



JESUITS

Central and Southern

Winter 2022

Hospitality to Angels: *Our Ministry on the Border*

Lent | Teaching the History of Slavery | Calls to Conversion



Dear Friends in the Lord,
Peace of Christ!

Most who make an Ignatian retreat are familiar with the Psalm of David (Ps. 51.) It begins with the painful recognition that his sin is always before him – he can never outrun it, escape it or forget it – and culminates with a confident request that God create for him a “clean heart” and a “renewed spirit.” If you’ve never read it, I commend it to your prayer and reflection, for it speaks to all of us.

Jesuits know this Psalm well and pray it often during the first week of the *Spiritual Exercises* as a way of deepening our awareness of being loved sinners, broken and flawed, yet called to follow Christ and to create clean hearts in others and renew their spirits. I think Jesuits do this well as individuals, yet in recent years we have been called to do it collectively as it relates to the sin of slavery. It is our sin; there is no escaping it. It is always before us, but with God’s grace I believe we have begun to create a clean heart and renewed spirit with initiatives such as the Descendants Truth & Reconciliation Foundation and the Slavery, History, Memory and Reconciliation project. In this edition of the magazine, you will read of another effort to renew our spirit in which some of our institutions are revisiting how we teach about slavery.

As we begin the new year, rest assured of my prayers for you. May the Lord create in you a clean heart and renewed spirit!

Gratefully in the Lord,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas P. Greene, SJ". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Thomas P. Greene, SJ
Provincial

Amigos,
¡La Paz del Señor!

La mayoría de los que han participado en un retiro ignaciano están familiarizados con el Salmo de David (Salmo 51). Este comienza con el doloroso reconocimiento de que su pecado está siempre frente a él, que nunca podrá superarlo, huir de él u olvidarlo. Y culmina con una confiada petición a Dios de que funde en él un "corazón limpio" y un "espíritu renovado". Si nunca lo has leído, te lo recomiendo para que ores y reflexiones, porque nos habla a todos.

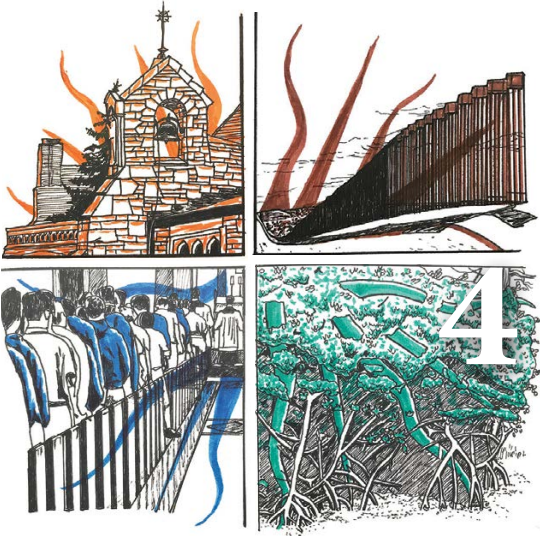
Los jesuitas conocen bien este salmo y lo rezan a menudo durante la primera semana de los Ejercicios Espirituales como una forma de profundizar en nuestra conciencia de ser pecadores amados, quebrados y defectuosos, pero llamados a seguir a Cristo y a crear corazones limpios en los demás y renovar sus espíritus. Creo que los jesuitas hacen esto bien como individuos, pero en los últimos años hemos sido llamados a hacerlo de manera colectiva en relación al pecado de la esclavitud. Es nuestro pecado; no hay forma de escapar de él. Siempre está ante nosotros, pero con la gracia de Dios creo que hemos empezado a crear un corazón limpio y un espíritu renovado con iniciativas como la Fundación Descendientes por la Verdad y la Reconciliación y con el proyecto Esclavitud, Historia, Memoria y Reconciliación. En esta edición de la revista, les presentamos otro esfuerzo para renovar nuestro espíritu, uno donde algunas de nuestras instituciones están revisando cómo enseñamos acerca de la esclavitud.

Al comenzar el nuevo año, tengan la seguridad de que oro por cada uno de vosotros. Que el Señor cree un corazón limpio y un espíritu renovado en vosotros.

Con gratitud en el Señor,

Thomas P. Greene, SJ
Provincial





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**Jesuits Central and Southern
Volume IX • Number 1
Winter 2022**

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Jesuits is published and distributed by the Jesuits of the Central and Southern Province of the Society of Jesus.
4511 West Pine Boulevard
St. Louis, Missouri 63108-2191
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Cover: Father Louie Hotop, SJ, blesses a child at a camp for migrants in Reynosa, Mexico.

Fr. Ronny O'Dwyer, SJ, Returns to De Smet Jesuit High School

Father Ronny O'Dwyer, SJ, is now serving as interim president at De Smet Jesuit High School. This is expected to be a 12-18-month assignment for Fr. O'Dwyer, requiring a leave of absence from Saint Louis University, where he has been an assistant professor in the School of Education and assistant to the dean for Catholic School Initiatives.

A graduate of Regis Jesuit High School in Denver, Fr. O'Dwyer taught theology at De Smet Jesuit as part of his Jesuit formation.

"I've been given many gifts during my Jesuit life. Among the greatest of these has been the chance to teach at De Smet," he said.

Father O'Dwyer began his assignment at De Smet Jesuit on Jan. 1, 2022.



Photo credit Saint Louis University

Father John Fitzgibbons, SJ, Steps Down at Regis University after Ten Years

Father John P. Fitzgibbons, SJ, has stepped down as president of Regis University in Denver, effective Dec. 31, 2021.

"We are extremely grateful for the many contributions of Fr. Fitzgibbons during his 10-year tenure as Regis' 24th President," said Robert B. Engel, chair of the board of trustees. "Regis University is in a strong position to continue to build leaders in service to others thanks to Fr. Fitzgibbons' leadership."

Regis alumna and trustee Cody Teets became the university's interim president on Jan. 1, 2022. She is the first female and lay leader of the 144-year-old Jesuit school. She will serve until a permanent president is selected, which is expected to happen this summer.



Fr. John Fitzgibbons, SJ



Cody Teets



Volunteers Seek to Restore Sacred Heart Church in El Paso

The *Segundo Barrio* of El Paso, Texas, has been added to the National Register of Historic Places. Its most iconic building – indeed, the heart of the *Barrio* – is Sacred Heart Church, a Jesuit parish. Obtaining the national historic designation is part of a push to reinvest in this low-income neighborhood south of downtown El Paso. That reinvestment is beginning with Sacred Heart's church building.

An all-volunteer group is fundraising and overseeing the restoration of Sacred Heart and adjacent buildings. Pastor Rafael Garcia, SJ and Dr. Max Grossman co-chair a committee that includes Bishop Mark Seitz and other Church leaders and professionals in architectural history, historic preservation and related fields. The campaign was recently energized when Sacred Heart obtained a \$250,000 matching grant from the prestigious National Fund for Sacred Places.

MORE
ON THE WEB

For more information or to donate, visit the project's website, www.RestoreSacredHeartChurch.org.

St. John's College to Become a Four-Year College

St. John's College in Belize City, Belize, announced on Nov. 2 that the Belize Ministry of Education has approved the school's application to become a four-year college. This decision enables the Jesuit college to grant both bachelor's and master's degrees. The first subject areas will be in business, education and nursing and will be offered in conjunction with other Jesuit schools in the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities.

St. John's College is Belize's first four-year Catholic institution of higher education.

■ MILESTONES



Thomas A. Croteau

Thomas A. Croteau, SJ, was ordained to the diaconate on Oct. 23, 2021, in the Cathedral of Christ the Light in Oakland, Calif. The Most Rev. Michael C. Barber, SJ, Bishop of Oakland, was the ordaining prelate.

Father James Caime, SJ, pronounced his final vows on Oct. 31, 2021, at St. Francis Xavier Church in Kansas City, Mo. Father Provincial Thomas P. Greene received his vows on behalf of the Society of Jesus.



Fr. Kevin Dyer, SJ

Father Kevin Dyer, SJ, pronounced his final vows on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, Dec. 8, 2021, in the chapel of Jesuit High School in New Orleans. Father Provincial Thomas P. Greene received his vows on behalf of the Society of Jesus.

The Office of Ignatian Spirituality is offering Lenten retreats in English, Spanish and Vietnamese.

March 2-6: Spanish Lenten Retreat

March 20-26: Vietnamese Lenten Retreat

March 27-April 2: English Lenten Retreat

VISIT www.JesuitsCentralSouthern.org/spirituality/ois/ for information.

2022 DAYS OF REFLECTION

The Jesuits USA Central and Southern Province invites friends to attend a one-day Ignatian retreat, offered in several cities within the province.

MONTERRAT JESUIT RETREAT HOUSE

Lake Dallas, Texas

Wednesday, March 16

Fr. Roy Joseph, SJ, presenting

TAMPA

Bethany Center • Lutz, Fla.

Saturday, March 26

Fr. Hung Pham, SJ, presenting

HOUSTON

Holy Name Passionist Retreat Center

Wednesday, March 30

Fr. Michael Wegenka, SJ, presenting

KANSAS CITY

Savior Pastoral Center • Kansas City, Kansas

Saturday, April 30

Fr. Hung Pham, SJ, presenting

MANRESA HOUSE OF RETREATS

Convent, La.

Tuesday, May 3

Fr. Greg Waldrop, SJ, presenting

Wednesday, May 4

Fr. Mark Thibodeaux, SJ, presenting



Each day begins with registration at 8:30 a.m. and ends around 2:30 p.m. Breakfast and lunch are provided, and Mass will be celebrated.

We will follow the COVID protocols employed by each hosting location, including cancelling an event if deemed necessary by local leadership.

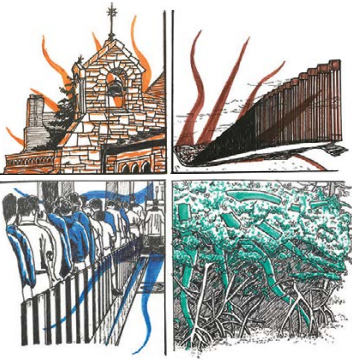
These events are free, but space is limited, so please reserve your spot by calling 800-325-9924.

