

A publication of the Marianist Retreat & Conference Center

Holy Grounds

Winter - 2018 / 2019

Volume 13, #2

Be Still Here

“What happiness for us if we walk for the rest of our lives on the beautiful pathways of faith, action only by faith, and living only by faith!”

**Blessed William Joseph Chaminade,
Letters, January 23, 1833**

A return of hope

By Maria Rogers O'Rourke
MRCC Board Member

“Happy New Year!” rings in our ears as the calendar turns to 2019. And yet, our Church calendar remains in Christmas Season through the Feast of the Epiphany in January. Our culture rushes the start of Christmas (Santa now competes with Jack-o-lanterns on store shelves), and we're equally quick to turn off the Christmas carols in those same stores and on the radio.

Our faith invites us to remain in the stable a little longer. Morton Kelsey writes:

“I myself am very glad that the divine child was born in a stable, because my soul is very much like a stable, filled with strange unsatisfied longings, with guilt and animal-like impulses, tormented by anxiety, inadequacy and pain. If the Holy One could be born in such a place, the One can be born in me also. I am not excluded.”

Rather than rush to the next task or season, we're invited to sit with the Christ Child and be warmed by his light. We are welcomed into his friendship; we are saved by his presence. The Christmas Season celebrates a return of hope, new life, and promise to a world discouraged by fear and hatred and injustice. Jesus comes to us at just the right time, at Christmas and throughout the New Year.

The Church calendar will carry us to

Ordinary Time soon enough. As we enter 2019, let us return to the light of the stable as often as possible. Let us receive God's grace and healing for the days to come.

MRCC launches new Sunday Concert Series featuring a variety of musical styles and musicians on four Sundays in 2019. See page 3 for more information.

Inside: upcoming retreats and events



“We have a vision that is amazing and exciting. We are inviting you to invest yourself through the resources that God has given you— your energy, your prayers, and your money—in this work to which God has called us.”

Doing God’s work with your help

The Annual Appeal is essential in our retreat initiatives and in helping us to maintain and improve our beautiful facilities and grounds. We have a very modest goal of \$50,000 to be raised by the end of our fiscal year, June 30, 2019, and we are about half-way there. If you have already made your gift, we extend our heartfelt thanks. If you have not yet contributed, we ask that you use the enclosed remittance envelope and be a contributing partner in our mission.

Through your contribution to our Annual Appeal you will be participating in a ministry that is truly grand. “You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity.” (II Corinthians 9:11)

Your donations this past year have helped us to reach out to low-income schools and parishes such as St. Cecilia, Our Lady of Guadalupe and St. Elizabeth/Mother of St. John Parish, St. Louis, (see page 7), and to initiate new family programs. Pictured here in our conference room are members of the Angel



Moms over St. Louis, a support group for parents who have lost a child. They were able to hold their Blue Christmas vigil here free of charge on December 2 because of our Annual Appeal. Your gift makes programs like this possible. In addition, we added a bakery case and salad bar in the dining room, a new Wifi system that runs through the entire building and new liturgical music for worship. The Annual Appeal helps us keep our facilities comfortable and functional and our programs up to date.

Thank you for being a partner in our mission. We rely on your prayerful generosity to continue and expand our vital retreat ministry. (Mike Hagenhoff, President, Jim Ford, Executive Director.)

A reply envelope is attached for your convenience



4000 Highway 109,
P.O Box 718
Eureka, MO 63025
(636) 938-5390
info@mretreat.org

www.mretreat.org

- Sabrina Archambault: Operations Coordinator**
- Dianne Richardson: Guest Services Manager**
- Curtis Ballenger: Development Director**
- Mike Partl: Maintenance Coordinator**
- Julie Hickey: Program Coordinator**
- Jim Ford: Executive Director**

The Family Lodge Update

Our major project, restoring the Marycliff mansion to its former grandeur to become the home of our Family Retreat Lodge is well underway. A successful estate sale was held to clear the facility of items not scheduled to be retained. The building is now virtually empty, allowing the project to proceed. The first step is asbestos and lead abatement being conducted currently by an environmental company. Next will be the establishment of a fire suppressant system, involving sprinklers in each room and additional stairways to the outside. We must initiate a plan to increase our water capacity and pressure to satisfy the fire code. The safety of our retreatants is of primary concern, so, although these steps are very expensive, they are necessary.

Bidding is scheduled to begin this spring and we still project completion by the summer of 2020. The additional lodging and meeting space which Marycliff will provide will give the Retreat Center more flexibility in serving multiple groups and groups requiring more space than is currently available.

As you consider your philanthropic budget for the coming year, we hope you will join with us in supporting this new and exciting ministry. The need is great, the reward priceless.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUING SUPPORT!

