

# MANRESA MATTERS

Spring/Summer 2025



Hope does not disappoint



Our Mission is to help men and women grow spiritually through prayer, reflection, guidance and teaching according to the Ignatian tradition.

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## FROM THE EDITOR



**I'M NEARING THE END OF MY INTERNSHIP IN SPIRITUAL COMPANIONSHIP AT MANRESA. ONE OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR COMPLETING THE PROGRAM IS ACCRUING 60 HOURS** of listening time with others to develop our skills as spiritual companions.

I've met this requirement primarily by visiting residents in a nearby assisted living facility. Having spent about three

years in one helping to care for my dad before his death, I know that many residents don't have family members living nearby to advocate for them and few friends who can visit. Other than interactions with staff caregivers, many live out their last years basically alone and lonely.

So, most every week I visit Mary\*, a petite 98-year-old widow who is nearly blind, hard of hearing and sweet as pie. I listen as she recounts moments in her life and laments over those things that frustrate her about living as she does. She likes to extend our visits by saying more than once, "Before you go, let me tell you one more thing."

I also visit Mark\*, a friendly, gentle man with multiple health problems who enjoys talking about his faith as well as his experiences as a high school sport coach. Each week I greet him with, "Hey Mark, what's the good news?", and he says, "You're here." And then I'll read him a scripture passage (he, too, is nearly blind) and a lively conversation ensues. He tells me he looks forward to my visit each week.

And then there's Sarah\*, a newer resident who is still grieving over the loss of her husband less than two years ago and adjusting to life as it is now. She expresses her fears around dying, and I remind her that our faith in Jesus gives us hope for a future in the presence of our loving Father. Her warm hugs and gratitude for my visits give me such joy. She worries when I miss a week, wondering if I'm OK, and I wish I had more time to be with her.

As wonderful as each resident is, some days I have to push myself to visit them. It takes some mental energy to get past the reality of their existence, their vulnerability and complete dependence on others with no hope of things changing. Yet I go because what started as the need to complete a requirement has become a reciprocal ministry of hope—they look forward to my visits reminding them that someone cares, and I am filled with joy and gratitude for the privilege it is to serve God in this way. I give myself to them and they in turn give to me far more than I could have hoped for.

In his Bull of Indiction for the Jubilee Year 2025 on the theme of hope, Pope Francis urged that hope be offered to the sick, elderly (especially grandparents), migrants and the poor. The need is certainly there, and I am grateful to meet it in my own small way as a pilgrim of hope.

On the journey with you,

JoAnn Amicangelo

Publications Coordinator

\* The names of residents have been changed to protect their privacy.



**Every issue of Manresa Matters comes to life with the help of our Publications Team, which develops themes and article ideas. The team includes JoAnn Amicangelo, Lori Kneisler, Steve Raymond, Paul Seibold, Sr. Linda Sevcik, SM and Fr. Bob Ytsen, SJ.**

## FR. LEO CACHAT, SJ RECENTLY ANNOUNCED HE WILL LEAVE MANRESA IN EARLY JUNE TO ACCEPT

a new assignment at Colombiere Retreat & Conference Center in Clarkston, MI.



A beloved retreat and spiritual director, Fr. Leo has been at Manresa since 2007.

Commenting on the move, Fr. Leo said, "As I became aware that it was time

to move to Colombiere, asking my Provincial to mission me there, the image of transplanting came to mind. In 2007 I was so happy to be missioned to Manresa. This is my 18th year, the longest I've been in any community and ministry. I've loved my time here, my ministry and my communities. There is definitely pain in uprooting and replanting, but also joy in this meeting of Christ in a new community and mission—praying for the Church and the Society."

Fr. Leo began his ministry in the Jesuit Province of Patna, India and began teaching in Nepal in 1961. He was ordained in 1966 and became K-12 school principal in Katmandu. He later studied with Anthony de Mello, SJ and Bede Griffiths, OSB.

In 1978 he founded Godavari Ashram (Center for Spiritual Development) and directed retreats there and elsewhere in Southeast Asia. In 1985 he set up a Jesuit formation house in Nepal and later became the regional superior. After several years in Myanmar, he returned to the USA and served as chaplain for the faculty and staff at University of Detroit Academy and High School from 2002-2007.

Fr. Leo said he will continue to see directees in his new home.

"Since I'll be praying for you, please feel free to come and visit me," he said.

# Hope does not disappoint

Dear Friends,



**SINCE POPE FRANCIS DECLARED** this Jubilee year to be focused on Hope, the Publications Team

decided to follow his lead for this issue of *Manresa Matters*.

In his Bull of Indiction of the Jubilee Year 2025, he began with the words "Hope does not disappoint" (Rom. 5:5) and suggests that this year is an opportunity to be renewed in hope.

As I write this in January, it has been painful and horrifying to witness the devastation by fire in the Los Angeles area. In the midst of this terrible tragedy, I read of a firefighter, Capt. Bryan Nassour, who had been fighting fires for several days. He was looking at the ruin of his brother's parish church and decided to enter the rubble to see if there was anything salvageable. He found a marble altar with the brass tabernacle still on it and the intact Blessed Sacrament!<sup>1</sup> He called the pastor with the news. Can you imagine the sign of hope this will be for many of the people who have lost everything?

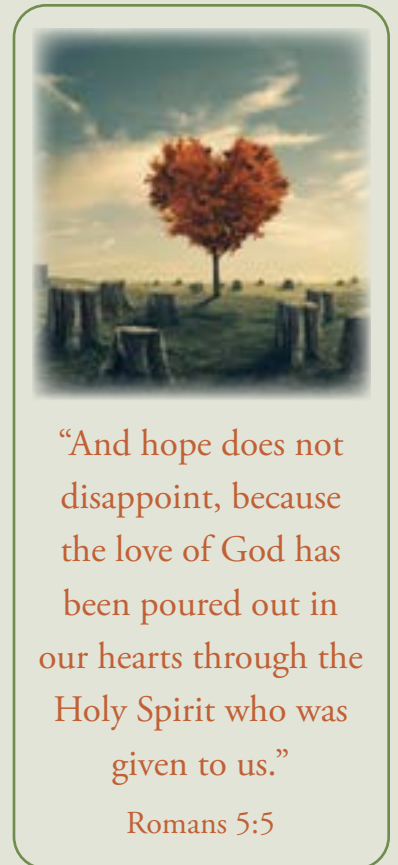
Probably every person reading this can recall at least one time they lost hope or were tempted to lose hope. Scripture assures us hope is a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul (Heb. 6:19). I trust this issue of *Manresa Matters* will invite you to think about the importance of hope on your journey.

Join me in reflecting on Romans 5:5.



