

# All roads lead to God:

The ministry of retreats on the street

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A Jesuit Zen master

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The Anishinabe Stations of the Cross

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How to practice spiritual conversation

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“To the preacher who kept saying, ‘We must put God in our lives,’ the Master said, ‘God is already there. Our business is to recognize this.’”

- Anthony de Mello, SJ

Today, we are constantly bombarded with information, possibilities, choices... Sometimes it can seem almost impossible to find or listen to our authentic selves or to let God find us. We may often be unaware of or even suffocate our deepest desires, our passions, and the sense of our true purpose. Rather than feeling like masters of our own destiny, we may see ourselves as Neo in the Wachowskis’ allegorical film “The Matrix” : a puppet at the mercy of others.

God desires that we get in touch with our innermost self, the space where the Spirit speaks to us. Discernment and the Spiritual Exercises have been used by many since the 1500s to do just that. As instruments for our journey, they help us to become attuned to the voice of God in the depths of our truest and most authentic selves, and to respond.

This edition of Canadian Jesuits focuses on the first of the four Universal Apostolic Preferences that guide the mission of the Society of Jesus today: To show the way to God through the Spiritual Exercises and discernment.

These pages offer just a glimpse into the short- and long-term initiatives of the Society of Jesus, our colleagues, and the various

groups of our collaborators and friends—from the creative adaptation of the Spiritual Exercises within our contemporary context through programs at the Centre Manrèse in Quebec, to the mission of the Office of Discernment in Common, which helps religious and secular organisations to be more aware of their purpose and mission and thus more able to navigate complex choices in a manner consistent with their identities.

We also look at the links between or analogies between Ignatian spirituality and other traditions through such means as the images presented in the Anishinabe Way of the Cross and the story of Fr. Bernard Senécal, SJ., a Jesuit Zen master. In addition, we explore the unique possibility of encountering God not so much in a retreat centre or a parish, but right on the streets, as first proposed by a German Jesuit, Fr. Christian Herwartz.

Our hope is that the stories shared in these pages will inspire you to join and participate in this mission of personal and communal encounter with the love that from our hearts transforms us.

*“Wisdom is brilliant, she never fades. By those who love her, she is readily seen, by those who seek her, she is readily found.”*

Wisdom 6:12

José Antonio Sánchez  
**Director**

Photo : Sergey Katyshkin, Pexels

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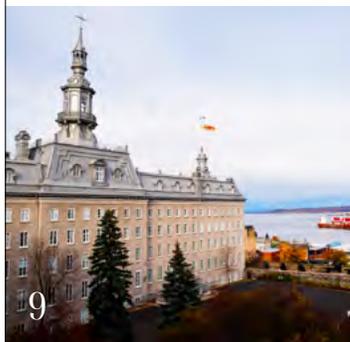
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Cover photo:  
Rachel Vine, Pexels

# Dear Friends,

The book of the “Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius Loyola” is the bedrock of every Jesuit vocation and that of countless others who have embarked on the journey that is proposed in the 150 or so pages of this famous text. The Exercises is a book that is meant to be lived and prayed, not just read. In fact, a simple reading risks leaving us scratching our heads, asking, “What is all the fuss about?” However, once one embarks on the journey of the thirty-day silent retreat or the six- to nine-month retreat in daily life, using either the original text or one of many adaptations, there is no looking back. *That* is what all the fuss is about. The genius of Saint Ignatius, who composed the Exercises directly from his personal experience of prayer and discernment, was to put together a manual that teaches one not only to pray and develop a personal relationship with Jesus but also to make serious choices about the direction of one’s life.

On a personal note, prior to becoming a Jesuit I ran across the Exercises by chance through the random acquisition of an adaptation of Ignatius’ original text. Not long after, I found myself with a significant amount of free time due to the last-minute cancellation of a work contract, and I decided to try my hand at the prayer exercises outlined in the book. What a moment of synchronicity this turned out to be, for little did I know at the time that I was in the right frame of mind (and spirit) to embark on such a journey. That is, I had been making my living as a musician and teacher for a few years, and having just turned thirty, I had started to ask the question: What do I want to do with the rest of my life? Once I began the Exercises with its cathartic First Week and illuminative Second Week, I began to appreciate that spending time in prayer and discernment was exactly what was required to move forward. In a very powerful exercise designed to help one gain clarity about an important life choice, Ignatius suggests imagining oneself on one’s deathbed faced with

the question: What decision would I have wanted to make from the vantage point of preparing to die? For me, at that moment in my journey of the Exercises, I received a deep sense of lucidity, greater than at any other time in my life, that made me realize that I needed to look seriously at a religious vocation; otherwise I might always wonder: *What if I had followed the urge to check out the Jesuits?*

That watershed moment was not the final decision but rather a freeing-up to enter into a more informed conversation about a possible vocation to the Society of Jesus. Let me be clear that a religious vocation is not the only avenue suggested by Ignatius in the Exercises. He also suggests that one can pray about married or single life, or simply a reform of the life that one has been leading, or even the basic life question: What really makes me happy? One of the poems included in the adaptation of the Exercises that I used has stayed with me until today, some thirty years later. It is entitled “I am the Great Sun”, by Charles Causley, and it encapsulates both the centrality of God’s presence with each human being and also the importance of each person’s responsibility to take charge of his or her life. This is the true wisdom behind the “Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius Loyola”. The poem concludes thus:

*I am your life, but if you will not name me,  
Seal up your soul with tears, and never blame me.*



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E. Oland SJ'.

**Erik Oland, SJ**  
Provincial of the  
Jesuits of Canada



Photo : Leon, Unsplash

# What should we do?

How groups make good decisions using discernment in common

by Fannie Dionne

**H**ave you ever been in a meeting where some participants remain adamant about their position without taking time to listen to others? Or have you been part of a group that had to make an important decision but didn't know how?

In the 1980s, Canadian Jesuits (notably John English, SJ), religious sisters and lay people brought their experience of the Spiritual Exercises and personal discernment to a group context. This *discernment in common* allows organizations, religious or not, to become more aware of their identity, their *raison d'être* and their mission, and thus to conduct their work in a coherent manner

with the help of personal reflection, time and space for each person to speak, actively listen and use an Ignatian framework, among other tools.

"It's really a legacy that the province has developed," says Xavière Sister Laurence Loubières, a legacy that has been renewed in recent years with the creation of the Service of Discernment in Common, where she serves as director. This service is geared toward religious organizations but will be available to the business world, among other sectors, as well. Let's take a closer look at this process.



Sr. Laurence Loubières, xmcj

### DISCERNMENT IN COMMON IN PRIVATE COMPANIES

Discernment in common can also take place in nonreligious contexts. Sr. Laurence was an executive in a private company for several years, and she led her team through exercises similar to the discernment process.

“

*I invited each team member to review the last six months of our work. At our meetings, we learned to take turns speaking and listening to each other. We looked at what was working, what was giving everyone a sense of enthusiasm and energy, and on the other hand, what was going less well. And six months later, we would check in to see whether the changes we had made were working. This gave people the ability to reflect on what they'd been experiencing and to respond in a constructive way.”*

### DISCERNMENT IN COMMON IN THE RELIGIOUS MILIEU

Sister Hélène Pinard, FCSCJ, experienced the ESDAC (Spiritual Exercises for Apostolic Discernment in Common) process in 2018, during the provincial and general meetings of her congregation. “What attracted me at first was the way we listen to each other during the conversation. No one says, ‘I think we should...,’ and people don’t talk over each other. I’ve seen people who don’t usually speak have a voice like everyone else, and what they say is important, even if they don’t believe it themselves. The other thing I appreciate is that it forces people to synthesize their ideas.”

Seeing the results of the ESDAC process, Sr. Hélène was quick to apply it to the groups of religious and lay people that she facilitates. In one of the groups, divided by conflict, the results of the process were impressive.

Sr. Hélène Pinard, FCSCJ



“

*We came up with a result that surprised everyone. The truth was named, people were not afraid to express their agreement or disagreement. We were able to leave with a much clearer framework for our work, knowing where we are headed together.”*



Photo: rawpixel.com

And how is ESDAC different from other methods of team conversation? Sr. Hélène believes that the secret to this process lies in the fact that people listen to each other and can speak honestly in an atmosphere of safety.

### DISCERNMENT IN COMMON FOR A RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION

Donat Taddeo, currently assistant to the president for planning and development at Loyola High School, and André Courchesne, director of Camp Lac Simon, participated in two sessions of discernment in common to define the role and activities of Le Gesù in Montreal.



*It helped us gain a better sense of how we are moving forward in the midst of a situation that is quite complex,” says Taddeo. Part of the complexity is that those involved, Jesuits and laypeople, have different backgrounds. How do you get the best ideas from each person in a constructive way? Courchesne noted that discernment helps us to better understand the important contributions of each person. “Each participant who adds his or her stone—small or large—participates in the building of the Kingdom.”*



Participants were given reflection questions 48 hours in advance, which helped to focus the discussion from the very beginning. During the three stages of the discernment process, each person took a turn to speak. “What I found interesting,” says Taddeo, “was that because we were few in number, it was easier to listen and to see how each person’s words were received by the others. The role of the leader is essential, ensuring that everyone follow the rules of the exercise. The spiritual element, in the broad sense of the word, is also interesting. There is time for reflection, which allows ideas to emerge. It’s amazing to see how much convergence there can be around two or three questions. I really liked it, although I had previously been a bit skeptical.”

Courchesne also enjoyed the experience.



André Courchesne



*Community discernment offers a wonderful opportunity for open and honest communication and active listening, becoming aware of the movements within us, without 'preparing a response.' The approach allows us to open our hearts to receive the words and reflections of the other. Careful attention to what moves within us reveals the Spirit as it slowly manifests itself."*

## AN EXERCISE INSPIRED BY THE FIRST JESUITS

As Sr. Laurence explains that the Jesuits themselves were founded through a process of discernment.

*"The first companions who gathered around Ignatius had no real idea about what they were going to do at the beginning. They were a diverse group, but they had all experienced the Spiritual Exercises. At some point, they had to think about their future and develop a process to really listen to the Spirit working through this powerful spiritual experience that they had lived."*

While personal discernment has long helped people make life choices deeply rooted in a sense of vocation, communal discernment has only been around for about thirty years, but it has been readily embraced by other Jesuit provinces.

The combination of active listening, adequate time and space, structure and the opportunity to go deeper distinguishes discernment in common from other types of group discussions. It's a time to refocus, to move forward in a better way.

You can contact **Sr. Laurence Loubières**, Director of the Service for Discernment in Common, at [lloubieres@jesuits.org](mailto:lloubieres@jesuits.org).



**Fannie Dionne** is a historian, a mother of two boys (loves coffee!) and passionate about social justice and ecology. She holds a PhD on Jesuit-Indigenous relations in New France, an MA in French literature and a certificate in communication.

# Finding the Centre:

## A new common home in Quebec

by Fannie Dionne | photos : Fr. Marc Rizzetto, SJ

“The Spiritual Exercises are a way of thinking, a way of living, a way of making decisions, a way of relating and a framework for spiritual experience,” says Christian Grondin, outgoing director of the Centre de Spiritualité Manrèse (CSM), who will be replaced by Fr. Marc Rizzetto, SJ. These practices are “all the more important because, as a result of the pandemic, radical questions are being asked about the fundamental values of humanity.”

The Centre Manrèse was founded in 1976 by Fr. Gilles Cusson, SJ, and a team of Jesuits who were soon joined by other religious and lay people. It is internationally recognized as a laboratory that continually reimagines the group experience of the Spiritual Exercises in daily life. “We see ourselves as a school of spiritual experience and formation in spiritual accompaniment. The word ‘school’ serves to highlight the process of formation in humanity that the Ignatian Exercises represent,” explains Grondin.

### **THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES**

*The mission of Centre Manrèse is guided by the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius of Loyola, adapted for lay people who desire to make an important decision, to choose or modify their way of life, or to deepen their relationship with their Creator. After 500 years, the interpretation of the Exercises has evolved, but they still have a spiritual and psychological depth that makes them relevant to people of various faiths or of no religious affiliation at all. The Exercises are a treasure to help the people of today, overwhelmed by stress and in search of guidance, to move toward inner growth. More than ever, the Spiritual Exercises are addressed to the entire people of God, beyond cultural and religious boundaries.*

### **THE VISION OF THE CENTRE**

*Like the history of the Jesuits, the history of the Centre de Spiritualité Manrèse is one of constant adaptation to the changing reality of the spiritual needs of local men and women. In order to renew its mission, the CSM is undergoing a major shift that will take into account current concerns, such as the sense of urgency about the environment and the dangers that threaten our "common home"; the search for collective and individual identity in a globalized world; and the thirst for unity and peace in a deeply divided world. To carry out this vision, CSM has begun a fundraising campaign. The centre will be moving into a new space in August, the "common home" of the Jesuit mission in Quebec City, on Dauphine Street.*

What is lived at the Centre has a powerful impact on people's lives. This was certainly true for Charlotte Plante (a volunteer engaged in accompaniment and formation at the CSM), Fr. Célestin Ongono (a Cameroonian priest of the Society of the Missionaries of the Holy Apostles), Martine Sarasin (a pastor in the Swiss Reformed Church) and Constance Aubry (a dance student). The first sign of the centre's influence is that all four came to Manrèse at the suggestion of a friend, relative, or colleague who had already done the Exercises or a retreat!

