude, or simply pass. One of the 12-Step retreat coordinators, Glenn J., said that at the sharing sessions, “I just say what’s in my heart and what’s going on.” The sessions, he says, “let everybody share what they’re feeling on retreat. Like a 12-Step meeting, people get to say what’s going on in their life, good or bad, God-related or life-related. For some, it’s a way to release tensions that have bottled up over the past months.”

JRH also shows its commitment to those journeying along the 12-Steps by maintaining a small 12-Step library in lower-level Loyola and by having a special 12-Step/Recovery Fund. This new fund combines, replaces, and formalizes two former collections named for early promoters of JRH’s 12-Step retreats, Harry Belvoir and Tina Heder. JRH continues to honor Harry’s and Tina’s devoted to 12-Step retreats with this new fund allowing JRH to potentially expand its ministry to those in recovery.

Contributions to the temporarily restricted 12-Step/Recovery Fund, support all 12-Step/recovery/addiction programs held at or sponsored by JRH and people in recovery/addiction programs participating in other JRH programs. Primarily, the fund helps ensure the continuance of the retreat house’s current retreat offering model that welcomes those who are unable to pay the actual cost of a retreat.

room. The Manresa conference room remains the one unfinished area of the Manresa building. It has always been envisioned as a multi-purpose space. Going forward we hope that the room will be used by retreatants who walk its labyrinth (the labyrinth was added in 2017) and who simply need a quiet nook to read or reflect, as a meeting space for small groups, and a space where additional programming can be offered.

Completion of the Manresa conference room includes a new ceiling, integrating attractive elements of the ceiling in the Annunciation chapel, adjustable lighting, interchangeable

Lenten Poetry

Two powerful and popular images of the Jesuit Retreat House are the resilient tree along the lakeshore and the corpus (the sculpture of Jesus’ crucified body) hanging on the brick wall of St. Ignatius Chapel. As we prepare to enter the Lenten season, consider each of these images and yourself. Three poems composed by retreatants reflect on these images and our own journeys.

Like the image of the old tree at the tip of Farney Point, we enter the Lenten season fasting, setting aside bad habits, hollowing ourselves out, and opening ourselves, creating space for Christ, his way, and his life within us. The following poem is by retreatant M.C.

Resilience

A mighty oak, once tall, on the shore
standing sentinel
Battered, not broken
Hollowed out, clinging to life
Nothing to hide, no secrets
Diminished, yet majestic, in a new way
Alive, surviving, continuing the journey
Choosing life, not death
Can I do this?

Throughout not only Lent, but all of life, we seek to dwell with God. That place is one of light, but journeying there—like Jesus’ own journey—takes courage, perseverance, self-sacrifice, and suffering. Enjoy retreatant J.A.R.’s acrostic poem, “Endure Eternally.”

On Palm Sunday and again on Good Friday, the Passion narrative is read during the liturgy. Whether we take the stance of Judas who betrayed Jesus, the crowd who cried out “crucify him!” or the disciple John and Jesus’ mother Mary standing at the foot of the cross, K.Z.’s poem leaves us with a question to ponder.

Riveted

Entering the chapel,
My eyes are immediately riveted to the corpus hanging there
Literally riveted to the brick wall
Depicting Christ nailed to the cross.
His emaciated body, contorted into a grotesque shape
by the pull of gravity.
His head hung low in death
With the crown of thorns thrust upon it.
Oh, Jesus, what have we done to you?



*Everlasting synapse gives
New light and courage to die and
Dwell on the self-sacrifices that
Urge my selfishness to quietly
Recede and be replaced by
Every energy needed in cross-carrying.*



Annual Appeal Updates

The final project of last year’s Annual Appeal neared its finish line in mid-January with the delivery of new furniture for the Loyola lounge. (See the photo on p. 4) We continue to patiently wait for a few remaining pieces. The furniture complements the new carpeting, lighting, and ceiling fans installed a year ago, and a new snack bar and new wall finishes done two years ago.

As of February 1, JRH has received \$65,220 towards its Annual Appeal goal of \$130,000. This year’s Annual Appeal focuses mostly on the completion of the Manresa conference

furniture to allow a variety of layouts, wall-mounted screens, audio and hearing loop systems, and a camera to link to virtual meeting participants. Of special note, a completed Manresa conference room would also serve as a temporary chapel when JRH moves forward with a proposed renovation of the St. Ignatius Chapel in 2024 or 2025.

If you have not given to this year’s Annual Appeal, please do so. Donations exceeding our goal will be directed to our Ministry Support Fund and help keep retreats affordable and accessible.



Contributions can be made online by clicking the Donate button at www.jesuitretreathouse.org or by mail.