



Manresa Matters

Manresa Jesuit Retreat House

1390 Quarton Road • Bloomfield Hills, MI 48304-3554

Spring / Summer
2021

248.644.4933

www.manresa-sj.org

To help men and women grow spiritually through prayer, reflection, guidance and teaching according to the Ignatian tradition



*"With joy you will draw water
from the wells of salvation." ~ Is. 12:3*



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Comments, suggestions, story ideas, photos of Manresa?
 Please write to us via email at editor@manresa-sj.org or use Manresa's postal address.

From the Editor

After each new issue of *Manresa Matters* I added a framed cover to my office wall and joked that once I ran out of wall space I would have to retire. Well, as you can see by the accompanying photo, I've run out of wall space! But seriously, despite that coincidence, my decision to retire this May was a result of sensing God calling me to a more contemplative life and to prayerfully discern His future plans for me.

And the fact that my decision reflects the theme of this issue—"From Prayer to Purpose"—is actually another coincidence. The publications team wanted to show that time spent in prayerful activities such as retreats, Mass, Scripture reading, Christian meditation and so forth often leads to a loving response to God. You will find examples throughout these pages, such as how:

- Jesuit-directed silent retreats led to increasing church involvement and outreach (p. 4)
- Manresa's Internship awakened a love for children's ministries (p. 9)
- Praying the Stations touched the heart of a grounds contractor (p. 13)
- Walking Manresa's campus after morning Mass revealed God's love in nature (p. 15)



We hope you enjoy reading these and the numerous other personal accounts of how lives were changed through prayerful encounters with the Lord, as well as the spiritual reflections written by current and former Executive Directors Sr. Linda Sevcik and Fr. Fran Daly (p. 3) and staff Jesuits Fr. Bob Ytsen (p. 5) and Fr. Peter Fennessy (p. 7).

I'd like to conclude my last column as Editor of *Manresa Matters* by thanking the Jesuits, staff, volunteers, Women-to-Women participants, daily Mass attendees, retreatants and other guests who have blessed me with words of support, encouragement and prayer throughout my seven-plus years on staff. Last but not least I want to thank my fellow publications team members (see their picture and names below) who've made this publication what it is and who've become dear friends in the joyful process. All will remain forever in my heart and prayers!

Anne Smith

Cover photo of the Tuomey Fountain on Manresa's campus, courtesy of Anne Smith.



Publications Team members pictured from left to right are Paul Seibold, Grace Seroka, Fr. Peter Fennessy, SJ, George Seroka, Steve Raymond, Anne Smith and Hugh Buchanan.

Do you want to learn more about Manresa?

Manresa is not just a retreat house . . . We also offer days of prayer and reflection, workshops, a Seminar in Ignatian Spirituality, an Internship in Spiritual Companionship and much more!

Our sister publication, *Manresa Memos*, will keep you informed of upcoming offerings. Visit the publications page on our website or sign up for electronic delivery at www.manresa-sj.org/publication-form/.

From Our Executive Director

Following are some powerful words attributed to Fr. Pedro Arrupe, SJ, Superior General of the Society of Jesus from 1965-1983. (His cause for canonization was opened in 2019.)

Nothing is more practical than finding God, than falling in Love in a quite absolute, final way. What you are in love with, what seizes your imagination, will affect everything. It will decide what will get you out of bed in the morning, what you do with your evenings, how you spend your weekends, what you read, whom you know, what breaks your heart, and what amazes you with joy and gratitude. Fall in Love, stay in love, and it will decide everything.

This has been one of the most influential writings of my life from the time I first found it, many years ago. It makes the integral connection between our life of prayer and relationship of deep love with God and every decision

we make, no matter how small that decision may seem, e.g., what gets us out of bed in the morning. To take another example from the passage, this falling in love with God will decide “what breaks your heart.” For me, that includes situations of great need or injustice we perceive around us, involving God’s own beloved sons and daughters. If I allow myself, in prayer, to see these situations as God sees them, this injustice will affect me deeply (break my heart) and guide me toward acting as Jesus would.



Linda Sevcik, SM

The theme of this *Manresa Matters* is “From Prayer to Purpose.” I invite you to reflect prayerfully with each phrase of the passage above and perceive what the Spirit draws you to consider more carefully.

I have given a small number of retreats at Manresa over the past seven or eight years, so have met some of our readers. I look forward to renewing acquaintance with those, and to meeting others for the first time during the coming year. Let us keep one another in prayer.

Sr. Linda Sevcik, SM



Thanks to the generosity of our donors, the barn that was destroyed by fire in 2019 is being replaced by a new one, with part of the original cupola installed to preserve a part of its history.

(Photos courtesy of Steve Raymond and Paul Seibold.)

From Our Former Executive Director

I am glad to welcome Sr. Linda Sevcik, SM, our new Executive Director to Manresa Jesuit Retreat House. I am grateful for her willingness to assume leadership of Manresa during this pandemic and look forward to collaborating with her in the days ahead. During my seven years as Executive Director of Manresa, I am also very grateful to Christ and all those who have labored with me to create a space for all who come to Manresa to encounter our loving God. I hope our retreatants realize God is not far from any of us, since it is in Him that we live, move and have our being. I have always valued Teilhard de Chardin’s insight: “By virtue of Creation and still more the Incarnation, nothing is profane to those who know how to see.” May God help us to continue to improve our seeing life from His perspective and living it in our everyday lives.

Our time of quiet prayer raises our consciousness of God’s presence and helps us see our real world as it is. God enables us to see and hear the cry of the poor, the hungry, the homeless and those suffering from the coronavirus. Ignatius stressed that love is manifested in deeds. He refused to see contemplation as being in opposition to action or incompatible with it. As a contemplative in action, he realized that our view of politics and finances is not separated from our religious values and judgments. May God strengthen us to meet the challenges of serving our sisters and brothers today.



Francis J. Daly, SJ

~ by Fran J. Daly, SJ

What's It All About, Alfie?

Manresa is a sacred place, sanctified by prayer and sacrament and silence.

I had never experienced a retreat before Manresa, even at the Jesuit university I attended. The closest was a “day of reflection” in high school with kumbaya sing-alongs, “what-kind-of-tree-are-you?” discussions and sending up prayers in balloons.

I don't remember why I accepted the invitation to come to Manresa in 1991 when at the time the last thing I wanted was to talk about faith. I had just recently come back to the Church after several years. I still felt like a visitor in my parish, St. Thomas More in Troy, Michigan. I had no sense of purpose then. So my first surprise and joy of Manresa was the silence. At first it was just relief that I didn't have to talk to anybody, but I came to cherish it. A second joy was the example of the men who'd been coming to Manresa for decades. These two blessings brought me back.