Sr. Linda Sevcik, SM  
Executive Director

<sup>1</sup> [osvnews.com/fire-captain-makes-way-through-ruins-of-incinerated-church-to-find-tabernacle-intact/](https://osvnews.com/fire-captain-makes-way-through-ruins-of-incinerated-church-to-find-tabernacle-intact/)



# How will you respond to



By Fr. Christopher Alt, SJ



## HOPE— HIT'S A GIFT FROM GOD.

*It's a virtue, a practice of endlessly reaching out to God. And the ground of our hope*

*is this: God is always reaching out to us. Indeed, hope is the conviction that God has—from the first to the last—been endlessly reaching toward us.*

This quote is from the late Fr. Michael Himes, a theologian I was lucky enough to encounter during my time at Boston College. Fr. Himes taught me a lot about hope, which was a theme he often focused on in the years before he died. With this Jubilee Year of Hope upon us, maybe it's time for us to make hope a favorite theme of ours, too.

But first, let's make what may seem like an odd detour to explore "Hope's Opposites"—despair, death, evil, hell

and the devil. You know, some light subjects to get the ball rolling!

One vivid image of "Hope's Opposites" comes from Dante's 14th century epic poem *The Divine Comedy*. In this work, the Roman poet Virgil guides Dante from hell through purgatory to heaven. The journey begins with Cantic 1: *The Inferno*, where Virgil and Dante stand at the entrance to hell. At the threshold, there's a gate with an inscription overhead that reads: *Lasciate ogne speranza, voi ch'intrate* ("Abandon all hope, ye who enter here.")

With these words, Dante reveals the entrance to hell. It's not pride or malice, envy or sloth. Rather, the gate to hell is despair—hopelessness. Dante's hell is the condition of being forever stuck, forever doomed with no chance of escape. It's the feeling that there's no way out, no path to salvation, no means of connecting with others. There's a sense of what's the point of reaching out to another,

or God, since none are there reaching back to you. Grim is despair, the gateway to hell: "Abandon all hope, ye who enter."

Four hundred years after Dante, the German writer J.W. von Goethe offers another striking image in his story *Faust*. In it, the main character, Faust, makes a pact with the devil, selling his soul in exchange for the fulfillment of his greatest desires. To make the deal, he conjures his personal demon, Mephistopheles.

When the demon appears, Faust asks, "Who are you?" to which Mephistopheles responds, "I am part of that power that forever wills evil and forever does good." Confused, Faust presses him for a clearer answer, demanding, "Tell me plainly who you are."

At that, the demon, with unsettling calm, fixes Faust with a cold, unblinking gaze and says, "I am the spirit that says 'No.'" And rightly, for all

# God's invitation to hope?

that exists comes to an end. Better there should never have been anything!"

This is one of the most chilling descriptions of evil ever uttered. That's what Fr. Himes argued, anyway. What do you think?

It's easy to dismiss the weight of the demon's words while sitting in a comfy chair with tea in hand in some cozy nook at Manresa. But imagine one night, when you can't sleep, sitting on the edge of your bed, staring into the dark. If you conjure the demon's words then, they might hit differently.

These are chilling words, indeed: "I am the demon—the evil spirit—that says, 'No!'"

But "No" to what, exactly? No to everyone and everything:

Is there any value in this world? *No.*

Is there any meaning to life? *No.*

Is there any possibility for improvement? *No.*

Am I worth anything? *No.*

Are you worth anything? *No.*

Is the universe worth anything? *No.*

Is there any hope for the future? *No.*

Because all is finite and imperfect, it's garbage; better it didn't exist. So says Mephistopheles. To Faust's question, "Who are you?", an answer emerges: the demon is a monster of despair.

Contrast the demon's "No" with the images and messages of "Yes," that is, of hope, found in our Christian faith.

Take Paul, for example, writing to the early Christian community at Corinth. The Corinthians faced various struggles—internal division, external persecution, affliction in prayer and discouragement on multiple fronts. Despair was creeping in. Was God still reaching out to them? Had God abandoned them? Would Jesus keep His promises? Could they persevere through it all? Was the answer to these questions "No"?

That's when Paul asserts: "The Son of God, Jesus Christ, that I preached to you, was not 'Yes' and 'No.' In Christ there is only 'Yes.'" (2 Cor. 1:19). This "Yes" is the grounding of our hope.

Messages of hope are woven throughout Scripture, with countless models, ancient and modern, to guide us. Think of Abraham, Sarah and Hagar, Ruth and David, Mary and Joseph and all those early apostles and martyrs. Things looked very grim, yet hope remained, glimmering.

Can we live with the same hope that sustained our ancestors? Can we trust that God is reaching out to us, that God has not abandoned us but is alive and working in the world? What's more, can we accept that God calls, empowers and gives us a share in His mission of "Yes" to the world and a future beyond whatever chaos, pain and sadness may confront us?

Living with this hope is not easy. Open the newspaper or scroll through social media and the headlines might as well read: *Lasciate ogni speranza, voi ch'intrate.* It's hard not to despair when we experience so much suffering: hunger, homelessness, rampant loneliness, environmental degradation, political division and broken relationships within our families, churches and communities. In the midst of this, we too will be tempted to wonder: Will our deepest hopes and desires for peace and life be fulfilled? Dare we reach out to others? Is God reaching out to us? Can we live with a persevering and prodigal hope in these days?

What is holding you back from living with radical hope? What images of hope do you need to cling to this season? How can we embody and enact this "Yes"—individually and corporately, as Church and nation?

The Spirit is open and available to all. Jesus is alive and is Lord. God is reaching toward us.

Every day the invitation to hope comes to us. Will we say "No" or "Yes"?

Persevere in your "Yes"—in your work and play, in your prayer and ministry—and know the consolation of God Who has "from the first to the last been endlessly reaching toward us."†

***Fr. Christopher Alt, SJ, STL, MDiv, LCSW joined the Society of Jesus in 2016 and was ordained a priest in June 2024. He holds a Licentiate in Sacred Theology (Christian Spirituality) and is a licensed clinical social worker. He currently serves as associate pastor at Gesu Catholic Church and provides individual and group psychotherapy at the Pope Francis Center-Bridge Housing Campus in Detroit.***

## From despair to hope:

*How God's mercy restored my soul  
and gave me new life*

By Lynn Miller



### THE WORST EVENT IN MY LIFE HAPPENED

with no thought at all. I can see myself standing in the hallway, looking at my husband. What did either of us say? I know I

was scared and confused. The silence ended when he told me to make the appointment and walked away. In a moment, I would schedule an abortion.

No one stopped me from entering the abortion clinic. No one asked me if I changed my mind. No one spoke to me as I lay on the stretcher. I blinked my eyes, and I was home, curled up in bed. My whole body felt scraped empty. It was over, and I told myself that no one would ever know.

Yet, I remembered it every single day. I thought, "If I could kill my baby without consequence, then there really was no God. I was living my life! No need to worry! Eventually I would forget completely, right?"