### **A COMMON HOME FOR ALL**

Who can benefit from the Centre Manrèse? Everyone! The majority of people who do the Exercises or participate in formation programs to become facilitators are lay people. And not all of them identify as Christians, or even as believers, says Grondin: "Many people are on a spiritual journey, but they have reservations about religious institutions. Here, we don't hide our Christian identity, but people feel at ease because we don't put pressure on anyone to change." Retreats such as those centred on Zen, for example, allow people to discover that Christian spirituality is not alien to other forms of spiritual practice. Activities such as pilgrimage or artistic creation also bear witness to this.

*"Places like this are necessary, and we need them now more than ever," says Constance Aubry, who encourages young people in particular to come to the centre. "Even an atheist can take advantage of the Spiritual Exercises to grow in interior freedom," adds Fr. Ongono.*



Martine Sarasin shows the breadth of this welcome in a humorous way: “Before registering for the formation program in spiritual accompaniment, I met the director and listed all my flaws: First of all, I’m Protestant; second, I’m divorced; etc. I asked him if it would be possible to accept someone like me. I was welcomed with open arms at this first encounter, and the spirit of openness continued well after that, as I was always free to be myself and speak my mind! There is a genuine spirit of welcome, a way of listening to the other that is quite exceptional.”

One of the reasons for this openness is that the Spiritual Exercises are universally adaptable. As Fr. Ongono explains: “The core of the Exercises was written while Ignatius of Loyola was still a layman! Yes, the Exercises are tinged with a certain historical hue, but they are transcultural and trans-institutional. They span the ages and are a legacy for all humanity, not just for Jesuits.”

“As a Protestant,” Sarasin adds, “I felt completely at home with the Exercises, because what is at the centre is Scripture and Christ.”

### A PERSON-CENTERED APPROACH

*“To speak about the Centre Manrèse and my spiritual experience is also to try to say something about this unmediated, divine presence in the heart of every human being.”*

— Charlotte Plante

All those interviewed shared that they were touched by the fact that the human person is always at the centre of every process or approach at the CSM. As Grondin explains, “Spiritual accompaniment in the Exercises allows people to step back and take some distance in order to review or reread their lives. Something happens when they do this: People see themselves differently, as human beings on a journey.” This person-centered approach also allows people to open up to the rest of the world. “We are able to hear another type of message—one that heals us, lifts us up, makes us more human and encourages us to contribute to building a more just and mutually supportive society,” continues the director.

Fr. Ongono left his native Cameroon to come to the CSM in order to get to know himself better, with a view toward healing and freedom that would enable him to better carry out his work as a novice leader and spiritual director. “Learning to really experience and savour things, becoming more sensitive to the spiritual and human reality allows one to better love and serve,” he explains.



Individuals from all walks of life engage with the centre



Photo by Polina Zimmerman from Pexels

Aubry had a desire to rekindle the spark of her spiritual passion after an intense period of studies for a college diploma (DEC) in dance and a pilgrimage on the Way of St. James (Camino de Santiago). She thought of the CSM because she wanted to share with a group the love that she had felt.

*“It was important for me to have an approach that could go beyond the strict framework of the Church and where the body and the emotions would be taken into account. In the Exercises of St. Ignatius and with the people at the CSM, we start from who we are, in other words, from our own embodiment. For me, there is no other way to connect with the Spirit and with love.”*

For Sarasin, too, the human aspect was at the centre of her experience. She explains that the Centre Manrèse offers a preparatory stage before one begins

### FIGURES

- Formation in spiritual direction (all three cycles): ~60 people per year
- The Spiritual Exercises in everyday life or the 30-day retreat: ~40 participants per year
- Workshops (Zen meditation, creative journaling, etc.): ~70 people per year
- Individual spiritual accompaniment: ~30 people per year

the Exercises, that is to say, a rereading of one’s own history: “I went through this whole stage of becoming rooted in my humanity without understanding anything. I was reviewing my history, but after a while, I said to the person accompanying me, ‘But when are we going to talk about God?’ And afterwards, while doing the Exercises, I understood the value of this preparatory process to enter into an experience of God with all that we are, all our history. In the course of the Exercises, all this is taken up again, deepened, evangelized. It was a turning point in my life.”

### SAVOURING THE FRUITS OF THE CENTRE MANRÈSE

The experience of the Spiritual Exercises and the formation sessions continue to nourish the participants for a long time. Constance’s mother has been meeting for 20 years with members of the CSM group with whom she did the Exercises in daily life. They continue to share their experiences. Aubry herself felt a change right from the beginning of her journey: “I was very touched by the attentiveness, the accompaniment. Right away, we began a dialogue with Jesus, with the Spirit, which immediately changed my daily life. I wanted this to become part of my life—to live alongside this love, to nourish it every day.” After this first experience, she was invited to lead, with an accompanier, workshops called La Parole en mouvement (The Word in Motion), where participants read and then dance a story from the Bible. “It was really wonderful.”

Since his return to Cameroon, Fr. Ongono continues to be amazed each day by the fruits of his formation that nourish his accompaniment of others: “Although I am a novice master, it brings me much joy to realize that the one who accompanies others is neither a master nor a guide, but simply



a privileged witness to the action of God in each of his creatures. This is a beautiful and noble mission that leads me to a deep sense of humility and gratitude!”

Plante poetically writes that the name Manrèse “resonates within me like the pure, distant and joyful echo of an unassuming bell that begins to ring when I incline my ear to listen. A quote of unknown origin springs to mind here, as I express the essence of my Manrèse experience: ‘I drink from a previously untapped source that reveals to me a thirst of which I was unaware.’ A word is addressed to me on the banks of the Jordan, a word that goes beyond my limitations and calls for an embodied response from the ground of my being. How to live? How to see life and the world around me through the eyes of God?” Beholding these fruits in her accompaniment and formation activities has brought Plante and others great joy.

Finally, the goal of the Centre de Spiritualité Manrèse, rooted in Ignatian spirituality, is to help the world live as humanly as possible. In the words of Fr. Ongono: “It’s a little house that works miracles, that changes lives.”

To learn more visit [centremanrese.org](http://centremanrese.org)

# A breath of life

## in times of crisis

by Stanley Charles



*The tree of life, Jacques-Richard Chery, 1982.*

The expulsion of the Jesuits on February 11, 1964, put an end to the activities of the Centre Spiritualité Manrèse in Haiti. We had to wait for the clandestine return of our companions, notably Fr. Midy, to begin this service. The companions from Canada arrived on March 31, 1987, after the restoration of the Society, and once again the centre began to offer retreats, accompaniment activities and spiritual formation programs. In 2001, the construction of the novitiate, including the creation of a space for the centre,

marked a turning point, with Fr. Charbonneau as director. In 2014, the novitiate was moved, and the space was reserved solely for the centre's activities. The official inauguration took place on January 23, 2016.

The Haitian people have a strong religious identity, and we constantly refer to God in our day-to-day lives, often adding the name of God to the names of people, stores, cars, wheelbarrows, houses, etc. In the religious practice of the people, however, we find ambiguous images of

God. In light of our history as a people with a painful past, a difficult present, and an uncertain future, we are inclined to believe that God is distant or that God punishes us and does not take care of us. We may resort to other intermediaries while waiting for God's response, which seems to be too slow.

Within this context, the Centre Spiritualité Manrèse offers a certificate program in spirituality, based on the Spiritual Exercises, which includes powerful moments of renewal (retreats and days of recollection), formation sessions and accompaniment. The framework of the Spiritual Exercises invites us to encounter God in the deepest part of ourselves and to develop an intimate relationship—with Christ as our reference par excellence—in order to commit our entire lives to God. The team at the centre is also ready to respond to the needs of various groups that ask us to accompany them on their spiritual journey. In addition, we publish a liturgical review in Creole, SousLavia, and distribute 3,000 copies that reach people in the 10 departments of the country. This magazine has a brief editorial on the first two pages that provides a forum through which we try to answer people's questions about the doctrines and practices of the Christian faith. There is also a short reflection for each Sunday that can be particularly helpful for those who animate church gatherings. Thus, the first Universal Apostolic Preference of the Society is clearly at work.

Some groups of people have already completed a cycle of formation at the centre. We intend to train more lay people in order to strengthen our team of five Jesuits who live at the centre and work with other companions who come to animate some activities. Through this service, we seek to help people experience the presence of God in their lives.

After the 30-day retreat in October 2020, Sr. Anise Pradiou, CSL, shared about her experience: "I feel that I am becoming a new creature. I received inner healing through experiencing new ways of understanding God: a God who is outrageously good." Mr. Loudor Espazien, an official from the Ministry of Education, noted: "Taking part in the activities of the centre allows me to come closer to God, to grow in faith, to become more tolerant and understanding of others, and to learn new ways of praying and meditating, discovering the presence of God within me and within every human being." Sr. Nagwa Gameel, CP, confided:

*"Being part of the activities of the centre was a powerful experience of searching for the presence of God in my life. I was able to do some personal work that allowed me to touch the deepest reality within me and see the importance of God in my life."*

Photo: Kelly Lacy, Pexels.com

More than half of the people who participate in our programs are religious women, a significant group in the Church, in religious life and in society. They live and work in remote areas where people are completely destitute. To accompany and provide these women with the appropriate tools for their ministry has far-reaching implications for the support and accompaniment of the many people who inhabit these isolated areas of the country. We would like to facilitate the participation of as many of these women as possible, especially members of Indigenous communities.

Due to financial constraints, very few lay people take part in our activities. Our desire, however, is to welcome as many as possible, given that they are “ambassadors of the Church” in the environments where they live and work. We have only seven rooms available to accommodate program participants. They are housed in the residence of the Missionary Sisters of Christ the King, our next-door neighbours, and there is a per-person fee for each day. This limits the possibility of welcoming a larger number of participants at the centre.

We are eager to introduce young people to the practice of the Ignatian Examen as a fundamental component of the Spiritual Exercises. The population of Haiti is young, and we believe that youth are the future. With all that is going on in the country, young people are a bit lost. They are afraid of the future, and they are distracted from seeing the cruelty of reality. We want to invest in this future—the young people—to help create a better tomorrow for this country. Concretely, we would like to start with those in their final year of high school, who are moving on to another stage in their lives, in order to help them review the path they have taken so far and to better equip them for the challenges that lie ahead. In this way, we are responding to the third Universal Apostolic Preference of the Society.

We offer our activities in service to the Church and to the country, as a breath of fresh air to revive the Haitian spirit today. We need the tools of our spiritual heritage to help Haitians engage in reflection and listen to the voice of God who assures them that he is always present in their quest for a better tomorrow.



*The participants are very grateful and give testimony: After the 30-Day Retreat in October 2020, Sr. Anise Pradiou, CSL, confided to us: “I feel that I am becoming a new creature. I received inner healing by experiencing new ways of understanding God: a God who is scandalously good.” Mr. Louidor Espazien, an executive of the Ministry of Education, affirms: “My participation in the activities of the Centre allows me to come closer to God, to grow in faith, to become more tolerant and understanding of others, and to acquire new ways of praying and meditating, to discover the presence of God in me and in every human being.” Sr. Nagwa Gameel, CP, confided to us: “My participation in the activities of the Centre was a strong time of searching for the traces of God in my life. I was able to work on myself, to touch my deepest reality and to see the importance of God in my life.”*

# God 3.0:

How spirituality centres adapted to the COVID-19 pandemic

by Colleen Hutchison



The digital world has played host to most events, gatherings and other social interactions during the coronavirus pandemic. Ignatian retreat centres throughout Canada have followed suit, offering opportunities to engage virtually with the Ignatian family and experience God. But even as the centres have moved retreat experiences online, they continue to be a vital physical presence for their wider communities.

## ONLINE RETREAT SUCCESS

Online retreats have become a popular alternative during the pandemic. Despite not being able to physically get away, retreatants can nonetheless access the emotional and spiritual

connection and support that are critical during this time of suffering and isolation.

The Manresa Jesuit Spiritual Renewal Centre in Pickering, Ontario, Villa Loyola in Sudbury and Loyola House in Guelph have taken advantage of the virtual space as they've adapted their ministries. Manresa and Villa Loyola have offered online retreats to provide opportunities for reflection during significant moments in the Church calendar, including Lent, Easter and Advent. Loyola House began in the same way but has expanded its offerings to include retreats on an array of topics, including discernment, the Enneagram and exploring how Ignatian spirituality intersects with other faith traditions.



*Rich outdoor spaces at retreat centres continue to be an option.  
Photo: Manresa Jesuit Spiritual Renewal Centre*

Fr. Greg Kennedy, SJ, of Loyola House shares, “When we first spoke about online retreats I was very skeptical and thought, ‘I’ll just make it through.’” Fr. Kennedy’s skepticism dissipated after the first online retreat during Easter 2020. After positive feedback from participants, Loyola House staff offered several more online retreats and fine-tuned the structure to include videos, poetry, art and music, as well as optional group sharing sessions and spiritual accompaniment for individuals.