Ask for Pat or Ana.

VISIT

www.JesuitsCentralSouthern.org/press-release/days-of-reflection-2022/

for more information or to register online.



Praying through Lent

with the Universal Apostolic Preferences

We invite you to join the Jesuits of the USA Central and Southern Province in praying this Lent with the Society of Jesus' four Universal Apostolic Preferences. Start with the following brief reflections from four Jesuits in formation. You can continue your prayer on the province's YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/c/JesuitsUCS/), where each of the authors below expands on his reflection.

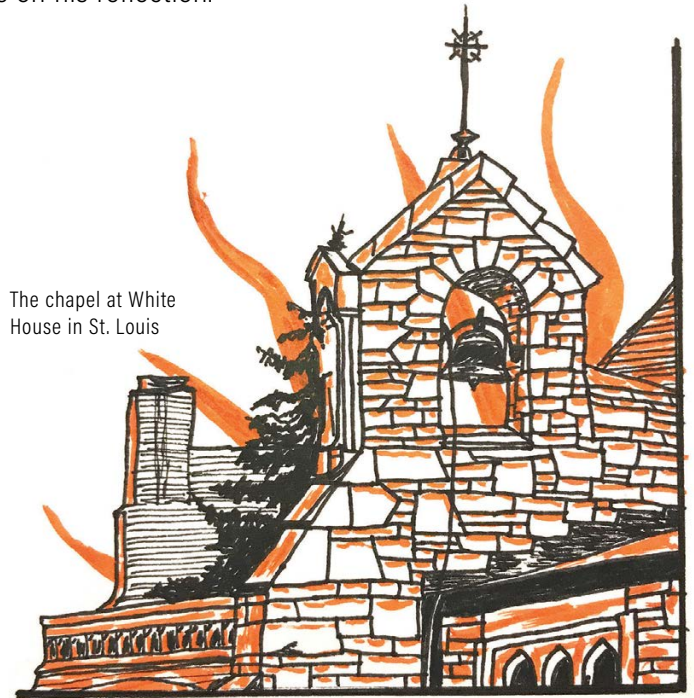
Showing the Way to God

By David Kiblinger, SJ

The Ignatian family has been given a mission to show the way to God. But how is one supposed to “show the way?” There are several methods for indicating a path to someone else. One is giving spoken or written instructions about how to move from one place to another. Another is to use gestures, to communicate the path. Still another is to refer the person to a guide who can direct him or her. All of these can be effective methods for aiding someone in his or her journey. The most effective method, however, is to accompany that person shoulder-to-shoulder along the way yourself. Your presence adds new dimensions as you travel together. You can instill confidence where the path is perilous. You can offer encouragement when fatigue threatens.

Notice that the mission is to “show the way.” It is not to find the way or search for the way. The mission presumes that we in the Ignatian family know the way. Even more, if we are to show the way through the personal accompaniment described above, the mission presumes that we have traversed the path ourselves. Only if we are already intimately familiar with the terrain can we walk next to someone as a trusted guide.

To show the way to God demands much from us. We may doubt our own knowledge or experience of the path, and we certainly have not reached the end of it ourselves. Yet together we form a network of persons along the path. Some may be experts in the first segments of the journey; others in the middle segments. The saints and blessed of the Ignatian family who have gone before us are experts in the last segments. We are both guided by those who know territory unfamiliar to us and guide others over areas we know. Most of all, our encounters with the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius give us confidence that,



The chapel at White House in St. Louis

by progressing ever deeper in them, we will arrive at our final destination of life with God.

This Lent, we might ask ourselves how to become more effective at showing the way to God. Is it by reading about the *Exercises*? Is it by seeking out a spiritual guide, a saint from earlier times or a trusted friend today? Is it through traditional the Lenten practices of fasting and almsgiving? Whatever we take on as a Lenten practice, it must be rooted in prayer. Pope Francis insists that without a “prayerful attitude,” no other work taken on by the Ignatian family will bear fruit. It is good to rededicate ourselves to cultivating this prayerful attitude, for we have little hope of completing the mission entrusted to us without it.



David Kiblinger, SJ, studies theology at Boston College School of Theology and Ministry. He looks forward to his priestly ordination this summer.

Walking with the Marginalized

By Daniel Finucane, SJ

The *Anima Christi* is a nearly 700-year-old prayer St. Ignatius included in the *Spiritual Exercises*. It asks for union with Christ through his body, his blood and the water from his side. I have grown to love this prayer.

There is one line, however, that I find mysterious: “within your wounds, hide me.” What does it mean to be hidden in the wounds of Christ?

Since last August, I have served as a volunteer chaplain at Belize Central Prison. I encounter many wounds among the men I sit with and listen to each day. Some wounds are self-inflicted, the result of bad, sometimes horrifying, choices. Other wounds are the result of childhood abuse or neglect or indifference at the hands of the judicial system. These wounds go unheeded by most at the prison and society at large. In a tiny country like Belize, these men are truly hidden away, their woundedness unrecognized.

The second Universal Apostolic Preference calls us to walk with the marginalized. We are, as Pope Francis wrote, to take on the “style of God,” which is to draw close enough that we encounter people who are wounded, resisting the urge to flee.

Where are many of those whom we call “marginalized”? They are often tucked away, in hidden places, like Belize Central Prison. It requires time and effort to find them, grow close to them and walk alongside them.

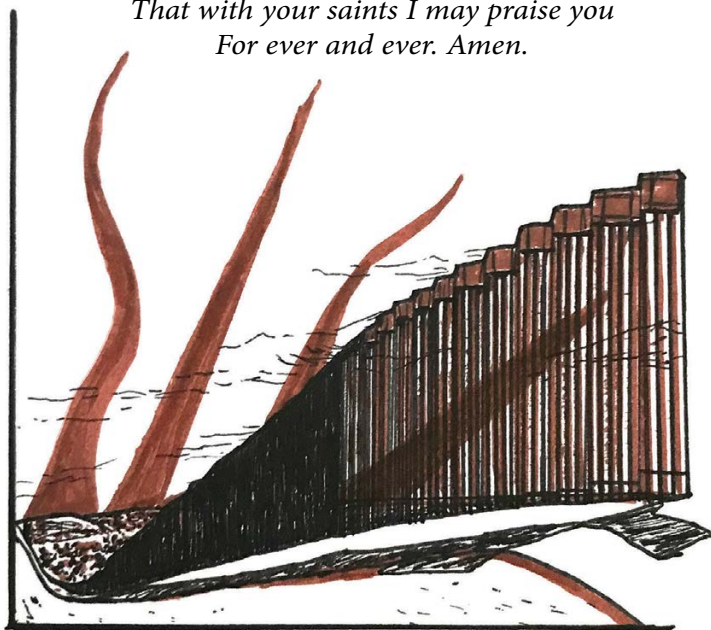
Jesus was clear that he is to be found in tucked away places. We know this from the myriad examples in the Gospels: he spent time with a man possessed, dwelling among the tombs (Mk. 5:1-20); he healed the loud, blinded Bartimaeus on the outskirts of Jericho (Mk. 10:46-52); he did not allow a Samaritan woman’s tarnished reputation to stop him from a transformative encounter with her at a well (Jn. 4:4-42).

There is a cost to this path. Jesus’ mission leads him to Calvary, where he dies almost entirely alone, abandoned. He spends so much time with those on the margins that he joins them in their fate: wounded by the same violence and hatred, he dies the ignoble death of a nobody.

Walking with the marginalized confronts us with the real possibility that we might join their lot and become hidden away, too.

Anima Christi

*Soul of Christ, sanctify me.
Body of Christ, save me.
Blood of Christ, inebriate me.
Water from the side of Christ, wash me.
Passion of Christ, strengthen me.
O Good Jesus, hear me.
Within your wounds hide me.
Permit me not to be separated from you.
From the wicked foe, defend me.
At the hour of my death, call me
and bid me come to you
That with your saints I may praise you
For ever and ever. Amen.*



The border wall in El Paso

Though it remains mysterious, I wonder if this is a desire we seek when praying the *Anima Christi*, when we say: “within your wounds, hide me.” During this Lent, we can pray with the second UAP by asking to be placed within the woundedness and hiddenness of men and women on the margins. If we do, we can trust the line that follows in the *Anima Christi*: “Permit me not to be separated from you.”



Daniel Finucane, SJ, is a regent in Belize City, Belize.



Students gathered in the chapel at Jesuit High School New Orleans

Accompanying Young People

By William Manaker, SJ

Each day at De Smet Jesuit High School the whole school pauses for five minutes before the last class period to make a brief Examen. One day recently, as I sat with a class of freshmen, I began to look around the room at the young men seated there, most of whom had their eyes closed or their heads on their desks. One by one, I said a prayer for them all, taking a moment to contemplate each individual. It was a graced moment, and I found myself filled with consolation and strength as we began class for the day.

The third Universal Apostolic Preference invites us “to accompany young people in the creation of a hope-filled future.” As I contemplate the faces of the young people in my life, they naturally stand as signs of hope. I see their energy and resiliency, their plans and desires for the future and their willingness to learn. How often have I been amazed at how a student, after a challenging conversation

about discipline or schoolwork, will still greet me with energy the next day!

In ministering to the young people in my life, a key dimension of my task is to guard and nourish their hopes. There are many forces that would rob them of their hope, such as anxiety, scandal and tragedy.

This past fall, our De Smet community tragically lost a student in an auto accident, and I witnessed firsthand the struggle of many of my students — his friends and peers — to understand and process what had happened. To accompany those young men at that moment, I knew that I needed to pray, to offer a compassionate listening ear, and ultimately to point to Christ, who Pope Francis calls “our great light of hope and our guide in the night” (*Christus vivit*, 33).