Eight years later my husband left, saying that I had fallen into a deep depression after what happened years ago. He felt I had become a different person, and our marriage was over. The truth is I still hadn't completely forgotten the abortion. "If I just had more time," I thought, "my struggle would be over." Now what?

After months of working to salvage my marriage, I fell to my knees sobbing. I needed to end the pain of abandonment. I wanted to end my life, but I knew my two children would be home soon. I felt I was a terrible mom, but I knew I couldn't let them find me dead. I begged God to help me. I have no idea what I begged for: time to devise my plan, an opportunity

to be alone, or maybe that He would change my mind? I was devoid of all rational thought and focus.

But God heard my quiet, wordless prayers, felt my tears. Despair gave way to hope, and I knew in my soul that God was there, holding me.

In the following weeks, I made a firm decision that if I lost everything in my life, I would not lose God. I had carelessly pushed Him away. How did I find Him? He led me to a Rachel's Vineyard retreat.

At the retreat, I was sure I would be the one woman God could not forgive, a woman without hope for a life with God. Then, the most glorious event in my life happened with no thought at all: God showered me in His

mercy. I woke up like Lazarus. I stopped bleeding out like the woman who touched the hem of His garment. I saw my aborted baby in the arms of Mary.

Today I think of my abortion most every day. I now serve as a retreat team member at Rachel's Vineyard, an example of God taking a wrongful act and transforming it into good. What an honor it is to be of use to God by showing post-abortive women that God has not abandoned them, that there is always hope. †

**Lynn Miller, a former Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist, has served as a retreat team member for two post-abortion healing ministries: Rachel's Vineyard and Entering Canaan.**

### Hope & Healing After Abortion

Rachel's Vineyard is a weekend retreat for women and/or men; Entering Canaan is a one-day retreat for women. Both are designed for those who are experiencing the emotional and spiritual pain of past abortions. Visit [RachelsVineyard.org](http://RachelsVineyard.org) and [EnteringCanaan.com](http://EnteringCanaan.com) for more information and to find a retreat near you.

# Kairos: A Pathway to Hope



By Adam Seneski



## AS THE YOUNG AMEN OF BROTHER RICE

High School file off the bus and follow the Manresa walkway to the wooden front door, many

thoughts and feelings run through their heads. Confusion, skepticism, excitement and apprehension seem to dominate the first few minutes for the Kairos candidates. They literally feel lighter without their cell phones in their pockets but anticipate the heaviness of being disconnected from the outside world for the next few days.

Many of the young men who join us are not active in their faith, and the idea of spending a few days on a religious retreat seems intimidating and overwhelming. For some, this may seem like a daunting task and a long week. To me, it is the perfect formula for a week of growth and hope.

Brother Rice has been holding its Kairos retreat at Manresa since 1995, and I've had the privilege of running the program since 2018. Over the last 20-plus retreats in six years, I have seen the good in young men

who, moved by their faith, take on the desire to be there for others. In this Jubilee Year, Pilgrims of Hope, I think the Kairos retreat is a great path to hope through God for our Kairos participants.

Kairos runs for four days and three nights, and though Manresa is only a couple miles from Brother Rice, the lack of technology for connecting with the outside world makes the distance feel much greater. Each day of the retreat is a chance to show the students the many ways God is present in their lives. Adults and students who have previously attended Kairos lead the students through a variety of activities that give tangible examples of God's love.

This retreat truly allows me to see the good in our young men. We hear so often how the youth are so different and even inferior to previous generations. I disagree. On Kairos, I see young men who have evolved. I see emerging adults becoming comfortable not only talking about their faith, but about their feelings and emotions. Students become comfortable sharing challenges that they struggle with, worries about family life and growing up. They get

to know other students better, and they form bonds that will transcend high school through group chats, post-Kairos meetups and assemblies for Mass. Hope is truly seen in realizing that common interests such as sports and academics are not the only things that connect students. They see God not only in the sacraments, but in each other.

Hope is so crucial in life's journey. Young people deal with so much and many times are surrounded by adults who tell them how easy they have it. I love being the Kairos director at Brother Rice because I help lead them to hope. Over the four-day period, I am witness to such sincerity, compassion and love. I see young men with purpose and motivation. Later, I see them at Sunday Masses which they didn't attend before, and I see young men who realize that hope is always a part of God's love. †

**Adam Seneski lives in Bloomfield Hills with his wife Crysta and three sons. On staff at Brother Rice High School since 2016, Adam is the Associate Campus Minister and teaches English and Theology. He has been in charge of the Kairos program since 2018.**

## Sowing seeds of hope for the future



Vincent van Gogh, *Sower at Sunset (June 1888)*, oil on canvas, 25.3 × 31.7 inches, Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, Netherlands.

By Fr. Peter Fennesy, SJ



### HOPE IS DESIRE COMBINED WITH THE POSSIBILITY OR EXPECTATION OF SOME FUTURE

good that is difficult but not impossible to attain. It is an ever-present, necessary aspect of human nature to imagine a future better than the present, and to hope for that future. This future orientation of our human life allows us to transcend

the present moment, so that part of our present existence is a striving or a waiting that is energized by the future that is yet to be.

Without such hope we would not be moved or motivated to plan for any future or to act with purpose in the present. Teilhard de Chardin described our ultimate

future, the goal and culmination of all cosmic evolution and history; it is Christ, the Omega Point, Who reaches down through all the ages to touch us with His power, inspire our deepest hopes and draw us and all creation to Himself.

The farmer who sows seed does so with hope for a future harvest. Sowing seed is a worldwide symbol for many of our hope-filled human undertakings. Van Gogh's *Sower at Sunset* is then an image of hope. His favorite artist was Jean-François Millet and his favorite painting was Millet's *The Sower*. The theme of the sower was so special for van Gogh that he produced more than 30 drawings and paintings based on it.

Millet's *Sower*, however, was dark with social realism, and its focus and almost entire content was the sower himself. Van Gogh, as a former seminarian, missionary, preacher and the son and grandson of pastors, knew that God played a



part even in our most worldly plans and activities. Consequently, his farmer, though in the same physical pose as Millet's, is smaller, set to one side and farther back in the frame and is surrounded by a landscape bright with hope.

The center of van Gogh's painting is not the farmer but the luminous orb of the sun, a symbol of God, which broadcasts life-giving rays generously in all directions. Below the sun is a full field of corn, the future harvest that the farmer hopes God will provide.

This painting could be taken as symbolic of just ordinary human hopes, of which Vatican II taught, "The joys and the hopes ... of the people of this age ... are the joys and hopes ... of the followers of Christ."

But van Gogh also alludes to Christian hope, the virtue that elevates our wills by grace, so that we can expect life, union and happiness eternally with God, confident of receiving from God the means to attain those ends.

