



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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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

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## Holiday warmth in difficult times

The current pandemic makes me lonesome for when family get-togethers could be safe without face coverings or distancing. Here are tales of holidays past that have cheered me up lately. May these vignettes spark holiday memories of your own.

Trick-or-treating as a child was a hunt for **Halloween** treats that we treasured. The local Pepsi distributor gave out bottles of pop/soda. The milkman gave out cartons of chocolate milk. The ladies on the corner invited us in to select treats from platters of homemade cookies, bars, and sweets. Even the pencils that a schoolteacher gave out were prized, because you always can use a pencil. Full-size candy bars remained the summit of Halloween treats and we were sure to include them on our treasure hunts.

Our pet yellow canary Petey got loose one **Thanksgiving** morning and flew freely about the kitchen and dining area as family members, who were not bird lovers, ran screaming for cover. He cheerily explored all corners of his much larger "cage." Back and forth he flew, passing over the boiling potatoes, the simmering turkey gravy, the roasting turkey and the baking scalloped corn. Each flight through the steam and the heat, however, added a bit more moisture and weight to his wings until it proved too much to carry and Petey plopped exhausted into the gravy. No turkey gravy that Thanksgiving.

**Christmas Eve** as kids included a drive to see the Christmas lights around town. While we were gone lo' and behold Santa Claus would come to our house. I did not want to see Santa Claus as a youngster because every year he would leave our house darkened – no lights on – and our furniture and decorations upended and in disarray. Our house would be a shambles. Santa was in such a hurry that he didn't have time to be neat, my parents said. One year we lost an easy chair from our living room – wood frame, cushions and all – until we found it broken in pieces against a neighbor's tree. I never wanted to be home to see Santa because I was afraid he'd trample me. Strangely, my oldest brother who remained home rather than see Christmas lights always slept through the havoc. He was always as surprised as the rest of us that Santa had come and caused such a mess.

St. Ignatius suggested we recall times of consolation to restore our balance when in desolation. May fond memories – funny or otherwise – sustain a sense of God's presence in your life.



## End-of-year donor options

As 2020 comes to a close, we are again very thankful and blessed by the continuing generosity and support of our retreatant families. In that light, we would like you to prayerfully consider one of the following end-of-year giving options:

- **Annual Appeal** – Fr. Chris's annual appeal letter will be arriving in late November. We hope you will consider a gift. If you work for a company or corporation with a **matching gift program**, you may be eligible to double your donation.
- **IRA Rollover** – To make such gifts, it is important not to withdraw funds prior to a gift. Instead, distribute the funds directly from an IRA to a qualified charity. Check with your **IRA administrator or tax advisor** for more detailed information.

- **Appreciated Securities** – To transfer stocks, the following **Investment Information** will help you and/or your financial advisor with the process.

DTC # 0141  
Account # 3632-0118  
Acct Name: Jesuit Retreat House

David F. Werner  
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- **Replenish Support Fund** – This fund is used to cover unexpected emergency expenses. It currently stands at **\$617,600**, and we hope to grow it back to \$1.2 million, comparable to our annual budget.

*Fr. Chris Manahan, SJ*

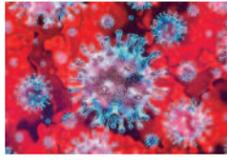
Fr. Christopher J. Manahan, SJ  
Director

*Turkeys are not frequent visitors to JRH, so this 2019 visit is a treat we can continue to enjoy thanks to the keen eye and quick camera work of Business Manager Sue Philipp.*



## Pandemic effects

Retreatants and friends of the Jesuit Retreat House have asked how we are doing in the midst of the current pandemic.



First of all, we are tremendously grateful that the summer and preached retreats we have had have not caused any spread of the COVID virus thus far, which affirms the precautions taken by the staff who hosts and the retreatants who come here. Face coverings, physical distancing, frequent handwashing and sanitizing of surfaces, have kept this a safe environment.

Second, our retreat attendance is about one-third of what it was in non-pandemic times; ranging from a low of 11 to a high of 31 on retreats thus far. The political back-and-forth in Wisconsin shifts requirements periodically, but for most of the time we have had a maximum capacity of 44 retreatants divided into groups of 22 for meals, Mass, and talks, to keep physical distancing. We have not had to turn anyone away.

Third, as you may have guessed, our revenue from retreat offerings is suffering a dramatic decline that is especially significant since payroll, utilities, and other overhead expenses change little whether 11 retreatants or 44. Reductions in food costs, housekeeping, dining room and kitchen service are welcomed savings, but relatively minimal.

Fourth, we used help from the Paycheck Protection Program stimulus to keep our staff paid from March-May when we were completely shutdown, and now are relying on our Support Fund to make up the difference between retreat revenue and operating expenses. We have a few additional hosting opportunities this Fall that will bring in revenue; and, have noticed that retreatants and friends have increased their unsolicited gifts in the past few months which is much appreciated.