Donate on line at www.mretreat.org or call 636-938-5390



Celebrate Music

Mo Bottom Project & Harmony

Sunday, January 20, 2pm at MRCC

Proceeds will support MRCC's Family Ministry Program

For our first concert, be prepared for an afternoon of original music influenced by a wide range of musical styles including folk, acoustic and classic rock, jazz, blues and gospel. Both groups also compose and perform music for personal prayer and worship.

Formed in the summer of 2012, the **Mo Bottom Project** was created as a grouping of composing, recording and performing musicians to pursue themed musical projects. Its first recording project, "Well Traveled Road," was released in October 2016. Fronted by singer-songwriter Steve Givens, the band features keyboardist/composer Phil Cooper, guitarist and songwriter John Caravelli, drummer/percussionist Pat Dillender, and bassist Gerry "Ghost" Kasper. Steve Givens is a former MRCC board member and has been directing retreats here for the past several years.



Harmony, which consist of Steve Galati and Jim Ford, has been performing, writing and recording music for over 40 years. Their most recent CD, Couch Music, was released October, 2018. Joining Harmony will be John Wilson, one of St. Louis' finest guitarists. Jim is MRCC's Executive Director.

(Pictured above is Steve Givens, Jim Ford & Steve Galati, at the recent MRCC Advent Retreat, where they gave a presentation on the songs of Advent. For samples of both group's music go to: www.mretreat.org/musicart/)

THE OTHER CONCERTS:

**A concert tribute to Broadway:
celebrate love and laughter**

February 3

Julie & Chris Hickey, Rose Fischer, Tim Schall
& the St. Genesius Theater Camp Choir

Rick Thum & Friends: March 10

One of America's finest hammer dulcimer performers and teachers featuring traditional, bluegrass, folk and old time music

Contemporary & Traditional Hymns: June 23

With the Trinity Lutheran Church Choir in Kirkwood, featuring MRCC's Curtis Ballenger and the Our Lady of Guadalupe Choir and Dancers.



Music is the language of the spirit. It opens the secret of life bringing peace, abolishing strife. Kahlil Gibran

THE DETAILS:

- ⇒ \$20 a ticket for 18 and above. \$5 for 7 to 17. Free, 6 and under
- ⇒ Purchase tickets for 3 shows at the first concert and get the 4th show for free.
- ⇒ No advanced ticket sales. Tickets can be reserved by contacting Julie at: julie@mretreat.org or (636) 938-5390 or on the website.
- ⇒ There will be an intermission with complimentary cookies and drinks
- ⇒ MRCC's baked goods will be on sale

Sing for joy to the Lord.

Psalm 95



Girlfriends in Grace

January 12 -13, 2019



A Celebration of Friendship!

Come...to remember.

Come...to share your stories.

Come...to deepen your bonds of friendship.

Come...to give thanks to our loving God.

The retreat will include some large group presentations, but each group of friends will function as its own small group for discussions. There will be a variety of activities and plenty of time to just kick back and bask in the beauty of your nearest and dearest girlfriends. Time for prayer will be available, and the celebration of the Mass will take place on Sunday. The retreat starts Saturday at 1pm and will end Sunday at 5pm. The cost is \$108 per person and includes a private room, with a bathroom and shower, linens, towels, 3 meals and snacks.

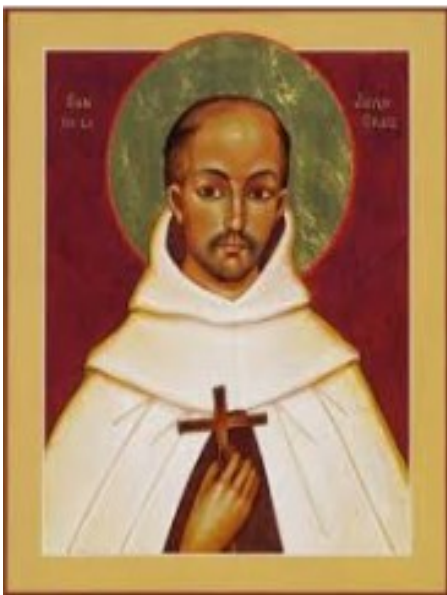
Hearts of Mary Retreat

January 26 - 27, 2019

An intergenerational retreat exploring the feminine genius



The Hearts of Mary Retreat is designed to foster in various generations what St. John Paul II called the “feminine genius,” by exploring how to apply the love and virtues of Mary to our modern-day lives. This retreat is offered to girls ages 7-14 and their accompanying mother, grandmother, aunt, or godmother. The event will have Mary-related talks for adults and children as well as games, music, crafts, Eucharistic Adoration, sacrament of Reconciliation, and Mass. It is an overnight retreat with 2:00 p.m. arrival on Saturday and 4 p.m. departure on Sunday. Dinner, breakfast, and lunch will be provided. The cost is \$85 per adult and \$35 per child. Led by MRCC Staff Julie Hickey and Jane Furey. Pictured above, the HOM retreat, January 2018.