The Parable of the Sower (Mk 4:1-20) was so important to van Gogh that it has to be part of this painting. As a lay evangelist he preached several times on this parable, picturing God as the sower Who "infuses His blessing in the seed of His Word sown in our hearts." He once wrote to his brother Theo, "I suppose that for a sower of God's words, as I hope to be, as well as for a sower of the seed in the fields ... the earth will produce many thorns and thistles."

The trodden path in this painting and the two crows almost hidden in the fields are references to the parable and so van Gogh probably means the sower here as a preacher of God's Word and even as Christ Himself. That Word has been sown in our hearts. It is the source of our hope for salvation despite the difficulties symbolized by the thorns, rocky ground, trodden path and ravenous birds. †

**Fr. Peter Fennessy is superior of the Jesuit Community at Manresa. Since studying Theology and Art and Buddhist Aesthetics during a sabbatical year at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, CA, he uses fine art to illustrate his preached retreats and teaches Manresa's Praying with Art.**

## Prayer of Hope

By St. Claude de la Colombiere

My God, I am so convinced that You keep watch over those who hope in You, and that we can want for nothing when we look for all in You, that I am resolved in the future to live free from every care, and to turn all my anxieties over to You. "In peace, in the selfsame, I will sleep and I will rest, for Thou, O Lord, singularly hast settled me in hope." (Ps 4: 9-10)

Men may deprive me of possessions and of honor; sickness may strip me of strength and the means of serving You. I may even lose Your grace by sin; but I shall never lose my hope. I shall keep it to the last moment of my life; and at that moment all the demons in hell will strive to tear it from me in vain. "In peace, in the selfsame, I will sleep and I will rest."

Others may look for happiness from their wealth or their talents; others may rest on the innocence of their life, or the severity of their penance, or the amount of their alms, or the fervor of their prayers. "Thou, O Lord, singularly hast settled me in hope." As for me, Lord, all my confidence is confidence itself. This confidence has never deceived anyone. No one, no one who has hoped in the Lord has been confounded!

I am sure, therefore, that I shall be eternally happy, since I firmly hope to be, and because it is from You, O GOD, that I hope for it. "In Thee, O LORD, have I hoped; let me never be confounded." (Ps 30:1) I know, alas! I know only too well, that I am weak and unstable. I know what temptation can do against the strongest virtue. I have seen the stars of heaven fall, and the pillars of the firmament; but that cannot frighten me. So long as I continue to hope, I shall be sheltered from all misfortune; and I am sure of hoping always, since I hope also for this unwavering hopefulness!

Finally, I am sure that I cannot hope too much in You, and that I cannot receive less than I have hoped for from You. So, I hope You will hold me safe on the steepest slopes, that You will sustain me against the most furious assaults, and that You will make my weaknesses triumph over my most fearful enemies. I hope that You will love me always, and that I too shall love You without ceasing. To carry my hope once and for all as far as it can go, I hope from You to possess You, O my Creator, in time and in eternity.

AMEN.

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# The Mission of Manresa!

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# MEMORIAL AND HONORARY GIFTS

Gifts received July 1–Dec. 31, 2024

**In Memory of Denise Anderson**  
Anne Smith

**In Memory of The Antkoviak Family**  
Peter Antkoviak

**In Honor of Mark & Sara Aune**  
Judith Pasich

**In Memory of Yacoub & Hasina Battah**  
Athir and Nadia Battah

**In Memory of Rita Bielski**  
The Bielski Family

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Patricia Bontomasi

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Lawrence Walker

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Christopher Ruth  
Andrew Szot  
Stanley & Elaine Szot

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Lucia Dubois

**In Memory of C. James Clemens**  
Barbara Clemens

**In Memory of Albert J. Combs**  
Roger Combs

**In Memory of Richard & Martha Condit**  
Michael & Marleen Condit

**In Honor of Joe Dawson & Margaret Egan**  
Chip & Mary Jo Dawson

**In Honor of Ann Dillon & Cathy Selin**  
Ellen Crum

**In Memory of Raymond R. Ebbing**  
Ray & Sue Ebbing

**In Memory of Ronald Fantino**  
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Constance Miller  
David & Kay Morrison

**In Memory of Fr. Walter Farrell, SJ**  
Anne Small

**In Honor of Fr. Peter Fennessy SJ**  
Anne Small

**In Memory of Angela Fifielski**  
Bill & Kathy Mattingly

**In Honor of the good work of Frank and his birthday (hush!)**  
Derick & Diane Grembi  
Nicholas Kozak

**In Memory of Serafino & Emilia Giommi**  
Gasper & Anna Marie Ruffino

**In Memory of The Gnau Family**  
Julie Pulte

**In Honor of Lynn Guenther**  
Robert & Janice Guenther

**In Honor of George & Ann Hoenscheid**  
Rene & Jacqueline Hoenscheid

**In Memory of Thomas J. Hughes**  
Phyllis Hughes

**In Memory of Bridget Hurley**  
Bob & Maggie Neaton

**In Memory of John P. Jacobs**  
Linda Jacobs

**In Memory of Fr. Ken Kaucke**  
Louis DiMambro  
Alda Marie McCook  
Patricia Pillot  
Robert Sell  
Theresa Wulbrecht

**In Memory of Ron Kleinstiver**  
Michael & Gail Horback  
Connie Kleinstiver

**In Memory of Nicholas Klingler**  
Fritz & JoJo Klingler

**In Memory of Kenton Kurth**  
Philip & Judith Kurth

**In Memory of Fr. Charles Law of St. Xavier's, Nepal**  
Satinder Mundra

**In Memory of Anna Lewenz**  
Elaine Lewenz-Manix

**In Memory of Dan Lowe**  
Tony Minish

**In Memory of David Lengyel**  
Kurt White

**In Memory of Frances & Gordon Lewandowski**  
Tom & Judy Winkler

**In Honor of Pete Luyckx**  
David & Ann Ottenhoff

**In Memory of Deceased Manresa Jesuits & Retreatants**  
Gregory Osowski

**In Honor of the Manresa Jesuit Community**  
DiAnne Schultz

**In Honor of Manresa Priests**  
Wilma Haataja

**In Honor of Manresa Staff**  
Richard Jobbagy

**In Honor of Manresa Staff & Volunteers**  
Joseph Troy

**In Memory of Leonard P. Matusko**  
Illene Lipski

**In Memory of Mary McKeon**  
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**In Memory of John Thomas McMahon III**  
Mary Oliver

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Claire Michelini

**In Honor of Kathy Mills**  
Diane Claeys  
Barbara Lepri

**In Honor of Fr. Bernie Owens, SJ**  
Anne Small

**In Honor of Sergio Pagés**  
Adam Seneski

**In Honor of Joseph & Lucy Pas**  
Fran Tatarelli

**In Honor of Steve Raymond**  
William & Caprice McGrail

**In Memory of Gary F. Roby**  
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**In Memory of Karen Rygiel**  
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Steven & Ann Rygiel  
Tim Theriault  
Walter & Therese Wolf

