

# CANADIAN JESUITS

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2023 | 2

## Walking together: The role of Jesuit accompaniment in a changing world



Jesuits and  
LGBTQ+ Catholics  
page 6

"We have a voice":  
Celebrating Indigenous  
identities in the Church  
page 11

A Jesuit's journey from  
parenthood to priesthood  
page 25

Christ, compassion  
and accompaniment  
page 38

# FROM THE DIRECTOR



*God is not afraid of new things! That is why he is continually surprising us, opening our hearts and guiding us in unexpected ways.” - Pope Francis*

In the embrace of Manitoulin Island’s landscape, Rosella Kinoshameg, an Anishinaabe woman, grappled with a sense of disconnection from her Catholic faith as her native Ojibwe culture remained marginalized. Coming to terms with the tragic legacy of colonization and the lingering shadows of intergenerational trauma faced by Indigenous peoples in Canada, the Jesuits began to listen, understand and embrace Indigenous traditions. This shift marked the beginning of a new journey, characterized by reconciliation, healing and spiritual growth.

In this issue of *Canadian Jesuits* we celebrate the guiding values of Ignatian spiritual accompaniment and how they shape the work of Jesuits and their lay colleagues in Canada. As we move through an ever-changing world, we walk with others, guided by humility, deep listening, mutuality and hospitality. These values enable us to help others find their way while remaining open to the unexpected paths that unfold before us.

Canada, like many other countries, faces numerous challenges and opportunities. Social, political and environmental issues demand our attention and action. In this context, the Ignatian approach to spiritual accompaniment becomes even more relevant, enabling us to engage with others in meaningful and transformative ways. By applying these values to our apostolic work, we deepen our relationships, foster understanding and create an environment in which lasting change can take root.

You will thus find here inspiring stories that showcase the impact of Ignatian values on various aspects of the Jesuits’ work in Canada. We share the journey of walking with LGBTQ+ persons, embracing their unique experiences and contributions to our faith community and helping depict how Ignatian accompaniment can help build bridges, foster inclusion, and promote a sense of belonging and dignity for all, regardless of their orientation or identity.

Another feature in this issue highlights the accompaniment of refugees and how their stories change those who walk with them. And we spotlight the experiences at Manresa Spirituality and Renewal Centre, showcasing powerful and often extraordinary (and often miraculous!) stories of healing and renewal. These accounts demonstrate the profound impact of Ignatian accompaniment on individuals seeking solace and spiritual growth in their relationship with God.

Each of these stories embodies the spirit of Ignatian spiritual accompaniment, showing the transformative power of walking with others. By weaving these values into the fabric of our work, the Jesuits in Canada and their lay colleagues are able to respond to the complex needs of our world with compassion, understanding and hope.

We invite you to consider joining us in our mission. Whether through your prayers, financial support or involvement in our apostolic endeavours, your partnership is invaluable in our collective effort to make a difference in the lives of those we serve.

We hope you find inspiration, direction and companionship within these pages.

Fannie Dionne  
**Associate Editor**

José Antonio Sánchez  
**Director**

# CANADIAN JESUITS

2023 N° 2

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## NEWS

**20** Canadian News

## SPIRITUALITY

**22** The wellspring within

## PORTRAIT OF A CANADIAN JESUIT

**25** A Jesuit's journey from parenthood to priesthood

## IGNATIAN WISDOM IN DAILY LIFE

**29** Emotions, a practical map for your inner journey

## EVENTS, PUBLICATIONS, RESOURCES

**32** Events, Publications, Resources



**2** From the Director

**4** From the Provincial

## OUR WORKS

**6** Jesuits and LGBTQ+ Catholics: Bringing the colors of marginalized people to the Church

**11** "We have a voice": Celebrating Indigenous identities in the Church

**16** Raising hope from under the rubble



## FORMATION

**34** From "no" to "yes": The story of Raj Vijayakumar

## PORTRAIT OF A PARTNER IN MISSION

**38** Christ, compassion and accompaniment

## INTERNATIONAL

**42** International News

**46** Lebanese Jesuits tend the invisible wounds of the Lebanese people

## WITNESSES OF A LIFE

**48** Changing the world from within and the impact of Ignatian spirituality today





*Day by day, O dear Lord, three things I pray: To see thee more clearly, love thee more dearly, follow thee more nearly, day by day. ("Godspell")*

The lyrics of the song quoted above from the 1971 Broadway musical "Godspell" could well have been inspired by the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola.

