

Franciscan

RETREATS AND SPIRITUALITY CENTER

Children from *Families Moving Forward*
during CHRISTMAS WEEK at
Franciscan Retreats and Spirituality Center



Article and cover photo by Bob Beck, Director of Marketing and Operations

Swoooooosshhh went the sled on the freshly packed snow. Now that the path was compacted by earlier runs, the plunge down the western hill at Franciscan Retreats and Spirituality Center in Prior Lake, MN was picking up speed. On this particular run a 'record' was set for the longest run that day, making it nearly to the edge of the pond. "I want to go again" said Bell, a three foot tall weeklong visitor from the Families Moving Forward program, as she wiped snow off her face. Twenty year old Sarah, one of the activities volunteers, had heard this before. Rolling her eyes just a bit so Bell couldn't see she started back up the steep trek, Bell in tow, for yet another run.

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Families Moving Forward is a part of Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative, a nonprofit based in St Paul. In the Families Moving Forward program, volunteers from more than 60 congregations throughout the Twin Cities metro area create shelter space at their parish sites. Homeless families from nearby are housed in area church basements, parish buildings or in this case – retreat centers for a week at a time. Each week, the fluid group of 16-20 moves all their possessions (usually in a Rubbermaid trunk or two) to a new location and a new set of volunteers. Although families are enrolled for up to a year, most families secure more permanent housing within 60-90 days. The families were at the retreat center during Christmas week this year but during a more typical week, on work days the families are at a ‘Day Center’ at Shepherd of the Lake Lutheran Church on Prior Lake’s north side. Children go to school, parents with jobs go to work, and those who are looking for work are counseled and assisted with job hunting skills.

After the mandatory ‘post sledding’ hot chocolate and marshmallows, Bell and her friends lounged in front of the fireplace watching Veggie-tales and debating about who was the fastest on the hills. Other guests relaxed with books, played board games, visited with volunteers or enjoyed a little ‘time out’ with family members in the privacy of their own rooms. Evidence of the recent Christmas holiday was everywhere – bright toys (somewhat scattered about) shreds of wrapping paper and tape accidentally stuck in a hidden spot and, of course, a tree decorated with lights, candy canes and homemade ornaments. Stockings, both the decorative kind and those freshly used by the sledgers, hung near the fireplace.

During Christmas week, St Michael’s Catholic Church in Prior Lake provided a devoted and well-orchestrated team of about 50 volunteers for cooking, serving, coordinating activities and overnight chaperoning. Although we haven’t heard this officially, there were probably diaper changing services included a few times as well. The retreat center provided the accommodations, towels, linens and housekeeping service once the week was over.

With open arms and a somewhat long face, Bell hugged her way around the room saying goodbye to Sarah and other newfound (if somewhat sadly, short-lived) friends as the noon to 3 p.m. volunteer shift came to an end.

But everyone’s day had been brightened. Bell and the families in the FMF program during Christmas week at Franciscan Retreats and Spirituality Center had a fun memory of a wintery day in the snow, and the volunteers had a glow in their hearts as well.



Christmas Appeal UPDATE

Our Christmas Appeal goal of \$15,000 designated for sprucing up the retreat center grounds was met! The spacious (60 acre) area that Franciscan Retreats and Spirituality Center sits on is a big part of our identity and an important part of the amenities that lead retreatants here. Thank you for your generosity and interest in seeing the retreat center grounds look their best. Once the snow recedes, the ponds open up and the frost leaves the ground, we will begin creating two circular paved ‘small group’ lounging areas in prime spots on our trails.

Watch for progress reports in this newsletter, on Facebook and on our website as the projects unfold. Thank you again for your largesse and support.

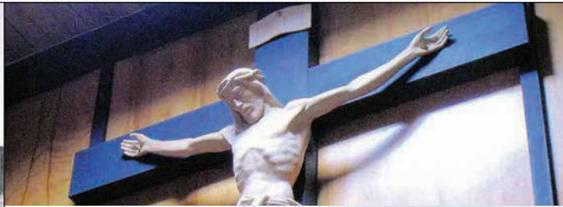


CALL FOR Historical Retreat Center PHOTOS

As our 50th anniversary approaches (Jan 2016) we are searching for historical photos of the retreat center. Photos of the retreat center grounds, buildings and people are all welcome. We can return your photos to you after we scan them. They may be added to the collection we plan on displaying in various ways throughout our anniversary year. Please call the office at 952-447-2182 or stop by with your bit of history in person. Please help us identify people in your photos by name as well.