It is in looking to Christ that I find the key to this third Apostolic Preference. Jesus himself shows us the model of what youthfulness can be (cf. *Christus vivit* 22-33), and in contemplating the faces of the young people I serve with the eyes of faith, I can see Jesus’ presence within each of them. I know that Jesus looks at each one of them with eyes of love and compassion, and he invites me to do the same. I pray that Jesus will grant me the grace to help them realize the hopes and plans that he has for each of their lives.

Throughout this season of Lent, take time in prayer to imagine the faces of the young people that our Lord has placed in your life. Ask Jesus for the grace to see these young people as *he* sees them, and to walk alongside them on the path of hope and salvation.



William Manaker, SJ, is a regent at De Smet Jesuit High School in St. Louis.

Caring for our Common Home

By Jorge Roque, SJ

The Society of Jesus continued to show its fidelity to the Holy Father, an essential part of its tradition, when naming “Care for our Common Home” as one of the Universal Apostolic Preferences. Ever since the publication of *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis has called on Catholics to undergo an “ecological conversion” in which praise and reverence of God leads to service to our globe.

Importantly, environmental concern has a distinct tenor when lived out of Catholic faith. Among the most memorable statements made by the landmark encyclical was a strong reminder: “rather than a problem to be solved, the world is a joyful mystery to be contemplated with gladness and praise.” Discouragement and despair do not lead to decisive action, even if they are frequent ingredients in the summons to address global climate change or untrammled deforestation.

With this statement, the Holy Father placed the call to ecological conversion within an Ignatian framework. Any service Catholics offer for the environment comes out of praise and reverence for the Creator who so lovingly fashioned creation. Otherwise, activism falls in danger of becoming misanthropic. Our common home must remain a joyful mystery. Contemplation helps us perceive it and gives us the resolve to live out the simplicity Pope Francis and now the Society of Jesus are asking us to find.

We will lack hope and enthusiasm for this Apostolic Preference if we do not grow in our love for the natural world. Contemplation increases our desire to live more harmoniously with the limits besetting our world. When our vision of the world is informed by prayer, we can cry out, “[e]ven the sparrow finds a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, at your altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God” (Ps 84: 1-3).



The red mangroves common in coastal regions of Puerto Rico

If this grace from prayer excites us to live more sustainably, then we must become aware of where our sloth or apathy to the globe’s future comes from. After all, it’s easy not to care. Blindness to the beauty of creation and deafness to our stewardship of it means that the modern throwaway culture is in danger of winning. Pope Francis followed Pope Benedict XVI by giving this diagnosis: “The external deserts in the world are growing, because the internal deserts have become so vast. For this reason, the ecological crisis is also a summons to profound interior conversion.”

The call is to let the Lord’s consolation ripple into our relationship with reality. Ultimately, any change we want to see in the world has to begin with us. We can begin by asking for the grace of ecological conversion, desirous of living simply. Caring for our Common Home will keep us from praising God with our lips while serving the throwaway culture with our hands.



Jorge Roque, SJ, is a regent at Strake Jesuit College Preparatory in Houston.



Thank you to **Philip Nahlik, SJ**, for his inspired artwork. Philip is a scholastic studying at Loyola University in Chicago.

SERVING OUR NEIGHBORS

Contributing to the Humanitarian Response on the Border

By Beau Guedry, nSJ

*Yo vengo a traerte vida
Vida en abundancia
En abundancia*

*Yo soy el camino,
La verdad y la vida
Vida en abundancia
En abundancia*

*(I come to bring you life
Life in abundance
In abundance*

*I am the way,
The truth, and the life
Life in abundance
In abundance)*

About 24 hours after arriving in Brownsville, Texas, I sang along with these words of Christ inside a church filled with migrant children from Central America. We were singing after communion at a parish Mass in the poorest neighborhood of a city that is among the poorest in the nation. For these children, this Mass is something to look forward to, not least because it is the only chance they get to leave the detention centers where they are housed.



Like children everywhere, this migrant child enjoys showing off his artwork to an encouraging adult.



Jesuit Fathers Brian Strassburger, Louie Hotop and Tom Greene visit migrants to learn more about their needs.

These children are not juvenile criminals. They are unaccompanied minors seeking asylum in the United States, whose parents or guardians had to send them into a foreign country alone for a variety of reasons, including violent attacks and threats on their life.

When children are apprehended by border police, they are brought to youth migrant detention centers, where they are housed until they can be sent to a relative in the States who can care for them. For some, this process takes a few weeks; for others, it can be months. For all, spending time in this transitory state effects a very real fear in their hearts: will I get to be with my family? Will I be safe?

The care of these children is just one of the many complex border issues faced in the Rio Grande Valley of south Texas. Newly ordained Jesuit priests Brian Strassburger and Louie Hotop were missioned here, along with Fr. Warren Broussard, SJ, to join the vibrant humanitarian response of the Catholic Church in the area, and to discern how the Society of Jesus might contribute to it.

The Border and the Valley

What Father Brian and Father Louie have learned so far is that the need is great in this part of the country. In an area of over 1.3 million people, more than 1.1 million, or 85%, are Catholic. They are served by 72 parishes, 44 missions and just over 100 diocesan priests.

"It's incredibly humbling to preside at a Mass for people who are truly begging God for change. It's their faith that encourages me the most. I have never been around such faithful people."

— Father Louie Hotop, SJ

Economically, Brownsville and nearby McAllen, Texas, consistently rank among the poorest cities in the nation, with more than a quarter of the people in each city living below the federal poverty line in 2020. Educational attainment is low, and jobs are hard to find and keep.

In sum, the people here have both great faith and great need.

The same can be said of the many migrants in the area who are in various

stages of trying to enter the country legally. Currently, more than a thousand migrants who have already left their home country are staying in camping tents in a plaza in Reynosa, Mexico, just across the border from McAllen. In their makeshift camp, electricity comes strictly from generators and water from 55-gallon drums; they must pay to shower. Most of them traveled north for a month or more from Guatemala, Honduras or El Salvador, and many have been stuck in Mexico within earshot of the border wall for months, not permitted to make their asylum claim with the current state of U.S. immigration policy.

Among the asylum seekers who are permitted to enter are dozens of families with children under six, who pass daily through the Humanitarian Respite Center run by Catholic Charities in McAllen. There, they can rest on plastic mats and get a sandwich before taking planes or buses across the country. Once they arrive, they await their court date when a judge will hear their case and

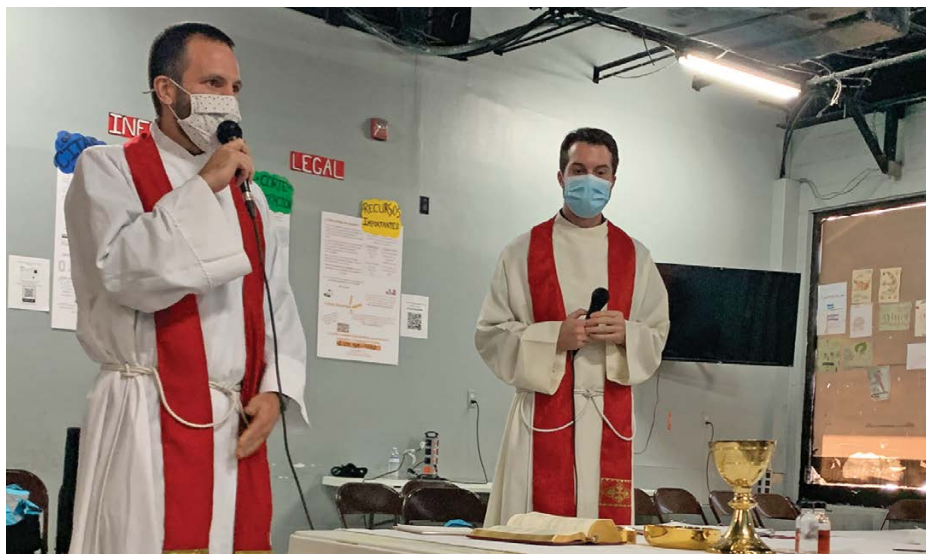
decide whether to grant them asylum or to send them back to their country of origin.

Some families resort to sending their children to cross the border alone. These unaccompanied minors are the hundreds of children in the detention centers scattered throughout the American side of the Rio Grande Valley. Most speak little, if any, English; some from areas with large indigenous populations don't

even speak Spanish. The children often receive some clothing, food and water, shelter and some basic schooling until they can travel to their family members in the U.S, though conditions vary between the different detention centers.

Responding to Need

Fathers Louie and Brian are becoming involved in the humanitarian response to the situation in the area. Both minister at mission parishes along the border, where they offer Mass and confessions, sit on parish councils and facilitate parish youth groups.



Jesuit Fathers Brian Strassburger and Louie Hotop say Mass at a makeshift altar at the Humanitarian Respite Center in McAllen, Texas.

Father Louie says he is consistently struck by the generosity of the local community.

At San Pedro [the parish where Fr. Hotop is assigned], parishioners organize food drives throughout the week to help support their neighbors. They drive through the streets of the *colonias* [poor, highly populated neighborhoods served by a parish]

brothers or sisters with them; others are alone in the detention center, without parents or siblings. When the meal ends, the children return to the centers.

Two days a week, Fathers Brian and Louie make visits to the migrant camp in Reynosa and the Humanitarian Respite Center in McAllen. Loaded with donations from generous

benefactors, they bring necessities like soap, blankets, sanitary pads and toothbrushes into the camp, where they also celebrate Mass. Then they cross back over the border to offer another Mass for those in the Humanitarian Respite Center and minister to them.

These Masses are powerful for migrants.

“The familiarity of the Mass and the beauty of the ritual can strike a chord with migrants who have been traveling for months,” Fr. Strassburger says. “I find it to be an incredibly moving experience to pray with them in the Mass. When we get to Communion, we invite every migrant to come forward to receive the Eucharist or a priestly blessing. Many migrants come up with their children and ask for a blessing for the family together. I have seen it move the migrants to tears. It touches my heart and reminds me of the importance of the ministry that we do.”