❧
*What is my purpose?
Is what I desire the end
for which God created me?*
❧

My first retreat director was Fr. Jack Schuett. He kept using a line from a 1960's song that I doubt St. Ignatius had in mind for his Spiritual Exercises: “What's it all about, Alfie?” I thought it was silly and half expected *kumbaya* to follow. But as the conferences went on, that weekend and at each retreat over the years, that question really was a spur to prayer and my first entry into the Exercises.

Blessings grew gradually, guided by outstanding directors who helped me think in different ways about what really matters. The Jesuits' reflections on music, art and poetry, history, daily life and relationships, and especially Scripture, drew me to “find God in all things” and to “listen with a discerning heart.” Manresa helped me



John Hannigan has been attending retreats at Manresa for the past 30 years. He is a professor of obstetrics and psychology at Wayne State University and writes a weekly column for his parish bulletin at St. Thomas More.



Pope Francis washing the feet of prisoners, Holy Thursday service 2019.
(Foto ©Vatican Media – used with permission)*

pray by giving me silence, time to listen and guidance in recognizing God's grace, discovering who I am in His eyes and discerning how to live rightly. The annual “recharging of my batteries” on retreat led me to ask, gradually and in different ways over the years, “What is my purpose? Is what I desire the end for which God created me?”

I heard one answer, one call to purpose, in the quiet on maybe my fourth retreat. I volunteered to read at Mass and the idea came that I should lector in my parish, and I do. Over the years, other calls were not as subtle but just as inspired, coming aloud from fellow retreatants or parishioners. In steps, over time, I helped recruit men for retreats and eventually became a captain. I joined the St. Vincent de Paul Conference in my parish and eventually worked a lot with St. Dominic Outreach in Detroit. I joined the parish men's group. More invitations came and I became progressively more involved in adult education, catechesis and evangelization in the parish. And it is not just service. At Manresa, I found purpose in worship, too.

In all these things of prayer and purpose, over all these years, it eventually became clearer that none of what matters is about me. What it is all about should have been clear to me much sooner. It is what St. Ignatius invites us to discover and to exercise. All of us share the one purpose of bringing people to Jesus Christ. Whether proclaiming the Word at Mass, helping at a food pantry, saying grace before meals with my family, teaching a catechumen, or just being before the Blessed Sacrament, all is meant to bring me and others to Christ. What I long to hear still at Manresa, in silence and in prayer, in conferences and sacraments, is the call to use the things of this world and our gifts for God's purpose, in whatever way they help us live *For the Greater Glory of God*. That is what it's all about, Alfie.

~ by John H. Hannigan, PhD

Lectio Humana

This may be a surprising title to a reflection on prayer and apostolic commitment in the Ignatian tradition. It is, however, grounded in Scripture and in Saint Ignatius' experience. To encounter God's presence in our lives, we look to Jesus and consider one man's journey and legacy. The Incarnation reclaimed humanity as God's own. Jesus demonstrated how to use the gifts and talents God bestowed on us when God loved us into being. By misusing our freedom we ruptured the relationship; Jesus showed us the way back. To know and love God, we are called to know and love our human potential: to love and be loved. In the Ignatian tradition, the model is what we name the Ignatian Paradigm: experience, reflection/prayer, action. Each element depends on and energizes the other. Balance is essential.

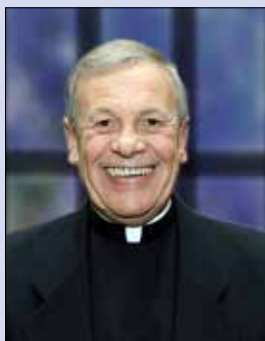


Prayer provides the necessary link between experience and action.



We all have experiences that are unique, and every experience has the potential to reveal God's presence and participation in our lives. Unfortunately, we tend to judge which experiences we wish to affirm or remember. By so doing, we limit where we feel God is present to us. We need to have the courage to open ourselves to God's presence in every part of our experience. Ignatius did this when he was contemplating and praying about his life prior to his injury and recuperation. His conversion was a product of his experience and reflection. It led to his action, which changed his life. It seems his autobiography reveals an imbalance in the paradigm. His impulsive response to the Moors, time in Manresa, travel to Jerusalem, his street preaching, studies in Paris and relationship with the first companions seem to have restored the balance and led to the primacy of prayer and discernment of spirits, a Jesuit guide to prayer and decision making. Prayer provides the necessary link between experience and action.

There are volumes written on prayer, and for me Ignatius' approach to Scripture is the most inspiring and potentially productive. *Lectio divina/humana* allows us to be ourselves



Manresa staff member Fr. Bob Ytsen, SJ is an experienced retreat leader and spiritual director with a proficient knowledge of British literature and Jesuit history. As participant in the Oxbridge program, he studied in Cambridge and Oxford, England and Dublin, Ireland. Fr. Bob taught high school literature for 28 years, directed student retreats and led service programs in Appalachia.

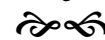


A modern rendition of Konrad Baumeister's 1881 painting of the first vows at Montmartre.

as we bring our experience to an encounter with Jesus. The account of the call of the first disciples in John is most revealing and freeing: "... where are you staying?" "Come and you will see." That is the invitation to prayer that moves me. What we see Jesus doing is teaching, preaching and healing. What we experience is the result: acceptance, affirmation, reconciliation and love. Imagining ourselves being with Jesus allows us to imagine the courage and commitment to follow His lead. Our experience has the potential to reveal acquired wisdom; Jesus used parables to preach, and we have our own stories to share if we have the humility to do so. We are able to heal blindness where prejudice exists, encourage persons to hear when a debilitating self-image makes them deaf to their worth, walk with people who are crippled by any type of addiction, call persons to life when all they see is darkness. Prayer and reflection support our desire and point the way to realizing how to fulfill it.



Imagining ourselves being with Jesus allows us to imagine the courage and commitment to follow His lead.



Jesus knew He needed to pray. There are many instances in Scripture where He "goes off by Himself to pray." We are privileged to witness two intimate and revealing prayers: "Father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me. Nevertheless, let your will be done, not mine." and "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do." He does not hide His fear but desires to be faithful. He has the desire and will to forgive. We are capable of doing the same.

~ by Bob Ytsen, SJ

Leaving Home, Going Home

Now more than ever, our homes are our greatest refuge in an ever-changing landscape, the place of familiarity where we find peace and rest. But do you remember the first time you left the comfort of home behind? I remember quite vividly at the age of eight riding my bike several miles beyond my parents' limits to visit an elderly woman in a nursing home my dad had taken me to several days before. I didn't have anything to offer her, but my Baptist faith had planted a seed of compassion in me.

Throughout high school in Berkley, Michigan that seed of the Holy Spirit continued to be an inner compass for my life, although I didn't recognize it at the time. In 1971, my senior year, I experienced a renewal of love for God's Word through the Church of Christ. I began to share my faith with my classmates and spent evenings cruising Woodward Avenue picking up hitchhikers, sitting in local restaurants and bars with my Bible, breaking open the Word and assisting people with needs both physical and spiritual. I then became involved with the Jesus People movement, comprised of zealous, Spirit-filled youth.