Finally, in our Annual Appeal letter that will be mailed to you after Thanksgiving we are going to outline what we think can keep our financial situation healthy and our operating expenses covered until the pandemic wanes. It is obvious to us that retreatants' generosity remains our greatest asset since we don't have an endowment that would provide income in addition to our retreat offerings. It has been many years since our revenues have not met our expenses – a source of pride for us – yet we face that predicament now. God's grace, retreatants' devotion to this ministry, and ongoing efforts to cut costs and increase revenues will solve it.

*Amen, amen, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit.*

*John 12:24*



## Patient Trust

Above all, trust in the slow work of God.

We are quite naturally impatient in everything to reach the end without delay.

We should like to skip the intermediate stages.

We are impatient of being on the way to something unknown, something new.

And yet it is the law of all progress that it is made by passing through some stages of instability—and that it may take a very long time.

And so I think it is with you; your ideas mature gradually—let them grow, let them shape themselves, without undue haste.

Don't try to force them on, as though you could be today what time (that is to say, grace and circumstances acting on your own good will) will make of you tomorrow.

Only God could say what this new spirit gradually forming within you will be.

Give Our Lord the benefit of believing that his hand is leading you, and accept the anxiety of feeling yourself in suspense and incomplete.

—Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, SJ  
excerpted from *Hearts on Fire*



## Search for an executive director

Fr. Chris Manahan, S.J., will be leaving the Jesuit Retreat House as executive director to become assistant to the USA Midwest Jesuit provincial for elder Jesuits (70 years and older) and Jesuits awaiting tertianship and final vows, effective August 2021.

“After seven years as director I am sorry that I have to go,” Fr. Chris wrote in an email letter October 8 to retreatants and friends of JRH. “It is especially difficult to leave as we cope with reduced retreat attendance and retreat offerings due to the pandemic.” He expressed great confidence in the current staff and Board of Directors, stating, “God is providing the people, planning, expertise, and wisdom needed to find the right person to carry this ministry forward.” Fr. Chris plans to continue as executive director through mid-July and participate in all of the preached and summer retreats until that time.

The search has begun for a new executive director to succeed Fr. Chris. While in the past the Jesuit provincial simply would mission a Jesuit to be the new director, with fewer Jesuits the provincial, Fr. Brian Paulson, S.J., has asked the JRH Board of Directors to conduct a search instead which will be open to both Jesuits and other applicants who might apply. He has assured the Board that the Midwest Province will continue to mission Jesuits to serve here in the years ahead to join the existing retreat team of Sr. Susan Kusz, SND, Fr. Gene Donahue, S.J., Fr. Jack Treloar, S.J., and Br. Lee Colombino, S.J.

Prayers for a successful search process are needed and appreciated.

## Lessons from an old retreat house friend



Anyone who frequented the Jesuit Retreat House in the 1990s and early 2000s knew Jesse. He would love to lie on his back and have his belly scratched. After every good scratching session, we would lay next to each other for long periods of time. Every time we lay next to each other, Jesse would inevitably reach out one of his front paws and lay it on part of my body...on my arm, my stomach, my side or my leg. We would lay there in silence, connected to one another.

In the first few years, it was as if Jesse was saying, “I am here if you need a friend. You are not alone.” And I can tell you, there were times when I really needed a friend. Jesse's presence was a great comfort to me.

In the later years, the meaning of Jesse's reaching-outs seemed to change. As Jesse got older and sicker and nearer his death, Jesse would gently reach out his paw. His paw would always shake a little. It would continue to shake until I held his paw. As soon as I took his paw in my hand, Jesse's shaking would stop and he would calm down. It was as if Jesse needed me to say to him, “I am here if you need a friend. You are not alone.”

It really is amazing how much we can come to care for God's creatures. I still remember the last retreat at which I was able to spend time with Jesse. We spent several long afternoons laying on the grass, me praying and thinking about life and about Jesse. I was fully aware of the fact that Jesse (September 4, 1991 – February 7, 2006) wasn't getting any younger and that this could be the last week I spent with Jesse.

I remember the tears that came as I thought with deep gratitude about the comforting companionship Jesse had shared with me over the years. He had been with me through some pretty tough times and Jesse had been a great blessing to me.

I had been comforted by Jesse, but I had also learned from him. Jesse had taught me something about being present to another. He taught me that sometimes all we need is the presence of another. Sometimes, no words are necessary. He taught me that simply being is a blessing. He taught me that sometimes all we need to give us courage, comfort and hope is the knowledge that another is present with us.

Jesse taught me that as we get older, we get wiser. He helped teach me that energy is wonderful, but silence is sacred.

Deb Hamm, JRH Retreatant & Retreat Director