Father Hotop also finds these liturgies moving. “It’s incredibly humbling to preside at a Mass for people who are truly begging God for change,” he says. “You can feel their sense of longing. You can hear it and see it in the way they pray and sing – hoarse voices, hands reaching up, crying out to God. It’s their faith that encourages me the most. I have never been around such faithful people.”

Possibility In Progress

The situation in the Rio Grande Valley is precarious. At any time, immigration policy could shift and move migrants either across or away from the border. A new camp could be established in Reynosa, or a second formed elsewhere, or the original

camp dispersed and broken up by the local government. The Humanitarian Respite Center never knows whether to expect 50 people or 1,500.

“Immigration laws and enforcement are constantly shifting,” Fr. Strassburger says. “What’s governing the border today might not be the same in another month. Or it might remain the same for another year.”

“Many of the migrants are children, and all of them are vulnerable to cartel activity, deportation by the Mexican government, unsanitary conditions, overcrowding, violence within the camp, and any number of factors that make this kind of living dangerous,” Fr. Hotop says.

“It’s difficult to look at a kid without shoes, playing marbles in the dirt, sleeping exposed to the elements, not always having enough to eat and not see the tremendous cost that this situation will have on his life,” Fr. Louie continued. “I have to remind myself sometimes, ‘This is not normal!’ This is not how people are meant to live, it is not how people are meant to be treated, and it is not the call of the Gospel to continue to allow people to live in squalor.”



Claudia, on the left, is a migrant who lives in a camp in Reynosa, Mexico, and organizes one of the *cocinas*. She’s known and beloved among the migrants for giving hugs, seeming to be everywhere and shouting through her smile “*valoreme, padrecito, valoreme*” – value me, acknowledge me, strengthen me. Claudia is uppermost in Novice Beau Guedry’s mind when he thinks and prays about the need in the Valley and what the Society of Jesus can do to help respond to it.

The response of the Church to the great need in the Valley is led by a host of dynamic leaders, like Sr. Norma Pimentel of the Missionaries of Jesus and Most Reverend Daniel Flores, Bishop of Brownsville. A network of religious charities and local non-governmental organizations work with them.

“Ultimately,” Fr. Hotop says, “our salvation is at stake. Either we choose

to follow Christ’s call to serve our neighbor, regardless of which country they are from, regardless of their legal status, or we ignore Christ’s call and walk away. Of course, I’m not saying that everyone needs to come down and work in the camp. But we all have the opportunity to serve our neighbor every day – it just so happens that our neighbors live in this camp across the border in a very difficult situation.”



Jesuit Fathers Brian Strassburger and Louie Hotop flank Most Rev. Daniel Flores, Bishop of Brownsville.

MORE INFORMATION

Stay in touch with Frs. Louie and Brian’s work through the Jesuit Border Podcast, which hosts experts on Catholic social teaching, the border and immigration law. Find it wherever you get your podcast.

If you’d like to help the migrants directly, visit their Amazon wish list (<https://bit.ly/BorderWishList>) to donate supplies.



Some of the photos used are courtesy of John Salazar.

SHARING THE WHOLE STORY:

Teaching the Complex History and Legacy of American Slavery

By Therese Fink Meyerhoff



Dr. Katrina Thompson Moore



Dr. Ron Rebore

A few years ago, Dr. Katrina Thompson Moore, an associate professor of history at Saint Louis University, was helping her niece prepare for a high school social studies test on the U.S. Civil War era. Because Dr. Moore’s area of study is the institution of slavery, she could offer her niece insight beyond what she was learning in the textbook. Unfortunately, the teacher wasn’t interested in anything beyond the textbook, which referred to enslaved people as “immigrant workers.”

Dr. Moore’s niece learned a lesson that day, but she didn’t learn the truth about slavery, at least not in the classroom.

“High school students know very little about the institution of slavery,” Dr. Moore says. “What they do know is a version I call “Gone with the Wind” slavery – very idealized and romanticized, but it’s not the truth. Not telling the truth causes problems. History is something to learn from. Not to feel guilty about, but to realize the complexity of humans and our history.”

To present the truth of slavery, Dr. Moore worked with Dr. Ron Rebore, the provincial assistant for secondary and presecondary education (PASE) for the Jesuits USA Central and Southern (UCS) Province, and the staff at the Jesuits’ Slavery, History, Memory and Reconciliation Project (SHMR) to come up with a program for the high schools in the UCS Province.

Originally envisioned as an in-person workshop, Drs. Rebore and Moore pivoted over the summer to offer a five-week, 10-presentation virtual program called *Sharing the*

Whole Story: Teaching the Complex History and Legacy of American Slavery. Dr. Moore designed the workshop and recruited expert presenters, Sara Smith of the province secondary education office handled the technology, and Dr. Rebore spread the word to the schools in the UCS Province and beyond.

“As a former high school history teacher, I knew the challenges of teaching the history of slavery in the classroom,” Dr. Rebore said. “Reading the signs of the times – with our schools developing diversity, equity and inclusion programs, SHMR researching Jesuit slaveholding, and the racial and political divide in our country magnified by the death of George Floyd – I thought this would be an ideal time to develop a program to help teachers build curriculum that is historically accurate and effective in helping students understand the past, so they can work to make the present and future equitable for all Americans.”

Learning the Truth

The Jesuits USA Central and Southern Province established SHMR in 2016 to research the history of Jesuit slaveholding and the lives of the people held in bondage by Jesuits. Researchers have since learned that approximately 200 men, women and children were owned, “rented” or “borrowed” by Jesuits in the states that make up this province. Jesuits in other parts of the country were also slaveholders.

The forced labor of these people helped ensure the success of Jesuit institutions across the country. This historical truth has often

been overlooked or ignored. Dr. Moore, who's been involved with the slavery research initiative from its beginnings, wants to change that.

"People should understand the complexity of the school they're going to," she said.

Like many institutions of its age, Saint Louis University benefited from the work of enslaved people. In 2020, Dr. Moore, herself a Descendant of enslaved people, taught a course called *Jesuits, SLU and Slavery*. "It was the first time on this campus that we focused on slavery holistically and Jesuit slaveholding specifically, and how that looked, and how to reflect on that," she said.

Seeing the misconceptions brought to the classroom by her college students reinforced for Dr. Moore that education – *sharing the whole story* – had to begin earlier. Thus, she was enthusiastic about working with Dr. Rebore and the SHMR staff.

Recent research by the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) indicates that most U.S. schools are failing in their approach to teaching the "the hard history of African enslavement." Their findings reveal that high school

teachers feel ill equipped, and many textbooks don't even cover the subject.

"The educators who registered for the workshop have a desire to do a better job teaching about slavery and racism," Dr. Moore said. "These teachers did it in a tumultuous time for high school and middle school teachers because they have to defend telling the truth in the classroom."

Kovarik is now working with the other SLUH teachers who participated in the workshop. "We'll collaborate on how to use what we've learned in our classrooms and broaden the impact to the rest of the school."

Understanding the history of slaveholding and its legacy of racism will help students understand their world. Studies show that exposing students

"Students understand that Black Lives Matter is important because it wasn't always true. Imagine the impact if all of our teachers passed this on to all of the students they taught over the course of their careers. It would be immeasurable!" – Dr. Katrina Thompson Moore

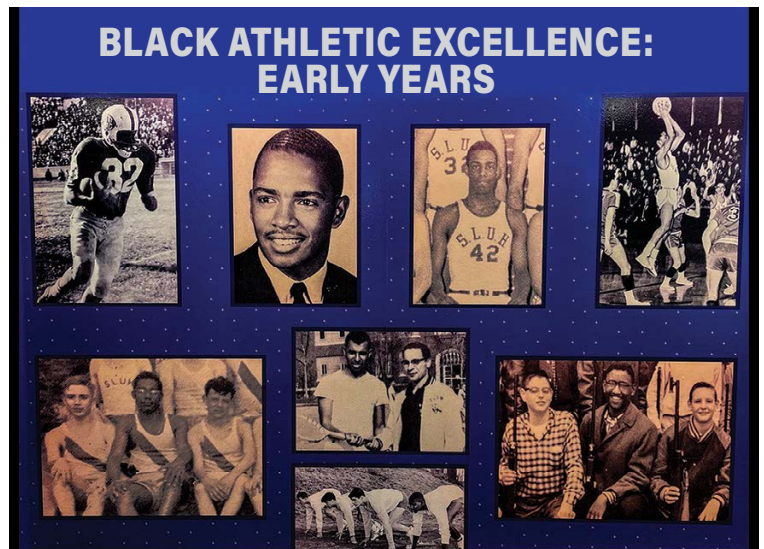
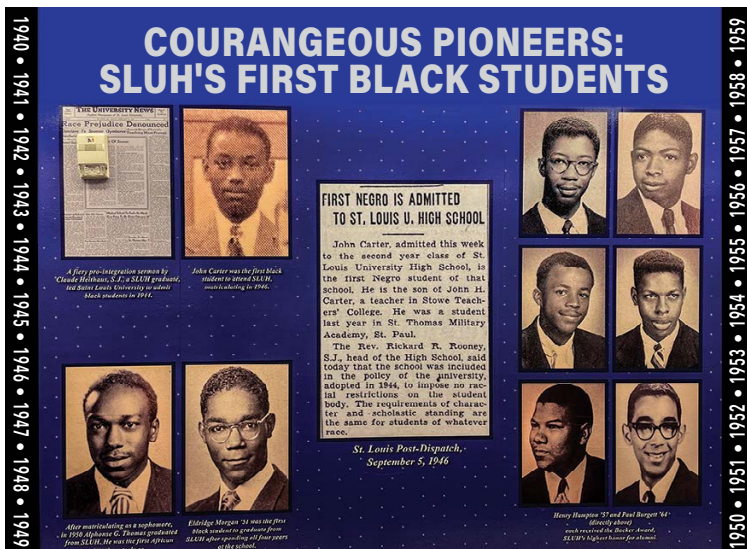
Frank Kovarik is an English teacher and the director of equity and inclusion at St. Louis University High School. He attended the virtual workshop along with 40 other Jesuit educators across the country.