Barbara Trieloff-Deane has attended six Loyola House virtual retreats and considers them exceptional: “My life is so fast-paced, it’s easy to get caught up in work and lose perspective. These retreats give me an opportunity to reflect, re-centre, and address the big problems, like everything we’ve experienced in the last year.”

## PHYSICAL SPACES STILL NEEDED

In addition to providing virtual retreats and spiritual direction, the centres have continued to offer their physical spaces for local use. With outdoor labyrinths, a rosary lane and acres of trails, Manresa and Loyola House welcome hikers, families, dog-walkers and others to enjoy sacred time in nature as a safe activity while indoor activities are unavailable or limited.

Loyola House boasts 500 acres of certified organic farmland which has been a meaningful way to engage local farmers and community members. The farm provides space to plant a variety of produce for the centre and for the nearly 250 people who participate in the centre’s community-shared agricultural project (CSA). The produce has been especially helpful as food insecurity has risen at both the local and global levels during the pandemic.

Loyola House has also taken on a unique initiative during the past year. Approached by the local drop-in centre, it agreed to use the centre space—vacant during the pandemic—to house people experiencing homelessness who had been exposed to COVID-19 and needed to quarantine for two weeks. When the space was no longer needed for this effort, the spiritual centre was asked to provide temporary housing for people experiencing homelessness who hope to transition to permanent housing. Loyola House is piloting this project for a year, until November 2021, and hopes to be involved in supporting this work beyond the pilot.

## SHARING THE JOURNEY

Whether in person or online, the Jesuits continue to share their gifts and

provide support to all who seek help with discernment and navigating life during this difficult time.



*Preparing food for the residents currently living at Loyola House in Guelph.  
Photo: Loyola House*

“When I was in the pits, I was touched to discover that I was not the only one struggling with a particular problem, that I’m not an oddball,” shared Fr. Henk van Meijel, SJ, director of Manresa. “We’re on the journey together.”

And in a post-COVID-19 world, it looks like the journey will happen both on-screen and off.



**Colleen Hutchison** is a Content Producer at Catholic Relief Services. She works on issue-based campaigns to engage Catholics and others of good will in CRS’ lifesaving work around the world.

# Showing the way to God:

## Other works and projects

All Jesuit works are rooted in Ignatian spirituality and the Spiritual Exercises. Here we highlight just a few of them.

### LOYOLA HOUSE

Loyola House welcomes people of all faiths to deepen their spirituality through retreats and spiritual formation. Based in Guelph, Loyola House has gained an international reputation for its work in the area of Ignatian spirituality and the adaptation of the Spiritual Exercises to address such topics as community and ecology.



### CENTRE JUSTICE ET FOI

The Centre justice et foi engages in social analysis, research and reflection to take a critical look—through the lens of the Gospel and Ignatian spirituality—at social, political, economic, cultural and religious structures.

### VILLA SAINT-MARTIN

Villa Saint-Martin in Montreal is a centre for spiritual renewal that fosters human and spiritual development as well as communal life. The villa team accompanies people from all walks of life, including young people, in their search for God.



### JESUIT FORUM FOR SOCIAL FAITH AND JUSTICE

Based in Ignatian or Jesuit spirituality, the forum's approach is grounded in the belief that God is at work in the world, continually drawing people toward the greater good and inspiring positive change. The forum creates a space for openness to the guidance of the Spirit and for learning to discern the "signs of the times" at both the personal and global levels.

### VILLA LOYOLA

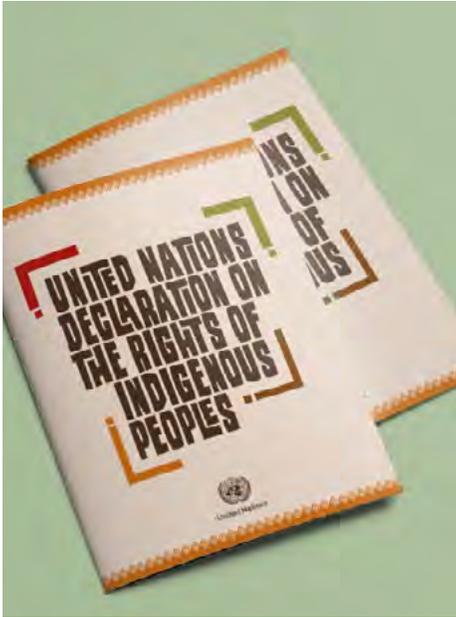
Located in Sudbury, Villa Loyola has become a retreat and conference centre for a wide range of secular and religious groups. It welcomes groups from a variety of religious traditions as well as individuals who seek a place for recollection, spiritual renewal and prayer.

### JESUIT SPIRITUALITY APOSTOLATE OF VANCOUVER

In its mission to help people hear Christ's voice more clearly and discover God in all things, the Jesuit Spirituality Apostolate offers opportunities for people to learn how to pray and discern God's presence, voice and action in their lives.

Find a retreat centre: [bit.ly/retreat-centres](https://bit.ly/retreat-centres)





**JESUITS OF CANADA SUPPORT THE UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES**

Five years ago, the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission stated that the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) should be the basis for reconciliation efforts in Canada. Several religious orders, including the Jesuits of Canada, are hoping for a change in legislation that will allow the UNDRIP to be incorporated into Canadian law. Fr. Erik Oland, SJ, provincial of the Jesuits of Canada, wrote to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations last September. On December 3, 2020, the Liberal government introduced Bill C-15 to provide a framework for the implementation of the declaration by the Government of Canada.

**THE JESUIT REFUGEE SERVICE MARKS FORTY YEARS**

The Jesuit Refugee Service was founded in November 1980 by Fr. Pedro Arrupe, SJ, then superior general of the Society of Jesus, in response to the plight of

Vietnamese refugees—and later other refugees around the world. The Jesuits of Canada responded immediately to this call through an initial fundraising effort, a framework agreement with the Ministry of Immigration in Quebec, and the creation of the Jesuit Refugee Service - Canada. Today, as there continues to be an alarming number of displaced people in the world, their work is still needed.

**LISTENING TO INDIGENOUS VOICES WITH THE JESUIT FORUM**

“Listening to Indigenous Voices” (published by Novalis) is a new guide produced by the Jesuit Forum for Social Faith and Justice with the help of an advisory and editorial group of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. The guide focuses on listening to Indigenous voices



*A sculpture in the Vatican dedicated to migrants. Photo : jrs.net*

**JESUITS AND JESUIT WORKS: RESPONDING TO THE FOUR CRIES OF THE WORLD**

The Universal Apostolic Preferences are the fruit of a discernment process throughout the Society of Jesus that lasted almost two years. Since last summer, Jesuits and laypeople in the Jesuit province of Canada and in the territory of Haiti have been engaged in a process of discernment to determine how to respond in their contexts to the four cries of the world (spirituality, persons who are marginalized, youth and creation). “We must constantly return (as individuals, as apostolates and as a Society) to faith and to the conviction that God is guiding us. It is not our work, it is God’s work, it is the work of all humanity to make the world a better place,” said Fr. Provincial Erik Oland, SJ.

and understanding their worldviews, as well as the history and legacy of colonization. It aims to engage people in deeper dialogue and in seeking meaningful ways to work for right relationships and justice. It is a first step, especially for those who do not know where to start, and it can be used in a variety of group settings (schools, communities, etc.), Catholic or otherwise.





### LA FERME DE BÉDOU: REFORESTATION AND SUPPORT FOR FARMERS

Located not far from the border between Haiti and the Dominican Republic, the Bédou property, acquired some 20 years ago, covers an area of nearly 120 hectares. In response to an urgent national priority—reforestation—the Society of Jesus developed a project whose goal is to cover this vast estate with fruit trees and some rare trees which are in danger of becoming extinct in Haiti.

We work in collaboration with the farmers of the area who receive a modest salary thanks to a small fund provided by Father General Arturo Sosa, SJ, during the pandemic. With these farmers we cultivate bananas, cassava and peanuts. The small salary allows the farmers to help their families who are in a very precarious situation.

The goal is to cover, with the help of supportive partners, this enormous property with trees, and to secure it by planting trees all around the perimeter in collaboration with the farmers of the area, in order to contribute directly to improving the lives of their families. At the moment, we face two big challenges: the need for water and securing the appropriate work equipment.

### HAITIAN JESUITS FACE THE COUNTRY'S CHRONIC CRISIS: FROM COMMITMENT TO TAKING A STANCE

Faced with the untold suffering of the Haitian people who have long been forgotten and looked upon with disdain, Haitian Jesuits have never opted for silence or compromise. Once or twice a year, we publicly take a stand and make the effort to side with the oppressed, with those who are the victims of history. Through our statements and position papers, we offer—with the help of a detailed analysis undertaken in collaboration with knowledgeable individuals—our understanding of reality, denouncing the negligence and incompetence of our so-called leaders in the face of the abject misery, violence and kidnappings that characterize the daily life of Haitians.

In addition to our regular advocacy work, Jesuits in Haiti are involved in basic education through our network of Foi et Joie schools, an innovative concept that aims to provide vulnerable children with access to quality education. Through the Jesuit Migrant Service, we continue to accompany displaced persons and victims of all kinds of injustice. Through an increasingly substantial presence in the university environment, we accompany young people “in the creation of a hope-filled future” in the midst of chaos where despair tends to take over.

Through combining word and deed, position and commitment, teaching and faithfulness to the people, we try every day, together with others, to break the barriers of injustice and cynicism.

*The Jesuits in Haiti are an integral part of the Jesuit Province of Canada and Haiti and have their own superior.*



### COLLÈGE SAINT IGNACE: A RAY OF HOPE IN A CHAOTIC REALITY

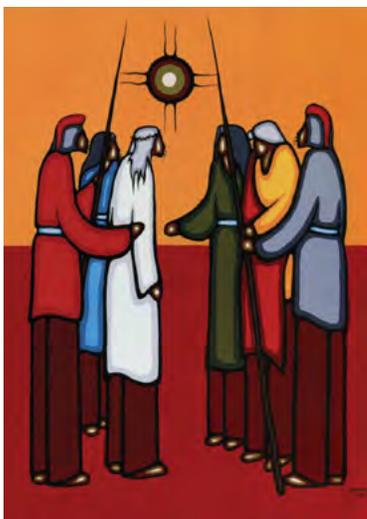
The Collège Saint Ignace, founded in 1996 in Croix-des-Bouquets by Fr. Claude Souffrant, SJ, aims to support the population through offering quality education. More than 600 students have the opportunity to develop their cultural talents, and even children whose parents lack sufficient resources have been able to gain access to a good education. Collège Saint Ignace is concerned not only with academic formation but also with spiritual formation, inviting students to participate in the Eucharistic celebration and in days of retreat in order to discern God's will in their lives.

To enhance its effectiveness, however, we must continue to work on the administrative restructuring of the college as well as on the development of an increasingly qualified teaching staff trained in Ignatian pedagogy, in a larger space. The work of the regents (young Jesuits) reflects the enthusiasm and competence that the teachers themselves must demonstrate.

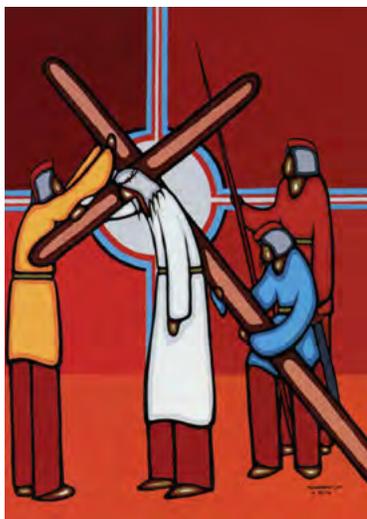
# Contemplating the Anishinabe Stations of the Cross

by Peter Bisson, SJ | Artworks of Leland Bell

In the Church of the Immaculate Conception in M'Chigeeng First Nation on Manitoulin Island, the 15 Stations of the Cross are paintings by the noted Anishinabe artist Leland Bell of Wiikwemkoong First Nation, also on Manitoulin Island. The stations begin with *Jesus Dibakona Tchi Nibod* or *Jesus Is Condemned to Death* and culminate in *Jesus Abitchiba* or *Jesus Risen from the Dead*. I would like to share with you my inner response, which are based in Ignatian spirituality, to these works of Anishinabe art and spirit.



1st station



2nd station





The first ways that these images affect me is by their serenity and graceful simplicity. This peacefulness is built with strong, uniform colours in clear forms highlighted by black outlines. The colours and the forms affect me like ritual. Even when the subject is violence and suffering, which is common in Stations of the Cross, the serenity of the images suggests that something bigger is going on. This impression is strengthened by the frequent background presence of Grandfather Sun or three circles that suggest the Trinity. From the background they seem to be holding together in a loving way all the figures acting in the foreground.