❧
*To follow Jesus is to carry
the cross of broken humanity
in service of the need . . .*
❧

During this time we learned of a pastor in Appalachia in need of clothing for the poor in his community, so we went door-to-door in Berkley and collected more than my van could hold; I rented a U-Haul and drove through the Thanksgiving weekend to make the delivery.

In 1973 my path crossed with a young Catholic girl who had wandered far from home; she gave her life to Jesus, and we were married eight months later. Little did I know that



A former Manresa weekend retreatant with the Holy Name men's group, Steve Duffy attends St. Anastasia Parish in Troy, Michigan, where he serves as the spiritual advisor for its SVDP Conference. Steve is retired after 30 years in the trucking industry and 18 years in the tree industry. He and Lynn have been married 47 years and have four children and ten grandchildren; two sons-in-law are Christian pastors in Grand Rapids.

showing her the way "home" would draw me "home" to the Catholic faith! In 2000 I entered the RCIA program at Holy Name Parish in Birmingham, and my wife reexamined her Catholic roots at the invitation of her brother, who had become a priest. Our home together in the Catholic Church opened a whole new avenue of ministry to the poor, less fortunate and disenfranchised through the St. Vincent DePaul (SVDP) Society.



The Good Samaritan from the chapel at Mwangaza Jesuit Retreat Centre, Nairobi, Kenya (photo courtesy of George Seroka).

I first became aware of this ministry while attending St. Anastasia in Troy. I was trying to get a car for a parishioner and asked the secretary if we could run an ad in the bulletin concerning his need. She said they couldn't do that but they were meeting to start a SVDP Conference the following week. An elderly woman at the parish had passed and left a portion of her estate to fund a Conference there: talk about treasure from heaven! We currently assist 50 to 60 families a year stopping evictions, preventing shutoffs, arranging car repairs, health and medical assistance, first month's rent and security deposit—the list is endless. Every year we spend \$25,000 to \$30,000 to meet the needs of those in our community.

The "home visit" sets us apart from other charities. Early on, I visited a woman with four children in late fall whose power had been shut off two days prior. As she and her children huddled close together, I asked whether she had sought assistance from her church; she had but was told, "We don't do things like that." Praise God I was able to say, "Well, we *do* do things like that!" Her power was restored the following day.

Our bi-weekly meetings begin with prayer and Scriptural reflection led by the "spiritual advisor" seeking the Holy Spirit's direction for our neighbors in need. To follow Jesus is to carry the cross of broken humanity in service of the need, whether material, spiritual or emotional.

As Pope Leo the Great said, "There is no lack when it is Christ who is fed and Christ who feeds."

~ by Steve Duffy

“The Teacher of Communion and of Service”

Tintoretto painted his *Christ Washing the Disciples’ Feet* for the church of San Marcuola in Venice as a companion piece to his *Last Supper* (1547). They hung facing each other across the church’s main altar, and so he united two moments of that final meal: the institution of the Eucharist and the washing of feet.

❧
*... focusing on our union with
Christ doesn’t detract from our
communion with others ...*
❧

He joined them even more closely in this painting using the pictorial device of continuous narrative—portraying two moments of a story within a single image, inserting, as it were, the earlier painting into the later one. Jesus, helped by John, kneels and is about to wash Peter’s feet as an example of humble service to others, and in another room right behind Him He is seen at table instituting the Eucharist.

Tintoretto has united what the Gospels separated, and it’s right that these moments be seen in their unity. Pope Saint John Paul II wrote, “The Synoptics recount the institution of the Eucharist, while the Gospel of John relates, as a way of bringing out its profound meaning, the account of the washing of the feet, in which Jesus appears as the teacher of communion and of service” (*Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 20).

John’s Gospel was the last to be written, so he didn’t have to remind Christians of what Paul and the earlier Gospels had described and what Christians commemorated every week. He chose rather to remind his readers that repetition of ritual shouldn’t lead to forgetting its meaning, that focusing on our union with Christ doesn’t detract from our communion with others and that humble service shows love far better than lofty words. Out of love for us Christ humbled Himself even to death on a cross. Union

with our Eucharistic Lord ought to transform us into people of self-sacrificing love and self-giving service for one another. Tintoretto did well to place Christ at the table in such close proximity to Christ on His knees; the ritual liturgy should flow naturally into real-life deeds.

The command Christ gave us—to love others as He has loved us, and so to love even to the point of laying down one’s life for a friend—is implicit in these two moments. The Eucharist celebrates Christ’s death and resurrection. The early church hymn in chapter two of Philippians beautifully describes His self-emptying, His humility even to death on the cross and His subsequent

glorification. The story of the washing of feet wonderfully corresponds to the movement within the hymn. Jesus rises from His rightful place at the head of the table, sets aside the outer robe symbolic of His dignity, girds Himself with a towel, the garb of a slave, and humbles Himself to the lowest service a slave might perform. And then He once again resumes His robe and His place at the head of the table and declares that His disciples call Him Lord and Master, and they are right to do so because that is what He is.

Both Philippians and the Gospel tell us to imitate Him: “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” (Ph 2:5) and,

“I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you” (Jn 13:15).

❧
*... humble service shows love
far better than lofty words.*
❧

Paul says it is unworthy for a Christian to partake of the Lord’s Supper while being indifferent to the poor, to attend Mass without attending to the needy. If we pray, we should serve. If we come on retreat to grow in our relationship with the Lord, we must show that growth in our service to others as well.

~ by Peter Fennessy, SJ



*Tintoretto, detail of
Christ Washing the Disciples’ Feet (1548–49),
oil on canvas, Museo Nacional del Prado.*

My Prayer . . . to Where? (an excerpt from a prayer journal)

Lord, I need to talk to You about this exercise I call prayer. It does not seem to be working very well, I find. It seems You pay little attention to what I have to say for I keep listening for Your voice in my life, looking for signs and yet I simply encounter silence. So, I come to you tonight to talk to you about my prayer and I hope, this time, you are listening as I pine away.

Now I am not surprised that most of my prayer falls short of reaching You for I do not seem to pray very well. Often, I settle into prayer with this sense it is another thing I must do because You told us to do it. I have prayer books that lead me through verses that lend a holiness to the whole action in my mind, but not really coming from my soul, I fear. When I simply try to empty myself and try to quiet myself the only thing that happens is silence while distractions abound. I fall hopelessly into “safe” habits of rote prayer, acknowledging as I do so that my heart is not in the effort. I am sorry I cannot seem to pray better. Still, while this is all true, You make it difficult also. I never hear anything clear from You; You are mystery, yes, Incarnate too, in a Man I worship, but whose voice is captured only in the Words I try to take into my being as I read, reflect, meditate. But is that the only voice I am supposed to hear, my own? Abraham and Moses, we are told, could hear Your voice and in some way, they knew You were God, You were near to them, walking with them. Except when You walked among men, has anyone else heard You so clearly? Am I asking so much or am I simply obdurately obtuse regarding Your ways; perhaps that is the case, and if so, You must have a way for me to find a way? I need to hear You.