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Paul Ragheb

**In Honor of Victor Saccaro**  
Maureen Kennedy

**In Memory of Nick Sharkey**  
Dan & Patty Sharkey

**In Memory of Alex & Mary Jane Simmons**  
Bradley M. Simmons Revocable Trust

**In Honor of Fr. Dave Speicher**  
St. Jude Parish Staff

**In Honor of Jerry & Carole Sugrue's 50th Wedding Anniversary**  
Nichele Slazinski

**In Memory of Don & Mary Ternes**  
Janene Ternes

**In Honor of Leonard Waske**  
Steven & Susan Raymond

**In Memory of Joseph Weibel**  
Michael & Paula Weibel

**In Memory of Arnold Zawacki**  
Marilyn Zawacki

## Awards July 1–December 31, 2024

**Manresa Pin**  
15 Retreats

Naji Arwashan  
Tim Dimock

Edward C. Fiscus  
John M. Head

David Hutka  
James W. Lemert

Mark R. Messina  
Amy Mok

Raymond W. Morganti  
Robert I. Sattler

Frank Tello  
James Wilkins  
Monir Yaldo

**Manresa Crest**  
25 Retreats

Robert J. Barrett  
James J. Jennings  
Gerald E. McCrate  
Timothy Theisen

**Manresa Blazer**  
50 Retreats  
Thomas Youngblood

## Born into Resurrection

July 1–December 31, 2024

Sr. Deborah Ciolek, F.S.S.J., 3 retreats  
Sr. Barbara Dakoske, 1 retreats  
Joseph Dillon, 2 retreats  
Lou Dimambro, 1 retreat  
Thomas Kennedy, 4 retreats  
Richard Maciejewski, 9 retreats  
Sam Romano, 5 retreats  
Karen Rygiel, 4 retreats  
Jerome "Jerry" Schmidt, 36 retreats  
Diane Seavitt-Conway, 9 retreats

# ON TO THE SUMMIT: Finding hope in college



By Charles Stevens



**AS I STAND ON THE BRINK OF A NEW CHAPTER, I CONTEMPLATE HOW HOPE HAS SHAPED MY COLLEGE experience and future aspirations.**

I graduated from high school during the pandemic. Like most Americans, I was forced to find hope in unconventional places. I knew I wouldn't let a pandemic stop me from starting my college experience.

I had faced obstacles before. In grade school, I needed more help in reading and writing than other students. I attended a Montessori school from first through eighth grade, where I received help with speech, emotions, reading and writing. I recently visited that school and was able to reconnect with my former teachers. Following this reconnection, I realized that they cultivated my hope and dream of becoming a teacher from a young age.

Before starting college, I was a very hopeful person, but after my first semester, I noticed my level of hope deteriorating rather quickly. By my second semester, I realized that I would have to look for hope beyond my college experience. From the second semester of freshman year forward, my vision came from what I planned to achieve after graduation.

When I graduate with a double major in history and journalism in the fall of 2025, I plan to teach history to the

next generation of students. I have set a goal to earn my master's in history, which will open the door for me to teach European history (my focus) at the college level. History is not a subject for everyone; many even find it boring. I hope I can inspire others to experience history as I do and feel a level of excitement for a subject I love.

As I work toward graduating, I am hopeful for three things: first, if I choose to teach below the college level, I will be able to provide students with a newfound interest or a love of history. Second, I hope my former students will return and say I'm majoring in history because you ignited my love of the subject at a young age. Third, if I achieve my goal of teaching at the college level, I hope to instill a lasting impact on my students as my teachers and professors did for me.

Teaching has always been my goal, especially at the college level. When I finished my history requirements, I emailed one of my professors and said, "It is my hope that when I eventually become a professor, I will be able to make the same lasting impact on my students' lives that you've made on mine."

As Martin Luther put it: "Everything that is done in the world is done by hope." †

**Charles Stevens is completing his senior year at Oakland University. The son of Manresa's business manager Ruth Ann Stevens, he is a firm believer in the power of hope and its ability to transform lives. He seeks to inspire others with his optimistic outlook.**

# Christ offers hope and peace through inner healing retreat

By Deborah Tourville with Fr. John Esper



**THE PILGRIMAGE OF HOPE INITIATED BY POPE FRANCIS LAST MAY IS NEVER MORE PERSONAL OR IMPACTFUL THAN** in the work of inner healing. These 25-year Jubilees seem to capture the hope and freedom found in inner healing. We are all on a pilgrimage to find our inner home. When our inner home is hidden or battered by consistent negative or traumatic experiences, hope ignites the courage to seek a way forward.



In the journey to find our home in the truth of Christ, both the healer and those seeking healing are animated by the virtue of hope. We have had the privilege of leading an Inner Healing Retreat at Manresa for well over ten years. The grace this time offers has

impacted our own healing as much as we have seen healing in our retreatants.

We feel hope for the weekend before it starts. As we pray and prepare our talks and review the names of those who will attend, we begin to anticipate the graces participants will receive in their desire for freedom. This hope is palpable in the grace God so faithfully gives. A trust is built in those seeking a new peace in themselves through Christ. Through the years, we have learned to trust that the Lord will act on behalf of those who ardently seek the power of love to become more fully themselves.

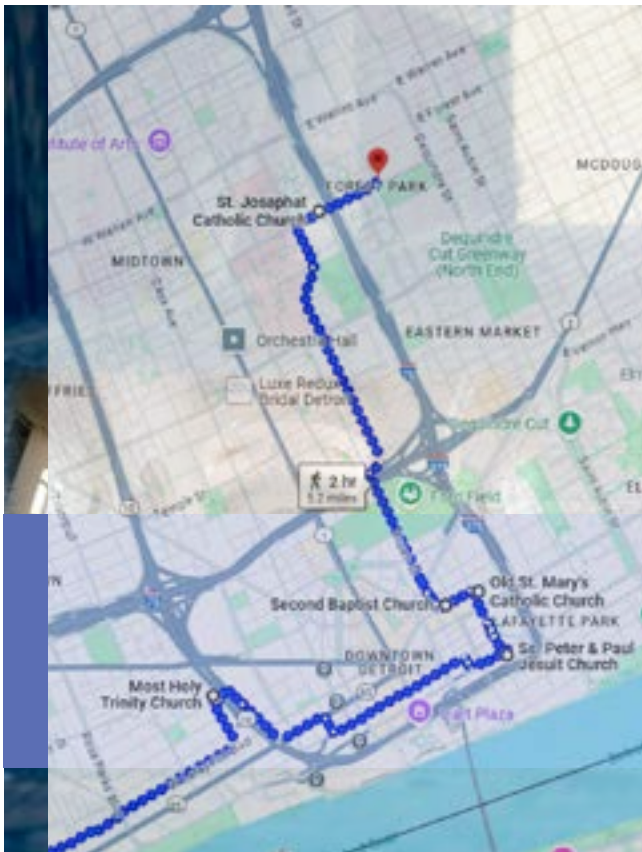
As we gather on Friday evening, there is a felt sadness, a heaviness, even a doubting resistance. As we enter

the first talk reflecting on the merciful, freely given love of Christ, the mood begins to soften. Building hope in the retreatants begins with a new image of God that can inspire a new image of self, knowing the love of Jesus. The lie of sin, unworthiness and rejection is replaced with a new acceptance in the love of Christ that confirms their value, worthiness and maturing oneness in Christ.