"It's important for teachers to be able to teach the history of slavery with the proper degree of sophistication and sensitivity," he said. "It's especially important for teachers at Jesuit institutions because of the Society's history of slaveholding."

to African-American history early reduces ideas of racism.

"They understand that Black Lives Matter is important because it wasn't always true," Dr. Moore said. "Imagine the impact if all of our teachers passed this on to all of the students they taught over the course of their careers. It would be immeasurable!"

"The way we get rid of structural racism is defeat it in a classroom. Then our students go on to defeat it in their worlds."



Displays at St. Louis University High School recognize the contributions of African-American students.



White House Retreat Withstands the Test of Time

By Jerry Duggan

WHITE HOUSE JESUIT RETREAT OUTSIDE ST. LOUIS HAS SERVED AS HALLOWED GROUND FOR GENERATIONS OF CATHOLICS. IT REMAINS TRUE TO THE PURPOSE FOR WHICH IT WAS FOUNDED: TO COMFORT BROKEN SOULS AND BRING RETREATANTS CLOSER TO CHRIST THROUGH THE *SPIRITUAL EXERCISES* OF ST. IGNATIUS LOYOLA. THIS YEAR MARKS ITS 100th ANNIVERSARY.

THE BEGINNINGS

In the early 1900s, post-World War I America needed to be healed. People of faith, particularly Catholics, had begun turning to retreats for spiritual consolation. A “layman’s league” had formed in St. Louis. This network, consisting primarily of Catholic immigrants from Europe and their descendants, hosted retreats on an informal basis, congregating at members’ homes for prayer.

In 1921, Fr. Francis Xavier McMenemy, provincial of the Missouri Province of the Society of Jesus, saw both the need and an opportunity. He recognized the *Spiritual Exercises* as uniquely suited as a source of much-needed spiritual

refreshment and sought a way to make them available to more people.

He commissioned Father James Monaghan, SJ, to find a physical spot for Jesuits to offer retreats. At the time there were few if any retreat houses in the St. Louis area.

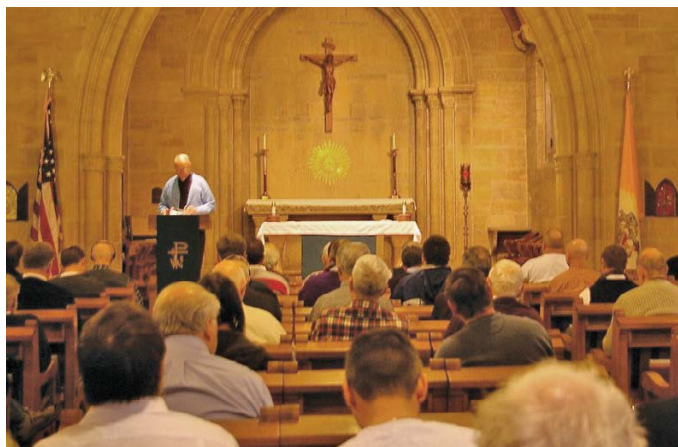
Father Monaghan found a large estate in south St. Louis County, roughly two miles north of the intersection of the Meramec and Mississippi rivers. At that time, the 75-to-80-acre tract was surrounded by rural land and owned by the Christopher family. The road the White House is on, now today highly suburbanized, is still known as Christopher Drive.

The Society of Jesus purchased the land in 1922, and White House opened its doors. Its name harks to an enduring rumor of the time that the area around it was considered as a new location of the United States capital thanks to its central location, access to several major rivers and a military institution nearby.

GROWTH

Twelve men attended the first retreat on the property. The initial building, named for Fr. Monaghan, was large enough to house retreatants given the demand at that time. Most of the property remained undeveloped for many years.

Expansion was soon needed, and the prominent Mudd family donated money for a spiritual hub on the grounds. The chapel, which has stood for 90 years, attracted even more retreatants. A third structure, Snyder Hall, was built as a housing facility for retreatants.



Father Jim Blumeyer, SJ, leads a retreat at White House Retreat in St. Louis.

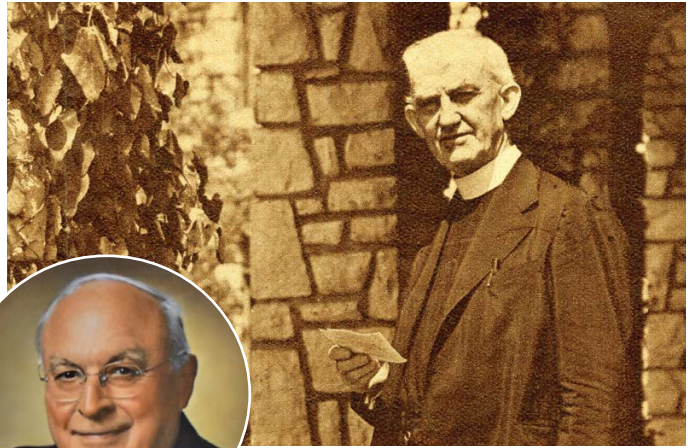
Shortly thereafter, the layman's league's numbers dwindled, and White House had to bolster its outreach efforts into the St. Louis community, its urban core a train ride away.

By 1941, a Jesuit priest named Lawrence Chiuminatto began spreading the word about the retreat house in Catholic parishes throughout the area, and the number of retreatants grew exponentially.

According to White House's current executive director, Bill Schmitt, it was under Fr. Chiuminatto that the retreat house really grew in influence.

"Father Monaghan built the car, but Fr. Chiuminatto shifted it into another gear, so to speak," he said.

In the mid-20th century, White House began to offer retreats every week, year-round, arriving at 67 per year.



Above: Fr. James Monaghan, SJ
Left: Fr. Lawrence Chiuminatto, SJ

Each retreat consisted of a four-day, three-night program based on the *Spiritual Exercises*.

Its offerings served as a blueprint for other retreat facilities, including Sacred Heart Retreat House in Sedalia, Colo., also staffed by Jesuits, and King's House in nearby Belleville, Ill., among others.

MODERNIZATION AND INCLUSIVITY

By the 1980s, White House staff recognized the need for inclusion and began allowing women to attend retreats.

"We did a lot of good things in our early years, but it was time to open our doors to more of society," Schmitt said. "For years, there was great desire among women to attend these retreats, and it was past time to include them."

Today, around 30 percent of White House retreatants are women, and that proportion is growing.

Around that time, White House also began offering couples' retreats, so that married men and women might have an opportunity to experience the *Spiritual Exercises* together.

In recent decades, White House has rolled out several "specialty" retreats, which remain rooted in the *Spiritual Exercises* but are tailored to resonate with a specific audience. White House now offers focused retreats for Catholic school students, young adults, military veterans, the Latino community and people in recovery.

According to Schmitt, this is an intentional effort to make the *Exercises* relatable to more people. "There's no 'right' or 'wrong' way to experience the *Spiritual Exercises*," he said. "They speak to different people in different ways, and anything we can do to help people of all walks of life make that connection to Christ, is time well-spent."

These efforts have proved quite fruitful.

“When we first offered these specialty retreats, it was really an exploration of new territory, but they have all been quite successful,” Schmitt said. “In fact, we run out of space weeks in advance for many of them.”

ADAPTING TO THE PANDEMIC

In 2020, White House was confronted with a challenge unlike any other in its history: a global pandemic. After shuttering for the initial lockdown for several months (the first extended closure in its history), later in the year the House reopened, with stringent protocols in place.

“It was a difficult situation,” Schmitt said. “Especially when it comes to dining in close quarters with other retreatants, and the fact that we have large numbers of people staying here at once, we had to be very careful.”

In the interest of safety, White House implemented many precautions, such as requiring masks for all retreatants while indoors and taking the temperature of all retreatants upon arrival. These measures remain in place and have paid off.

“Since the start of the pandemic, we have hosted more than 3,000 retreatants, and, by the grace of God, have not had any cases of COVID stemming from our retreat house,” Schmitt said. “We have done our part to keep the spread under control while still operating as close to normal as possible.”



A LOOK TO THE FUTURE

The last decade has brought significant changes to White House. In 2014, Schmitt was named the first lay director in its history.

In addition, within the past 10 to 15 years, non-Jesuits have started to lead retreats, reflecting White House's commitment to inclusivity.

White House is in the midst of a fundraising campaign with a main goal of funding capital improvements, in particular replacing the 50-year-old HVAC system in each retreatant room.

To mark the Society of Jesus' Ignatian Year, White House has opened the "Ignatian Trail," a nearly mile-long, rugged path complete with spots to pray and reflect on St. Ignatius' own journey. This trail marks the "full development" of White House property – there is no longer any unused land.

CONSISTENCY OF MISSION

Through its many expansions, White House has kept its mission the same: to help people of faith grow spiritually through prayer, reflection and teaching in the tradition of the *Spiritual Exercises*. Schmitt says that consistency in focus is intentional.

“We always have been focused on the *Spiritual Exercises* because we believe that is the best way for us, in particular, to draw our retreatants closer to God,” he said. “This place would not exist without Ignatius, his *Exercises* and the Jesuits we have had on our staff throughout the 100 years.”

In addition, White House has kept the tradition of no charge for its retreats. A free-will donation is accepted, if desired. Most retreatants are generous.

“We believe we shouldn't be making money off what we do. We are a nonprofit and exist to draw souls closer to Christ,” Schmitt said. “We have done that for 100 years, and, God-wiling, are poised to do it for 100 more.”

He believes that sacred spaces like White House are always needed.

“There is a reason we are still here and have withstood the test of time – because we heal souls and transform lives. As long as there is a need for that in this world, we will continue to be here for all people, for the Greater Glory of God.”

MORE For more information on the White House Retreat Center
ON THE WEB In St. Louis, visit www.WhiteHouseRetreat.org.