I am aware I am not alone, by the way. The great souls I have read about also had issues with You and spoke about it: Karl Rahner, Mother Theresa, St. John of the Cross. They devoted much more of their lives to You than I can generate yet were also left adrift with only their faith in You. When I look for answers, like they did, I find I am only thinking of my poor self, crying out to “know,” to

Hugh Buchanan was Manresa's Associate Director from 2008 to 2015. His weekly reflections on the Sunday readings appear on Manresa's Facebook page.



somehow be sure that there is an answer from You. But there is no voice in return; no surety in the answers I seek.

Yet, I know I cannot “not” pray. You said it was not only good to do but was necessary for me. You prayed with Your Father, told Your disciples to pray, and all the saints who walked in Your light knew that the only highway to You was through this vaporous mechanism called prayer. Where is prayer supposed to take me that I can hear Your voice, where Your answer of love can reach into my spirit? You would ask me to enter this mysterious realm only if it was good and needed by me to know You. It must be something that enables me to shed all the accretions I fasten to myself, real and imagined, to be left alone with You, loving You as You are and meant to be by me.


*Can it be . . . prayer is a way of
preparation for me . . . ?*


Can it be, somehow, keeping faithful to prayer is a way of preparation for me; that my whole life of yearning, listening in silence, grappling with mystery is the way I am to be moved to You? Can it be by opening myself, inviting You into the terrible silence that surrounds me when I try to reach You, and waiting for Your voice is all a part of loving You? Is it so that when this part of my existence has run its planned course in Your plan, I will find the answer You have been expressing; Your extraordinary love for me at my point of joining You in the eclipse of one side of life to another? If this be the place, the destination of my prayer, let my supplications change me to see You around me at least, praying as I worship, yes, but also when I grasp my fellow souls and reach You through them. Leave not this soul that is me.

~ by Hugh Buchanan

RETREATANT AWARDS (Jul – Dec 2020)

Manresa Pin (completed 15 retreats)

Elizabeth Anderson
Gregory Lester
Thomas Sennett
Ann Small

BORN INTO THE RESURRECTION (Jul – Dec 2020)

<u>Name</u>	<u>Group</u>	<u>#</u>
Stanley Kramer (3/20)	Bodde/Schweihofer/St. Clare Group	36
Richard McKnight	Various	3
Margarita Menzel (3/20)	Ladies I (Midweek)	25
Walter Niemann	Men's Midweek	51
Daniel Paris	Notre Dame	22
Ron Powell	St. Boniface	8
John Stampor	Various	17

God's Presence at Manresa

My journey into Manresa began with the Internship in Ignatian Spirituality. When I heard about the retreats that were part of the program, I was definitely all in! One of my classmates said this about the silent five-day retreat: "If the federal government knew what five days of silence would do for people, they would regulate it as a controlled substance."

On the first day of my retreat, with Fr. Jim Serrick as director, I remember spending my initial hour of prayer with Genesis 1. I was sitting in the grass and picked up a small branch, awestruck by the details God put into every aspect of His Creation. The grace of Ignatian spirituality is very rich.

In my retreat notebook I wrote this about Manresa:

M - *Mary as Mother and guide on this journey*

A - *All times giving thanks and praise*

N - *New moments of discovery and growth*

R - *Refreshment and rest*

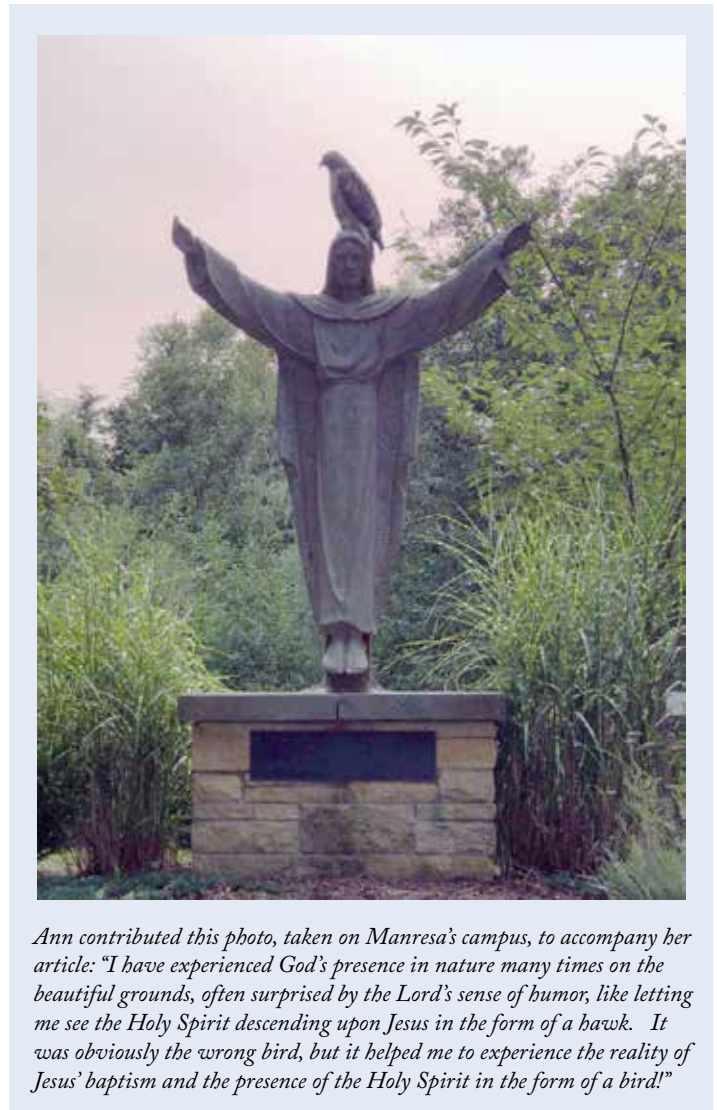
E - *Eucharist*

S - *Satisfied with God's love*

A - *Attended to by the Trinity*

I had come to Manresa as a faith-filled charismatic Catholic. Soon to be an empty nester, with six fledglings gone and grandchildren on the way, I was looking for direction in this new stage of my life. I had found a haven for growing in much-needed discernment and the refreshment that only silence and solitude offer.