As the images draw me in, I notice the wavy lines on various shapes, especially around people's mouths. These suggest to me that the words being spoken mean more than what I hear, and the actions being done mean more than what I see. Then I reflect that a special effort is needed to see truly, not only to see these images, but indeed to see the whole world truly. These effects, combined with the serenity that also points to a bigger, spiritual meaning, lead me to think that I am not beholding paintings or images, but visions. The images are spiritual media that draw me to see the whole world in a contemplative way, as in a vision, much like the *Contemplatio* at the end of the "Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius." The *Contemplatio* seeks a point of view where everything in the world somehow shows God madly in love with us and offers us opportunities to love back.

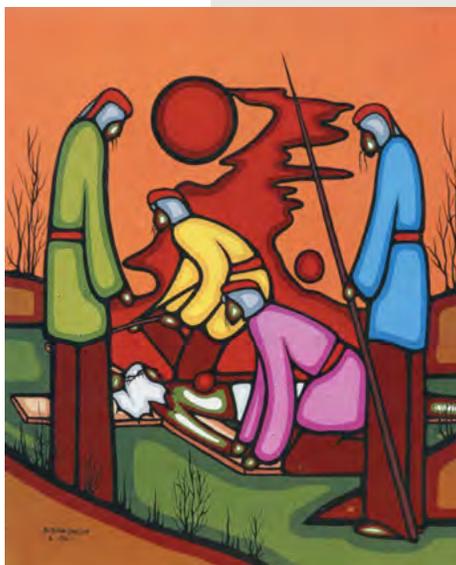
Next the visions draw me to the central figure in each station, Jesus. My eye is especially drawn to him as he is usually the only figure dressed in white, except in the concluding resurrection station where a red cloak partly covers his white robe. His image remains serene even when bad things are being done to him. More is going on with him than suffering. This "more" pulls me into Jesus' interiority, into what moved him, what motivated him, what he valued, how he made decisions. In the *Spiritual Exercises*, the



4th station



6th station



11th station

Second Week has us contemplate the life of Jesus in order to get to know him personally. Furthermore, in this part of the Exercises there are three meditations especially oriented towards getting to know the interiority of Jesus. They move us gradually from knowledge of his way, to commitment to his way, to loving commitment to him, to his person. I feel that Leland Bell's visions invite me into Jesus as do these meditations.

Finally, that every element in the stations seems to have spiritual significance beyond the image, especially Jesus, says to me that everyone has the right to speak directly to the Creator, just as Jesus does. In his notes at the beginning of the Exercises, Saint Ignatius strongly recommends that spiritual guides get out of the way so as to let the Creator deal directly with the creature, and to let the creature deal directly with the Creator. Surely a world where Creator and creature can speak directly with one another would be a better world!



12th station



**Fr. Peter Bisson, SJ**, is the provincial assistant for justice, ecology and relations with Indigenous Peoples. He is based in Ottawa.



13th station



14th station



15th station

# Business not as usual:

Kevin Kelly, SJ

by Eric Clayton



Photo: Trevor Scott, SJ

Kevin Kelly, SJ—director of Villa Saint-Martin, the Jesuit retreat center in Montreal—is a businessman-turned-Jesuit. But, to Kevin, that’s nothing unusual. “I see St. Ignatius not only as a brilliant and spiritual person,” he says, “but also as a businessman.” After all, the saint started and managed a multinational corporation: the Society of Jesus.

So, how does business acumen translate into the life of a Jesuit today? Kevin shares how he discovered his own vocation through his many years working at the pharmaceutical company Merck—and how the lessons from his time in business have helped him to lead others to God today.

## HOW DID YOU FIND GOD – AND THE JESUITS – DURING YOUR TIME AT MERCK?

I was leading one of our business units at the time. I was living in Zurich and traveling all through Europe. I had had vocational ideas earlier when I was at university and had told myself, “If this is meant to be, it’ll come back. If it’s not meant to be, I’ll get a job that’s rewarding.”



Kevin (left) at his diaconal ordination Mass. Photo: Moussa Faddoul, [www.fotoreflexion.com](http://www.fotoreflexion.com)

Ultimately, my decision had very little to do with Merck. It had more to do with my coming to understand who I was. Merck made it challenging, I suppose, in that it was a great place to be. There wasn't any reason to look beyond my role at the time. But then I met this really cool diocesan priest from Scotland who was living in Zurich and running one of the English parishes. He had worked in business and was a fantastic pastor. He introduced me to the Jesuits.

I finally realized that I could be happy in a lot of places, but where I was called was not necessarily where I was at the time. I began to recognize God's bigger plan by asking basic questions: What is my desire? Where is my will in this? Where is God's will?

*Many of us are blessed to have options in our lives. We have to slow down and realize that some of these options are better than others; some of these options are where God is calling us.*

#### **HOW DID YOUR BUSINESS BACKGROUND IMPACT YOUR JESUIT FORMATION?**

During the novitiate, I worked for the African Jesuit AIDS Network (AJAN) in Kenya. I had worked on vaccines when I was with Merck and had a good understanding of HIV.



Kevin with AJAN the Jesuit community and team. photo: Jesuits of Canada



### Kevin Kelly, SJ

1999 -2011:

Merck: research, marketing and sales; vaccine education

2011-2013:

Novitiate at Jesuits of Canada: L'Arche Community, Centre Justice et Foi, African Jesuit AIDS Network

2013-2016 First studies at Regis College, Ignatian Spirituality Project

2016-2018: Regency at Jesuit Forum, New Gesù Project in Montreal

2018-2020: Theological studies at Regis College

2020 to present: Director of the Villa Saint-Martin

Within the first week of arriving in Africa, there was a funeral for one of the employees who had worked with the Jesuit community. I went to the funeral. As I walked around the cemetery, I noticed the graves and began to look at the years: So many people were dying in their twenties and thirties, and many of those deaths would have been related to HIV. Coming from Merck, I understood HIV, but I didn't understand it in this context.

While at AJAN, I was able to get access to HIV drugs that had been donated by Merck and other companies. The challenge didn't have to do with whether Merck was giving these drugs to countries at a fair cost. The challenge was that the countries themselves wouldn't allow the drugs in or make them accessible to the people. It's only when I understood the political structures, the corruption and these injustices that I began to understand the full context for a company like Merck, despite its massive annual profits.



Kevin (fourth from the left) with other Ignatian Spirituality Project – Toronto team leaders.  
Photo: Regis College

## WHAT LESSONS FROM THE CORPORATE WORLD HAVE HELPED YOU IN JESUIT LIFE?

In Canada, we focus a great deal on communal or group discernment. Part of the process of communal discernment is listening to where the Spirit is working in and leading a group. While it wasn't done the same way at Merck, I look back and realize that I first learned these skills there. If you offer people a space of trust, if you give people the confidence that their story is worth something and should be shared, if you foster that kind of environment, then you begin to recognize God working in those spaces.

## HOW MIGHT SPIRITUALITY HELP OTHERS IN THE WORKPLACE?

Most people want to talk about spirituality, but we have told ourselves that spirituality means religion, and it's often impossible to talk about religion in the

workplace. This attitude deprives people of something that is fundamental to who they are. People want to share their experiences, their experiences of God and of their lives. Work is central to the lives of many people. If you cannot integrate your faith or your spirituality with the other parts of your life, you're missing something.

An important part of spirituality is encouraging people to dialogue. Pope Francis has been talking about the "culture of encounter" since the start of his pontificate: meeting people where they are, entering through their door rather than starting with our ideas, opinions, desires. That, to me, is what's missing in the workplace.

## WHAT ROLE DOES IGNATIAN SPIRITUALITY PLAY?

Ignatian spirituality is critical as an entry point. My work with the Ignatian Spirituality Project - ISP (a retreat program for those who struggle with experiences of

homelessness and addiction) shows this very clearly. It doesn't matter whether you see yourself as Christian or Jewish or part of another religious tradition. Unless you believe that there's something bigger than all of us and have come to recognize that you can't do this on your own, that you need something else, something greater than yourself, you won't be able to change.

It's the same in the workplace. There are probably more addicts in a place like Merck than there are at an ISP retreat ... people who work all the time and seek affirmation only through what they produce at work. If this is our world, then we don't get in touch with some of the key aspects of what we're struggling with, whether it's drugs and alcohol or workaholism; we are simply trying to fill a void. We don't like emptiness and we fill those voids very easily. I think Ignatian spirituality helps people to get connected with who they are, to see where God is in their life, and to start to let go of some of the stuff we allow to fill those voids.

*Interested in Jesuit life and vocations?  
Visit [BeAJesuit.org](http://BeAJesuit.org)*



**Eric Clayton** is the deputy director for communications at the Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States. He is the author of a forthcoming book on Ignatian spirituality and storytelling by Loyola Press. He lives in Baltimore, Maryland, USA, with his wife and two daughters.



JÉSUITES  
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of Canada

Please take a few moments to fill out this brief survey. It will help us to make sure that the magazine responds to your needs and interests. Your participation is entirely voluntary. Thank you for your time and support.

**Would you recommend this magazine to others interested in the Jesuits of Canada?**

Yes  No

Why: \_\_\_\_\_

**Where did you find this magazine?**

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- Parish or church  Website
- Given by friend  Given by a Jesuit
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**How many issues of *Canadian Jesuits* have you read?**

1  2  3  4

**How much of the latest magazine did you read?**

- All of it  Most of it
- Some of it  None of it

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- Ignatian Spirituality  Meditation
- Resources

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\_\_\_\_\_

**Please indicate your agreement with this statement: "*Canadian Jesuits* magazine strengthens my interest in the Jesuits."**

- Strongly Agree  Agree
- Disagree  Strongly disagree

**What actions have you taken influenced by reading the magazine?**

- Attended an event (retreat, etc)
- Made a donation
- Contacted a Jesuit
- Contacted someone who works with the Jesuits
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- Saved all or part of the magazine
- Visited the Jesuits' website
- No action taken
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Use the attached envelope to send in your answers or fill out the survey online:

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Fill it in for a chance to participate for free in a retreat organised by one of our retreat and spirituality centres.

Survey QR Code



# Spiritual conversation:

## A heart-to-heart dialogue

by Sr. Laurence Loubières, xmcj

In his autobiography, “A Pilgrim’s Journey”, Saint Ignatius of Loyola recounts the circumstances of his conversion in 1521, when he spent weeks in bed at his family’s castle recovering from a military injury. He tells how, after reading religious books and spending time in prayer and reflection, his heart was touched by the love of God, and he began to share this joy with those in his home, who were surprised to see “a change in his soul.” When he saw that this was also “doing their souls a great deal of good,” he understood that entering into conversation was a good way to invite others to discover God in their lives and to open themselves up to the desire to love and serve him.

As the rest of the story shows, this burning desire to “help souls” come closer to God through conversation continued to deepen. Throughout his life, Ignatius continued to engage in conversation to help others draw closer to God: over shared meals, through numerous



exchanges of letters, or in what is now called spiritual accompaniment, that is, regular meetings in which one person confides in another about the stages of his/her spiritual journey. It was thanks to long conversations with Ignatius that Francis Xavier and Peter Faber, his fellow students in Paris, chose to share his commitment to serve Christ.

Elected the first superior of the Society of Jesus, Ignatius made conversation a privileged apostolic tool for the Jesuits, who had to work tirelessly to help souls turn to God through preaching, catechism, confessions, the Spiritual Exercises and spiritual accompaniment. Ignatius insisted that conversation was also at the heart of the life of the Society. He also insisted that the Jesuits, scattered in distant missions, keep up a lively correspondence with each other, even if the letters sometimes took several years to arrive! It was important that they all know what each one was experiencing in their missions, as this would strengthen their own zeal—and help even more people.

The Spiritual Exercises can be understood as a series of structured conversations between the retreatant and the Lord in prayer and between the retreatant and the person who guides him/her, step-by-step, in the accompaniment meetings. By sharing what has touched their hearts in prayer and in their experiences, retreatants gradually become more open to God's call and to the ways of reorienting their lives in response.

Over the years, the term "spiritual conversation" has come to describe this way of conversing that directs people toward God.

A specific form of spiritual conversation is proving very useful in helping groups to collaborate more fully with the work of the Holy Spirit in the world. Through successive rounds of sharing, which require attentive listening and speaking that take into account the emotional impact of what is being shared, it allows group

members to become aware of how the Holy Spirit is inviting them to move forward together. In the course of the conversations, a path that leads toward growth and life takes shape.

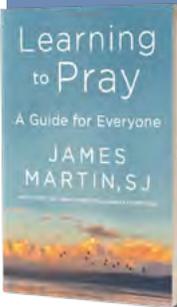
The term spiritual conversation should not be understood in a restrictive sense; a conversation can be spiritual even if its content does not refer directly to God. Who has not experienced deep conversations with friends that energize us and lead us to gratitude? These kinds of conversations can be moments when God communicates with us through the way our hearts are touched. The traces of joy, hope and love that these moments offer us indicate, if we pay attention, that God is revealing God's self in some way. It is the effect that the conversation has on us, rather than its object, that allows us to describe it as "spiritual."

This is what the disciples on the road to Emmaus understood when they recognized Christ and remembered that their hearts had been "burning within them" during their conversation with him on the road! Following in the footsteps of the first disciples, following Ignatius, let us become attentive to what touches our hearts and directs us to God in our conversations. And like them, let us burn with the desire to help those around us to open themselves to the love with which God wants to fill us. So, who would you like to have a conversation with today?