Jesuit Spirituality Center Celebrates 50 Years

By Jerry Duggan

JESUIT SPIRITUALITY CENTER IN GRAND COTEAU, LA., WAS FOUNDED 50 YEARS AGO TO MEET A NEED FOR SPIRITUAL NOURISHMENT FOR THE PEOPLE OF SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA. TODAY THE CENTER LOOKS TO THE FUTURE WITH A CLEAR SENSE OF DIRECTION AND OPTIMISM.



Father Paul Deutsch, SJ, who was named director of the Center last fall, elaborated on the context in which it was founded.

“In the late 1960s, the (New Orleans) Province moved its juniorate from Grand Coteau to Mobile (Ala.), so that freed up a lot of space,” he said. “There existed great need for a spirituality center in southern Louisiana, so this was a natural fit.”

For a half century now, the Center has provided personally directed retreats based on the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius Loyola.

The Center offers retreats lasting three, five and eight days, as well as the full 30-day *Spiritual Exercises*. The Center’s staff is comprised of five Jesuits and three lay directors, each trained in Ignatian Spirituality.

Since the Center reopened this summer, retreatants have consistently expressed deep joy at again being able to make a retreat in Grand Coteau.

“Many retreat and spirituality centers in the South have closed, but the need for spiritual healing has not diminished,” Fr. Deutsch explained. “We have seen an uptick in retreatants from Louisiana, yes, but also from Texas, Alabama, Georgia and Arkansas.”

The global pandemic provided the impetus for the Center to move operations online for the first time in its history. This expanded its reach and brought in participants who may have hesitated to make the drive to Grand Coteau.

“The pandemic is a tremendous hardship, and we saw the need for spiritual direction grow in these times,” Fr. Deutsch said. “We were able to fill a need for persons from all over the country, and since reopening, our numbers of in-person retreatants have also rebounded strongly.”

He looks to his tenure as director and the future with optimism because he believes the Center has a clear sense of direction, provided in large part by the Society of Jesus at both a province and worldwide level.

“The Office of Ignatian Spirituality is an exciting new collaborative opportunity for us to explore,” Fr. Deutsch said, referring to the province’s new ministry. “In addition, the Universal Apostolic Preferences released by Fr. General give us clear guidance to follow in terms of our work with the *Spiritual Exercises* and discernment, and I am also eager to include in our ministry the U.S. Bishops’ new initiative to deepen Catholics’ devotion to the Eucharist.”

He is grateful for the financial and spiritual support of the province.

“We could not do what we do without the backing of the province,” Fr. Deutsch said. “Because of their tremendous support, we are able to stay focused on what we do best and feel equipped to tackle whatever challenges the future may bring.”

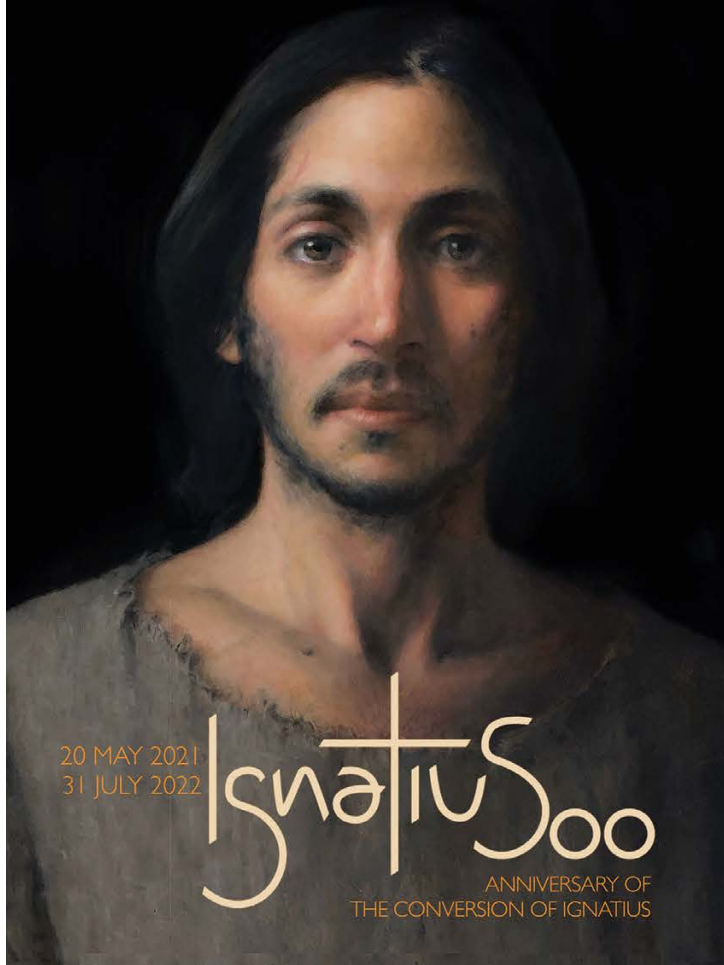
MORE
ON THE WEB

For more information on the Jesuit Spirituality Center in Grand Coteau, visit www.JesuitSpiritualityCenter.org/

From the Office of Ignatian Spirituality

Calls to Conversion:
Our
**CANNONBALL
 MOMENTS**

By Fr. Drew Kirschman, SJ



Ponder the human heart. An ingenious layering of tissues and valves that enable four chambers to oxygenate and circulate blood to the entire body day-in and day-out, hour by hour, minute by minute, moment by moment. Incredibly durable, your heart will beat two billion+ times over the course of your life. Incredibly delicate, we know how easy the heart can falter and fail, let alone break, get bruised, be scorned. Durable and delicate all in one!

While function can fascinate, that the heart can *turn* speaks of something more than human. This is the nature of conversion. In Latin, *conversio* means “to turn around;” in Greek, *metanoia* – a “change of heart” urging toward repentance to *re*-turn to one’s true self.

What initiates the “turning” and “changing” tends to originate beyond us. Think of the blinding light that de-saddles St. Paul, or the cannonball that shatters St. Ignatius.

What are your “knocked off your horse” moments? In a COVID-19 world, I bet we all have many. For me: Friday, March 13, 2020. Jesuits from the four corners of the Jesuits USA Central and Southern Province gathered in St. Louis for a meeting of community leaders (superiors). Alerted to a virus-gripped world, the precautionary kneejerk reaction was “shut it down.”

Like a cannonball, COVID crashed into our consciousness and demanded drastic measures. As novice director, I had novices on pilgrimage. In Jesuit parlance, this means novices on a journey, placing their necessities (i.e., food, shelter, transportation) concretely in God’s hands. The unknowns of the virus and unpredictability of novices wandering the highways and byways in a world grappling with how to care for the most vulnerable demanded a reaction: “shut it down.”

And so, I prayed like hell! The world changed, with new ways of thinking required, new ways of praying sought. The pandemic cannonball forced a rethinking, reconsidering, re-discerning, re-praying.

Moments of disruption like this invite a return to God, to consider God’s plan as my plan, God’s dream as my dream, God’s will to become more and more my way of proceeding.

God's Way of Proceeding

Return to the original Garden. Adam and Eve witness the need for conversion from the get-go. You know the story: God comes each day in the cool of the afternoon to walk with this first couple, to share the day, to deepen the friendship. When Adam and Eve get self-absorbed in seeking ill-fated nourishment from the “tree of knowledge,” God comes with a tender question: “Who told you that you were naked?” (Genesis 3:8-11) This foundational conversion question beckons them back to right relationship.

So, too, with us. Knowing that God desires to walk with us in the cool afternoons of life, who told us that we are not enough? Who told us that our nakedness – fully being who God created us to be – needs to be hidden? God's way constantly invites us to turn back.

This is the thing about conversion. Turning is hard. Maybe the natural process of aging is to calcify – to be less flexible to things, less open, less receptive. It is easy to dig heels in with what is comfortable, known and familiar. Conversion demands an openness to see with new eyes, feel with a fresh heart and step into a horizon. At every age in our faith life, we are invited back to a “heart of flesh” (Ezekiel 36:26-27; 2 Corinthians 3:2-3), one that beats a billion+ times and is susceptible to being broken.

Jesus shows us how to do this. At every stage of his ministry, Jesus models a heart eager to discern his Father's will. Notice Jesus' freedom to expand his ministry from his own tribe to the world, including foreigners. (Matthew 28:18-20) Note his agility to pick up and move to the next town despite the pleading to stay local. (Mark 1:32-39) Notice Jesus' intimate grappling in a different Garden as he surrendered to the cup his Father offered. (Matthew 26:36-46) The ongoing conversion of his heart began to reveal that the salvific plan of his Father was beyond his understanding. A turn was demanded, a turn toward the cross.

Jesus' surrender to his Father's will, so vividly seen from the cross, never moves toward bitterness. That is the temptation though, is it not? It is easy to let our hearts harden, even grow bitter when we are pushed out of what is comfortable and preferred. Suffering tempts recalcitrance, and yet invites a response of Divine Love.

Jesus chose self-emptying love. We enter this Lenten season acutely aware that in all of Jesus' sacrifice and surrender, his way to the cross was to be gracious (where brutality did not deter him from seeking out the women of Jerusalem for comfort), to be generous (where suffering opened him to solidarity with thieves rather than the



despair lurking at the cross), and to be grateful (where love for mother and closest of friends initiated a new community). No bitterness, only love!

St. Ignatius found a way to help make self-emptying love a bit more accessible. Through the *Spiritual Exercises* he offers tools for discernment to help make Jesus' way our way. Challenges and suffering are part of life; might we choose graciousness, generosity and gratitude? A cannonball opened the door for Ignatius, breaking him so these virtues might thrive. So, too, with us.

As an Ignatian community we pray for conversion to reveal ever more clearly the Father's way in our world today. We pray to *re*-turn to the “cries of the world”: cries from young people seeking a hope-filled future, cries from marginalized people seeking justice and fullness, cries from creation seeking jubilee stewardship and care. Conversion replants us, time and again, in God's horizon.

