



**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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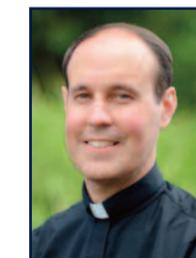
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## Message from the new director

"Welcome!" That's what I feel since arriving at JRH late last spring. Retreatants, staff, and guest directors have expressed warm words of welcome. What a wonderful group of people to join! The trees, lake, and lawn, all in their own way, say "welcome." What a blessed place this is! I'm grateful to call JRH home.



JRH also welcomes Fr. Jim Shea, S.J., and Br. Lee Colombino, S.J., who, though he arrived here a year ago, did so in the midst of the pandemic. We also welcome Michael Cheskie and Tanya Hielke to our staff. They will succeed Dawn Gorenschek and Trish Neuman who are retiring later this year.

We welcome you! If you've been to JRH before, we look forward to welcoming you back. Many retreatants make retreat at JRH an annual event in their lives. Here is a place whose comfort, familiarity, and peacefulness make it a second home to many retreatants. If you haven't been to JRH before, we welcome you to visit us for a weekend retreat or one of the individually directed summer retreats.

"Welcome!" is the stance our hearts take towards God. I think of some of my favorite gospel characters: Mary and her "yes" welcoming the Spirit into her life and Jesus into her womb, Zacchaeus welcoming Jesus into his home to simply spend the day with him (Lk 19), Jairus welcoming Jesus into his home to cure his daughter (Mt 9), Martha and Mary welcoming Jesus to accompany them in their mourning (Jn 11), the disciples on the road to Emmaus (Lk 24) welcoming the risen Christ (who they didn't recognize!) to join them on their journey. We are called to be like these models of faith and continually seek the Lord and welcome him into our hearts and lives.

Most important, "Welcome!" is the stance that God takes towards us. He welcomes us into his being, into his heart, and into his life. The Gospels and the Sacraments show us the way. Maybe we're like the disciples of John the Baptist joining Jesus to "come and see" where he is (Jn 1), or like the little children who Jesus welcomes into his arms (Mk 10). Maybe we find the Lord's welcome in the Rite of Penance, reconciling ourselves with God who readily, joyfully, welcomes us with arms outstretched, like the father welcoming back his lost son (Lk 15); or in the chapel, where Christ reaches out to us in the Eucharist and in the anointing to strengthen us and bring us to wholeness and holiness; or in the quiet and solitude of prayer in the comfort of a guestroom or on a swing overlooking the lake.

Wherever we are and however we are, let's be open to receive the Lord's loving welcome and extend your own welcome, inviting God into your life!

In Christ,

Fr. Mark Carr, S.J.

## Eight is the new normal

After being closed from mid-March to mid-June in 2020, JRH reopened its doors for preached weekend retreats in September 2020. We did so following state and local COVID regulations and CDC guidelines. To meet these, we operated at a reduced capacity and split retreatants into two groups so that social distancing could be maintained at group gatherings including meals, Masses, prayer services, and conferences. This meant that each day there were two back-to-back Masses and that the retreat director gave each talk twice, once to each group! To accommodate this, retreatants listened to only six talks during the retreat. Many retreatants commented that they liked having more unstructured time for personal prayer and reflection. Hearing that feedback, when weekend retreats start again this fall, we won't be returning to a schedule with eleven conferences. Our "new normal" will have a schedule of eight conferences. We also plan to return to full capacity.

Already this summer we've returned to whole group

gatherings, having just one seating at meals and one Mass each day. Chef Jeff restored the self-serve buffet line as well as the beverage and snack area off the lounge. The Art Room is back in service and the Exercise Room is open for use again. In short, we're ready to welcome you back!

# 8

Still, for the health and safety of retreatants, we follow CDC recommendations for fully vaccinated people. Retreatants who are not fully vaccinated must wear a face mask in common areas. Be assured that JRH staff is following the above guidance based on their vaccination status and personal health concerns. As always, if you are sick or feeling ill, please stay home and care for your health. If you're not already, we recommend being vaccinated. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has stated, "being vaccinated safely against COVID-19 should be considered an act of love of our neighbor and part of our moral responsibility for the common good."

## Farewell Fr. Chris

On July 23, following seven years at the helm of JRH, Fr. Chris Manahan, S.J., moved on. He gets a few weeks' break before taking up a new mission in the office of the USA Midwest Province Jesuits. Fr. Richard Rohr, OFM writes of transitions as being special realms of the Holy Spirit. Those who know Fr. Chris well, or who have even met him just once, know that the Holy Spirit is already rooted deeply in his heart and readily expresses itself through his words, care, and kindness. It's amazing to think what more the Holy Spirit will do as it guides and accompanies Fr. Chris to his new ministry working with younger Jesuits awaiting final vows and senior Jesuits at the end of their years of active ministry. But this we know: Fr. Chris will serve the Society and those Jesuits entrusted to his care well and with a heart of Christ. We will miss him greatly at JRH and will always be ready to welcome him back when he can visit. Fr. Chris' mailing address is 1025 W Taylor St., Chicago, IL 60607-4226 or you may email him at [cmanahan@jesuits.org](mailto:cmanahan@jesuits.org).