The signs of hope seen in the receiver heightens the hope and energy of the retreat leaders, prayer teams and spiritual companions. During personal prayer time with a team member, it is amazing to see God work in the few minutes we spend with each person. The power of that grace is unmistakable. Even the most hesitant or doubtful retreatant is often brought to tears by the grace they encounter.

The greatest joy comes on Sunday morning as each person is invited to share the grace that most moved them. No longer sad or resistant, many are animated in the awareness of a newfound peace. This journey into grace has brought them to a new inner home in the truth of divine love. With hope renewed, there is a new openness to give and receive love. Any healer knows the grace of healing is in Christ alone. As we journey to Christ, it is He who is already on a pilgrimage to bring hope to us. It is ours to allow and accept. †

**Deborah Tourville is a commissioned spiritual director and retreat leader and serves as business manager and pastoral minister at St. Vincent Ferrer Parish in Madison Heights. Fr. John Esper is pastor of St. Vincent Ferrer Parish. He offers inner healing retreats and workshops and continues to celebrate healing Masses.**



## Visiting sacred spaces as a pilgrim of hope

By Madeline Bialecki



**A FRIEND  
RECENTLY  
TOLD ME THAT SHE**

is going to Rome and planning to walk the Seven Churches Pilgrimage in one day, a route that

covers about 15 miles. She inspired me to plan a pilgrimage of my own, perhaps something less daunting than the 485-mile Camino de Santiago or even 15 miles.

Merriam-Webster defines pilgrimage as “a journey of a pilgrim; especially one to a shrine or a sacred place.”

Many years ago, I read the book, *The Way of a Pilgrim*, and the idea of wandering and praying unceasingly appealed to me. In this book, the journey mattered as much as the destination, the idea of praying along the way.

This year is a Jubilee Year in the Catholic Church, and the theme is Pilgrims of Hope. Both words—pilgrim and hope—appeal to me, and I want to participate in this Jubilee Year, but

Rome is not on my itinerary, so I am going to do a pilgrimage to seven churches in Detroit.

I will start at Saint Anne's Basilica, the second oldest Catholic church in the US, founded in 1701. I have been to Saint Anne's before but am up for revisiting as part of a pilgrimage. My pilgrimage will also include Most Holy Trinity (1834) and Saints Peter and Paul (1848), both of which I have also been to before.

Sweetest Heart of Mary (1894), founded by Polish immigrants, is on my list and is a church I have never visited. I have also never been to St. Josaphat (1889) nor Old St. Mary's (1834), two other historic churches in Detroit.

I would also like to visit Second Baptist Church, which was the first African American church in Detroit (1836) and was part of the underground railroad.

The walking route for this pilgrimage is just over five miles, and I could walk that distance in one day. But a pilgrimage is about more than checking items off a list. It is about

allowing what I see and feel to touch me and transform me. It is about a spiritual destination more than a physical one, so if I find something transformative in the first church and decide to stay there all day, that's OK.

Entering historic churches is a mystical experience for me. Before I enter, I remind myself of the thousands of people who have prayed and received the sacraments there over the years and how I am entering into the midst of their prayers, like walking through incense rising to God. Inside, I imagine parents and grandparents praying for their wayward children and others praying for someone who is sick or going through a rough time. I join my prayers to theirs, and my faith and hope are strengthened by their witness. †

***Madeline Bialecki lived most of her adult life in southeast Pennsylvania. She attended Villanova University and worked in nonprofit management for 35 years. She moved to Michigan ten years ago and completed the Internship in Spiritual Companionship at Manresa. She now serves as Manresa's Development Assistant.***

# Manresa offers a sacred space to ISP retreatants for spiritual renewal

By Etta MacDonagh-Dumler



## FOR ABOUT TEN YEARS, THE DETROIT CHAPTER

of the Ignatian Spirituality Project (ISP) has invited men and women in recovery from homelessness and addictions to

experience overnight retreats and ongoing reflection programs. ISP believes that spirituality has an important role to play in the journey of recovery, offering lasting hope to those who participate in its programs.

The Detroit chapter is part of the national ISP program founded over 25 years ago by Bill Creed, SJ and Ed Shurna, who worked for the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless. Today, Detroit ISP is one of 20 cities nationwide offering men's and women's' overnight retreats and regular spiritual reflections programs.

The Detroit retreats are mostly held at the Manresa and Colombiere retreat centers. ISP relies on shelter partners or residential recovery programs to recommend potential retreatants. Ideally, they will have three months of sobriety.

There are separate overnight men's and women's retreats. Each retreat hosts 12 retreatants and follows an outline attuned to the movements of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius and the Twelve Steps recovery program. The retreats have the flexibility to adapt to the situations and persons making the retreat. No one retreat is the same as the others. Each takes on the character and temperament of all the participants.

ISP retreats stress God's unconditional love, hospitality and

faith-sharing that is welcoming and accepting. Retreatants are drawn into seeing themselves as beloved children of a loving Creator. Friendships and bonds are formed through small and large group sharing. Significant moments of hope occur in each retreat through a healing-of-memories ritual and other activities. There are tears and laughter, sadness and joy, creativity and fun and time for prayer throughout the retreat.

Our most recent women's retreat was held in October 2024 at Manresa with women from Grace Centers of Hope and Paula's House residential recovery programs. The women were anxious at first, not knowing what a retreat experience might be like. By the end of the retreat, in an accepting, Spirit-filled space, they gave voice to the spirituality of their own experience:

*I discovered that I have courage and it's OK to express my feelings... This retreat has helped me realize the unconditional love that God has for us.*

*I experienced the love of Jesus at work within me.*

*I realized that I am closer to God than I thought and that I will continue to grow in Christ.*

*The retreat has really impacted my recovery by reconnecting me with God.*

*I am worth loving and saving...*

*I am strong.*

*I am spiritual.*

Others expressed how beautiful and peaceful Manresa's house and grounds are and how safe it felt in this sacred space. One woman went several times to the Emmaus sculpture in the garden just to reach out and hold the hand of Jesus.