They capture the spirit of the grace that one prays during the second week of the Exercises: I ask for an intimate **knowledge** of our Lord who became human, so that I might **love** him and **follow** him. Indeed, the entire thrust of the Exercises is to lead one to a personal relationship with Jesus and from this privileged place to make a serious discernment about one's life choices. In truth, Ignatius may have known this celebrated prayer written by St. Richard of Chichester in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, three centuries before he composed his book of Spiritual Exercises. Indeed, this little book is a masterful compendium of spiritual methods for prayer and discernment that Ignatius put together out of his own experiences and guidance from others on his journey to conversion.

Whether one undertakes the Exercises in a long or shortened form, or whether one experiences them as a fully silent retreat or in daily life, one can be assured that something life-changing may take place. I speak from personal experience. I happened upon the book of Exercises by chance half a lifetime ago. I perused the book and said to myself that it was not particularly engaging spiritual reading, so it sat on my bookshelf until one day when I found myself faced with a cancelled contract and a few months of relative freedom. I remembered that the book was one of spiritual exercises, a guide to live out prayer in daily life. My daily routine became prayer and journaling first thing each day and an occasional

conversation with a spiritual friend. It took a few days to get into the rhythm, but after a week or so the experience took on a life of its own as I journeyed through my own sin history and the beginnings of a whole new level of encounter with Jesus.

At one point, a number of weeks into my prayer regimen, following Ignatius' directives for decision-making, I imagined myself on my deathbed, looking back over my life and asking the suggested question: What would I have wished to have done? In truth, while I was content with my chosen path as a classical musician, I had entertained the possibility of getting to know the Jesuits better. During this prayer, however, that possibility came into stark relief. The resulting meditation was one of the most powerful spiritual experiences of my life. It was as if a very bright light bulb went on in my head, and I was able to say with confidence that, at the very least, I needed to begin a conversation with the Jesuits. The conversation began and the rest is the rich chronology of my Jesuit life up to today.

A significant part of that chronology is the years that I spent at our retreat centre, Loyola House in Guelph, where I trained in spiritual direction and gave my first retreats. Truly, that experience is but one among many that has confirmed over and over again that the spirituality of the Ignatian Exercises is very much a pathway to God and a school of discernment that helps individuals to deepen their faith and to make serious choices about their life ... day by day.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'E. Oland SJ', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**Erik Oland, SJ**

Provincial of the Jesuits of Canada






Show the way  
to God through  
the *Spiritual Exercises*  
and discernment



Walking with  
the Excluded



Journeying  
with Youth



Caring for our  
Common Home



UNIVERSAL  
APOSTOLIC  
PREFERENCES

[JESUITS.GLOBAL/UAP](https://JESUITS.GLOBAL/UAP)



# JESUITS AND LGBTQ+ CATHOLICS:

Bringing the colors of marginalized people to the Church

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by José Sánchez and Fannie Dionne





*Mass for the All Inclusive Ministries group at the Jesuits' Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Toronto*

Beneath the soaring dome of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Toronto, a group has been quietly pioneering a path of compassion and understanding for over a decade. Drawing inspiration from the time-tested teachings of St. Ignatius of Loyola, their mission incorporates many of the values of Ignatian accompaniment. Fundamentally, they aim to offer spiritual support to LGBTQ+ Catholics and allies while nurturing a more inclusive and compassionate Church.