**Sr. Laurence Loubières, xmcj**, is the director of the Jesuit Service for Discernment in Common in Canada. Trained in management and theology, she has worked for over 10 years in the private sector.

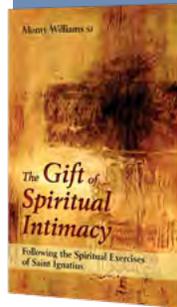
# PUBLICATIONS



## LEARNING TO PRAY: A GUIDE FOR EVERYONE

BY FR. JAMES MARTIN, SJ

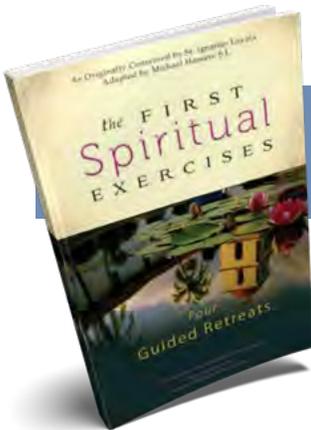
In this practical handbook, Fr. Martin explains what prayer is, what to expect from praying, how to pray and how prayer can transform us when we make it a regular practice in our lives. He makes it clear that there is not one secret formula for praying and that all of us can discover the way that best helps us to build an intimate relationship with God, regardless of religion or denomination.



## THE GIFT OF SPIRITUAL INTIMACY: FOLLOWING THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES OF SAINT IGNATIUS

BY FR. MONTY WILLIAMS, SJ

A timeless and invaluable tool for anyone seeking to develop a deeper sense of self and God in the depths of our hearts. In this book, Fr. Monty Williams, SJ, presents a practical yet rich step-by-step guide to working with one of the Christian world's first self-help books: The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. Williams has designed a book that can be used by individuals or groups, at home or in retreat, pastoral, academic or parish settings.



## THE FIRST SPIRITUAL EXERCISES: FOUR GUIDED RETREATS FOR EVERYONE

BY FR. MICHAEL HANSEN, SJ

In this innovative book, Fr. Hansen presents the Spiritual Exercises in the form of four different retreats on inner peace that are accessible to anyone, without having to get away from ordinary life or meet daily with a spiritual director. The book combines spiritual conversation and spiritual exercises, akin to the form of the Exercises thought to have been given by Saint Ignatius and the early Jesuits to anyone of good will.



# PRAYER APPS



**PRAY AS YOU GO** is a daily prayer session that is designed to go with you wherever you go, to help you pray whenever you find time. A new prayer session, which includes music, Scripture and some questions for reflection, is produced every weekday and once on the weekend.



**IBREVIARY** features a digital breviary, missal, readings and prayers. The app's creator, Don Paolo Padriani, says his goal was to link technology with faith and with the human need to talk with God and feel closer to him through prayer at any time of day.



**LIVING WITH CHRIST** Puts God’s word in your pocket. In addition to all daily Mass readings, the app highlights the saint of the day, a picture to meditate upon, an invitation to show solidarity, prayers for children and more.



## EVENTS



### RETREAT: VIRTUAL 8-DAY DIRECTED RETREAT

During the pandemic, Loyola House will bring the directed retreat to you! Just as in any silent retreat, Loyola House spiritual directors will provide daily spiritual direction that will occur via Zoom (or telephone). Your director will listen to you and to the Holy Spirit in order to help guide you in your prayer.

A variety of dates are available this summer. For a full listing of Loyola House virtual retreat offerings, visit [ignatiusguelph.ca/events](http://ignatiusguelph.ca/events).

For the most up-to-date information about opportunities at our Jesuit retreat and spirituality centres, visit [jesuits.ca/spiritual-life](http://jesuits.ca/spiritual-life) and click on the “Attend a retreat” button.

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**Becky Sindelar** is a mother of two and does freelance communications work for several Jesuit organizations from her home in the Chicago suburbs. She is an alumna of Loyola University Chicago and has worked in some capacity for the Jesuits since graduating in 1999.



A Jesuit's journey

# from head to heart

by Rachel Moccia | Photos: Jesuits of Canada

*Matt with the Grade 6 class he assisted with in Kingston.*

**M**atthew Hendzel, SJ has always felt a calling to both academic study and pastoral ministry; his Jesuit formation helped him see how he could embrace both.

## **COULD YOU SHARE ABOUT YOUR EARLY ENGAGEMENT WITH YOUR FAITH?**

I was born in Winnipeg, Manitoba. My mother was Anglican and my father was Catholic, but they weren't practicing. I went to a Mennonite high school, and that's where I started to ask questions about my own religious background. So, it all started with an academic engagement with my faith. I decided to go through RCIA and was confirmed.

## **HOW DID YOU DISCERN JOINING THE JESUITS?**

I studied at the University of Manitoba and took a class with a Jesuit named David Creamer, who got me interested in the Jesuits. I always had a desire to serve others, specifically through teaching. He showed me that you could be both a priest and a professor—it seemed like the best of both worlds!

I also studied at the Graduate Theological Union where I befriended a number of Jesuit scholastics. Getting to see the day-to-day life of Jesuits was very helpful in my discernment.



*Matt in his PhD academic dress from convocation.*



*Matt with some Core Members at L'Arche in Quebec City.*

I was finally able to take the plunge and start my application to the Society after a couple years of PhD studies.

## WHAT WAS THE TOPIC OF YOUR STUDIES?

I received a PhD in systematic theology. My interest was in questions of suffering, eschatology, and the afterlife, and my dissertation examined the doctrine of purgatory.

## HOW DID YOUR PHD INFORM YOUR MINISTRY?

While I was working on my doctorate, I was also doing a (Clinical Pastoral Education) CPE course at the hospital, so I was encountering lived suffering every single day and that really put a human face on the academic work I was doing. It ended up being quite reciprocal—my academic work informed my approach to ministry and vice versa. It was an important moment in my vocational life because it responded to a desire to move some of this work out of the abstract and into the ministerial realm.

## HOW HAS YOUR JESUIT FORMATION HELPED YOU TO GROW IN AN UNDERSTANDING OF YOUR VOCATION?

A Jesuit named John Govan often used to say: “The longest journey that a person can take is from the head to the heart.” That line could very well be the story of my formation process because there was a lot of head work going on and not much opportunity for that of the heart. My formation experiences made room for the heart work.

## WHAT WERE SOME OF THOSE SIGNIFICANT FORMATION EXPERIENCES?

One significant experience was working at a soup kitchen in downtown Montreal.

I had to speak French, and since my French isn't very good I really had to distill what I was trying to say and simply be present with people.

I also served at L'Arche, which was doubly challenging—engaging with people with learning disabilities exclusively in French. I couldn't solve people's problems, and I couldn't engage them in long conversations, so I had to surrender my self-consciousness to embrace my limitations and just be present.

My experience in Kingston, Jamaica, was also very formative. One of my favorite parts of my time there was a Bible study. Rather than bringing academic scholarship into the study, we simply read Scripture passages and related them to our own experiences. It was another experience not only of letting go of some of the gifts I thought I had in order to embrace some that were latently there, but also of trusting God in the process.

## CAN YOU SHARE ABOUT YOUR WORK AT LOYOLA HOUSE?

I've been here at the retreat centre for about a year and a half. When the pandemic struck last March, we weren't quite sure what to do.

After some soul-searching, we adapted in several ways. We started an arrangement with Wellington County to allow Loyola House to serve as temporary housing for people experiencing homelessness. We also moved spiritual direction to the phone and started offering retreats online. We created videos with lectures, photographs and companion files and then uploaded them to YouTube for the retreatants. I've taken a leadership role in creating these videos, and it's been a very fulfilling experience to work so creatively.

## HOW ARE YOU ABLE TO HELP POINT THE WAY TO GOD THROUGH YOUR WORK AT THE RETREAT CENTRE?

During this challenging year, I think that we've responded to the need people still have for spiritual retreats. Even though they may be doing these retreats from their homes, retreatants have expressed gratitude for the space to intentionally reconnect with God during these difficult times.

## THIS PAST YEAR HAS BEEN ONE OF ENORMOUS LOSS. GIVEN YOUR ACADEMIC INTERESTS AND YOUR MINISTRY EXPERIENCES OF ACCOMPANYING PEOPLE IN TIMES OF STRUGGLE, DO YOU HAVE ANY INSIGHTS THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE ABOUT FINDING GOD IN CHALLENGING TIMES?

The challenge for me is to start looking for God in places where I didn't expect God to be. I read these times as an invitation to look deeper.

For example, one of my prayer practices is to go for walks. Prior to my time at the retreat centre I had always lived in a city, so just outside my door were countless permutations of routes to walk. I loved the open-endedness of walking in the city.

During the pandemic I've been walking the same trails at the retreat centre for the past year. I started taking a camera with me, and if I saw something that caught my eye I would take a picture of it. I now have hundreds, if not thousands of photographs. I look at these photos and they show me how God is speaking to me through this natural landscape. In these challenging times, I ask God not only for illumination but also to speak to me in new ways

*Interested in Jesuit life and vocations? Visit [BeAJesuit.org](http://BeAJesuit.org)*



**Rachel Moccia** is a training specialist at Catholic Relief Services. She holds a Master of Divinity and is passionate about supporting faith communities in their work for justice.



### **Matthew Hendzel, SJ**

August 2013–August 2015:

*Novitiate, Montreal, QC*

January 2014: *Spiritual*

*Exercises, Gloucester, MA, USA*

March–April 2014: *L'Arche, Quebec City*

January–May 2015: *Long Experiment in Kingston, Jamaica*

August 2015–August 2019: *First Studies, Cardoner House, Toronto*

November 2019: *Awarded PhD in systematic theology from University of Saint Michael's College*

September 2019–present: *Regency, spiritual director at Loyola House, Ignatius Jesuit Centre*

October 2019: *Spiritual Exercises, Guelph, ON*

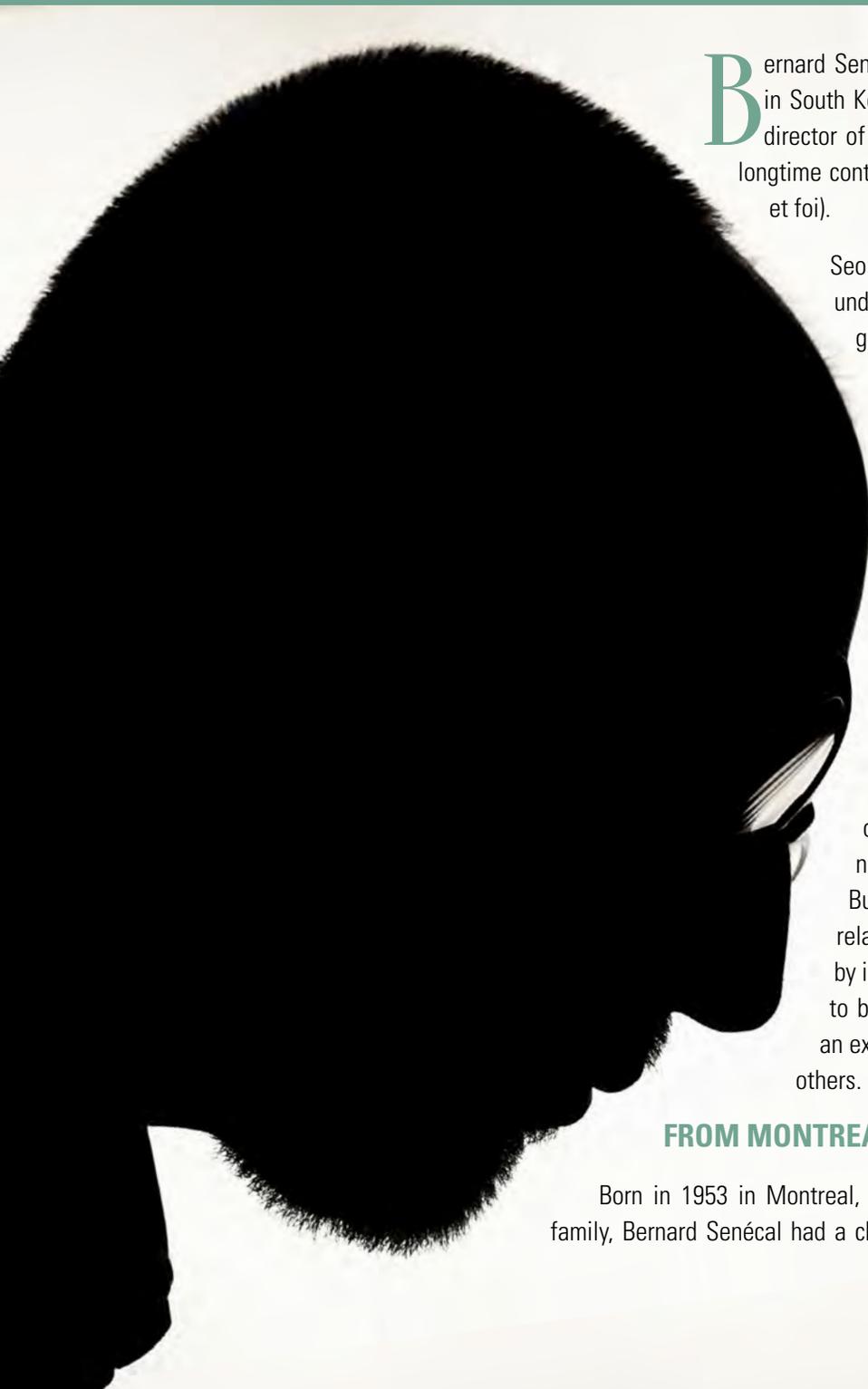


*I had the opportunity to let go of some of the talents I thought I had and turn to other gifts, which were dormant, and trust God in the process. “*

# Bernard Senécal,

## Jesuit Zen master

by Fannie Dionne



**B**ernard Senécal is unique. This Quebec Jesuit taught Buddhism in South Korea, where he has lived since 1985, and is now the director of the Way's End Stone Field Community, as well as a longtime contributor to *Relations* (the journal of the Centre justice et foi).