What, then, does it take for our hearts to turn? A foreboding voice message with lab results? A tender glance from across the room? The time-suspending sound of breaking metal and glass? The hand of a newborn searching to lock hold of a finger? God has an opinion on the direction our hearts turn, which means we listen, we slow down enough to notice, we cultivate curiosity and wonder so that conversion might visit us, regularly.



Father Drew Kirschman, SJ, is novice director and a consultant to the provincial for the Jesuits USA Central and Southern Province.

Juan Ruiz, SJ, Finds Consolation in His Jesuit Vocation

By Jerry Duggan



prayer, I felt that was the one time when I could relax – I felt consoled and at peace.”

The Memphis native was familiar with the Society of Jesus even before he arrived at Saint Louis University as an undergraduate. His time there helped him imagine what a Jesuit vocation might look like.

“I began attending discernment events my senior year of college, but I did not want anyone else to know that I was thinking about a religious

of a religious vocation was coming to light. I could not ignore it any longer.”

Through his two years at the novitiate, studies at Loyola University Chicago and an assignment at Cristo Rey Jesuit College Prep in Houston, Juan has learned the value of providing to others the same consolation God has always provided him through prayer.

“As a Jesuit, I have learned how to be there for people at some of their lowest points,” he said.

“As a Jesuit, I learned a lot about what it means to console others, and that's what I hope to do in my vocation.”

vocation, so I would get to the campus ministry events early and close the blinds so that no one walking outside could see me in there,” he recalled. “My discernment process was private, and, though I was strong in my faith, I did not want to be seen by others as zealous.”

After graduating in 2010 with a degree in finance with a concentration in IT management, Juan found gainful employment in his field. It was everything a graduate of his degree program could hope for: a good starting salary, positive work environment and flexible schedule. He describes himself during this year as very happy, but a question lingered.

“Everything was going pretty well for me in my career and in life, but I still felt a restlessness within me,” he said. “I knew that, once again, the idea

One of his Cristo Rey students shared that she had to shoulder primary caregiving responsibilities at her home. Juan encouraged her and made a schedule that worked for her, allowing her to get her work done while still caring for her family.

After the student’s graduation, Juan received a handwritten note from her, thanking him for the compassion he showed that helped her to graduate from high school. For Juan, that letter served as a sense of a “job well done.”

“I learned a lot about what it means to console others, and that’s what I hope to do in my vocation, wherever I may be assigned,” he said. “By acknowledging the harsh realities of life and laboring through those difficult times with others, I hope that we both can come out stronger and closer to Christ.”

Juan Ruiz knew he had put off exploring a Jesuit vocation long enough. He knew he would be restless until he took action. God’s call would not go away. So, in 2011, he surrendered all to God and entered the Society of Jesus. Today he is an ordained deacon and is finishing up theology studies in Toronto in advance of his priestly ordination this summer.

Juan finds consolation in his Jesuit vocation and hopes to pass that sense of consolation on to others through faith.

“I was always a bit of a perfectionist, and still am,” he said. “But, in



Grounded in Christ, Fr. Greg Waldrop, SJ, Explores New Paths to Mission

By *Therese Fink Meyerhoff*

Father Greg Waldrop, SJ, is a man of many talents ... and a corresponding number of responsibilities. He is a priest, college professor and province consultor, but his most pressing role at the moment is that of rector for the Jesuit Community of New Orleans. This newly constituted community includes all the Jesuits in southeastern Louisiana, 26 in all. As rector, Fr. Waldrop is responsible for their overall well-being.

“My most important job is *cura personalis*,” he says, using the Latin term Jesuits favor for “care of the whole person.”

As rector, he also has a limited role in *cura apostolica* (care of the apostolate) for the Jesuit works in the region. These institutions include Jesuit High School, Loyola University, Immaculate Conception Parish and Holy Name of Jesus Parish in New Orleans, as well as Manresa House of Retreats in Convent.

“I mainly concern myself with questions about the apostolates’ Catholic and Jesuit identity,” he says. “I work with the directors of the works, urging collaboration and asking questions about the needs of the institution. I want to be as helpful as possible in ensuring the health and vigor of our apostolates.”

The New Orleans Jesuit Community is exploring a new approach to Jesuit mission in the USA Central and Southern Province. Recognizing that the number of Jesuits is declining while the need for Ignatian works is not, the province is calling on its members and partners to adjust their mindset for mission.

Jesuits are still missioned to a certain job in a particular institution but now can also expect to help in others. For instance, in New Orleans, a Jesuit’s primary assignment might be at the high school, but he may also be called upon to preside at

Masses at the two Jesuit parishes in the city.

It is a new way of caring for the apostolates so that they remain viable, vigorous and Jesuit.

This vision for mission requires creativity, collaboration and collective discernment.

“I am excited about this new way of thinking about our mission,” Fr. Waldrop says. “It’s more collaborative and more generous across apostolic boundaries, and it makes us all collectively responsible for the Society’s efforts in this region.”

Father Waldrop is optimistic about the ongoing discernment of mission in the province and what it means practically. “Service of the Faith and the promotion of justice remain our priorities; that’s the contemporary mission of the Society in a nutshell,” he says. “To carry it out, we must, above all, be grounded in Jesus Christ, who gives us courage and strength and creativity.”

The scope of his rector assignment required Fr. Waldrop to step back from his full-time professorship at Loyola New Orleans, where he taught art history. He continues to serve on committees and as the treasurer/secretary for the university’s board of trustees. He hopes to return to the classroom someday, because teaching is the ministry for which he has most prepared.

Father Waldrop’s final role is province consultor, one of four advisors to Provincial Tom Greene. The group meets monthly to discuss the weighty, occasionally difficult, issues facing the provincial.

Consultor, rector, educator. With his many responsibilities, Fr. Waldrop says his favorite ministry is preaching and presiding at liturgies. “Priest” remains his ultimate calling.

Papal Politics and the Canonization of Ignatius and Francis Xavier

By Jerry Duggan



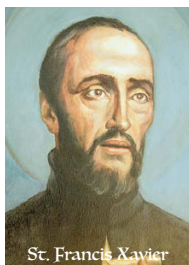
St. Ignatius Loyola



St. Ignatius Loyola



St. Francis Xavier



St. Francis Xavier

Nearly 500 years after the founding of the Society of Jesus, St. Ignatius Loyola and St. Francis Xavier are widely revered and respected.

It wasn't always so.

This March 12 marks the 400th anniversary of both saints' canonizations. It turns out there's a story there, one I had the privilege of hearing from Fr. John Padberg, SJ, shortly before his death on Christmas Day. Father Padberg was a renowned historian and particular scholar of the Society of Jesus. He was kind enough to share with me a little of the political maneuverings that took place behind the canonizations.

Ignatius, of course, was a soldier and courtier who enjoyed his share of earthly vices and sought glory on the battlefield. When he was wounded in battle and had time to consider what he wanted out of life, he chose to dedicate his life to Christ. This year, the

international Society of Jesus is celebrating the 500th anniversary of this conversion.

St. Francis Xavier was from a wealthy family and initially had little desire to devote his life to Christ, but was influenced by his zealous friend and roommate, Ignatius. He was among Ignatius' first companions in Paris and among the small group to make up the Society of Jesus, which received papal approval in 1540. Soon after, Ignatius, the superior of the small Society, missioned Xavier to Asia, where he would spend the rest of his life as a missionary for Christ.

Today it seems fitting that Ignatius and Xavier, who had an inseparable

bond reinforced by long-distance letters, were canonized on the same day. Still, as Fr. Padberg explained, their canonizations represent more than official recognition of their saintliness. There was a bit of political wrangling going on behind the scenes.

Politics Behind the Canonization

"In those days, separation of church and state didn't really exist as we think of it today," Fr. Padberg said. "The papacy was, of course, a spiritual entity, but also wielded significant political power and did not shy away from getting involved in international relations."

In 1621, Pope Gregory XV was elected Pope. At the time, France and Spain were the two largest Catholic powers in Europe. His predecessor, Pope Paul V, had displayed favoritism toward France, and Gregory, seeking to keep the church's political interests balanced over time, chose to favor Spain throughout his 30-month reign.

According to Fr. Padberg, the canonizations of Ignatius Loyola and Francis Xavier were warranted on the merits of each man's piety and contributions to the Church, but they also sent a political message.

Gregory XV was the first Pope educated by Jesuits, ascending to the papacy just 81 years after the Society's founding. It is likely that this influenced his decision to canonize two Jesuits.

"Because he was Jesuit educated, Gregory had a fondness for the Society, and wanted to make a statement about its worth," Fr. Padberg said. "This was one way for him to do that, loud and clear."

Three other people were canonized on the same day as Ignatius and

Xavier: St. Philip Neri, a Roman who founded the Oratorian Fathers; Teresa of Avila, a Spanish Carmelite Nun; and Isidore of Madrid, a Spanish farmer who lived a life of simplicity.

Father Padberg pointed out that it was no mere happenstance that four of the five who were canonized on that day were Spaniards.

“Gregory wanted to side with Spain more than he did France, especially compared to his predecessor,” he said. “Canonizing four Spaniards and one Roman [and no French] clearly sent that message.”

Inferring the political context behind the canonizations is not overly speculative.

“In today’s American politics, it seems everything has to come in the form of an official statement, or be made explicit, but it hasn’t always been that way around the world,” Fr. Padberg said. “Europeans of that

era who were tuned into the political landscape knew exactly what Gregory was doing.”

Significance of the Canonization

The events were especially significant because of their timing.

“Today, canonizations happen quite often, but no canonizations had occurred for 70 years prior to those five, who were all canonized on the same day,” Fr. Padberg said. “Of course, canonizations are always a big deal, but it is fair to argue that they were an even bigger deal in those days because they occurred much less often.”

What’s more, the canonizations granted a level of worldwide legitimacy to the Jesuits that had been previously lacking.

“Today, Jesuits are known all over the world; they are established and

respected almost everywhere,” Fr. Padberg said. “In those days, that was not necessarily the case.”

