



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

“Love You, Man”

Ray Glowacki made 30 retreats on Lake Winnebago. When recognized for reaching this milestone in 2023, Ray told his fellow retreatants what so many already know: “Gentlemen, this place is special.” He offered words of gratitude and encouragement to those who shared many of the retreats with him, “I’m glad that many of you repeat, repeat, repeat. ... I pray that I see you and you see me next year.”

Following his own advice—repeat, repeat, repeat—Ray and his son Bob arrived for this year’s Holy Week retreat. Ray was able to see many of his long-time fellow retreatants. However, a serious fall that same afternoon brought paramedics to Ray’s side. Ray spent this year’s Holy Week retreat and the Easter Triduum at the hospital in Green Bay.

Ray and the men at JRH followed Christ’s passion, death, and resurrection separately this year, yet united with each other. On Good Friday Ray was disconnected from life support but his heart remained strong. Ray and

Bob were in communion with fellow retreatants as they streamed a Good Friday service at the hospital. On Easter Monday Bob texted: “My Dad passed away peacefully as this day dawned. He has finished his Holy Week retreat, celebrated Easter and is now home. We mourn now, but will celebrate his life and his legacy.”

At the end of the retreat on Holy Saturday several men reflected on their relationships with Ray. One commented, “We don’t speak with our mouths on retreat, but our souls are speaking to each other.” Another observed that “You see these guys once a year for 3 or 4 days. You don’t get to talk to them or even know them much, but you learn to love them.” Still another said, “Ray will never make another retreat here, but he will always be here in spirit.” One of Ray’s good friends recalled, “Ray is the one who got us here. On the phone, Ray always ended with ‘love you, man.’ Please do that to people; there’s not enough love in the world.”



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Spring into Summer

This spring’s newsletter is going to print late, after the lake flies have come and gone and after our last weekend retreat of the season. It has been a busy spring, with plenty of news to share.

The winter/spring Lakeside Speaker Series finished strong with good attendance at the April and May talks. In April, Fr. Phil Schoofs spoke about ministry in the Hispanic Catholic community. He delivered a message of hope and provided an example for understanding and engaging others. In May, Fr. Peter Nguyen, SJ, shared about the role of faith in his family’s experience as refugees. We look forward to resuming the series in September.



The vegetable garden is planted thanks to the generous labors of volunteers from Green Bay: Bob, Mike, Judy, and Sharon. Given that they tend to go on retreat in the fall or winter, they enjoyed seeing JRH in a new season. Chef Jeff has already used asparagus from the garden. As summer progresses, we expect to serve fresh tomatoes, kale, zucchini, and green beans from the garden.

Chuck Linde, facilities manager, oversaw the planting of new trees in March, installed screens on the gazebo, and replaced windows in the Loyola lounge and dining room. Sometime over the summer a new furnace will be installed in Campion farmhouse.

The summer bears good news for JRH. As of May 1, just one opening remained on the summer directed retreats. We expect to welcome over 250 retreatants to JRH this summer! Additionally, we will host the Midwest Jesuit’s 8-day formation retreat and the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities 5-day Ignatian Colleagues retreat. Again, we expect a full-house during EAA AirVenture.

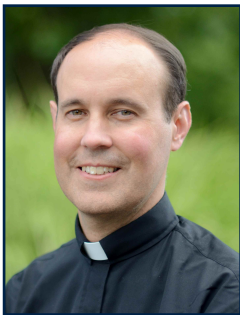
Also, this summer Fr. Jim Flaherty, SJ, will join JRH’s staff. Fr. Jim has been connected with JRH for many years and is a popular retreat director. He looks forward to the transition from Loyola University Chicago where he served as the dean for Jesuit scholastics. As he puts it, “I’ll have the best bedroom in the Province!” We still have not figured out how we will distinguish between the two Fr. Jims—Fr. Jim Shea and Fr. Jim Flaherty. It is something for us to pray about.

Please keep our ministry and our summer retreatants in your prayers!

Blessings!

Mark A. Carr, SJ.

Fr. Mark Carr, SJ
Executive Director



A Common Mission

On April 7, the Superior General of the Society of Jesus, Fr. Arturo Sosa, met with directors of works and board chairs from the nine Jesuit works based in Wisconsin (Casa Romero Renewal Center, Cristo Rey Jesuit High School, Gesu Parish, the Jesuit Retreat House, Marquette University, Marquette University High School, Nativity Jesuit Middle School, the Pope’s Worldwide Prayer Network, and St. Patrick and Our Lady of Guadalupe Parishes).

Jim Janisse, JRH’s Board chair, and Fr. Mark participated in this gathering and shared how JRH integrates the Society’s Universal Apostolic Preferences (UAPs) into our lived mission. Fr. Sosa reminded the group that the first preference—showing the way to God through the Spiritual Exercises and discernment—is fundamental to who the Society is and how it ministers because Jesus is the way! Because JRH identifies most with this preference, we can feel an added responsibility.



In smaller but still significant ways, JRH is attentive to the other preferences: walking with the excluded, journeying with youth, and caring for our common home. Recent Lakeside Speakers that focused on migrants, upcoming events with the Oshkosh Young Adult (OYA) group, and the continued focus on restoring trees to the campus are examples of our commitment to these other preferences.

Fr. General also called us to greater collaboration—including knowing and trusting each other—and reminded us that Jesuits, not just the laity, are collaborators. If the four UAPs are fingers on a hand, the thumb is collaboration, he said. All must work together for the hand to function. The hand is connected to the body and to the head—Jesus—who directs the movements of the hand.

The Provincial of the Midwest Province, Fr. Karl Kiser, SJ, encouraged the nine ministries to work together and see ourselves as part of a single Jesuit mission. Given that groups or individuals from most of the gathered ministries regularly come to JRH, we have a good foundation for further collaboration on a common mission.

