

Retreats and Programs



An Ignatian Contemplative Retreat May 28 - June 5, 2020

Facilitated by Marilyn Merikangas, Martina O'Shea, Thomas Gavin, S.J.

The Contemplative Retreat offers you an opportunity to learn about quiet prayer and to understand what God is doing when nothing seems to be happening. It is one effective way to journey into passive prayer. The retreat is helpful for people who already have a relationship with God and are just beginning to feel called to let God take the lead. It is also beneficial for anyone who has been doing some form of quiet prayer for a short or long time. Space is limited to 15 participants.

There is an application process which is described in this link.
Cost: \$625.00

Ignatian Contemplative Retreat Questionnaire

Since you have expressed an interest in coming to the Ignatian Contemplative Retreat on May 28 – June 5, 2020, we need to give you more information to help you discern whether the retreat is for you or not. We assure you that it is not meant for everyone.

Let us begin by giving you an image. Think of a life guard and what they need to learn. This person needs to know at least two things. They need to know how to swim, and they need to know how to subdue a drowning person before they bring them to

safety. Otherwise the drowning person will struggle and drown them. This is a physical subduing.

With this image in mind, think of God as your life guard. God needs to subdue you spiritually before God can bring you to new life. However, the quieting down is a process that takes place over a period of time as you experience your life and grow in your relationship with God. From a concern about one's relationship with the world, one is brought by God to want simply to be in God's Presence. 'Be still and know that I am God' (Ps. 46:10) has become or is becoming their primary desire.

The Ignatian Contemplative Retreat is an experience of being taught by God. It is a silent retreat that includes some instruction on prayer, discernment, and living daily life in harmony with God's desire. The first night will give you an overview of the retreat and silence will begin. Then there will be three days in which there will be talks by one of us in both the morning and afternoon. These talks will be accompanied with suggested prayer passages.

During these three days, you will learn two types of discernment that will help you understand how God has been, is, and always will be present in your daily life. After these days are over, there will be a shift. You will be introduced to a new way of praying. It will be letting God lead you and being totally passive. It will be like the experience of Peter in Jn. 21:18, "when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go". There still will be a talk every morning, but the afternoons will be different. You will be invited to share your experiences of prayer in a small group and learn by experience how to discern passive prayer. If sharing is not comfortable for you, you may always pass. One of us will be present in each group and help you reflect on your experiences in terms of your relationship with God. In this way, God will become your only foundation (Psalm 127).

Who will benefit from this retreat? It is meant for any person experienced in prayer who is being called by God to greater intimacy. This means the person is in the process of becoming quiet or is already quiet. It will allow you to understand and discern your experience through the teachings of St. Ignatius Loyola, St. Teresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross. It will give you a new way of living, praying, and discerning that belongs to anyone who is being called by God into greater union.

So how do you know whether or not this retreat is for you? St. John of the Cross gives us three signs that perhaps indicate the Lord is calling one to a new way of being in relationship with God. The signs of St. John of the Cross are very simple and indicate that there is an invitation to surrender to God's lead (Ps 127):

- 1) One is unable to pray with one's reason or rational or imaginative mind;
- 2) A person does not get satisfaction or consolation from the things of God or from any creatures either;
- 3) One likes to remain alone and in loving awareness of God... in interior peace and quiet ... (St. John of the Cross).

If all three signs are present in your life, not just the first two, there is a call from God to a form of passive prayer. So, if you can identify with these three descriptions in some way, then this retreat might be just what you are looking for.

If you are still interested in coming, please apply by sending us an email in which you address each of the following questions. Your answers need to be in some detail. Please send your email to Marilyn Merikangas, mwmerikangas@gmail.com

1. Briefly describe your psychological/spiritual journey through life.
2. Describe your prayer experiences as an adult up to the present time.
3. What is your sense of the direction of your prayer today?
4. Have you made the full Spiritual Exercises in the 19th or 20th Annotation format? When? Where? Who was your guide?

We will also discern if this retreat would be helpful for you. Our main concern is that this retreat experience be appropriate for you and support your journey from God, with God and to God (1Jn 3:1-2).

In Christ,
Marilyn Merikangas, Martina O'Shea, Thomas Gavin, S.J.