At the heart of Ignatian accompaniment lies the art of deep listening, discernment and reverence for each person's unique identity and inherent dignity. It acknowledges that every journey is unique and offers spiritual and emotional support to individuals as they navigate life's challenges. This approach has inspired Jesuit and Ignatian apostolates across Canada to create spaces where LGBTQ+ individuals feel valued, supported and empowered.

The Ignatian Spirituality Centre of Montreal exemplifies this ethos of inclusivity. Mark Langlois, Director of Spiritual Care, says that the centre has become a refuge for LGBTQ+ individuals seeking spiritual solace. Langlois maintains

that "there is a spirituality of marginality to be lived," and the centre's retreats and programs embody this philosophy.

Likewise, All Inclusive Ministries at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish has committed itself to supporting LGBTQ+ Catholics and allies. John Jacob, a psychotherapist and member of the group, sees the Church's relationship with marginalized individuals as crucial: "The Church needs to be in a relationship with its congregation because without us, the Church ceases to exist."

The Ignatian Spirituality Centre provides a diverse range of programs for LGBTQ+ individuals, including silent retreats, group retreats, and spiritual accompaniment. All Inclusive Ministries hosts a monthly Mass, fosters community connections, and organizes retreats and various activities. Both groups are grounded in Ignatian principles such as deep listening and discernment, creating spaces where LGBTQ+ Catholics can explore their spirituality, connect with others, and strengthen their relationship with God. They ultimately promote a heightened understanding and unwavering support for the dignity of all individuals.





*Community celebrations bring a sense of belonging*

Journeying with marginalized individuals can lead to transformative experiences, not only for the individual but also for the Church. As Langlois observes, “the LGBTQ+ challenge has a colour of its own, but it’s a colour: The challenge is the same for all those who have been marginalized, and it takes on a different colour each time.” By fostering a spirit of inclusivity, the Church can become a true reflection of God’s diverse creation.

The Ignatian accompaniment model and its values can orient the Catholic Church in hope-filled ways as it strives to welcome marginalized communities, including LGBTQ+

individuals. Jesuit and Ignatian apostolates in Canada — with their emphasis on journeying alongside individuals, respecting their individuality, and providing tailored support—demonstrate that it is possible to create inclusive spaces where all individuals feel valued, supported and empowered.

Echoing this spirit of inclusion, Pope Francis has said, “Homosexual people have the right to be in a family. They are children of God.” As we look to the example set by Jesuit and Ignatian apostolates in Canada, we discover one model for how the Church worldwide can learn to embrace and welcome all individuals into the fold.

## **Statistics:**



*LGBTQ+ individuals often cite discrimination based on religious grounds as the primary reason for their mental health problems, according to a 2017 survey by the Trevor Project.*



*A 2017 survey by the Public Religion Research Institute found that approximately only 40% of Catholics believe that their church is accepting of LGBTQ+ individuals.*



**NICOLA DI NARZO, WRITER,  
FORMER DIOCESAN PRIEST**

Nicola struggled with accepting his homosexuality due to his conservative Catholic upbringing. He had low self-esteem and faced a breaking point in 2016 when he nearly took his life. "I was in a car ... I looked at the wall from a distance, and then I said to myself: 'End your life; it will be so much easier. You'll never be able to be yourself. You won't be loved. You'll be rejected. You'll live a life of hell.'" The Jesuits, particularly Fr. Jean-Guy Saint-Arnaud, helped him discover a personal God who communicates through imagination, conscience and everyday events. He recalled, "God comes to meet our deepest being ... What I understood in my heart was the Lord telling me: 'Nicolas, you don't allow yourself to be happy.' It upset me because I told myself deep down that I have the right to be happy."