Prayer and discernment at Manresa led me to serve in children's ministries, such as the "Catechesis of the Good Shepherd" and "Liturgy of the Word for Children." I also began offering Days of Reflection and Adventure Retreats, combining camping on Lake Michigan with times of prayer and fellowship for women and granddaughters. It was on the beach during one such venture that I saw God's



Ann contributed this photo, taken on Manresa's campus, to accompany her article: "I have experienced God's presence in nature many times on the beautiful grounds, often surprised by the Lord's sense of humor, like letting me see the Holy Spirit descending upon Jesus in the form of a hawk. It was obviously the wrong bird, but it helped me to experience the reality of Jesus' baptism and the presence of the Holy Spirit in the form of a bird!"

presence at work. My youngest camper (Gianna, age three) was playing in the sand while a wonderful deacon was conducting a Communion service on the beach and preaching on the Golden Rule. You would never have thought Gianna was paying any attention, but afterwards she asked Sr. Gail: "Does Jesus really want us to treat others as we want to be treated? That is really hard!" Then she asked her, "What is it like to be married to Jesus?"

More and more I was blessed to witness the beginnings of children's faith journeys. I have grown in my understanding of the Scriptures and have been greatly blessed to experience Jesus' humanity and presence within them. I am grateful for the discernment and direction I received at Manresa that opened new avenues of service and blessings for me.

Now I eagerly await my yearly retreat. Each one has been an incredible experience. Silence and solitude are much needed in our fast-paced lifestyle. Thank you, Manresa, for being a haven for transforming blessings.

~ by Ann Kopinski



Ann Kopinski completed the Internship in Ignatian Spirituality in November 2006 and has attended over 15 retreats at Manresa. Ann says she has spent most of her life raising the next generation; and as her father, former dean of Cornell Law School, said, "That is the most important job there is." She is the mother of six children (five boys

and one girl), "Nana" for 27 grandchildren and "Grand Nana" to three great-grandchildren. Ann's greatest joy is fostering spiritual memories in a variety of creative ways with children of all ages.

Manresa is most grateful for all who support our Mission and honor or remember a loved one with a gift to us. Contributions were received from the following donors between July 1 and December 31, 2020.

HONORARY AND MEMORIAL GIFTS

In Memory of Sheila R. Book

James & Perry Carroll
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James Danaher
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Marcia Judge
Martha Speer
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In Memory of Gordon Booth

Colleen Booth

In Memory of Eva Bopp

Mary Louise Connolly

In Memory of John & Tommy Burrell

Jesse Burrell

In Honor of Fr. Leo Cachat, SJ

Christine Cachat
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(list of donors is continued on page 16)

Save the Date!

Spirit of Manresa Banquet

Thursday, September 23, 2021

Shenandoah Country Club
West Bloomfield, MI



Please join us for our annual fundraiser in support of Manresa's Mission. Doors will be open at 5:00 PM for registration and for those who wish to tour the Chaldean Cultural Center. Refreshments are available at 5:30 PM, followed by a fabulous dinner, speaker and much more! Tickets from \$150.



Keynote Speaker: Br. Jim Boynton, SJ ***Digitus Dei* / The Finger of God**

How life-changing events reflect the movement of God

Br. Jim Boynton is a dynamic and engaging speaker, having had a varied and colorful vocation including ministry team member in post-earthquake Haiti, regional director of Jesuit vocations, and teacher and acting principal at U of D Jesuit High School. Faithful to Michigan's "Up North," he plays the fiddle there with a folk group and has written the book Fishers of Men: The Jesuit Mission at Mackinac, 1600-1765.

2021 CONFERENCE RETREAT SCHEDULE

To register call 248.644.4933 Ext. 0 or visit www.manresa-sj.org/upcomingretreats/

Special Notice: Due to the limited number of participants as a result of COVID-19 distancing restrictions, please do not sign up for more than one retreat between each July 1 and June 30 time period. Thank you for your consideration.

Conference Retreats for Men ~ NOT RESTRICTED TO GROUPS NAMED

DATE	RETREAT NAME	DIRECTORS	FOR
Apr 16-18	WEEKEND RETREAT for MEN [PATRON: BLESSED FRANCIS PAGE, SJ]: GRAND RAPIDS–META-MORA; ST. IGNATIUS LOYOLA; WYANDOTTE–DOWNRIVER (Full: Call to be placed on wait list.)	Fr. Si Hendry, SJ	Men
Apr 23-25	WEEKEND RETREAT for MEN [PATRON: ST. PETER CANISIUS, SJ]: FRANCES CABRINI K of C; ST. HUGO; JOHN LAU; ST. PETER CANISIUS MEN	Fr. Steve Hurd, SJ	Men
Apr 30-May 2	WEEKEND RETREAT for MEN [PATRON: OUR LADY OF THE WAY]: BROTHER RICE ALUMNI; DETROIT POLICE & FIRE FIGHTERS; GAYLORD; MEN OF MANRESA; MT. PLEASANT; ST. MARY MAGDALEN – ST. CONRAD; GESU, Detroit	Fr. Pat Fairbanks, SJ	Men
Aug 6-8	WEEKEND RETREAT for MEN IN RECOVERY ONLY [PATRON: FR. JACK SCHUETT, SJ] \$50 non-refundable, non-transferable deposit required.	Mr. Jeff Henrich	Men in Recovery
Aug 27-29	WEEKEND RETREAT for MEN [PATRON: ST. STEPHEN PONGRÁCZ, SJ]: LEONARD STUMM; ST. BEDE; THE TWELVE STEPPERS	Fr. Fran Daly, SJ & Sr. Kathie Budesky, IHM	Men
Sep 10-12	WEEKEND RETREAT for MEN [PATRON: BLESSED SEBASTIAN KIMURA, SJ]: McDONALD – McHARDY; ST. MARY OF THE HILLS; SERRA OF OAKLAND COUNTY; SHRINE – REICHENBACH	Fr. Steve Hurd, SJ	Men
Oct 1-3	WEEKEND RETREAT for MEN [PATRON: ST. FRANCIS BORGIA, SJ]: BERRY GROUP; FEUERSTEIN; K of C DETROIT ARCHDIOCESE; MAHER; ST. ANTHONY, Temperance; ST. ELIZABETH, Tecumseh; ST. LOUISE	Fr. Fran Daly, SJ & Sr. Kathie Budesky, IHM	Men
Oct 7-10	4-DAY WEEKEND RETREAT for MEN [PATRON: ST. JOHN OGILVIE, SJ]: R. WEISENBURGER – SERRA (At current capacity: Call for availability.)	Fr. Bob Ytsen, SJ	Men
Oct 22-24	WEEKEND RETREAT for MEN [PATRON: ST. ALPHONSUS RODRIGUEZ, SJ]: CATHOLIC LAWYERS & PHYSICIANS; FORD TRACTOR; OAKLAND ST. VINCENT DE PAUL; ST. ROBERT, Ada/Grand Rapids	Fr. Steve Hurd, SJ	Men
Oct 29-31	WEEKEND RETREAT for MEN [PATRON: ST. STANISLAUS KOSTKA, SJ]: BODDE – SCHWEIHOFFER – ST. CLARE OF MONTEFALCO; OUR LADY STAR OF THE SEA; ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI; ST. HUBERT, Mount Clemens; ST. JOSEPH, Lake Orion; ST. VALERIE	Fr. Bob Ytsen, SJ	Men
Nov 5-7	WEEKEND RETREAT for MEN [PATRON: ST. RUPERT MAYER, SJ]: ASCENSION; HOLY NAME, Birmingham; IMMACULATE CONCEPTION, Ira Township; ST. BONIFACE, Oak Harbor, OH (Toledo Diocese); ST. CLEMENT, Center Line; SS. PETER AND PAUL JESUIT CHURCH	Fr. Robert Flack, SJ	Men
Dec 3-5	WEEKEND RETREAT for MEN [PATRON: ST. FRANCIS XAVIER, SJ]: BAYER, Toledo – Defiance	Fr. Peter Fennessy, SJ	Men