Seo Myeongweon (his Korean name) has always understood the life of a Jesuit as that of a man who goes to the peripheries, who confronts difference and accepts being transformed by it. "It seems that the Christian tradition is going to be renewed through significant encounters," he says, "and among the signs of the times is this potential encounter with Buddhism. I think we're still on the threshold of that encounter." In any case, he is recognized as one of the great contributors to this rich interreligious encounter desired by Pope Francis.

Indeed, the pope told the participants in the plenary assembly of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (2013), "It is widely thought that coexistence is only possible by hiding one's own religious affiliation, by meeting in a kind of neutral space, devoid of references to transcendence. But here, too: How would it be possible to create true relationships, to build a society that is a common home, by imposing that each person set aside what he considers to be an intimate part of his very being?" Fr. Senécal is an example of someone who creates a common home with others.

### FROM MONTREAL TO SEOUL

Born in 1953 in Montreal, Quebec, into an upper-middle-class Roman Catholic family, Bernard Senécal had a childhood dream of being a farmer. As a young adult,

## Portrait of an International Jesuit

he tried unsuccessfully to get into medical school. His family pushed him to study in France. He spent five years studying medicine in Bordeaux, where he discovered spirituality and realized that he was not cut out to be a doctor. "It became abundantly clear that I had to stop my studies," he says. So, in 1979, he entered the Jesuits in Lyon.

In 1982, he was asked to go on mission to Korea, which he accepted. When he arrived in Seoul, the former Superior General of the Society of Jesus, Fr. Adolfo Nicolás, SJ, was at Sogang University. "He warned me that it would take 10 years to learn the local Ural-Altaic language and Sinic culture and not less than twice that to begin to render innovative service to the Korean Church. Those words have proven to be true."

Fr. Senécal began his studies in Korean language and civilization in 1985, completed a doctorate in Korean Buddhism in 2004 and received a diploma as a Seon (Korean for Zen) master in 2007. He became a professor at Sogang University (2004–2015), a researcher and an assistant editor in chief of the *Journal of Korean Religions*. In the process, he was immersed in another culture, which has had a great influence on him.

### AT THE CROSSROADS OF THE WAY OF CHRIST AND THE WAY OF BUDDHA

"From the beginning of my studies in Korean language and civilization, I began to wonder about the meaning of Christ within a universe of thought where shamanism, Confucianism, Buddhism, Protestant sects of all denominations, and new religions coexist and interact," admits Fr. Senécal.

As he explains in his book "Jésus le Christ à la rencontre de Gautama le Bouddha", the Jesuit questioned his identity as a Christian as he began to be attracted by the message of Buddha. In his quest to reclaim his faith, however, he discovered that the tension between Christ and Buddha was disappearing, that the Christian and Buddhist traditions were harmonized within him. Sharing about a mystical experience, he says, "I felt that the more I went towards the Buddha, the more I



Photo: Screenshot from "Christianisme et bouddhisme" by Céline Fossatit



Photo: Daebong, Pixabay.com

was going along a path that would lead me back to Christ.” And this intuition has never left him.

“

*There are universes of religious thought that emerged without having to wait for Christianity, and they continue to exist very well without it.”*

Fr. Senécal believes that the study of another religion, such as Buddhism, is humbling and can serve to revitalize Catholicism.

### WAY'S END STONE FIELD COMMUNITY

Since 2014, Fr. Senécal has been leading the Way's End Stone Field Community with a number of lay people. Located about 100 kilometers from Seoul, this community, which includes a few people with physical disabilities, practices organic farming on a 3,000-square-meter plot of land (Fr. Senécal has finally become a farmer!). Being ecumenical, interreligious and international, the community is unique in Korea. “Twinned with a Korean Buddhist association called The Way of Seon (Seondohoe) and linked to the lineage of the Chinese master Linji (ninth century), it specializes in a multidimensional encounter with the tradition founded by the Buddha. At the crossroads of the path of Christ and that of Buddha, the Way's End Stone Field Community offers a spirituality that reconciles intellectual reflection and connection with the earth,” explains the Jesuit. It is also a concrete response to *Laudato si'*, Pope Francis' encyclical on the environment. And in the words of Pope Francis, the future lies in this kind of community.

“We want to live our Christian identity in relation to Buddhism. We want to go as far as possible in the encounter with

Buddhism,” notes Fr. Senécal, while insisting on the fact that he is not proposing a new religion, but rather a new way of understanding the Catholic tradition.

“In the Christian tradition there is a concept called the negative way, which consists in going beyond words to a mystery that seizes us and that is in the realm of the unspeakable. This current has not been explored sufficiently to revitalize the tradition, particularly within Catholicism. The very essence of Buddhism is to lead to the end of this negative path. In biblical language, it is the refusal of any kind of idolatry. Is there room for Christ in a system that sends everything to the scrap heap? This is a question for Christians, not Buddhists. If we accept that Christ is not an idol, then there is a place for him. This Buddhist enzyme can enable Christians to rediscover this apophatic movement, which encourages us to go beyond words to let ourselves be seized by the mystery of the Word, by the eternal Word.”

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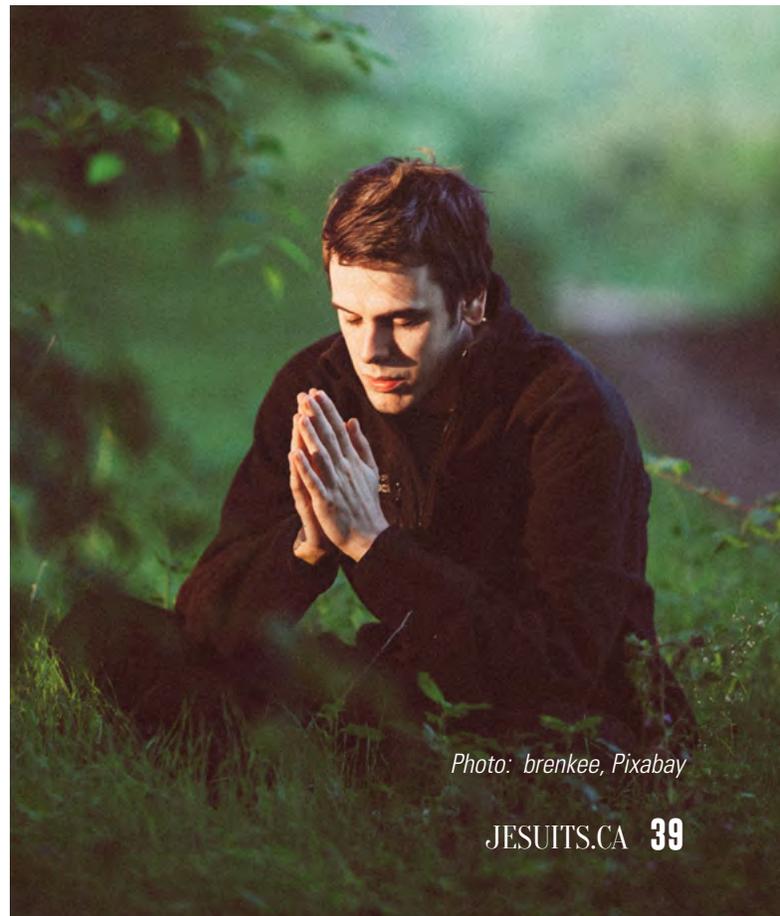


Photo: brenkee, Pixabay

### THE IGNATIAN YEAR—MAY 20, 2021 TO JULY 31, 2022

The entire Ignatian family is called to a spiritual experience during this year, which began on the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of an event that may have seemed like a failure: Ignatius of Loyola was wounded by a cannonball and had to admit defeat before the French army. His recovery would take time—enough time to review his life, his goals and his future. The conversion he experienced then can inspire our own conversion today. The website [ignatius500.global](https://www.ignatius500.global) offers many ways to use this year to strengthen our relationship with God and to learn “to see all things new in Christ.” Two video series, *Cannonball* and *One Gospel Step*, are specially designed to bring to life the spirit of the Ignatian Year on social networks.



### WOMEN AND THE SOCIETY OF JESUS

International Women’s Day, March 8, 2021, was marked by Superior General Fr. Arturo Sosa’s announcement of the creation of a commission on the role and responsibilities of women in the Society of Jesus. The 2019 congress to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Social Justice and Ecology Secretariat revived this major theme through a session that brought together approximately 50 participants with Father General. The new commission is mandated to evaluate the current level of shared responsibility, collaboration, and inclusion at all levels of the institutions and works of the Society. It will formulate proposals that aim to strengthen the mission of the Society by creating more space for the involvement of women.



### INDIA—SUPPORTING MIGRANTS

The pandemic has spared no one, but the poor have been hit hardest. While digital platforms have made many things possible during the crisis, they have done almost nothing for many daily wage earners. One of the most heartbreaking images on television screens is of migrant workers in the southern states of India returning from the big cities to their homes in rural areas at the height of the pandemic. Jesuits in India have focused their attention on these migrant workers during the pandemic, and the Jesuit Conference of South Asia established the Migrants Assistance and Information Network. The network is a coordinated, collaborative and innovative approach to reaching out to migrants in distress and will act in partnership with various stakeholders and collaborators involved in this apostolate throughout India. (See: <https://www.jesuits.global/2021/02/19/a-call-for-social-justice-in-the-digital-economy>)

### MYANMAR—SUPPORTING HOPES FOR DEMOCRACY

Following the military takeover of Myanmar, the Jesuits have joined with many other religious groups, not only Christian but also Buddhist, to support the civilian population who have taken to the streets to express their desire for democracy. Father General echoed the call of the Myanmar Jesuits to ask his confreres and their partners everywhere to pray for the country, especially for the Burmese youth who are seeking to create a future of freedom. He also encouraged Jesuits to do an in-depth analysis of the situation and to help develop alternatives to violence for the future. (See: <https://www.jesuits.global/2021/02/22/father-general-calls-for-support-for-the-people-of-myanmar/>)



# All roads lead to God:

## The ministry of retreats on the streets

by Eric Clayton

Photo: Jacek Dylag, Unsplash

Saint Ignatius invites us to find God’s Holy Spirit at work in all things. COVID-19 has challenged us to do exactly that. Rather than at church, we find God in our homes, on our screens and amidst our families.

But have you ever thought to encounter God as you walk the streets of your city?

“Cities are big and busy,” says Stephen Noon, SJ, a Jesuit in formation from the United Kingdom who studies theology at Regis College in Toronto. “We can think that there are places where God is not present, but of course, God is present in all places and in all things and meets us where we are.”

This simple truth—God will meet us where we are—is at the heart of urban pilgrimages, more commonly known as retreats on the streets.

“It is an experience of finding God in your day-to-day life,” reflects Consuelo Vasquez, who has both led and participated in retreats on the streets of Montreal, Quebec. “God is on the streets where you usually walk, but you don’t often take the time to see or experience God there.”

The idea began in Berlin, Germany in the mid-1990s. Fr. Christian Herwartz, SJ, was living in the Jesuit community when a guest arrived, looking to make a retreat. There was little space for silence or solitude in the Jesuits’ small flat. How could his guest manage a retreat under such constraints?

That guest surprised the Jesuits—he went into the streets of Berlin and had a profound experience. Father Herwartz realized that his community *could* provide retreats—just not in the way most people expected.

Photo: Zachary Staines, Unsplash



**Fr. Christian Herwartz, SJ**  
photo by Der wahre Jakob,  
August 2019.

Thus, the retreats-on-the-streets initiative was born, changing lives all around the world—including in Canadian cities.

The retreat itself is simple. Retreatants are given a specific Scripture verse to ponder throughout their day.

In Toronto, for example, retreatants have reflected on Matthew 10: 5–15. Jesus sends forth his disciples with no money, sack or walking stick. This passage invites retreatants to ask important questions of themselves.

“What do I have that protects me? My wallet? My mobile phone?” Noon asks. “Before you leave, you work out what it is that is burdening you, and you make the conscious choice to leave it behind. You enter the street without a safety net, without barriers between you and the world. In that mindset, you are open to finding God’s presence.”