**MARK LANGLOIS, DIRECTOR  
OF SPIRITUAL CARE AT THE  
IGNATIAN SPIRITUALITY CENTRE  
OF MONTREAL**

Mark, who left the Church due to his struggle with reconciling his gay identity with the Church's teaching, shares his journey back to Catholicism. "I left the Church because I couldn't reconcile who I was as a gay person with what I was hearing and seeing. It was scandalous to me. If I wanted to be part of the Church, I had to ignore who I was," he recalls. He found an extraordinary pastor who gently guided him

to return, and he eventually discovered warmth and welcome at the Villa Saint-Martin. Through Ignatian spirituality and spiritual accompaniment with a Jesuit, he experienced non-judgment, inner welcome, and support in his reality. He states, "Ignatian spirituality is a spirituality of welcome of journey, of pilgrimage. I felt that I did not have to conform. There was a freedom and a security that is truly Christocentric. I found the oasis again."



**JOHN JACOB,  
PSYCHOTHERAPIST, MEMBER OF  
ALL INCLUSIVE MINISTRIES**

In his early twenties, John faced a struggle reconciling his faith and sexual orientation as a queer man.

He felt he had to choose between embracing his desires or rejecting his faith. This internal conflict led him to a dark, lonely place, affecting his self-worth and connection to God. He feared disappointing himself, his family and God. However, Ignatian spiritual accompaniment helped him understand that he wasn't broken, and he learned to embrace all aspects of himself. John shares, "With spiritual accompaniment, I was able to reach a place where I loved all aspects of me ... and I began to explore and discern my gifts." As a queer person of color, he now strives to contribute to the wider community through his work, acknowledging the value of his unique experiences in a Western colonial context. Ignatian accompaniment played a vital role in helping him heal, integrate and grow.



*Retreats allow LGBTQ+ people to freely explore their identity.*



*Members from the LGBTQ+ spectrum gather with All Inclusive Ministries*



**GORDON DAVIES, DIRECTOR,  
ARTS & SCIENCE, LANGUAGES  
& TRANSLATION AT THE  
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO  
SCHOOL OF CONTINUING  
STUDIES**

Gordon has noticed a growing acceptance among other parishioners towards the LGBTQ+ community. "I'm an active parishioner of a Jesuit parish, Our Lady of Lourdes, which is in downtown Toronto, including the All Inclusive Ministry group for LGBTQ+ people. And I also sing in a choir ... Little by little, I think, the other parishioners are beginning to recognise that we are Catholics like everyone else, that we are not strange people." Davies himself has experienced a transformation in his prayer life since coming out and accepting himself. "People are changing, and I'm changing too. My prayer life is quite different now that I am openly gay in society ... But as I reflect on myself, I recognise that when I was in the closet, I was of course hiding from society, but without knowing, I was hiding from God. I have deepened my prayer life immeasurably since I accepted myself."



*A memorial mass for the 49 victims of the shooting at Pulse nightclub in Orlando, Florida, in 2016.*



# “WE HAVE A VOICE”:

## Celebrating Indigenous identities in the Church

by MegAnne Liebsch



*Bishop Thomas Dowd, Fr. Paul Robson and Odawa/Ojibway elder Rosella Kinoshameg during an altar blessing. Photo: Colleen Manitowabi*

### Growing up on Manitoulin

Island, Ontario, Rosella Kinoshameg didn't understand the Catholic Masses she attended each Sunday. This was pre-Vatican II, and the priest still faced away from the congregation, reciting the Mass in Latin. All readings and hymns were transcribed in English, not her native Ojibwe. Except for a few Ojibwe hymns that the congregation sang, little of her Jesuit-run parish reflected the culture and traditions of the Native people that it served.

Thanks in part to Kinoshameg's leadership, the Jesuit approach to Native ministry has shifted notably over the course of her life. Now, through organizations such as the Anishinabe Spiritual Centre and Kateri Native Ministry, Jesuits and Indigenous partners are re-envisioning methods for spiritual accompaniment that recognize Indigenous leaders and honour Native traditions.