Brother Bob’s Spiritual Reflections ARTICLES

Space doesn’t allow full reprinting of Brother Bob’s latest two articles in the Spiritual Reflections column in the local newspapers. To view “*Taking the scenic route allows for needed contemplation*” and “*Build up one another during the Advent-Christmas season,*” click the Spiritual Resources link on the homepage of our website, www.franciscanretreats.net.



2015 THURSDAY LENTEN DAYS OF PRAYER: Will you come and follow me?

Our 2015 Lenten Days of Prayer will focus on themes from the life of Christ and his interaction with his disciples. How do these encounters mirror our own encounter with the Lord? What lessons can we learn as we enter into this season of prayer and preparation for Easter?

Our Lenten Days of Prayer include two retreat conferences, plus time to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation, to meet with one of our spiritual directors, and time to just pray and reflect in the beautiful surroundings of the Retreat Center.

Pre-Registration is not required, but greatly appreciated. We suggest \$20.00 for each day; that may be paid in advance or on the day of the program. Retreatants bring their own lunch for the day. The Retreat Center will provide beverages and a little treat. For those who wish, the Stations of the Cross will be prayed after lunch. The day will conclude with Mass at 1:45 p.m. See the schedule below:

February 26: “**This Is My Beloved Son, Listen to Him,**” and “**Come Follow me,**” presented by **Terri Mifek** and **Br. Bob Roddy, OFM Conv.**

March 5: “**Peter, the One Who Does Not Have it All Together, and That’s Ok,**” and “**Quo Vadis? Turn Around,**” presented by **Kris Joseph** and **Bro. Bob Roddy, OFM Conv.**

March 12: “**Let Not Your Hearts Be Troubled,**” and “**Forgive as I Have Forgiven You,**” presented by **Kathy Berken** and **Nancy Murzyn.**

March 19: “**I Come to Set You Free,**” and “**Love One Another,**” presented by **Debbie Koop** and **Fr. Jim Van Dorn, OFM Conv.**

- 9:30 a.m. Gathering Time. Coffee available in Dining Room
- 9:45 a.m. Welcome (*Chapel*)
Followed by Opening Prayer & Conference 1 (*Chapel*)
- 10:30 a.m. Opportunity for Confessions or Spiritual Direction
- 11:30 a.m. Second Conference (*Chapel*)
- Noon Lunch (*Dining Room*)
- 1:00 p.m. Stations of the Cross (*Chapel*)
- 1:45 p.m. Mass (*Chapel*)
Followed by departures

Summer Directed Retreat, JUNE 20-26, 2015

Our annual Directed Retreat will take place from Saturday, June 20 to Friday, June 26. Our spiritual directors for this retreat will be: **Kathy Berken, Kris Joseph, Corrine Kindschy** and **Fr. Jim Van Dorn, OFM Conv.**

A Directed Retreat allows the retreatant ample time for personal prayer and reflection under the guidance of a spiritual director with whom s/he meets once a day for about an hour. Daily Mass and other Prayer Experiences will be made available for participants, as well as three, short, optional conferences on some aspect of spirituality. Silence for the retreat will begin after Night Prayer on June 20th and will end before the closing meal at 12:30 p.m. on June 26.

Each retreatant will have a private bathroom and bedroom suite for the duration of the retreat. Retreatants have access to the Retreat Library, the beautiful prayer grounds of the retreat center, and our marvelous Chapel.

Spaces are limited for this retreat; we can only accept 25 retreatants, so please make your reservations early!

JUDY’S RECIPE Wild Rice and Egg Cuplets

- 4 cups cooked wild rice
- 1 cup cooked white rice
- 1 bunch green onions, sliced thin (or chives)
- 2 tsp salt
- 1 tsp pepper
- ½ tsp hot sauce
- ½ cup fresh parsley, chopped
- 6 eggs
- 1 cup heavy cream

Directions

Blend all ingredients together in a bowl. Pour into buttered muffin tins. Bake at 350 for approximately 20 minutes or until filling is set. Cool 5 minutes. Remove from pans and serve warm.