Conference Retreats for Women ~ NOT RESTRICTED TO GROUPS NAMED

DATE	RETREAT NAME	DIRECTORS	FOR
May 7-9	MOTHER'S DAY WEEKEND RETREAT for WOMEN [PATRON: MARY, MOTHER OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS] (Full: Call to be placed on wait list.)	Fr. Fran Daly, SJ & Sr. Kathie Budesky, IHM	Women
May 28-30	WEEKEND RETREAT for WOMEN IN RECOVERY ONLY [PATRON: FATHER FRED, SJ] \$50 non-refundable, non-transferable deposit required.	Dcn. Brian Carroll	Women in Recovery
Jun 10-13	4-DAY WEEKEND RETREAT for WOMEN [PATRON: SISTER MARY WARD, IBVM] (Full: Call to be placed on wait list.)	Fr. David Meconi, SJ	Women
Sept 14-16	MIDWEEK RETREAT for WOMEN [PATRON: BLESSED FRANCISCO GARATE, SJ]	Fr. Robert Flack, SJ	Women
Oct 14-17	4-DAY WEEKEND RETREAT for WOMEN [PATRON: ST. DOMINIC COLLINS, SJ]	Fr. Peter Fennessy, SJ	Women
Nov 12-14	WEEKEND RETREAT for WOMEN [PATRON: BLESSED MIGUEL PRO, SJ]	Fr. Leo Cachat, SJ & Ms. DiAnne Patterson Schultz	Women
Nov 26-28	WEEKEND RETREAT for WOMEN IN RECOVERY ONLY [PATRON: FR. EDWARD DOWLING, SJ] \$50 non-refundable, non-transferable deposit required.	Sr. Diane McCormick, IHM	Women in Recovery

Conference Retreat for Women Religious

DATE	RETREAT NAME	DIRECTORS	FOR
Sep 26–Oct 1	SUMMER CONFERENCE RETREAT FOR RELIGIOUS SISTERS; Theme: A Call to Prayer—an Invitation to Love; [PATRON: ST. MARGARET MARY ALACOQUE] Total cost is \$300.	Fr. Fran Daly, SJ & Sr. Kathie Budesky, IHM	Religious Sisters

2021 CONFERENCE RETREAT SCHEDULE (cont'd)

To register call 248.644.4933 Ext. 0 or visit www.manresa-sj.org/upcomingretreats/

Conference Retreats for Both Men and Women

DATE	RETREAT NAME	DIRECTORS	FOR
Apr 1-3	HOLY WEEK RETREAT for MEN & WOMEN [PATRON: FR. PIERRE TEILHARD DE CHARDIN, SJ]: HOLY WEEK – ST. REGIS – ST. OWEN (Full: Call to be placed on wait list.)	Fr. Leo Cachat, SJ & Ms. DiAnne Patterson Schultz	Men & Women
May 21-23	CHRISTIAN MEDITATION RETREAT for MEN & WOMEN [PATRON: FR. ROBERT DE NOBILI] \$50 non-refundable, non-transferable deposit required; total cost is \$225.	Fr. Leo Cachat, SJ & Ms. DiAnne Patterson Schultz	Men & Women
Jun 4-6	CHARIS RETREAT FOR YOUNG ADULTS (PRESENTED IN SPANISH) \$100 non-refundable, non-transferable deposit required.	Charis Team	Men & Women
Jun 25-27	HISPANIC WEEKEND for MEN & WOMEN (PRESENTED IN SPANISH) \$50 non-refundable, non-transferable deposit required.	Hispanic Team	Men & Women
Jul 30-Aug 1	WEEKEND RETREAT for TRADITIONALLY MARRIED COUPLES [PATRON: ST. IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA, SJ] (Full: Call to be placed on wait list.)	Mr. Jay Landry	Married Couples
Sep 24-26	INNER HEALING RETREAT [PATRON: ST. JOHN DE BREBEUF, SJ] Theme: An Encounter with the Healing Christ; \$50 non-refundable, non-transferable deposit required.	Fr. John Esper & Ms. Debbie Tourville	Men & Women

Individually Directed Retreats for Men & Women (Three-day Minimum)

Session I: May 11 – 20, 2021

Session II: June 14 – 23, 2021

Session III: July 19 – 28, 2021

Session IV: August 10 – 19, 2021

These “in-session” dates allow for eight-day retreats as well as retreats of shorter duration (three-day minimum). Arrival time begins 5:00 PM on the opening date of the retreat session, dinner is at 6:00 PM and the retreat itself begins at 7:30 PM. The retreat ends at 10:00 AM on the closing date of the retreat session. Alternately, individuals may choose “out-of-session” dates for individually directed retreats between September and April each year.

The “in-session” cost is \$80 per day with an \$80 non-refundable, non-transferable deposit. “Out-of-session” costs are \$85 per day with an \$85 non-refundable, non-transferable deposit. For summer session retreats of 3 to 8 days you may register online (click on “Individually Directed Retreats”) or call 248.644.4933 Ext. 0 for an application.

Holy Week Encounter at Manresa

During our pilgrimage to the Holy Land my husband and I walked the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem, and we carried a wooden cross on our shoulders for two of the Stations. It was both an awesome and sobering feeling to be walking the same “Way of the Cross” that Jesus did.

As Holy Week approached I had a desire to walk the Stations of the Cross outdoors, carrying a cross to somehow replicate what we had done in Jerusalem. Manresa was the only place I could think of that had the Stations of the Cross outdoors, so on Wednesday of Holy Week I drove to Manresa in the late afternoon to walk the Way of the Cross by myself. I brought with me an olive wood crucifix that I had purchased in the Holy Land and I carried that cross in my hands as I walked and prayed at all 14 Stations.

After I finished, I was walking back toward the retreat house when a man driving a truck from a tree service company stopped and called out to me. He had finished working there and was on his way out. He told me that he wanted to thank whoever “created this place,” and he was so grateful that he was able to work on the trees there! He was excited when he talked, and I could tell that his heart was touched just by being on Manresa’s grounds and he wanted to share it with someone.