“We have to appreciate Indigenous, wholesome values of culture and language,” says Kinoshameg. “When I think of my culture and our traditions, and then to bring the Church into it, it enhances my learning and my understanding and my spirituality.”

Quoting Fr. Paul Robson, SJ, Kinoshameg continues, “Our vision is of a thriving, fully active Anishinaabe Catholic Church with enculturation of the faith, for the culture and spirituality of the people to be valued, promoted, [and] integrated into faith and practice of the Church.”

Throughout much of the Church and Jesuits’ interactions with the First Nations of Ontario, the values of enculturation and integration were often neglected.

The Jesuits first arrived in Anishinaabe territories in the mid-17th century, and they have been providing religious guidance to the people of Manitoulin Island since 1844. During a significant portion of this history, the Jesuits’ approach, mirroring that of the wider Church, placed a strong emphasis on their own authority within parish administration and education. The input of the Indigenous community was seldom considered. Many Jesuit ministries working with Indigenous peoples adopted a colonial mindset that regarded Indigenous ways of life as inferior, aiming to replace them with Christian and Canadian values.

As a child, Kinoshameg was taught that her Indigenous identity must remain separate from her Catholic faith.



“What [the Centre] wanted to do was to encourage the Native people to rediscover their roots and to value their own culture and the beauties of some of their ceremonies and early traditions.”





*A newly confirmed youth receives a certificate from Tish Manitowabi and Ogimaa-Kwe Rachel Manitowabi. Photo: Paul Robson, SJ*



*Bishop Thomas Dowd receives a ribbon shirt from Jeanette George. Photo: Paul Robson, SJ*

At eight years old, she was sent to a residential school, run by an order of nuns but affiliated with the Jesuits who ran the nearby St. Peter Claver School for Boys. There she received her primary education, but she was forbidden from participating in any traditional Anishinaabe practices. Corporal punishment was common.

Nearly all of Kinoshameg's siblings attended Catholic residential schools, and the experience profoundly shaped them. Some internalized a shame of their Indigenous heritage. One sister denied she was Anishinaabe, asking their parents to only visit her under the cover of darkness, so that her neighbours wouldn't see that her parents were Native.

Today, the Jesuits of Canada are committed to repairing the relationships broken by residential schools and paternalistic ministries. Starting with Vatican II, some Jesuits became interested in empowering Native leadership in the Church, and with the help of elders, began integrating Indigenous languages, customs and spirituality into Catholic rites.

"That's when [the Jesuits] started shifting to a sense of partnership in Indigenous ministry," says Fr. Peter Bisson, SJ, who formerly served as provincial of English Canada. Jesuits also began working closely with Native leaders advocating on various social and environmental justice issues.

It was around this time, in the early 1980s, that Kinoshameg began volunteering with the Anishinabe Spiritual Centre, based in Espanola, Ontario. The Centre offers directed retreats and spiritual formation programs



— many of which are designed specifically for First Nations. In Anishinaabemowin, the Centre is named *Wassean-Dimi-Kaning* — The Place of Enlightening. Its flagship program, the Anishinabe Leadership Formation Program for Deacons and Diocesan Order Service, grounds Native leaders in Indigenous practices while training them for the diaconate or diocesan order (for women).

“This was to encourage First Nations to become leaders in their faith communities, which I thought was really, really good,” Kinoshameg says. “What [the Centre] wanted to do was to encourage the Native people to rediscover their roots and to value their own culture and the beauties of some of their ceremonies and early traditions.”

The trauma of residential schools had separated many First Nations people from their traditional cultures. Few ceremonial practices were passed to younger generations, so Kinoshameg developed a 10-month course pairing Indigenous spiritual instruction with formation in Catholic and Ignatian spirituality. She taught how to perform different ceremonies, such as tobacco offering, and invited other elders to teach topics with which she wasn’t familiar.

This transformation in ministry approach didn’t happen overnight. When reports of abuse at St. Peter Claver residential school began to surface in the 1990s, it forced the Jesuits to “review the stories that we told about ourselves and become aware of our participation in the colonial project,” says Fr. Bisson.