In Montreal, a Scripture passage from Exodus Chapter 3 has been central: Moses encounters God in the burning bush.

For Élizabeth Lecavalier, a chaplain who works with students through Pouvoir de Changer (P2C Étudiants) in Montreal, this passage never gets old.

“I had just moved to Montreal because I wanted to live closer to campus,” she remembers. “That day, I was thinking, ‘I’ll go to campus. This is a meaningful place for me.’” The campus is on a big hill in the middle of Montreal, and there’s a huge tower that’s visible from miles away.

“And so, when I went and stood in front of that tower, I read the same text again. And this time, I imagined myself on that mountain with Moses in



front of the burning bush. And I said to God, 'You called me here to Montreal. Here I am. What now? What is the next step? I'm not quite sure.' During that retreat, I was able to bring my heart to God."

"I realized through this experience that I had a lot of fear," reflects Fr. Gabriel Côté, SJ, director of Jesuit novices in Montréal, Québec. "I was tempted to stop in churches to meet God. This was very comfortable for me. But I was challenged to go in another direction, towards the poor. For me, it started just by hearing the cry of the poor that Moses heard."

Allowing the Spirit to guide your retreat through the city is key. There is no predetermined route.

"Which places in the city attract me?" Noon asks. "Some people might go to the railway station where there's lots of movement and lots of opportunity for encounter."

"The attitude that's required is to set aside any anxiety, to shake off any burdens and just come as you are," says Ashley Tran, a third-year master of divinity student at Regis College in Toronto. "Nothing is expected; there's no right or wrong. Be like a cup of water just poured out. Wait to be refilled, open to anything."

At the day's conclusion, retreatants are invited to share their experiences.

"I am always surprised to see how God is so personal, how God touches everyone in his or her uniqueness, in his or her needs," Vasquez reflects.

Retreats on the streets reach a variety of people.

"I've wanted to adapt our spiritual program for people who are not churchgoers but who are spiritual seekers," says Fr. Côté. "This experience opens the door for retreatants, and they're fascinated by it, they want to do more."

"People have lost the language of God," says Noon. "They are not comfortable with traditional religious spaces. But there's something really accessible, particularly for young people, in this idea that you can encounter God in your own reality. A street retreat has fewer barriers, and people are comfortable with it. We can bring God to people in a way that they can understand and can engage with."



*Painting of St. Ignace of Loyola located in the Church of Gesu, Rome, Italy.*



*Photo: Zuyet Awarmatik, Unsplash*

Politician, Jesuit, and man  
for others:

# Jacques Couture, SJ

by Frédéric Barriault | Photos: The Archive of the Jesuits in Canada



*Jacques Couture, SJ*

Last fall, the Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States published “Contemplation and Political Action: An Ignatian Guide to Civic Engagement,” which opens with a challenge from Pope Francis: A “good Catholic” cannot be indifferent to social and political struggles. Given that I come from a Social Gospel background, I have always resisted the idea that faith is a purely private matter. Ethics, mysticism and politics can—and should—go hand in hand.

The life of Fr. Jacques Couture, SJ is eloquent in this regard. It is also typical of the Jesuits of the generation of Father General Pedro Arrupe (1907–1991), concerned with being men of service for others who are engaged in the pursuit of justice in order to transform oppressive structures that dehumanize and crush the marginalized. This commitment, rooted in Ignatian spirituality, was made in the name of what would soon be called the preferential option for the poor. His life is an example of the integration of ethics, mysticism and politics, as well as of contemplation in action in order to find God in all things, through putting himself at the service of others.

## THE SON OF A NOBLEMAN

Born in 1929 in the upper middle class of Quebec’s Haute-Ville, Jacques Couture initially studied law. As a young idealist attentive to the suffering of others, he discovered with horror the misery of the

working-class neighbourhoods of the Basse-Ville. He moved on from law to study social work, even as he discerned a religious vocation. At the age of 18, he joined the Jesuits and began his formation. Sent to Taiwan to study the Chinese language, he returned to Montreal in 1964, shortly before his ordination to the priesthood.

## WORKER-PRIEST AND PROGRESSIVE ACTIVIST

That same year, he wrote an article for the journal *Relations* in which he pleaded for a church of the poor, thus echoing the call of Pope John XXIII at the opening of the Second Vatican Council. He then settled in the working-class neighbourhood of Saint-Henri in Montreal with his companions, Julien Harvey and Rosaire Tremblay. A worker-priest and social organizer, he worked in a factory and animated the *Groupement Familial Ouvrier*, whose pedagogy was inspired by that of “See-Judge-Act” and by Ignatian discernment: “to organize meetings with the people, to study the problems of the local community, to unite the different social classes, to engage in lobbying, to pursue a series of activities with the same focus.” To this end, he co-founded and co-led, with citizens of Saint-Henri, a political action committee, which published the newspaper *L’Opinion ouvrière* of which he was the editor-in-chief.

Initially confined to Saint-Henri, his involvement soon expanded to the southwest in various citizens’ committees and finally to



*Madagascar 1981-1995*

the city of Montreal, where he helped found the Rassemblement des citoyens de Montréal, a left-wing municipal party opposed to the authoritarian leadership of Mayor Jean Drapeau. This attracted the attention of René Lévesque, who suggested that he enter provincial politics as a Parti Québécois candidate.

On November 15, 1976, he was elected as a Member of the National Assembly (MNA) for the riding of Saint-Henri. As required by canon law, he was then released from his religious vows.

### FROM PRIESTLY MINISTRY TO THE MINISTRY OF IMMIGRATION

First appointed as Minister of Labour, Couture was then entrusted with the immigration portfolio, during the time of a massive exodus of boat people from Southeast Asia and thousands of Latin Americans who were fleeing the military juntas. It was in this turbulent context that

the Society of Jesus created the Jesuit Refugee Service and that Couture became the very first Minister of Immigration in Quebec, where he contributed to the normalization of the status of a large number of Haitian asylum seekers fleeing the violence of the Duvalier regime. He also facilitated the arrival of Vietnamese, Cambodian, Chilean and Salvadoran refugees and set up the first sponsorship and francization programs for immigrants.

### MISSIONARY AND SOCIAL MOBILIZER IN ... MADAGASCAR

Once an idealist, always an idealist. Couture entered politics out of concern for the common good and resigned in 1980 with a sense of duty accomplished. A Jesuit at heart, he returned to the Society of Jesus, still motivated by the desire to serve, to evangelize and to incarnate in word and deed the preferential option for the poor. Shortly afterwards, he became a missionary in the Andohatapenaka district, one of the poorest in Antananarivo, the



*August 2005 / Antananarivo / monument in honor of Jacques Couture, s.j. in front of the Center he founded*



*Madagascar*

capital of Madagascar. His second time in a working-class environment, Fr. Couture was both a pastor and a social worker, involved in community development, until his untimely death in 1995 at the age of 66. His authenticity, his dynamism and his commitment have left a lasting impression in the hearts and minds of the Malagasy people.

This heritage is also alive and well in La Belle Province. Many historians have studied his legacy and his contribution to coexistence in today's Quebec. In fact, a research institute that bears his name, founded in 2017 at Teluq University, awards an annual Jacques-Couture prize that highlights "the exceptional contribution of a Quebecer who, through his or her work, commitment, or publications, has made it possible for newcomers to become better acquainted with Quebec or for people here to better understand the world in which they live."



*Madagascar 1981-1995*



**Frédéric Barriault**, a historian with an Ignatian heart and spirit, is responsible for research at the Centre justice et foi, where he coordinates the project Mémoire du christianisme social in Quebec ([mcsq.ca](http://mcsq.ca).)

# First studies renewed

byr Fannie Dionne

**T**he studies that members of the Society of Jesus engage in have an apostolic purpose: They aim to prepare these men to better serve the mission that God entrusts to the Society and to each Jesuit. This coming September, the Jesuits of Canada will be offering a brand-new program in Quebec City for young Jesuits doing their first studies!

It must be said that Jesuit formation (as detailed by Saint Ignatius of Loyola himself!) is occasionally updated. In 2014, Fr. Adolfo Nicolás, SJ, then Superior General of the Society of Jesus, issued a letter calling for the renewal and revision of the intellectual formation of scholastics and Jesuit brothers. In response, the seven Jesuit conferences, including that of Canada and the United States, worked to adapt the Superior's guidelines to their own realities.



Photo: Moussa Faddoul,  
[www.fotoreflexion.com](http://www.fotoreflexion.com)

The revised program emphasizes four essential elements that are integrated into the five stages of Jesuit formation. These elements, or “4Cs,” are: understanding the *context* of mission, exploring the *content* of faith, developing ministerial *competence* and deepening the Jesuit *charism*.

Changes are already being implemented in the centres of the Conference of Canada and the United States, including a new program that aims to ground Jesuits in the Canadian mission.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF STUDYING IN THE CANADIAN APOSTOLIC CONTEXT

In their first studies, in addition to the philosophy curriculum (especially the fundamentals, such as metaphysics, epistemology and ethics) mandated by the Church, young Jesuits in formation, both scholastics and brothers, study history, religious studies and social sciences. “Added to this is theological analysis of the context and the social teaching of the Church. The deeper understanding of the content of the faith to prepare for ordination will come later. Finally, to properly integrate the intellectual, spiritual and social dimensions, there is a practical apostolate that includes personal and communal discernment to guide this process of integration,” explains Fr. Gilles Mongeau, SJ, socius and head of formation for the Jesuits of Canada.

Thus, after the process of spiritual deepening during the Jesuit novitiate, the first studies allow for an intellectual deepening of the mission context through study and part-time ministry.

Why is this process of deepening important? “Spiritual tools such as communal discernment, which helps us to read the signs of the times, are only as useful as the intellectual analysis that we bring to this discernment,” explains Fr. Gilles. “Thus, we need refined intellectual tools that allow us to better understand important questions, such as context-specific cultural issues.”

With the revision of the first studies programs, Canadian Jesuits in formation are now sent to the United States or France. This development does not allow them to deepen their understanding of the context of mission in Canada, with its particular challenges, such as the history of relations between the peoples who make up the country





Photo: John O'Brien, SJ



(Indigenous, non-Indigenous, Francophone-Anglophone, new immigrants, etc.), interculturalism, interreligious dialogue in a secular context, ultramodernism and so on. To resolve this problem, starting at the beginning of the 2021 school year, the Jesuits will do the first year of their first studies in Quebec City.

### **QUEBEC CITY, THE CROSSROADS OF A BILINGUAL, SPIRITUAL AND INTELLECTUAL FORMATION**

Quebec City offers several advantages for young Jesuits.

On the linguistic level, English-speaking Jesuits will be able to perfect their French by studying at Laval University. Meanwhile, French-speaking Jesuits can take advantage of the written English courses offered at the university, before pursuing their first studies in the United States.

Quebec City is also home to the Centre de spiritualité Manrèse, which will provide the necessary support for the spiritual discernment linked to the process of intellectual deepening. Indeed, as Fr. Gilles points out, "It's not as if you have a spiritual side in the novitiate and an intellectual side in the first studies! The Centre Manrèse is the perfect place to integrate the intellectual and spiritual dimensions." The spirituality centre, which you can read about at the beginning of this magazine, has been offering Ignatian formation and spiritual accompaniment for many years. Its formation program is already linked to Laval University.

Finally, the Jesuits have positive ties with the Diocese of Quebec, explains Fr. Gilles, which is another advantage of the location.

### **FORMATION FOR JESUITS OUTSIDE CANADA**

The new first studies program is not for Canadian Jesuits only but also for Jesuits throughout the Conference of Canada and the United States.

"That's part of the revised program," adds Fr. Gilles. "Students in every program in the United States must have an experience outside the American context. For the majority of young American Jesuits, it's going to be in a Spanish-speaking context. But it is also important that young Jesuits who have a basic understanding of French come to understand Canada better. It's important to integrate them into the full reality of the conference."

The new Jesuit formation program, anchored in the "4Cs," allows for a healthy tension between critical appropriation of the Jesuit tradition, discipline, personal responsibility with openness and humble attentiveness to the other, ongoing reflection, and collaboration with others. All this in a context that is not only global, but also Canadian.

*Interested in Jesuit life and vocations? Visit [BeAJesuit.org](https://www.beajesuit.org)*

# The Gesù,

## a Jesuit hub in the heart of Montreal

by Daniel Simoncic, Executive Director

In early 2019, Father General Arturo Sosa, SJ, unveiled the Universal Apostolic Preferences (UAPs) that will guide the actions of the Society of Jesus for the next decade. The result of a communal discernment process [see the article on discernment in common at the beginning of this magazine], the UAPs are articulated as follows: 1) Showing the way to God through the Spiritual Exercises and discernment; 2) Walking with the poor, the outcasts of the world, those whose dignity has been violated, in a mission of reconciliation and justice; 3) Accompanying young people in creating a hope-filled future; and 4) Collaborating, with Gospel depth, for the protection and renewal of God's Creation.

This new context places the Gesù-Centre de créativité within the Canada-wide network of Jesuit works and communities as an important and meaningful hub for the Jesuits, who want to increase their presence in downtown Montreal.