I told him that I had just finished praying the Stations of the Cross and I showed him my olive wood crucifix from the Holy Land. He took the crucifix from my hands, admired it for a moment, and then he kissed Jesus on the cross! Now it was my turn for my heart to be touched! What he did was a spontaneous act of love and faith, and it stirred my heart to witness it! We chatted another minute and wished each other a Happy Easter. He drove off and I went to pray at the grotto, in front of the statue of the Blessed Mother. As I prayed, my eyes filled with tears thinking about the encounter I just had. Everything fell into place that Wednesday of Holy Week. It was an ordinary day until the Holy Spirit broke into it and changed everything. God’s timing is always perfect.

I kept that image and encounter with me as I celebrated the Triduum, Easter Sunday and beyond. And I wondered about him and how his celebration of Easter was different that year since his heart was touched by the Holy Spirit in a special way that day.

~ by Carmen Maffezzoli

Carmen Maffezzoli is a member of Our Lady of Sorrows parish in Farmington, MI. She enjoys visiting Manresa’s campus to pray and walk the grounds.



Community Discernment

After my decade of practicing Ignatian discernment from a *personal* perspective, here are two recent examples where the Holy Spirit used me as an instrument to approach it from a *community* perspective.

The first example was with the Hispanic community of St. Mary Student Parish in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Due to COVID restrictions, the group decided to have its annual retreat not at Manresa but virtually, with me as one of the spiritual guides. After that experience, several community members decided to enroll in a new online Ignatian Leadership Certification Program at Boston College. Their communal decision to attend virtually was an answer to their declining opportunities in theology and leadership formation, and it resulted in the group expanding with parishioners who were previously unable to attend.

Amy Ketner, leader of the Hispanic ministry at St. Mary, reflected: "One can see Divine intervention, along with many conversations within our community and the Jesuit priests that led us to these decisions." As a result, the community has grown closer despite the isolation due to COVID. They plan to continue taking more online courses through Boston College and meeting monthly to share what they learn and continue discerning where the Holy Spirit leads them.

The second example involved a group of women from the Emmaus community who were seeking Ignatian formation. They chose to attend an eight-week online discernment course that I led last spring. Upon completion, they decided to continue with the 19th annotation (32-week Exercises) led by two other directors. Marisol Barajas, one of the group leaders, shared: "Making the decision to do the Exercises as a group was challenging because in their weekly meetings it was hard to express their feelings with each other for fear of what the other person would think; however, after a while each of us felt more self-aware and confident."

These two group experiences showed me that although living a discerning life is a personal practice, it can be a powerful community-building experience as well. Ignatian spirituality is rooted in discernment, and to be human is to realize that God created us as social beings in a dynamic, fluid relationship with each other.

~ by Sergio Pagés

Sergio Pagés graduated from Manresa's Internship in Ignatian Spirituality in 2011 and serves on Manresa's Board of Directors. He gives the Spiritual Exercises and has led several workshops in both Spanish and English.



Discernimiento Comunitario

Después una década de practicar el discernimiento ignaciano desde una perspectiva personal, los siguientes son dos ejemplos recientes en los que el Espíritu Santo me usó como instrumento para abordar esta práctica desde una perspectiva comunitaria.

El primer ejemplo fue con la comunidad hispana de la parroquia estudiantil St. Mary en Ann Arbor, Michigan. Debido a las restricciones de COVID, el grupo decidió tener su retiro anual no en Manresa sino virtualmente, conmigo como uno de los guías espirituales. Después de esta experiencia, varios miembros de esta comunidad decidieron inscribirse en un nuevo Programa de Certificación de Liderazgo Ignaciano en línea con Boston College. Su decisión comunitaria de asistir virtualmente fue una respuesta a la disminución de sus oportunidades en teología y formación de liderazgo, y resultó en que el grupo se expandiera con feligreses que antes no podían asistir.

Amy Ketner, líder del ministerio hispano en St. Mary, reflexionó: "Uno puede ver la intervención divina, en conjunto con muchas conversaciones dentro de nuestra comunidad y con los sacerdotes jesuitas que nos llevaron a tomar estas decisiones". Como resultado, la comunidad se ha acercado más a pesar del aislamiento debido a COVID. Ellos están planeando continuar tomando más cursos en línea a través de Boston College y reunirse mensualmente para compartir lo que aprenden y continuar discerniendo hacia dónde los guía el Espíritu Santo.

El segundo ejemplo involucró a un grupo de mujeres de la comunidad Emaús que buscaban una formación ignaciana. Ellas eligieron asistir a un curso de discernimiento en línea de ocho semanas que dirigí la primavera pasada. Al finalizar el curso, decidieron continuar con los Ejercicios Espirituales en la modalidad basada en la anotación 19, dirigida por otros dos directores. Marisol Barajas, una de las líderes del grupo, compartió: "Tomar la decisión de hacer los Ejercicios en grupo fue un desafío porque al principio en sus reuniones semanales era difícil expresar sus sentimientos entre ellos por temor a lo que la otra persona pensaría; sin embargo, después de un tiempo, cada uno de nosotros se sintió más consciente de sí mismo y más seguros".

Estas dos experiencias grupales me demostraron que, aunque vivir una vida de discernimiento es una práctica personal, también puede ser una poderosa experiencia de crecimiento comunitario. La espiritualidad ignaciana tiene sus raíces en el discernimiento, y ser humano es darse cuenta de que Dios nos creó como seres sociales en relaciones dinámicas y fluidas entre nosotros.

~ por Sergio Pagés

Sergio Pagés se graduó del Curso de Espiritualidad Ignaciana de Manresa en 2011 y forma parte de la Junta Directiva de Manresa. Imparte los Ejercicios Espirituales y ha dirigido varios talleres tanto en español como en inglés.

Boulder Blessings

Many times after 8:00 AM Mass, I like to wander along Manresa's paths. During one daily sojourn I paused when I saw . . .

An early morning revelation –

'Twas always there

Just now I see

a heart-shaped boulder

in the river rapids' current

pulsing back at me.

I stand between the rooted banks

upon the crossing bridge

transfixed, transformed in gratitude,

in wonder for

God's daybreak gift.

He'll join us on our journey

Rough waters' time will cease

He's providing boulder blessings

Love and anchor –

pause and peace.



*Pictured above: the River Rouge flowing through Manresa's campus.
Bottom left: the gift Gretchen found in its waters.
(Both photos by the author, Gretchen Gonzalez.)*



I am so thankful for the variety of retreats and programs offered at Manresa. I have been able, over the years, to participate in: Women to Women / *lectio divina*, daily Mass, seasonal outdoor reflections, Fr. Peter Fennessy's and Carole Sugrue's art seminars and Fr. Leo Cachat's meditation retreats. They all have enhanced my spiritual journey by providing learning and fellowship, guidance and inspiration. Yes! *Manresa Matters!*

~ by Gretchen Gonzalez

Gretchen Miller Gonzalez is a wife, mother of three and grandmother of five. Growing up in Minneapolis, MN, she was a Rotary exchange student to Argentina in the late 1960s. During that time she met her future husband, Dr. Jose, and this year they will be celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary.