Fr. Bisson led the Jesuits of English Canada during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and participated in many listening sessions with survivors of residential school systems. The TRC spurred another inflection point in the Jesuit understanding of shared ministry with Native peoples. Through painful and frank conversations, Fr. Bisson came to see that it wasn’t just Indigenous communities that needed accompaniment — it was the Jesuits.

“That was transformative, and a sense of partnership at an experiential level started to emerge,” explains Fr. Bisson.

From those conversations grew a province-wide effort to center right relationship with Indigenous communities across all sectors — education, social justice initiatives, parish ministry, etc. Now Fr. Bisson represents the province as the assistant for Justice, Ecology, & Indigenous



*Indigenous and non-Indigenous persons journey at Anishinabe Spiritual Centre*

“ I think the Jesuits look to me, and they’ve asked me for my opinion, but the Church also has to let Indigenous people make our own decisions. We have a voice.”



*Odawa/Ojibway elder Rosella Kinoshameg performs a purification ritual on the feast of St. Ignatius*

Relations, working to decolonize Jesuit ministry.

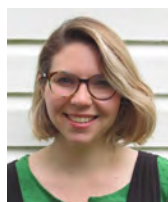
With the discovery of 215 unmarked graves at the former site of Kamloops Residential School in 2021, the wounds uncovered during the TRC remain fresh. Kinoshameg says some of her friends and community members on Manitoulin Island have considered leaving the Church.

"There is still a lot of hurt," says Kinoshameg. "There's a lot of anger, there's a lot of blame, there's a lot of intergenerational trauma, and there's a lot of work to be done."

It is in this work that Kinoshameg and Fr. Bisson see progress. Unlike her childhood, Kinoshameg now sees her culture reflected in Mass. One Jesuit she knows is learning Ojibwe and is hoping to translate the Bible into Ojibwe.

More importantly, though, there is now honest dialogue between Jesuits and Native leaders. "That's a sign of friendship," says Fr. Bisson.

"I think that's a great honor, to be called a friend," Kinoshameg adds. "I think the Jesuits look to me, and they've asked me for my opinion, but the Church also has to let Indigenous people make our own decisions. We have a voice."



**MegAnne Liebsch** is the communications manager for the Office of Justice and Ecology of the Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States. She develops stories, videos, podcasts and other resources that promote deeper engagement with issues of social and environmental injustice. Liebsch holds an MA in Media and International Conflict from University College Dublin and a BA from La Salle University. She is based in Washington, D.C.

# RAISING HOPE

## from under the rubble

by Canadian Jesuits International; photos: Compagnie de Jésus – Territoire d'Haïti



The Jesuits in Haiti are accompanying vulnerable families affected by the August 2021 earthquake with the construction of housing in the south of Haiti. Below is an interim report on the work accomplished so far. Canadian Jesuits International (CJI) is supporting this work, thanks to the generosity of Canadians.

Despite the sociopolitical unrest and continuing security crisis in Haiti, the reconstruction efforts by the Jesuits and marginalized communities in the south of the country following the August 14, 2021, earthquake are making considerable progress.

Six months after the project was launched in February 2022, 20 of the most vulnerable families were rehoused with dignity in new homes in Sucrerie Henri and Ducis in the Sud department, according to an interim report sent to CJI, which supports the project.

Another 20 homes will be ready for families to move into this fall, which brings the total to 40 of the 60 new houses planned for the area.

In the Grand'Anse department, also in the affected area, 20 houses are under construction, and preparations are underway for 20 more, for a total of 40 of the 60 houses planned for this area. The poor state of the roads, communication challenges and political unrest have delayed the construction in Grand'Anse.



*Families accompanied by the Jesuits in Haiti*



To ensure the project's completion in 2023, new strategies have been implemented. The technical coordinator (engineer) will have a greater presence in the field to better animate the teams of forepersons and masons and to respond more easily to their needs.

