



**Jesuit Retreat House**  
4800 Fahrnwald Road  
Oshkosh, WI 54902

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## Reflections Newsletter

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[www.JesuitRetreatHouse.org](http://www.JesuitRetreatHouse.org)



*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.*

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## Within Your Wounds

During the penitential season of Lent we prepare ourselves for the celebration of Christ's resurrection on Easter. We do this in part through acts of penance. The Church and scripture call us especially to prayer, fasting, and almsgiving (Tobit 12:8).

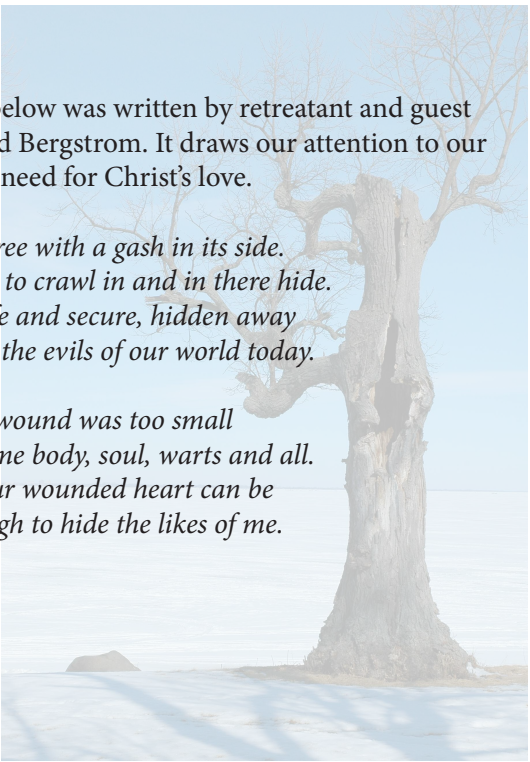
Preparing ourselves to celebrate the Easter Triduum, the holiest days of the liturgical year, also involves taking stock of our lives, identifying those places needing change, and embracing a path of conversion. For this reason, many people make a special effort to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Lent. Through these practices we seek to bring ourselves closer to Christ.

In the person of Jesus Christ, who revealed his love most fully in his sacrifice on the Cross, we are both comforted and find the grace to live as disciples. As the traditional *Anima Christi* prayer says, "Within your wounds hide me. Permit me not to be separated from you. From the wicked foe, defend me."

The poem below was written by retreatant and guest director, David Bergstrom. It draws our attention to our lowliness and need for Christ's love.

*I saw a tree with a gash in its side.  
I wanted to crawl in and in there hide.  
To be safe and secure, hidden away  
From all the evils of our world today.*

*But this wound was too small  
To hold me body, soul, warts and all.  
Only Your wounded heart can be  
Big enough to hide the likes of me.*



## What's New?

It is always a pleasure to welcome new faces to JRH. This winter, for the first time, we hosted first-year seminarians from St. Francis de Sales Seminary for a retreat just before Christmas. In January, some of our new retreatants included sons of veteran retreatants and the father of one retreatant. This reminds us that sharing retreat experiences with family members can be passed down from generation to generation and passed up through generations. Sometimes new faces are not always that new, but just ones we have not seen in a while. One retreatant this winter told us, "I've been away for a few years but the retreat was better than any I remember as far as content, knowledge, and inspiration." I hope that all retreatants follow his further sentiment, "I only pray that I can keep the grace of this time with me through the year." Welcoming new and old friends to JRH is part of our hospitality.



Other new faces at JRH include staff. Our new cook, Ann Cerney, who had been out recovering from knee surgery since early November, returned to JRH in late January. Her first weekend back happened to be a weekend that Jeff Martin needed time off. Having a staff with three cooks—including Sean Gelhar—keeps guests well fed.

With Deacon John Ingala's retirement in December, Sue Philipp has been helping process donations and Sr. Susan has ensured that our Monday Moments continue to be sent each week. We hope to hire new people in our advancement office this winter (positions are posted on JRH's website under the ABOUT US tab).

We are grateful to all those who give to JRH, whether as a regular benefactor or as a new donor. These contributions help maintain and improve our facility and keep it looking like new. That is greatly appreciated by the many people who regard the retreat house as a second home. Donations also help ensure that our ministry continues for many years to come. The retreat house's St. Alphonsus Rodriguez, SJ, Endowment, which aims at ensuring a stable future for JRH, passed the \$100,000 milestone in late December.

Many of the winter and spring weekend retreats still have openings. Summer directed retreats are about two-thirds full. Additionally, we are already taking reservations from guests interested in staying at JRH during the EAA AirVenture this summer. Register soon if you are considering attending any of these events. Please also invite others to make a retreat at JRH. We are always eager to welcome new folks and introduce them to the Spiritual Exercises.

May God's grace be with you throughout this year!

*Mark A. Carr, S.J.*

Fr. Mark Carr, S.J.  
Executive Director



## Nurturing Vocations

In late December, JRH welcomed two groups of men preparing for the priesthood and religious life: Jesuit novices and diocesan seminarians. Both groups made pre-Christmas retreats, or Christmas triduum (a period of three days of prayer usually preceding a major Roman Catholic feast).

The Jesuit novices from the Midwest Province began making their Christmas triduum at JRH in 2018. This past Advent, nine first year novices and four second year novices traveled from their novitiate in St. Paul, MN to the shores of Lake Winnebago for retreat. During their two-year novitiate, these men learn how to pray and live in community, and then study the history and spirituality of the Society of Jesus. They also do apostolic work and make the 30-day Spiritual Exercises. At the end of their novitiate experience, these men may ask to take vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience as Jesuits. Currently, three novices plan to become Jesuit brothers and eleven intend to pursue the priesthood.