IN APPRECIATION OF OUR DONORS - continued from page 11

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A Time in Our Lives

Not long ago a priest friend asked me if I felt the presence of my dead husband, Jerry, a question I have been asked a few times over the 31 years since he's been gone. Yes, I feel the presence. He has been with me since the accident that took his life instantly.

When I looked at him in the car, I knew he was gone. I believe the horse that ran into him took Jerry straight to heaven. While shards of glass were being taken off my head, arms and legs in the hospital, I tried to imagine life without Jerry. I tried to grapple with the thought that he would not see Katie grow up and Katie would not play with her daddy again.

Katie and I came out of the accident almost injury free. We walked out of the car while Jerry lay there motionless, when twenty minutes before he was pumping gas and eating his favorite candy. While I waited for family to pick me up from the hospital I cried, took a shower and asked for a priest to talk to. I told him I believed in the Resurrection

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Little did I know what Jesus had planned for me!

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and that my husband was with Jesus and also with us right now. Later I said at his funeral eulogy we would all see him again, and that brought people the comfort and hope that they needed at the time.

Even while dating, Jerry and I were devoted to our faith, even “born again” several times because we wanted to be sure! Now when I know Jerry is near I smile and thank him for coming. I can see him smile in return, and I always ask if Jesus is with him. He says, “Yes, Sherry, Jesus is here and loves you very much. I love you and everything will be okay.” Exactly like that I can hear his audible greeting. In the background Jesus is smiling . . .

The tragic experience of losing my husband and best friend deepened my prayer life and motivated me to become a hospital chaplain; I felt called to help others who had undergone similar losses of loved ones and found it very

Sherry Christ completed the Internship in Ignatian Spirituality in 2002. She became a Board-certified chaplain in 2004 and has a Master's degree in Theological Studies. She is pictured here, on the right, offering support to a friend, one of the many ways Sherry puts her prayer life into action.



The young bride and bridegroom

humbling. The Internship at Manresa helped prepare me for the onslaught of despair, rage and depression resulting from survivors' grief and taught me how to listen. I learned that in the process of helping to heal others, I myself became healed.

Upon retiring at the age of 62, I felt that my ministry was done. Little did I know what Jesus had planned for me! I went back home to help my sister Tammy take care of my mother. She needed little care in the beginning but later needed more and more. During this period my sister Sally was going through a bad divorce, and in July my sister Dixie died of dementia. It was uncomfortable ministering to family members who did not believe in God or the Resurrection.

How was Jesus present to me then? “Sherry, you are not done, you are here to help your family now, even if it is only praying for them.”

I am still a widow and will always be Jerry's bride. Though my purpose in life changed over the years, the foundation has remained essentially the same: Jesus was present to us even before our marriage and continues to be with me after Jerry's death. This belief has only gotten stronger over time. Much of this can be credited to the spirituality and peace found during the Manresa Internship, a definite faith and trust that Jesus was with me, that taught me not to be afraid. The tools of the seminar helped my prayer life until the need for words was almost absent. Now I just sit and wait and listen for Jesus to come. He never fails me.

~ by Sherry Christ

Eternity Here and Now

Christ became human to die on the cross for the expiation of the sins of all humanity. Redemption is global. But salvation is personal. And salvation is spending eternity in heaven, characterized by being in the presence of God all the time. Jesus teaches that “whoever loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him” (Jn. 14:23). Therefore, eternity in heaven could be here and now if we love Jesus Christ and keep His Word.

As an example of loving Christ, I go back to my dating days. I remember spending many hours with my future wife in conversation about us, our favorites or dislikes, our times of joy or sadness, our plans for the present and visions for the future and so on. Even after 50 years of marriage, we still need this intimate personal time of talking with each other. Therefore, if we love Christ, we must also share such intimate, personal time with Him.

To spend time with Christ, we must pray. Prayer is communication with God. We can start with verbal prayers like the rosary, meditating on the life of Christ. We can migrate to meditative prayer on Scriptural passages. Or we can practice contemplation, just letting God come into us. We can attend Mass, Eucharistic adoration, the Stations of the Cross and so forth.

While studying to be a deacon at Sacred Heart Major Seminary, I spent time in their chapel whenever I arrived early for my classes. In January 2007, while sitting in front of the tabernacle, I asked Jesus as my brother and best friend, but with awe and reverence (Ps. 147:11), how I should advise my daughter regarding a buyout option from Ford. Taking the buyout would cause her to sever her relationship with her boyfriend because she would have to leave the state to find another job. In the silence after my conversation with Jesus, I heard a voice answering me. It was as loud as if someone was talking to me across the table. I looked around, but I was alone in the chapel.



Ordained in 2012, Reverend Doctor Francis King is a deacon at St. Regis Catholic Parish in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan as well as President of the Chinese Catholic Society of Michigan. He received his PhD in mathematics from the University of California at Berkeley and Master Degrees in Theology and in Pastoral Studies from Sacred Heart Major Seminary. Holder of seven patents, he co-authored the book

Process Improvement Simplified and published articles in the Encyclopedia of Robotics and the NATO Advanced Science Institute Series. Francis and his wife, Lucy, have two children, Anthony and Rebecca, and five grandchildren.



*Manresa's grounds offer many quiet places to be alone with the Lord.
(Photo courtesy of Gretchen Gonzalez)*

The answer that came back was: “Do nothing!” I was dumbfounded. I longed to tell my daughter to do nothing. But I obeyed Jesus’ command and bit my tongue. A week later, her boyfriend invited my wife and me to dinner and asked us for our blessing to marry our daughter. He proposed on Valentine’s Day. My daughter was told the following month that she would be promoted at Ford.

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*God’s plan is always
far better than ours.*
❧

Indeed, God does answer our prayers. His answer could be in a loud voice, a fleeting thought, a remark from someone, an event, a comment from the television, or a song from the radio or other media. A “no” is also an answer. Just explain the problem in prayer, but never propose a solution. God’s plan is always far better than ours (Is. 55:9).

After I retired and was ordained a deacon in the Catholic Church, I became busier than before. Now I must schedule time to spend with Jesus. Manresa is one of my venues of quiet places to be with Jesus. Whether it is walking on its beautiful grounds or spending time in a retreat, I’ve found it most conducive to having a conversation with our beloved Lord and God, Jesus Christ. It is during those times that I am in the presence of Christ and receive advice on how to be a contemplative in action.

We must keep Jesus’ commandment to love one another as He has loved us. It is the commandment to bring the hope of salvation to all by reflecting the love and goodness of God to them. In this way, we love Him by keeping His Word to save all souls. And Jesus will come to abide in us. Eternity in heaven becomes real here and now.

~ by Deacon Francis King



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