About 800,000 people were affected by the 7.2 magnitude earthquake, which also left more than 2,200 dead and over 12,000 injured, according to UNICEF.

**USD\$1,675,935**  
Total Project Cost

**USD\$119,000**  
Local Contribution

**USD\$1,556,935**  
Contribution from  
International  
Partners

**Beneficiary Contribution**

*Labour, project support,  
and land for construction  
provided by members of  
120 families*

**CAD\$150 000+**  
Contribution from  
Canadian Jesuits  
International



**USD\$507,335**  
Expenses so far

**Beneficiaries**



**120 families  
(856 people)**



**604 women and girls  
252 men and boys**



*A house under construction in  
the Department of Grand'Anse.*



*The most vulnerable families in the Departments of the South and Grand'Anse will be rehoused in new homes equipped with anti-seismic and anti-cyclonic features.*



Shortly after, Tropical Depression Grace unleashed torrential rain on the earthquake-damaged communities, further cutting off access to water, sanitation and shelter.

“This project is an opportunity to transform a tragedy into an opportunity for human and socio-economic development for the most vulnerable,” said the late Fr. Kawas François, SJ, director of the Jesuit Commission for Intervention in the Greater South of Haiti.

## DISASTER AND RISK MANAGEMENT

The second major component of the project — training and awareness raising — has also been set in motion. A total of 240 men and women from the beneficiary families

participated in a two-day training workshop on risk and disaster management.

Families learned how to protect themselves in the event of earthquakes, hurricanes and other disasters. They learned about water management and other ecology and reforestation practices. They also had access to psychosocial, economic and spiritual support.

“Unfortunately, the sociopolitical unrest has somewhat disrupted the pace of these workshops. We are making appropriate arrangements so that all the selected families can benefit from this activity,” said Fr. François.

Beneficiary families and their relatives, many of whom have been

abandoned by the government, have given the project a warm welcome. They have been enthusiastic in their support for mobilizing communities to address topics that include protection against natural disasters, the urgency of addressing environmental challenges, and dealing with individual and collective psychosocial consequences of disasters.

“These communities publicly express their gratitude to the Jesuits and their international donors for their solidarity and support,” said Fr. François.

## **To support Haiti:**

<https://bit.ly/CJI-Haiti>

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?**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Received by mail  | <input type="checkbox"/> Retreat centre    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parish or church  | <input type="checkbox"/> Website           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Given by a friend | <input type="checkbox"/> Given by a Jesuit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____      |  |

**How many issues of *Canadian Jesuits* have you read?**

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4

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

- |                                     |                                     |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> All of it  | <input type="checkbox"/> Most of it |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Some of it | <input type="checkbox"/> None of it |

**You prefer to read *Canadian Jesuits*...**

☐ In print ☐ Online ☐ Both

**Favourite section of the magazine:**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Our Works             | <input type="checkbox"/> Canadian Jesuit    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> International Jesuit  | <input type="checkbox"/> International Work |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Canadian News         | <input type="checkbox"/> International News |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ignatian Spirituality | <input type="checkbox"/> Meditation         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resources             |   |

**Any topics you wish the magazine would cover?**

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

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Agree | <input type="checkbox"/> Agree             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree       | <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree |

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

- ☐ Attended an event (retreat, etc.)
- ☐ Made a donation
- ☐ Contacted a Jesuit
- ☐ Contacted someone who works with the Jesuits
- ☐ Recommended the Jesuits
- ☐ Forwarded all or part of the magazine
- ☐ Saved all or part of the magazine
- ☐ Visited the Jesuits' website
- ☐ Taken no action
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**What is your relationship to the Jesuits?**

- |                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jesuit       | <input type="checkbox"/> Lay colleague of the Jesuits |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friend       | <input type="checkbox"/> Donor                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |   |

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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







*First vows of Raj Vijayakumar, SJ*



*Cardinal Michael Czerny, SJ, advocates for the needs of all*



*Members and collaborators of the Centre Justice et foi gathered to celebrate*

## FIRST VOWS

Raj Vijayakumar, SJ, pronounced first vows of poverty, chastity and obedience in the Society of Jesus on February 10, 2023, at St. Joseph's Chapel at Regis College in Toronto. Fr. Erik Oland, SJ, provincial of the Jesuits of Canada, received his vows.