Ignatian Spirituality Changed My Life

Since joining the School Sisters of Notre Dame in the 1970s, Sr. Cathy Wottreng, SSND, has been richly blessed by many opportunities for spiritual growth. Below she shares some of her graced experiences of Jesuit spiritual directors, Ignatian spirituality, and the Jesuit Retreat House.

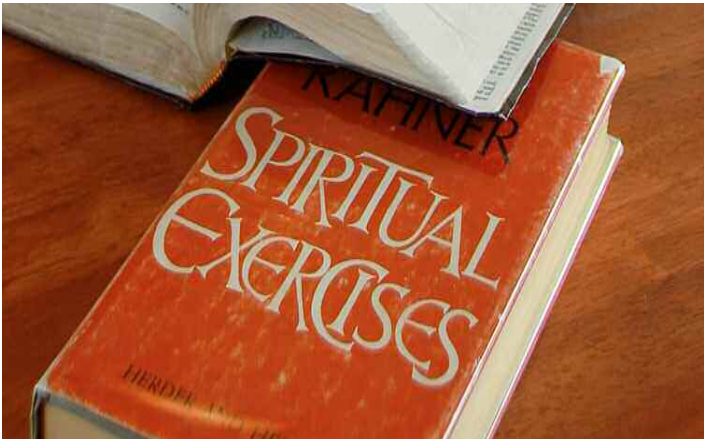
My first experience of the Jesuit Retreat House in Oshkosh was in the early ‘80s when I was teaching math at Lourdes High School in Oshkosh. I was looking for a spiritual director and the sister I lived with suggested I see Fr. Bill Renn, SJ, at the retreat house. I remember seeing Fr. Bill only a few times before he died but found him to be very kind and caring.

After 17 years of teaching high school, I felt called to become a chaplain working with the sick and dying, especially in long term care facilities, and in 1991 began the training to become a chaplain in healthcare. In the late ‘90s I felt called to deepen my prayer and ministry by receiving training as a spiritual director at the Norbertine Center for Spirituality in De Pere, WI. On one of the weekends Fr. David Fleming, SJ, talked about Ignatian spirituality. I wanted to know more about it; I felt an urgent need to experience Ignatian spirituality and have a Jesuit for a spiritual director. In 2000 God led me to Fr. Gene Merz, SJ, who became my spiritual director for many years. From him I learned much and grew in trusting and deepening my relationship with God with much gratitude.

Ignatian spirituality changed my life. It taught me how to discern the movements within me so I could learn to listen and know what was of God and what was not. In my younger years I was easily discouraged by self-doubts. I learned that by focusing on God and God’s goodness to me I could grow in trusting that God wanted peace, joy, inner freedom, and hope in my life. By reflecting on my experiences, I have become more aware and attentive to the ways God is present and active in my day-to-day living in small and yet significant ways which have increased my gratitude for God’s many gifts. Ignatian spirituality helped

me know that God wants good for me and that even amidst the struggles of life God is with me and I am not alone.

Through the years I have gone to the Jesuit Retreat House many times. I have attended directed retreats, weekend preached retreats, 12-Step retreats, and even made private retreats in their Campion hermitage. I find JRH’s beautiful grounds to be a sacred nurturing place with the water, trees, good food, and silence to hear God’s voice. Optional opportunities are available for daily Mass along with Reconciliation and healing services, which I appreciate. The listening presence of a director, the preached conferences, and homilies all have touched me, enriched me, and continue to encourage me to be a better disciple of Jesus. I am filled with gratitude for Ignatian spirituality, the many Jesuits I know, the Jesuit Retreat House, and the abundant graces I have received in my life! Grace upon grace!



Enjoying the Outdoors from Indoors

When we think of “windows” and “screens,” most of us probably image our phones and tablets. However, recent projects involving screens and windows at JRH took a more traditional approach. Over the winter Chuck Linde built eight large screened panels to go on the gazebo during the summer months. These now keep birds out of the gazebo and provide some protection from flying insects. Then, in early May, just before the lake flies appeared, two new picture windows were installed in the dining room and Loyola lounge. These replaced older windows that had started to fog. Both projects allow JRH guests to enjoy the beauty of the outdoors from indoors and help us spend less time with other kinds of “screens” and “windows.”

A Place of Natural Beauty

Following three years of vigorous tree removal and planting in response to the destruction caused by the emerald ash borer, this spring JRH planted just 16 new trees. We expect to maintain that replacement rate for the near future.

“We’re making a long-term investment in our future,” says Chuck Linde, JRH’s Facilities Director. “We’ve planted at least 230 trees since the construction of the Manresa building in 2015. Our hope is to create a pleasant campus that has shade, but enough light to sustain a carpet of grass, and provide open views looking toward the lake. I think we’re accomplishing that.”



The great variety of trees—from crimson maples to flowering tulip trees and stately elms—adds to the beauty and health of the community of trees on campus. They also offer habitat and food for the many squirrels and birds that retreatants enjoy watching. Hackberry trees, nut-bearing buckeyes, and oaks with their acorns are some favorites of the critters here.

If you would like to direct your support of JRH to its trees, check TREES on the enclosed envelope and mail it with your donation.

Individual trees are available to honor or memorialize someone. Small metal plaques identify these trees and those who are being remembered. 120 trees now stand as memorial trees. Currently, 43 trees are available for memorials (all of which were planted at least two years ago). If you are interested in making a minimum donation of \$1,000 for a memorial tree, please indicate that on the enclosed offering envelope and JRH will be in touch with you with information, or contact Fr. Mark Carr, SJ (mcarr@jesuitretreathouse.org) to inquire about a memorial tree.