Judy Miller, Chef Franciscan Retreats and Spirituality Center

PLAY-PRAY DATE 2015: A Day for Mothers, Daughters, Grandmothers and Granddaughters, May 2, 2015

Last year’s Play-Pray Date was a rousing success and we hope that more mothers, daughters, grandmothers and granddaughters can join us for this special day. This day retreat will combine input by the presenters, **Kris Joseph, Terri Mifek, Bro. Bob Roddy, OFM Conv.** and **Fr. Jim Van Dorn, OFM Conv.**, as well as activities and prayer times – weather permitting, we will make the Stations of the Cross outside. The day will begin at 9:30 a.m. and conclude at 3:30 p.m. with an Afternoon Tea. This day is a great way for families to spend some quality time together, time that will enrich your mind, body and spirit. You might also get lucky during the drawing for the doorprizes!

The cost of the day is \$65.00. Pre-payment in full for this day is required, though you may pay this amount in installments prior to the day.

Feedback on the new theme – “Come Away and Rest Awhile”

Now that the Friars and staff have presented our 2015 theme – “**Come Away and Rest Awhile**” a few times we are beginning to receive feedback on the theme from our retreatants:

-The theme ‘Come Away and Rest Awhile’ was extremely well executed. Many things were new. The team works so well together – they complement one another and are connected to real life.

-I come away from this retreat with a sense of peace and the realization that balance sometimes means saying ‘no’ when it is right for you

-So much to think about! Finding space for Jesus, balancing my life more and now I have permission!

Our 2015 Retreat Theme: **Come Away and Rest Awhile**, looks at the broad idea of “holy leisure,” reflecting upon the value and the importance of making space for ourselves and our God in our daily lives. What are practices that can help us preserve a space for spiritual sanity in our lives? How can we set healthy limits on ourselves? How can we respond to the expectations that we lay upon ourselves, as well as the expectations (sometimes unrealistic or unfair) that are placed upon us by others? What are we really drawn to in our lives?

See the full 2015 retreat schedule in this newsletter.

RIGHT Around THE CORNER...

These popular retreats are coming along soon – time to sign up now:

Married Couples Retreat, Friday-Sunday (April 10-12)

Women’s Palm Sunday Retreat, Friday-Palm Sunday (March 27-29)

Men’s Holy Week Retreat, Thursday-Saturday (April 2-4)



TO Every Thing THERE IS A Season...

by Bro. Bob Roddy, OFM Conv., Director

As you read this, Lent will have commenced. This is a time in the church year that ultimately prepares us for the great feast of Easter. In our parishes with RCIA programs, this is a time of great anticipation and joy as the Candidates and Catechumens prepare to be received into the Church and in some cases, baptized.

If you grew up as I did, Lent was time when you “gave up something.” That was a common question among my siblings and peers, “What did you give up for Lent?” In most cases, candy was the sacrifice of choice. (I did try to swear off watermelon for one Lent, but my Mom nixed that idea — watermelon wasn’t exactly something you found on the table in February, March or April when I was growing up.) As Lent unfolded we looked with longing as the chocolate eggs and rabbits appeared on the store shelves. (Did anybody ever like those “Fruit and Nut” eggs? I’m partial to coconut, myself.)

The sacrifices that we make during Lent are not ends in themselves, nor are they some kind of pride-infused endurance test. Rather, these forms of self-denial are ways to remind us that this time of the year is different; it is a holy time of preparation. Our sacrifices will hopefully draw us into a deeper life of prayer and reflection.

The traditional components of Lent are *Prayer, Fasting* and *Almsgiving*. We seem to do very well with the Fasting part, but the Prayer and Almsgiving components may slip in the background. Sure, our parishes have Lenten devotions, such as the Stations of the Cross or Communal Penance Services; we have our Lenten Prayer Days here at Prior Lake, and these are all good opportunities to ritualize Lent. But all of us, myself included, need to find ways that we can carve out a bit more time for personal prayer, reflection or reading. Perhaps one can resolve to show up for Mass ten or fifteen minutes early, or stay ten or fifteen minutes after Mass is over? Instead of the radio or MP3 player blasting away in the car, we could resolve to take a few moments to just savor the quiet and to listen to the voice of the Lord. Maybe we just need to allow ourselves to be surprised, to do something spontaneous and utterly unplanned to nurture our soul. For example, one could take time at a favorite spot for prayer or reflection or, better yet, find a different spot. In his remarks in the Phillippines, Pope Francis said, “*Don’t be frightened of surprises. They shake the ground from underneath your feet and they make us unsure, but they move us forward in the right direction.*”