ISP is compassion-based discipleship in action. It draws all of us involved (team and retreatants) together to become participants. We meet those who may be different from ourselves or who share our own experience. We meet those who have had no place to lay their head (Matt 8:20), who have lived being unhoused and survived on the streets struggling with addictions, and who have lost so much including access to their own children. As participants, both the retreat team and retreatants discover our common ground. All of us are in some stage of recovery and share a desire to make life-giving choices. Each participant offers a visible witness of courage and bravery in walking the new way as they become aware of a new inner strength. The courage shown is remarkable and inspires us in becoming pilgrims of hope lighting the path before us. †

For more information about ISP or to learn about becoming a volunteer, email Allison Loecke at [aloecke@ispreteats.org](mailto:aloecke@ispreteats.org).

**Etta MacDonagh-Dumler is a member of the Detroit ISP team, spiritual director and Manresa board member. She and her husband Jon live in Ann Arbor and are members of St Mary Student Parish.**



## Permanent deacons as missionaries of hope

By Dcn. Mike Stewart



### **B**UT WHAT IF THE CHEMO DOESN'T WORK, THEN WHAT?

*I just feel like such a failure at relationships. I'm about ready to give up believing that there's somebody out there for me.*

*The world just seems like such a dark place right now. So much bad stuff.*

The people behind the stories change, and indeed the stories themselves are unique to each person, but always, there is a common theme running through the narratives of those who seek pastoral guidance. At times, it seems as though hope is as difficult to find as toilet paper at the height of the COVID pandemic!

As a permanent deacon serving the Archdiocese of Detroit, I've been blessed to offer pastoral support and spiritual guidance to many people during my 15 years of ordained ministry. I also serve as a police chaplain, and what's oddly similar in my vocations as a deacon and a chaplain is that no one seeks help on their best day. It is into that void that deacons accept the challenge of Pope Francis in this Jubilee Year 2025 to be "tangible signs of hope" for those God calls us to serve who live outside of hope.

So how can I, as a deacon, be a tangible sign of hope for those whom God calls me to serve?

Deacons occupy a unique role within the rhythm of the parish, and indeed in the broader Church and community as well. While permanent deacons are ordained clerics,

they uniquely have a foot in both the ordained and secular worlds. Most deacons are married or widowed, and many have children or grandchildren. Most either have or are retired from secular careers. These life circumstances often lead people who are struggling with life issues to seek the guidance of a deacon who appears relatable.

For me personally, a significant portion of my ministry to the five parishes I serve, as well as a Catholic high school and grade school, is spent in helping restore lost hope. Into that sacred space, I increasingly see the effects of a culture lost in hopelessness. Whether it comes from broken relationships, unfulfilled expectations, grief over a myriad of losses or simply fear of the future, the light of hope is missing from the lives of many. It is into that void that permanent deacons can be tangible signs of hope, since we have often experienced healing within the very same life realities in our marriages, our families, our work and even in our ministries.

Pope Francis' prayer for all of us in this Jubilee Year is that we be renewed in hope. As deacons, we've accepted the call to be missionaries of hope on the front lines of a culture of hopelessness, inspired by the words of St. Paul in Romans 5:5, "...hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us." †

**Dcn. Mike Stewart serves the Monroe Family of Parishes as well as St. Mary Catholic Central High School and Monroe Catholic Elementary School. He also serves as Assistant Director of Permanent Diaconate Vocations for the Archdiocese of Detroit and is in the first year of the Internship in Spiritual Companionship at Manresa.**

# When life is hard, plant seeds of hope with gratitude

By Lori Kneisler



**G**RATITUDE COMES MORE EASILY TO SOME PEOPLE THAN TO OTHERS.

**MY OWN GRATITUDE PRACTICE IS**

often effortless and satisfying, but when life gets challenging, I must work harder to be grateful. I want to feel the kind of hope that is firmly rooted in an unshakable experience of God's abundant love for me, but instead I

hone in on all that's wrong, berate myself and make those around me miserable. My ingratitude chokes off hope.

Saint Ignatius considered gratitude the most important virtue and ingratitude the source of all sin. Ingratitude, he said, is rooted in ignorance because we are blind to who God truly is. Gratitude, therefore, sits prominently at the beginning of the Ignatian Examen prayer. Modern science corroborates what Ignatius knew—gratitude is good for us. Among other benefits, it boosts immunity, enables better sleep, enriches relationships, bolsters mental strength and reduces negative emotions. Most of all, when done from a posture of prayer, gratitude puts God and His goodness properly at the center. This is where hope can sprout and flourish.

During a challenging period in my recent past, I resorted to my well-worn practice of complaining to anyone who would listen while begging God for a quick resolution. As I cast about for solutions, a wise friend redirected me with a question: What might God be offering? This seemingly simple question has opened up an approach to gratitude that has been life-affirming for me. Gratitude has become my path to hope, and a modified Examen is my roadmap.

## **Gratitude Prayer Practice – Past, Present, Future**

I periodically pray an extended Examen where I consider my past, present and future. As I engage with God in prayer, considering gratitude from these three different vantage points helps me identify God's provisions along my path, reminding me that hope really does rise from gratitude.

If I'm troubled by the past, I offer God my history and ask how do You want me to carry my memories? Surrendering my memories to God requires a certain amount of courage and trust. Generally, I prefer to cling to my perspective, justifying my actions and point of view. Instead, God invites me to let my history be an agent of transformation. I can't rewrite the past, but I can choose to view it through the lens of gifts and gratitude. Where was God beside me in the darkness? Who bore Christ to me? What were the moments of fulfillment, safety or rejuvenation? How did this shape my character to be more Christlike? Letting God heal and



shape yesterday's memories helps form today's character. In this way, God and I build a personal history, and I can live more hopefully into the future.

If I'm fretting about a current situation, I ask God how are You offering me hope and buoying me up? I consider if I'm responding with trust and openness rather than suspicion and dread. Holding expectations can dull my radar to the ways God is moving, so I consider if I'm searching for certain outcomes. If it's a difficult day, I ask for the grace to see the opportunity in each moment. I trust God's movement in both my graced and sinful parts, and I pray to receive the gifts of the day with hope and realism.

Finally, if I'm anxious about the future, I ask God, what is my growing edge and how can I trust You more? My desire is to cultivate an interior posture of hopeful expectation. This is not just an antidote to anxiety, but also a way of proceeding. Since I'm prone to what-if ruminating, I try to place trust in God as the object of my focus, then make reasonable contingency plans. Curiosity about possibilities helps me feel hopeful, and I am receptive to God and His surprises.