Join us as we explore the spiritual journey of

St. John of the Cross

Dark Night of the Soul

Night of Sense, Night of Spirit

March 7-10, 2019 - Retreat leader, Susan Komis

“There is an unknowing that is higher than all knowledge, a darkness that is supremely bright; and in this dazzling darkness, divine things are given to those who seek Him....” St. John of the Cross

The weekend will allow time for presentation on the stages of spiritual life as exemplified in the writings of John of the Cross, small group process, periods of contemplative prayer in community and free time for reflection and rest. Starts at 5pm on Friday and concludes on Sunday at 1pm.



Retreat opportunities for 2019

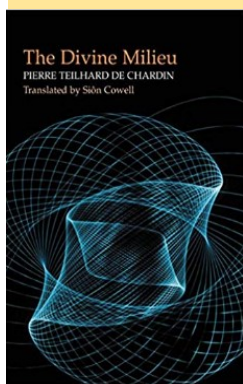
5

PALM SUNDAY RETREAT: April 12-14, 2019

Led by Msgr. Michael Witt

The Divine Milieu

Nothing here below is profane for those who know how to see - on the contrary, everything is sacred. Teilhard de Chardin



Join Msg. Michael Witt, Seminary Professor and author of 3 books on the History of the Church in St Louis, as he explores the life and works of one of our finest spiritual writers, priest and paleontologist Fr. Teilhard de Chardin, SJ, (1881-1955). This retreat will be based on Chardin's book *The Divine Milieu* which is a treatise on how to live the Christian life in the modern world. He explains how both one's actions and passivities can be 'divinised' by recognizing that Christ lies at the heart of the world which has brought your being into existence, and which will bring it to fulfillment. One's being is not fulfilled in isolation, but in communion with God, the earth, and humanity. Everything around us is embedded in the divine.

*We are not human beings having a spiritual experience.
We are spiritual beings having a human experience.*

In a series of reflective talks on the *Divine Milieu* Msg. Witt will lead retreatants through a Lenten journey that will help prepare you for the Easter Season. The weekend will include a Stations of the Cross Prayer Service, time for prayer & meditation in the chapel and on our beautiful grounds, Mass and a reconciliation service. Starts at 5pm on Friday and concludes on Sunday at 1pm. Cost \$195

Good Friday
Day of Prayer

The day will focus on the words of Jesus from the cross and their message of love and suffering for all of us.

Friday, April 19, 2019 -
8:30am to 3pm

Led by Sr. Paulette Patritti, OP
& Fr. Jose Ramirez, SM
\$40 includes breakfast and lunch

8 DAY DIRECTED RETREAT

July 14 - July 21, 2019



BE STILL HERE

Directors: Sister Janet Dohr, CPPS, Sister Paulette Patritti, OP, Father Jose Ramirez, SM, Father Joseph Uvietta, SM. Cost: \$430

Theater Camp, Music/Art Camp



Led by Julie Hickey and Rose Fischer for 6-13 year olds (day camp) and high schoolers who mentor the day students and workshop their own production in the evenings & stay overnight, Theater Camp, June 17-19, 2019 and Music/Art, June 24-26, 2019



MRCC Registration Form for 2019

You can register on line at www.mretreat.org or fill out a registration forms below & mail it with your payment to:

