

An Ignatian Contemplative Retreat

Facilitated by Marilyn Merikangas, Father Thomas Gavin, SJ and Martina O'Shea

The Ignatian Contemplative Retreat integrates the spirit of St Ignatius Loyola with the Carmelite spirit of St John of the Cross and St Teresa of Jesus. We offer an opportunity to learn through one's experience how to respond to a God who is inviting the person to 'be 'with God even when God seems to be absent. We assume that a person who is drawn to apply to this retreat already has an established intimate and personal relationship with God. Space is limited to 15 participants.

There is an application process which is described below. Cost \$625.00

Introduction

Please help us discern with you whether or not the Ignatian Contemplative Retreat is for you. The following questions are designed to help you and us discern the 'rightness 'of this retreat at this particular time in your journey with and to God. We assure you the timing of this retreat is not meant for everyone.

Overview

The Ignatian Contemplative Retreat is an experience of being taught by God. It is an 8-day 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 the morning and afternoon. These talks will be accompanied by suggested passages with which to pray.

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. 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 will continue to 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 pass. One of us will be present in each group to 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?

The Ignatian Contemplative Retreat is meant for any person, lay, religious or ordained, who has an established intimate and personal relationship with God and is being called by God to greater intimacy. This is manifested by the individual being drawn to becoming interiorly quiet or is already quiet. It will allow you to discern and understand your experience through the teachings of St Ignatius Loyola, St Teresa of Jesus, 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.

Is the retreat for me?

St John of the Cross gives us three signs that perhaps the person is being called by God to a new way of being in relationship with God. The signs are simple and indicate that there is an invitation to surrender to God's lead. (Psalm 127)

The following questions are adapted from St John of the Cross's signs. These are the questions we invite you to ponder and respond to – while keeping your reflections to no more than two typed pages.

- Do you experience in prayer dryness, an inability to think or imagine, the helplessness of continual distractions? Please explain briefly.
- In the past, did prayer nourish you? Was prayer satisfying, giving you insights, good ideas and feelings? Now you find yourself wondering what to do, how to get back to feeling God's presence? Explain briefly.
- Do you find your deeper self longs to simply sit with God in silence?
- Are you in monthly spiritual direction? How long have you been in spiritual direction? Do you find spiritual direction to be of help to you? In what way?

Please send your email responses to Marilyn Merikangas- mwmerikangas@gmail.com

In Christ,

Marilyn, Father Tom and Martina