

# Bon Secours Spiritual Center Announces a 30-Day Ignatian Retreat in July 2010

IN MILITARY PARLANCE, a "retreat" signifies the decision to withdraw from an engagement to regroup and prepare to re-engage the foe. This theme repeats in the spiritual realm as well, where we use "retreat" to mean a time of removing yourself from daily concerns and questions and giving yourself the time and permission to go deeper, focusing more clearly on the divine agenda in your life. Effective retreats, whether they be the short time spent walking the labyrinth or an extended stay at the Center, are focused on re-collecting energy and preparing for a new engagement, better ready to understand and see anew the way God is asking us to follow.

Retreats have been one of the vehicles God uses to steer us toward changes we need to better know God and to move our lives in ways that are more open to a clearer view of or way to be with God. This was the case with Abraham and Sarah, who left the "house of his father and his kindred" to become a great people for God. Such was true, too, of Moses, tempered by God during forty years of desert shepherding. Jesus often retreated for prayer and communion with the Father, especially when He faced challenges or needed time to re-energize himself. Certainly the Apostles, awaiting the Holy Spirit after the Ascension of Jesus, withdrew to the upper room for a time of retreat / waiting. We know that early monks and nuns by the 3rd Century had abandoned their normal dwellings and retreated to the deserts to be closer to God, and in the stillness of the foreign land they learned God's ways. Throughout our tradition each of the saints, in her or his own way, found that prayer, sacrifice and listening to God came easier away from the hustle and bustle of daily life. Opening oneself to God's presence and investing the time



needed to listen carefully to God has always preceded a manifestation of grace for God's servants.

Perhaps no one in the Christian tradition understood these retreat benefits as well as St. Ignatius of Loyola. As a soldier and saint, Loyola knew the benefit of a timely retreat. In his system of spiritual growth and awareness he advises his followers to use the "retreat" as a vehicle to come away from the ordinary and to put oneself in God's hands, ready for the next step of guidance, re-energizing and Insight into where to be so you and God are in sync with each other.

Ignatius of Loyola was born into the end of the Middle Ages in 1491. Born into Spanish nobility, he was, typically, from his youth set aside for a military career. A cannon ball changed all that. After enduring many attempts to fix his broken leg, his long recovery became his first official retreat. Provided with the Gospels (not the romances he requested to read) and a sec-

ond book, *The Golden Legend*, by Bishop Jacques de Voragine, he came to see the mercy of God working powerfully in the souls of those we call saints.

The stories stirred Loyola's soul. As he recovered, he changed, dedicating his life to Christ and to God's kingdom. And he came to realize that decisions led to action which required discipline and consistency of spirit. He named his process of decision-making "discernment of spirits," a special gift and discipline that would eventually make him an unsurpassed practical genius in the field of apostolic decision-making.

Once recovered from his wounds, Ignatius spent eight months as a hermit at Manresa in Spain, where he wrote the first draft of his Spiritual Exercises, now the "guide book" for those discerning how to follow the inspirations of God in the Jesuit tradition. By 1534, while in Paris completing his theological studies he led his first six companions in his emerging Company of Jesus in a 30-day spiritual exercises retreat.

Ignatius' Spiritual Exercises are organized to focus on the Gospels and to allow their message to flow back to the seeker

after Jesus through meditation, self-examination and personal action in faith. If there is a "gold standard" in the spiritual development process, it is Ignatius' 30-day retreat, a graced time when those who follow Ignatius' walk find their way most clearly.

Bon Secours is blessed during 2010 to offer those ready for this level of opportunity, a 30-day retreat in the Ignatian tradition. Led by Fr. Joseph Lacey, S.J., and Fr. Frank O'Connor S.J., the retreat invites all those ready for the discipline and the benefits of this wonderful event to join these seasoned guides to discover in prayer and silence what Loyola discovered: A clearer path to a fuller knowledge and love of God.

For particulars on the 30-day retreat at Bon Secours during July 2010, call 410-422-3120 or consult the website, [www.bonsecoursspiritualcenter.org](http://www.bonsecoursspiritualcenter.org) for registration and program information. Follow the path of Ignatius. Come to Bon Secours to know the Lord and yourself better. ♡

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St. Jane de Chantal (Salesian); St. Francis, St. Clare and St. Bonaventure (Franciscan); St. Benedict and St. Scholastica (Benedictine); St. Paul of the Cross (Passionist); St. Vincent DePaul and Louise de Marillac (Vincentian); St. Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross and Theresa of Lieseu (Carmelite) ; St. Ignatius of Loyola (Jesuit) and the Celtic traditions and, of course, the Charism of Compassion of the Sisters of Bon Secours, in seeking and acting for a more compassionate church responding to God's call for compassionate care for all in need of healing and care in our world.

For \$55 per session (includes breakfast, lunch, participation in each day's activities at the Center and all session materials for each event) you may join each day's full

program at the center. If you pre-enroll for the entire series (\$385) by January 15, 2010, you save \$110. Please see the website, [www.bonsecoursspiritualcenter.org](http://www.bonsecoursspiritualcenter.org), for details and other information.

Come and join us, honor the Sisters of Bon Secours and learn how God is telling the story of compassion in the lives and teachings of the spiritual masters who have led and inspired so many to be the compassionate people who relieve the needs of others and reveal a compassionate God. ♡