Located in the heart of the Ville-Marie borough, the Gesù is strategically positioned—bordering the Quartier des spectacles, the Centre-Ville, the business district and the universities—to reach potential collaborators or partners for the development of projects and also to reach the most vulnerable populations. Indeed, this area is characterized by: 1) widespread poverty—in 2016, 42 percent of the working population aged 15 and over earned less than \$20,000; and 38 percent of the population was inactive (students, homemakers, retired persons or those who are



Photo: Fr. Edmund Lo, SJ

unemployable); 2) a high concentration of immigrants (32 percent), as well as non-permanent residents (14 percent) and Indigenous people (0.8 percent); 36 percent of its population identifies as a visible minority (2016); and 3) the largest presence of homeless people in the territory (2015 report) and, according to the municipality, homelessness in Montreal has doubled during the pandemic.

As a result of the changes, a development agreement was reached on February 28, 2020, between the Maison du Gesù and the Gesù-Centre de créativité, entrusting the latter with the completion of the New Gesù Project (NGP). The project stipulates the implementation of the UAPs (as defined above) and the creation of four new areas of activity: 1) spirituality and liturgy, 2) arts and culture, 3) education, and 4) social justice. All this will support the apostolic and financial sustainability of the Gesù to carry out the improvement of the entire built and spiritual heritage of the square by upgrading the infrastructure of the building, which will be carried out in conjunction with the restoration work to rectify the damage



Photo: Clay Leconey, Unsplash

caused by the works adjacent to the building. In order to facilitate the development and implementation of a business plan, the Gesù building has been leased to the Gesù-Centre de créativité.

Finally, there is a proposal to change the name of the project to Avenir Gesù (there have been too many versions of the “New Gesù Project” over the years), thus marking the beginning of a new era that brings together the church and the Centre de créativité, as well as highlighting the change in the mission of the Centre de créativité, which will now encompass the development of the four hubs of activity through which the UAPs will unfold.

The Church of the Gesù (inaugurated in 1865) is an important building that bears witness to the return of the Jesuits to Montreal and their involvement in education. The amphitheatre, which served as an academic auditorium, was built under the chapel, a place of worship for the Collège Sainte-Marie. Jesuit education—which promoted the study of the literary arts and the art of the spoken word through theatrical practice of oratory, poetry recitation and the staging of plays by classical authors—gave birth to many poets, writers, actors, directors and musicians who made their first public appearances there. The stage became public in 1923 and has since served as a springboard for many actors and theatre groups. Thus, over time, thanks to artists, thinkers, teachers and audiences from all walks of life, the Gesù has become a mythical, cosmopolitan and timeless artistic space.

After a process to rethink its future and the renovation of the premises, the Gesù became, in 1993, the Gesù-Centre de créativité, thus highlighting its change of orientation. In addition to being a performance venue, the Centre de créativité became an organization that offers artistic residencies and produces multidisciplinary and multiethnic events (such as its Arts sacrés et Rencontres interculturelles). Its mission is to offer citizens

and artists experiences that inspire and fascinate and to provoke encounters and dialogue, all with the aim of encouraging expression and accessibility to art. A desire to create links between the various cultural communities that come together around art and creation is uniquely combined with heritage, performing arts, visual arts and literary arts. The Centre de créativité stands out because of the diversity of its annual program that includes hosting the Festival Accès-Asie, the Festival du Monde Arabe, the Festival Présence Autochtone and the Festival Nuit d’Afrique. More than 400 activities take place each year, ranging from music to theatre, dance, comedy and storytelling, not to mention exhibitions, workshops, conferences, symposiums and roundtables.

Le Gesù-Centre de créativité has built a unique cultural legacy where art, heritage, reflection, spirituality and entertainment meet and blend perfectly with modernity. This new agreement between the Maison du Gesù and the Gesù-Centre de créativité will encourage the implementation of innovative activities and



Photo: Tim Marshall, Unsplash

artistic experiences because it represents a natural convergence of our respective activities. The Centre de créativité has all that is necessary to take up the challenge, implement these new activities and invite new partners to participate in this new adventure that is Avenir Gesù.

# INVESTING IN THE MISSION IN QUEBEC CITY



In 1625, Saint Jean de Brébeuf and four other Jesuits arrived in Quebec City. Motivated by a profound missionary spirit, they boldly committed themselves to minister to the first peoples of America, serving the first inhabitants of European origin of the young colony. Pastors, educators, scientists, historians—no domain was foreign to them. The unwavering faith that animated them, as well as their courage and determination, led many to give the ultimate testimony of love and fidelity to the One they had chosen to serve.

Four hundred years later, despite the constraints of a pandemic, the Jesuits are demonstrating once again their courageous determination in Quebec City. While many religious communities in Old Quebec are selling their properties that have become too large, the Jesuits have decided to renovate the residence that they have occupied since 1856 and renew its mission. Looking beyond the construction work, it is important to recognize that faith has always been the vital force behind the mission undertaken here, whether in the early years of the colony or today, in the context of the twenty-first century.

After major renovations, the Résidence Notre-Dame at 14 rue Dauphine will reclaim its role in the formation of the next generations of Jesuits. The Centre de spiritualité Manrèse will be housed there and to continue its work to promote the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius, especially in everyday life. Spiritual accompaniment and discernment, both individual and communal, are at the heart of its mission. The Jesuit chapel will also continue to play an important liturgical and cultural role. The combination of a church community, formation and spirituality makes possible the rebirth of a powerful hub in Quebec City.

To be present in the heart of the birthplace of the Church in Canada, to proclaim the Gospel through the means of Ignatian spirituality, to work in partnership with the Church of Quebec, to form and nurture the next generations of the Society of Jesus—these are the various facets of our mission. Your support can help bring it to fruition!

**Erik OLAND, sj**  
Provincial  
Jesuits of Canada

**Marc RIZZETTO, sj**  
Superior  
Résidence Notre-Dame



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For centuries, Russia has been the homeland of the Eastern Orthodox Church. It is home to a variety of religious architecture dating back a millennia. Scattered all over its vast territory are Orthodox churches and monasteries. Nearly every Russian town and city is lit by the glow of its gilded domes. The colorful onion domes of St. Basil's Cathedral in Moscow to the white-and-blue domes of the churches, monasteries and hermitages are home to sacred icons, religious relics and historical frescoes and murals which offer a glimpse of the history of the Orthodox church.

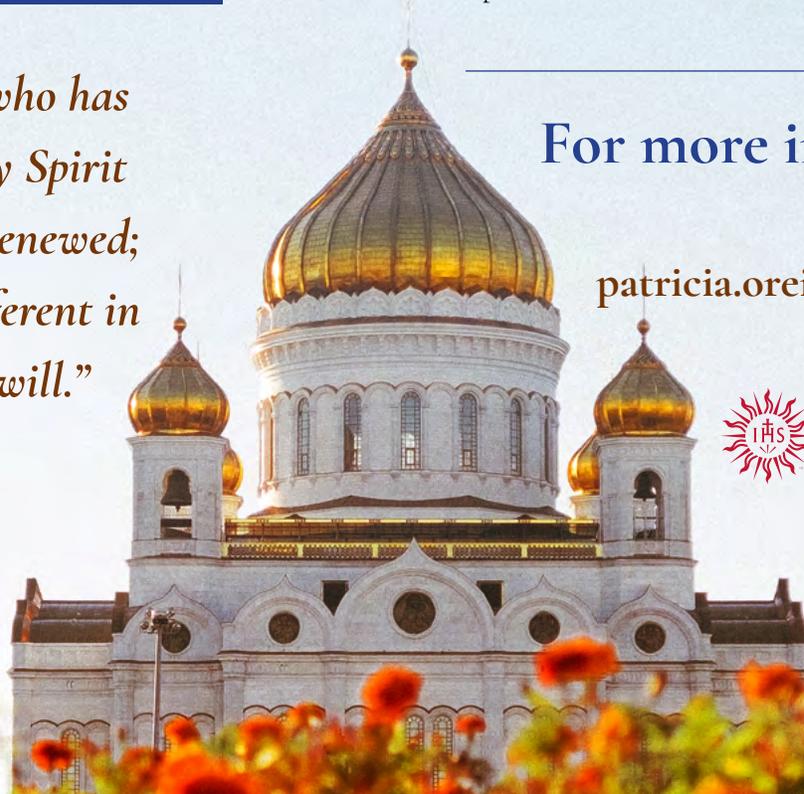
Minsk, Belarus is famous for the writing of icons. Orthodox Christians believe that an icon is the spiritual door to the divine world, to the Holy Spirit.

*“In a word, one who has acquired the Holy Spirit becomes totally renewed; they becomes different in mind, heart and will.”*

- Abbot Nikon Vorobiev

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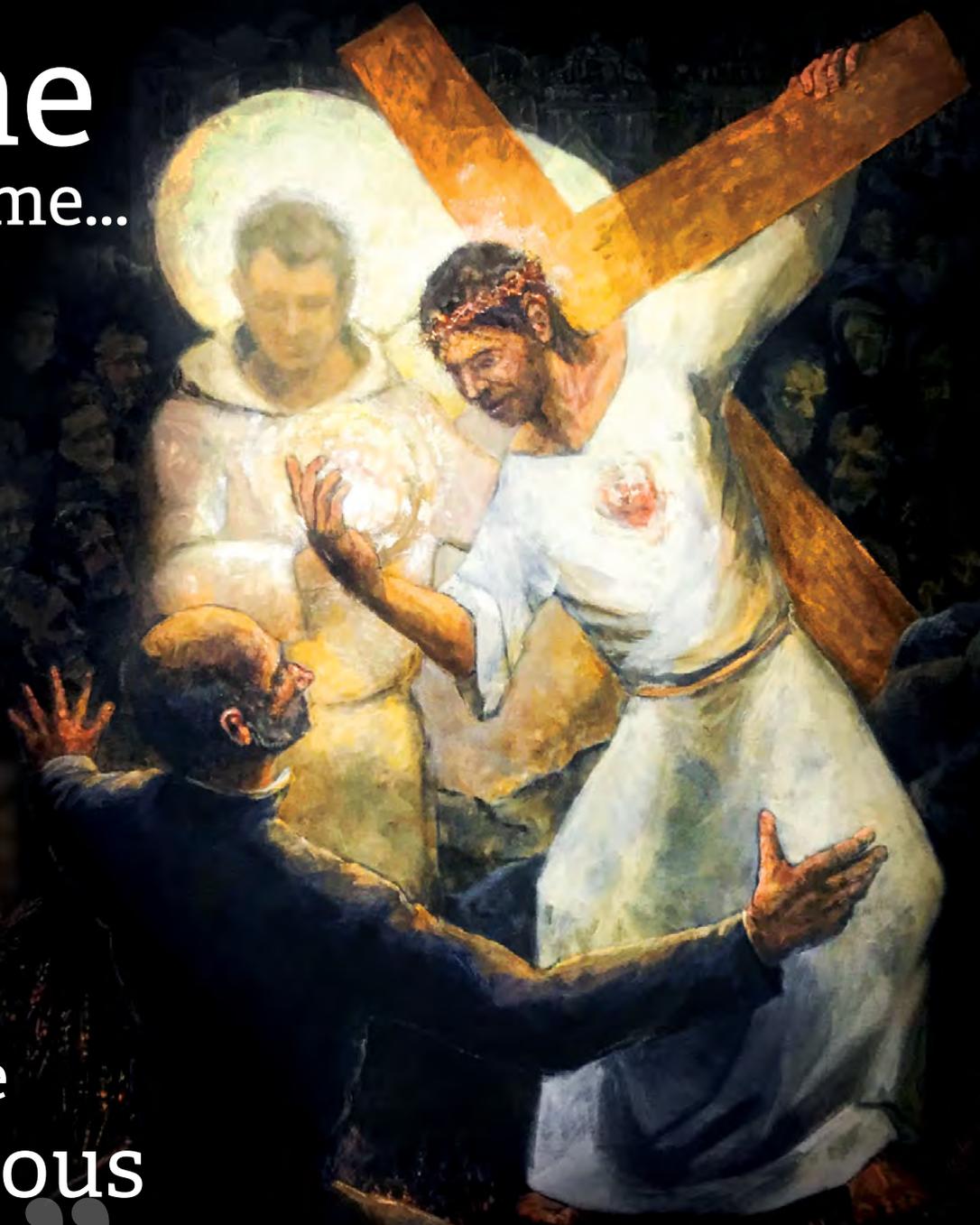


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“Come  
follow me...”

I will be  
generous  
to you ...”



In 1537, on his way to Rome, Ignatius had a vision in which he saw God the Father turning to his Son who was carrying the cross, and giving Ignatius and those in his company into Jesus' hands "with exceeding great love." This made such an impression on Ignatius that he requested their new company be named the Society of Jesus.

*The Vision of St. Ignatius at La Storta, Regis College, Toronto*  
artist: Sean Michael Powers



*Ignatius is the saint of a down-to-earth mysticism; he lives in the world as in a burning bush inhabited by the love of God, who assumes the tensions of life, harmonizing them, uniting what is apparently contradictory. Ignatius has left us the most human of God's experiences; how divine our human experience would be if we followed his path thoroughly!*

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