## Michael Cheskie – full-time maintenance and groundskeeper

We welcome back Michael Cheskie to the retreat house team after an absence of six years. Mike worked as a part-time summer groundskeeper at JRH back in 2014 before moving to moving on to other employment opportunities in the areas of house painting, locksmithing, and retail.



According to Mike, when the opportunity arose to interview for a fulltime position at Jesuit Retreat House, he jumped at the chance. "It's a great place to work, wonderful staff and retreatants are very appreciative. It is the only place that I have ever woken up in the morning wanting to go to work." We are blessed to have Mike back on board as a part of the team.

Mike graduated from Oshkosh West High School in 2011 and lives in Oshkosh.



## Do not forget the woods

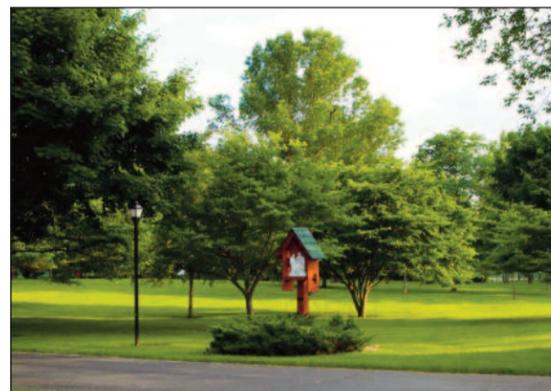
In his poem, *The Farm*, Wendell Berry tells us, "Do not forget the woods." At the Jesuit Retreat House, we haven't! As reported in the June newsletter, we're actively caring for the tree population on the retreat house grounds. Particularly, as Ash trees succumb to emerald ash borers, we are replacing them with new trees. This is one way that the Jesuit Retreat House exercises care for creation, one of the Society of Jesus' current Universal Apostolic Preferences.

Berry says that trees stand as our "praise and prayer," sometimes singing in the wind. In their praise we can rest and be aware of our own being. His poem calls us to "live like a tree." To know our place within God's creation. To continually grow and reach new heights while alive. And, in death, find more life.

If you are interested in helping fund our tree replacement project, contact Dcn. John Ingala at (920) 230-6992 (Monday through Friday).

Do not forget the woods...  
To rest, go to the woods  
Where what is made is made  
Without your thought or work.  
Sit down; begin the wait  
For small trees to grow big,  
Feeding on earth and light.  
Their good result is song  
The winds must bring, that trees  
Must wait to sing, and sing  
Longer than you can wait.  
Soon you must go. The trees,  
Your seniors, standing thus  
Acknowledged in your eyes,  
Stand as your praise and prayer.  
Your rest is in this praise  
Of what you cannot be  
And what you cannot do.

– from Wendell Berry's, *The Farm*



## The Ignatian year

The current Ignatian year (May 20, 2021 – July 31, 2022) celebrates the 500th anniversary of St. Ignatius' conversion. Yet, Ignatius' conversion was not a one-time event. As Pope Francis remarked at the beginning of this special year, "Ignatius' conversion began in Pamplona, but it did not end there. He converted throughout his life, day after day." For us, too, conversion is rarely confined to a single moment or experience. Conversion can be, should be, a regular, even daily experience! Each time we choose to put Christ at the center of our lives there is a conversion. The daily examen is one spiritual exercise taught by St. Ignatius. Each time we pray it, we recenter ourselves on Christ, open ourselves to God's grace, and ready ourselves to move forward as disciples.

Other spiritual practices—weekly or daily Mass, availing ourselves regularly of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and making the Spiritual Exercises in a preached weekend format or individually directed multi-day retreat—are also ways that ground us in an ongoing process of conversion in our lives. This fall 20 people will participate in JRH's *Meeting Christ in Prayer*, a program of making the Spiritual Exercises in daily life over many weeks. Whatever we choose to commit ourselves to this Ignatian Year, let us mark St. Ignatius' conversion with our own conversion and extra effort to place Christ at the center of our lives.

*"In May 1521 during a French invasion, Ignatius was wounded while defending the Spanish fortress at Pamplona. During Ignatius' long recuperation, he began to notice and discern various interior spiritual movements. This reflective process began his conversion that would fuel his growing desire to be like the saints in following Jesus Christ."*

*[Original collage by Br. Lee Colombino, S.J. depicting the convalescence of St. Ignatius during which his focus was turned ever more to Christ, eventually leading to the founding of the Society of Jesus.]*