In 1622, the Society of Jesus was growing in popularity and attracting increasing numbers of men, but “more established religious orders were often cynical of the Jesuits in their early days,” Fr. Padberg said.

The canonization of two Jesuits gave the Society of Jesus not just recognition, but legitimacy – and in a very public way.

“Canonizing the founder of the Society and one of his closest companions sent a clear message that the Jesuits were legitimate and here to stay,” Padberg said.

Since that transformative day four centuries ago, more than 50 Jesuits have been canonized. The importance of Gregory XV’s decision to canonize Ignatius and Francis Xavier cannot be overstated.

IN MEMORIAM

May they sleep in peace until awakened into God’s eternal glory.

Father John W. Padberg, SJ



Father John Padberg, SJ, was an internationally recognized scholar and author and an authority on the history of the Society of Jesus and Jesuit education. He served for 28 years as director and editor of the Institute of Jesuit Sources in St. Louis. He also

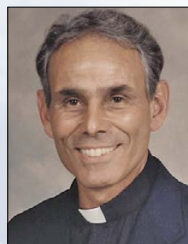
served as professor of history and academic vice president at Saint Louis University and as president of Weston Jesuit School of Theology in Cambridge, Mass. He was founding president of the International Conference of Catholic Theological Institutions. He was founding chairman of the

National Seminar on Jesuit Higher Education and editor of its journal, *Conversations on Jesuit Higher Education*.

Father Padberg died on Dec. 25, 2021, in St. Louis. He was 95 years old, a Jesuit for 77 years and a priest for 64 years.



Brother Castenzio Angelo (Casey) Ferlita, SJ



Brother Casey Ferlita, SJ, died Dec. 21, 2021, in St. Louis. He was 83 years old and a Jesuit for 61 years.

Brother Ferlita was missioned to serve as prefect of discipline and athletic trainer at Strake Jesuit College Preparatory in Houston in 1973. He

would remain at Strake Jesuit until 2016, having an immense influence on generations of young men at the school. Most alumni have a “Brother Casey” story to tell.

He also served at Jesuit High School in New Orleans from 1965 to 1971.

IN MEMORIAM

Continued

Father William T. Miller, SJ

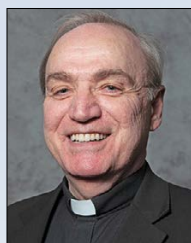


Father William Miller, SJ, died Nov. 28, 2021, in St. Louis. He was 96 years old, a Jesuit for 79 years and a priest for 66 years.

Father Miller was a long-time presence at Regis University in Denver, beginning there in 1961 and continuing until 1999 – with occasional interruptions to serve as visiting professor at Sogang University in Seoul, South Korea. He then served as a visiting priest around the Archdiocese of Denver and beyond. He retired to Jesuit Hall in 2015.

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Father Paul V. Stark, SJ



Father Paul Stark, SJ, died Nov. 16, 2021, in St. Louis. He was 74 years old, a Jesuit for 44 years and a priest for 36 years.

Remembered by his Jesuit brothers as gentle, wise and compassionate, Fr. Stark's ministry was mainly in education. He taught at St. Louis University High School and Regis Jesuit High in Aurora, Colo., but most of his ministry was in university administration, serving for many years at Saint Louis University and Wheeling Jesuit University. His final assignment was at St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church in Peoria, Ill.

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Father W. Peter Bayhi, SJ



Father Peter Bayhi, SJ, had a long career in secondary education, serving at Jesuit schools in Dallas, New Orleans, the Bronx, N.Y., and Chicago. After completing clinical pastoral education, he served as a chaplain at Saint Louis University Hospital in St. Louis before serving at parishes in New Orleans and Dallas. His final active ministry was at Jesuit Spirituality Center in

Grand Coteau, La., and Manresa House of Retreats in Convent, La.

Father Bayhi died Nov. 10, 2021, in St. Louis. He was 87 years old, a Jesuit for 68 years and a priest for 55 years.

MORE For complete obituaries, visit the province website:
ON THE WEB www.JesuitsCentralSouthern.org/in-memoriam.

Father Francis R. Brou, SJ



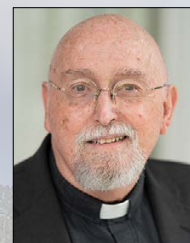
Father Frank Brou, SJ, was a much-loved senior presence at Jesuit High School in Tampa, Fla., his final active ministry. He is remembered as a

kind, generous, prayerful and spiritual man who had an adventurous streak in him, as exemplified by his service in the Ceylon Missions (now Sri Lanka), India and Africa. In addition to Tampa, he taught at the Jesuit high school in Dallas and worked in retreat and spiritual ministry at Jesuit retreat houses in Lake Dallas, Texas; Atlanta; Grand Coteau, La.; and Convent, La. He also served as campus minister at the Catholic Student Center of Southern University in Baton Rouge, La.

Father Brou died Oct. 19, 2021, in Grand Coteau, La. He was 92 years old, a Jesuit for 74 years and a priest for 60 years.

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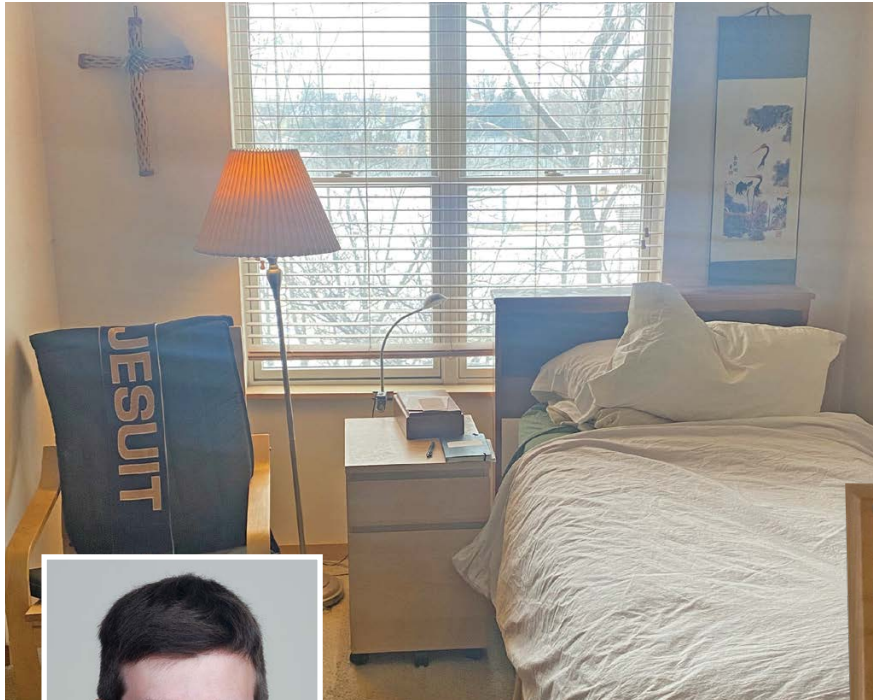
Father Peter S. Rogers, SJ



Remembered by his Jesuit brothers as kind and scholarly, Fr. Peter Rogers, SJ, had a passion for passing on his knowledge and love

of French and French literature to college students and others. He taught French at Loyola University New Orleans for most of his career. Early in his ministry, he also taught at the Jesuit high schools in New Orleans and Tampa.

He died Oct. 10, 2021, in New Orleans. He was 77 years old, a Jesuit for 59 years and a priest for 47 years.



FATHER STEPHEN PITTS, SJ, is currently pursuing a doctorate in applied economics at the University of Minnesota, with a focus on the root causes of migration. His prayer space is in his room in the Jesuit community.

“Depending on my mood, in the morning I may pray some of the breviary, read the Mass readings in English or Spanish, especially if I have to prepare a homily, or listen to music or a podcast,” Stephen wrote. “Much of my priestly ministry has been with Spanish-speaking migrants so sometimes I find it easier to pray with music, readings, or poems in Spanish, rather than English.”

CROSS

The cross made out of driftwood was given to me by a close friend from college when I was ordained a priest.



CHAIR, SCARF AND SCRAPBOOK

I like to pray in a chair in my room in the morning. The scarf draped over the chair is from the Jesuit Dallas soccer team, many of whom I taught. The scrapbook on the chair belonged to a dear friend, the campus minister I worked with at the University of Oklahoma. She was the first person who invited me to consider priesthood. She died tragically last summer, and her sister sent this collection of photos from the years we worked together.

FOUR CROSSES

These four crosses come from different phases of my Jesuit life: my first vows, my priestly ordination, a parishioner in El Paso, and a student from regency who I became very close to, especially after I accompanied him through the death of his father.



SACRED HEART

After ordination, I served in Sacred Heart parish in El Paso, Texas, on the U.S. - Mexico border, for two years. A retreat group from Tulsa gave me an image of the Sacred Heart for my ordination that I can see from my chair.



VANITY-PLATE

I found my vocation at St. Thomas More parish, the campus ministry of the University of Oklahoma.



BULLETIN BOARD

A bulletin board provides reminders past and present: deceased Jesuits, saints, and a weekly postcard from my mother.



PODCAST

In El Paso I had to preach every day in Spanish. *Rezandovoy*, a podcast of the Spanish Jesuits, often gave me inspiration. I continue to listen to it often.

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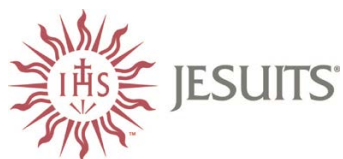


Each of the Jesuits above has his own unique vocation story, his own path to life as a Jesuit. What they have in common is the source of the call and the decision to say yes.

We invite you to watch a new video series on YouTube in which members of the Jesuits USA Central and Southern Province share their vocation stories. Perhaps something in these stories will be a source of consolation or inspiration for you.

Find them at <https://bit.ly/DiscernYourVocation>.

May God bless your discernment.



For information on upcoming discernment events or to speak to a Jesuit, email
ucsvocationcoordinator@jesuits.org