I will confess to all of you that I don’t like surprises. I rarely find them fun or a source of pleasure. I suspect that I don’t like them because surprises assault my fixation on control, on being in charge. I guess this is the lesson that I hope to embrace during this Lent, that I don’t have to always “be in charge.” I can welcome the surprises that God has in store for me. Have a blessed and surprise-filled Lent! – Bro. Bob



Retreat Schedule January to December 2015

2015 Theme: COME AWAY and REST AWHILE

A Retreat for Everyone... Please pray for these retreats and consider joining us!

WEEKEND RETREATS

January 9-11	Women's Weekend
February 6-8	Men's Weekend
February 13-15	Married Couples
February 20-22	Women's Weekend
March 27-29	Women's Weekend (Palm Sunday)
April 10-12	Married Couples
April 24-26	Women's Weekend
September 11-13	Prayer Shawl Ministry
October 2-4	Women's Weekend
October 9-11	Women's Weekend
October 16-18	Men's Weekend
October 30-November 1	Friends of Francis
November 6-8	Women's Weekend
December 4-6	Serenity AA-Al-Anon
December 11-13	Men's Weekend

OTHER RETREATS

April 2-4	Men's Holy Week
June 20-26	Directed 7 Day Retreat
August 6-9	Silent Weekend

MIDWEEK RETREATS

January 13-15	Women's Midweek
April 14-16	Women's Midweek
May 12-14	Women's Midweek
June 9-11	Women's Midweek
September 8-10	Women's Midweek
September 15-17	Women's Midweek
October 6-8	Women's Midweek

SPECIAL RETREATS*

May 2 Mother/Daughter/Granddaughter Day

*Special retreats are paid in full at time of registration

DAYS OF PRAYER 2015 (Thursdays)

LENT

February 26
March 5
March 12
March 19

ADVENT

December 3
December 10
December 17

FRANCISCAN RETREATS AND SPIRITUALITY CENTER

16385 Saint Francis Lane • Prior Lake, MN 55372-2220 • (952) 447-2182

www.FranciscanRetreats.net



www.youtube.com/user/franciscanretreats

www.facebook.com/franciscanretreatspriorlake



REGISTRATION FORM

RETREAT DATES: _____

SEND TO: Franciscan Retreat & Spirituality Center, 16385 St. Francis Lane, Prior Lake, MN 55372-2220

Name: _____ Telephone # _____

Address _____ City _____

State _____ Zip _____ - _____ E-Mail _____

REGISTRATION FEE \$30.00* Payment Check # _____

Credit Card: Visa Discover MasterCard # _____ - _____ - _____ Exp. Date _____ Sec. Code _____

Signature Approval _____

***A non-refundable registration fee of \$30.00 per person is required and must be received in order to reserve a room.**



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Feed My Starving Children TO RECEIVE ANNUAL Franciscan International Award

Feed My Starving Children is a Christian non-profit committed to feeding God's children, hungry in body and spirit. The approach is simple: volunteers hand-pack meals specially formulated for malnourished children and FMSC sends them to partners, building more successful communities around the world. FMSC food reaches nearly 50 countries a year – more than 70 in their history. Every day, FMSC produces enough food for more than 525,000 children. Each of these meals costs less than a quarter to make and more than 90% of total donations support the food program.

The annual **Franciscan International Award Dinner** is a great way to support Franciscan Retreats and Spirituality Center and honor a person or organization, who, like St. Francis of Assisi, has made a difference for the better in our world.

THE 57TH Franciscan International Award Dinner – THURSDAY, MAY 7, 2015

date Thursday, May 7, 2015	dinner tickets
time 6:00 p.m. Gathering with Social Hour	\$60 Individual (1 person)
7:00 p.m. Dinner	\$150 Sponsor (2 persons)
<i>Presentation of the award following dinner</i>	\$250 Patron (2 persons)
location The Wilds Golf Club, 3151 Wilds Parkway NW, Prior Lake, MN 55372	\$500 Benefactor (2 persons)

Sponsors, Patrons and Benefactors are listed in the program.
To purchase tickets, call 952-447-2182. Tickets must be purchased by April 29th

Visit us on the web at www.FranciscanRetreats.net