## **Try It!**

Praying in this way through my past, present and future has strengthened my gratitude "muscle" while helping me remember that God is present in everything. Gratitude interrupts my cycle of scanning for the negative and makes it easier to have hope during troubling times. To find hope, be grateful! †

*Lori Kneisler has more than 20 years of experience leading Bible studies and spiritual formation groups. She completed Manresa's Internship in Spiritual Companionship in 2016 and serves as spiritual director in a variety of capacities including guiding people through the Spiritual Exercises. Lori is also a Manresa board member.*

# Conference Retreats

Retreat Format is silent unless otherwise noted. A non-refundable, non-transferable \$50 deposit per person is required for all retreats. To register for retreats, click on the retreat date or go to [manresa-sj.org/events](http://manresa-sj.org/events) or call 248.644.4933 Ext. 0.

## Retreats for Men

**Friday-Sunday, Apr. 11-13**  
**Palm Sunday**

**Patron:** St. Gabriel Lalemant, SJ  
**Director:** Fr. Robert Scullin, SJ

**Friday-Sunday, Apr. 25-27**  
**To Know Christ Jesus**

**Patron:** Our Lady of the Way **Director:** Fr. Peter Fennessy, SJ

**Friday-Sunday, Aug. 1-3**  
**Men in Recovery**

**Patron:** Fr. Jack Schuett, SJ

**Friday-Sunday, Aug. 22-24**

**Patron:** St. Stephen Pongrácz, SJ

**Friday-Sunday, Sept. 5-7**

**Patron:** Blessed Sebastian Kimura, SJ

**Friday-Sunday, Sept. 26-28**

**Patron:** St. Francis Borgia, SJ

**Thursday-Sunday, Oct. 2-5**  
**(4 Days)**

**Patron:** St. John Ogilvie, SJ

**Friday-Sunday, Oct. 17-19**

**Patron:** St. Alphonsus Rodriguez, SJ

**Friday-Sunday, Oct. 24-26**

**Patron:** St. Stanislaus Kostka, SJ

**Friday-Sunday, Oct. 31-Nov. 2**

**Patron:** Blessed Rupert Mayer, SJ

**Friday-Sunday, Dec. 5-7**

**Patron:** St. Francis Xavier, SJ

## Retreats for Religious Sisters

**Sunday,-Friday, Sept. 21-26**

**Patron:** St. Margaret Mary Alacoque  
**Note:** Ends after lunch on Friday

## Retreats for Women

**Friday-Sunday, May 9-11**  
**Hope Springs Forth**

**Patron:** Mother of the Society of Jesus  
**Format:** Silent and optional sharing  
**Director:** Sr. Linda Sevcik, SM

**Friday-Sunday, May 23-25**  
**Women in Recovery**

**Patron:** Fr. Frederick A. Harkins, SJ  
**Format:** Silence and some sharing  
**Director:** Terry Sullivan

*Hope is hearing  
the melody of the future;  
faith is dancing to it in the present.* – Ruben Alves

## Retreats for Men & Women

**Friday-Sunday, Apr. 4-6**  
**To Know Christ Jesus**

**Patron:** St. Peter Canisius, SJ **Director:** Fr. Peter Fennessy, SJ

**Thursday-Saturday, Apr. 17-19**  
**Holy Week**

**Patron:** Fr. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, SJ **Director:** Fr. Bob Ytsen, SJ **Note:** No lunch on Saturday

**Friday-Sunday, May 2-4**  
**Christian Meditation**

**Patron:** Fr. Roberto de Nobili, SJ **Directors:** Fr. Leo Cachat, SJ, Mary Gresens & DiAnne Schultz **Note:** No dinner on Friday; ends after lunch on Sunday

**Friday-Sunday, May 30-June 1**  
**Spanish-speaking Adults**

**Patron:** St. Alberto Hurtado, SJ **Format:** Silent with some sharing **Directors:** Team led by Fr. Robert Scullin, SJ **Note:** Ends Sunday at 3:00 PM, lunch included

**Friday-Sunday, June 6-8**  
**Care of Earth**

**Format:** Silent and some sharing  
**Director:** Mr. Mark Blancke, SJ

**Friday-Sunday, June 20-22**

**Patron:** Sr. Mary Ward, IBVM **Director:** Fr. Bob Ytsen, SJ

**Thursday-Sunday, Oct. 9-12**  
**(4 Days)**

**Patron:** Blessed Dominic Collins, SJ

**Friday-Sunday, Nov. 7-9**

**Patron:** Blessed Miguel Pro, SJ

**Friday-Sunday, Nov. 21-23**  
**Women in Recovery**

**Patron:** Fr. Edward Dowling, SJ

**Friday-Sunday, June 27-29**  
**Urban Parishes**

**Patron:** St. Peter Claver, SJ **Format:** Silent with some sharing **Directors:** Team led by Fr. Robert Scullin, SJ

**Friday-Sunday, July 25-27**  
**Traditionally Married Couples**

**Patron:** St. Ignatius of Loyola

**Friday-Sunday, Aug. 29-31**  
**Gift and Gratitude: Finding God in All Things (Christian Yoga)**

**Patron:** Fr. John LaFarge, SJ **Directors:** Fr. Leo Cachat, SJ, Mary Gresens and DiAnne Schultz **Note:** No dinner on Friday; ends after lunch on Sunday

**Tuesday-Thursday, Sept. 9-11**  
**(Midweek)**

**Patron:** Blessed Francisco Gárate, SJ  
**Note:** Ends after lunch on Thursday

**Friday-Sunday, Sept. 12-14**  
**Healing**

**Patron:** St. John de Brebeuf, SJ  
**Directors:** Fr. John Esper and Debbie Tourville **Note:** Dinner on Friday at 6:00 PM

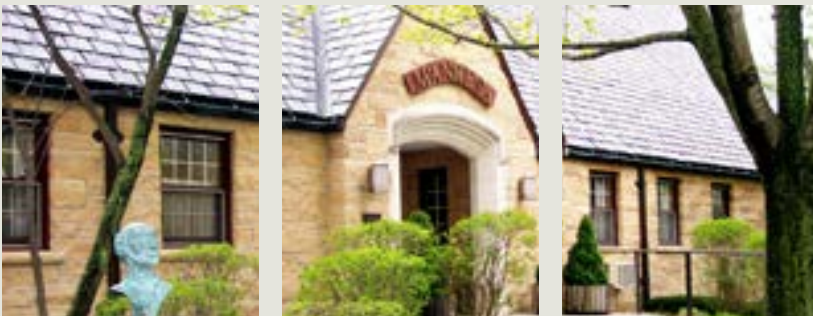
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*Spirit of Manresa*  
2025  
BANQUET

Thursday, May 1, 2025  
Cocktails 5:00 PM | Program 6:00 PM

THE MINT  
At Michigan First Conference Center  
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(NE Corner of I-696 & Evergreen)

*Keynote Address*

Hope Does Not Disappoint



V. Rev.  
Karl J. Kiser, SJ  
Provincial,  
USA Midwest  
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