MRCC, PO Box 718, Eureka, MO 63025

Girlfriend Retreat, January 12-13, \$108

Hearts of Mary, January 26-27, \$85/\$35

Dark Soul Retreat, March 7-10, \$195

Palm Sunday Retreat, April 12-14, \$195

Good Friday Day, April 19, \$40

Theater Camp, June 17-19, \$150

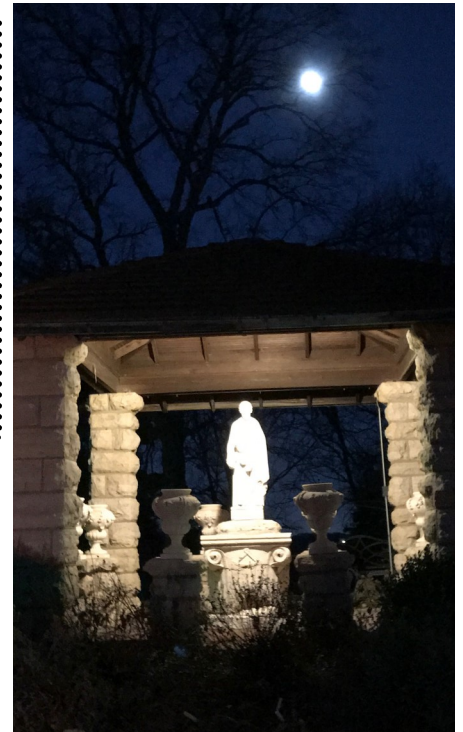
Senior Theater Camp, June 24-26, \$50

8 Day Directed Retreat, July 14-21, \$430 or ___ days @ \$75 a day

NAME OF RETREAT _____
 NAME _____
 ADDRESS _____
 CITY/STATE / ZIP _____
 Phone # (____) _____ EMAIL _____
 Special needs _____
 (Examples: "First Floor, Diabetic, Vegetarian, Gluten Free, etc....")
 Registration Fee (\$25 non-refundable deposit) enclosed \$ _____, Check # _____
 Or: Visa _____ MC _____ DISCOVER _____ CARD# _____
 Expiration Date _____ Security Code _____



NAME OF RETREAT _____
 NAME _____
 ADDRESS _____
 CITY/STATE / ZIP _____
 Phone # (____) _____ EMAIL _____
 Special needs _____
 (Examples: "First Floor, Diabetic, Vegetarian, Gluten Free, etc....")
 Registration Fee (\$25 non-refundable deposit) enclosed \$ _____, Check # _____
 Or: Visa _____ MC _____ DISCOVER _____ CARD# _____
 Expiration Date _____ Security Code _____



The Marianist Retreat & Conference Center

636-938-5390

636-938-3493 (fax)

Email: info@mretreat.org

Pictures: page 1, cliffs on our eastern border overlooking the Meramec; this page: St. Joseph Shrine, next to Marycliff.

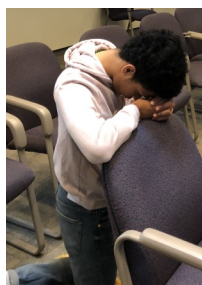
Save the dates for the following retreats. Registration opens on July 1, 2019

- ⇒ December 6,7,8: The Advent Retreat with Fr. Tom Santen, Lucia Signorelli ,Steve Givens, Diana Gorham and Jim Ford
- ⇒ December 13, 14, 15: The Fr. Binu Edathumpambil Retreat

For more information about all these retreats go to: www.mretreat.org



Images from the recent St. Elizabeth/Mother of St. John Parish (St. Louis) retreat



STAFF MEMBER PROFILE

Curtis, much more than a development director

What do call a person who runs a successful annual appeal, cleans out the pond, helps coordinate the Trivia de Mayo fundraiser, plants shrubs and flowers, has an amazing voice, brought in over 14 Eagle Scout projects to the grounds and plays ukulele? We call him Curtis Ballenger.

Since 2011 Curtis has been MRCC's Development Director. His beginning at MRCC started in the kitchen where he was hired by Dianne in 2008 to help with meal preparation, wash dishes, make beds and clean toilets. Curtis is retired as an Executive with both the Boy Scouts of America and the National Easter Seal Society. He was looking for something constructive to do in retirement when a help-wanted ad in a local church bulletin brought him to the Retreat Center. He and his wife Jo had lived in the Wildwood

area since moving to St Louis in 1976, and had traveled by the MRCC en-



trance on Highway 109 hundreds of times wondering what was up that long hill. Since he set foot on our

property he has never left.

Curtis is the youngest octogenarian that you will ever meet. On work days he is outside with all the volunteers, moving dirt, chopping down vines and contributing greatly to our beautiful grounds. He spends countless hours sending out thank you letters to donors, researching potential grants for programs and Marycliff and exploring the history of our property.

His enthusiasm for this retreat ministry is infectious, his love of the outdoors is inspiring and his commitment to our mission exemplifies the Marianist values of hospitality and community. Curtis is a key member of our Leadership team and we are grateful for his commitment to our retreat center.

Marianist Retreat  Conference Center

4000 Highway 109, PO Box 718, Eureka, MO 63025

(636) 938-5390 www.mretreat.org

Non-Profit Org.
US Postage
PAID
Permit #2710
St. Louis, MO

"Ours is indeed a grand work, a magnificent work, universal in scope." Blessed William Joseph Chaminade

"With Mary, to engage in the religious, spiritual and educational development of all God's people." MRCC's Mission

Inside: upcoming retreats and events

Go to www.mretreat.org for more information

In This Issue:

- ⇒ Annual Appeal and Marycliff update: page 2
- ⇒ MRCC announces new Sunday concert series: page 3
- ⇒ Girlfriends, Hearts of Mary and St. John of the Cross retreats; page 4
- ⇒ New retreat based on Teilhard de Chardin's the *Devine Milieu*: page 5
- ⇒ Good Friday and Directed Retreats: page 5
- ⇒ Summer Music and Art Camps: page 5
- ⇒ Staff Profile: more than a development director: page 7

SAVE THE DATE: 5/4/19

The 5th Annual



TRIVIA DE MAYO



*Be still
here*