At the same time, ten first-year seminarians in their propaedeutic year at St. Francis de Sales Seminary in Milwaukee made a retreat at JRH. This propaedeutic or preparatory stage is largely a time of discernment, prayer, fraternity, and light studies for men who feel called to the priesthood, before they enter the rigorous studies of seminary formation. Because the seminary serves multiple dioceses, these men are studying not only for the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, but also for the Dioceses of Gary, Rockford, and Superior.

Each group's guided retreat consisted of two preached conferences each day and individual meetings with a spiritual director. Fr. Mitch Pacwa, SJ, biblical scholar and EWTN host, preached the conferences to the Jesuit novices in the La Storta conference room. He offered the novices a new perspective on Advent through the Maronite Church's



Jesuits Fr. Rob Kroll, Fr. Mitch Pacwa,  
& Fr. Bill O'Brien (novice director)

six-week season of Announcement preceding Christmas. Fr. Rob Kroll, SJ, director of spiritual formation at St. Francis de Sales Seminary, preached the conferences to the seminarians in the new Manresa conference room. He presented a traditional abbreviated version of St. Ignatius' Spiritual Exercises. Novitiate staff and seminary formators provided individual spiritual direction to the men.

The two groups celebrated Mass in either the main St. Ignatius chapel (novices) or the Annunciation chapel (seminarians). The groups came together for meals, morning prayer, evening prayer, and a daily holy hour with night prayer. Of course, the men passed each other in the hallways and on walks outside, shared the exercise room, and enjoyed the fireplaces in the Manresa lounges together.

During their days of retreat, the novices and seminarians were not only entering more deeply into the Advent season and its preparation for Christmas, but also nurturing their vocations. As Pope Francis reminds us, "Vocations are born in prayer, and only in prayer can they persevere and bear fruit."



A Winnebago iceberg during ice-out in spring 2021. Because of this year's mild winter, Lake Winnebago did not freeze over until January 10.

## Deacon John Retires

For almost 13 years, Deacon John Ingala led the Jesuit Retreat House's development and marketing efforts. Most notable during that time was his guiding of a successful capital campaign that blessed JRH with the Manresa guest wing. "Deacon John enjoyed being at JRH and was deeply committed to it," says Fr. John Schwantes, SJ. "He put together an excellent case statement for the new addition and was a great help getting the capital campaign under way."



In mid-December, Deacon John decided to step away from his role at JRH, in order to focus more on his ministry as deacon.

When Deacon John moved on from JRH, he left a place that loves him and that he loves. "Deacon John provided a steadiness to JRH, fellow staff, and donors thanks to his pastoral skill, professionalism, and knowledge of the local community," says Fr. Chris Manahan, SJ, who also recalls Deacon John helping him with his transition to JRH in 2014. JRH will continue to hold a dear place in his heart. All those associated with JRH miss his presence and ministry at the retreat house. We will always be grateful for his good stewardship at JRH, and the care and concern he showed our guests.

## Annual Appeal Update

As of this newsletter going to print, JRH is 85 percent towards reaching its 2024 Annual Appeal goal of \$125,000. We anticipate needing to raise that same amount annually for the next few years to address various capital needs and upgrades that contribute to a well-maintained infrastructure and beautiful campus for our retreat ministry. Thanks to all those who have generously donated to this year's appeal. If you have not yet given to this year's Annual Appeal, please consider making a gift today.

Thanks to last year's Annual Appeal, the Manresa conference room was finished. The room is now bright, inviting, and equipped with state-of-the-art technology. As a multi-purpose room, it will serve as a meeting space for small groups, a place where additional programming can be offered, and continue to welcome retreatants to walk its labyrinth.



## Lakeside Speaker Series

Fr. Jack Treloar, SJ, kicked off the Lakeside Speaker Series for this winter/spring on February 7 with a sharing of his reflections and insights on praying with scripture. His monthly column with the Diocese of Green Bay's *On Mission!* is one place where some of his reflections appear publicly. The Lakeside Speaker Series continues this winter and spring with the following line-up:

### Wednesday, March 13, 2024

Jesuit Novices, men in their first two years of Jesuit formation, will share about their vocation stories, discernment, and experiences of formation.

### Wednesday, April 10, 2024

Fr. Phil Schoofs will speak about his ministry in the Hispanic Catholic community in the US Catholic Church.

### Wednesday, May 8, 2024

Fr. Peter Nguyen, SJ, will speak about the role faith played in his experiences of growing up as a Vietnamese refugee.

These casual talks and discussions occur from 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm on the dates above in JRH's Loyola lounge. RSVPs are much appreciated: (920) 231-9060 or [office@jesuitretreathouse.org](mailto:office@jesuitretreathouse.org).



## Lenten Fasting

At the beginning of Lent last year, Pope Francis recalled that "Fasting is not a quaint devotion, but a powerful gesture to remind ourselves what truly matters and what is merely ephemeral." This Lent, consider following Pope Francis' advice:

- Fast from hurting words and say kind words.*
- Fast from sadness and be filled with gratitude.*
- Fast from anger and be filled with patience.*
- Fast from pessimism and be filled with hope.*
- Fast from worries and have trust in God.*
- Fast from complaints and contemplate simplicity.*
- Fast from pressures and be prayerful.*
- Fast from bitterness and fill your hearts with joy.*
- Fast from selfishness and be compassionate to others.*
- Fast from grudges and be reconciled.*
- Fast from words and be silent so you can listen.*