Vijayakumar earned a bachelor's degree in psychology from York University (Toronto) and an MA in theological studies from Regis College. He enjoys writing about film and watching them as a form of spiritual exercise. He also enjoys working out.

He is currently a student in the Master of Divinity program at Regis College and hopes to go on to study the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius.

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## CARDINAL MICHAEL CZERNY, SJ: THE CHURCH MUST RESPOND TO A REGION'S NEEDS

Cardinal Michael Czerny, SJ, prefect of the Vatican's Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, travels the world to deliver the Vatican's message on human rights issues. This spring while visiting Fiji, he explained that there has been a shift in how the Roman Curia under Pope Francis responds to global concerns, such as climate change and migration.

"There is no geopolitical centre of the Church," Cardinal Czerny stressed. "The priority issues are set by what's happening in the Church, by what's happening in the different regions. The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of God's people, wherever they are, these are the priorities."

In Oceania, he noted some of the region's current concerns, including unsustainable exploitation of ocean resources, human trafficking and migration. He also traveled to the United States later in the spring, visiting Gonzaga University — his alma mater — where he spoke on climate change.

## ORDINATIONS

On Saturday, May 13, 2023, Matthew Hendzel, SJ, was ordained to the diaconate by the Most Rev. Ivan Camilleri, Auxiliary Bishop of Toronto, at the Jesuit parish of Our Lady of Lourdes in Toronto. He is currently studying theology. On the same day, Brook Stacey, SJ, and Mareus Toussélat SJ, were ordained to the diaconate at Église Saint-Ignace in Paris.

Erik Sorensen, SJ, will be ordained to the priesthood by Cardinal Michael Czerny, SJ, at Notre-Dame-de-Bon-Secours Chapel in Montreal on Friday, August 4, 2023. He is currently completing his theological studies degree at the Catholic University of Louvain in Belgium.

On Saturday, August 5, 2023, Robenson Siquitte, SJ, will be ordained a priest and Ketler Lysius, SJ, will be ordained a deacon in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Siquitte is currently studying at the Boston College School of Theology and Ministry, and Lysius is working in a parish in Port-au-Prince.

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## CENTRE JUSTICE ET FOI CELEBRATES 40 YEARS

Centre justice et foi (CJF) is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year. Through its discernment of the signs of the times and its commitment to justice (with others, for others), the CJF is an example of how Jesuits and their colleagues are changing society and creating a more humane world. This is consistent with Decree 4 — "Service of Faith and the Promotion of Justice" — of the 32nd General Congregation of the Society of Jesus, of which CJF is a product.

For several years now, through its project on the future of social Christianity, the CJF has also been working with two groups engaged in an intergenerational dialogue: first, committed Christians from older generations who are questioning the transmission of their spiritual and civic heritage; and second, the identity quests of young, socially committed Christians, often spiritually orphaned, who are finding too few spaces that offer an experience of the intersection between faith and commitment to justice.

# THE WELLSPRING WITHIN

by Lynn Barwell



*Created with Midjourney*



**Surprising but true, some of my most** nourishing conversations have taken place while filling my water bottle at the fountain of my local gym. There is something about people exercising together that fosters exchanges which tend to be mutually encouraging and enriching. These conversations usually go far beyond the desire to improve our physical bodies; they are often about how we are seeking to grow and lead more fulfilling lives in general. You would be surprised by how many spiritual conversations abound in the gym — not to mention others I have experienced at the water cooler in a variety of workplaces and parks as well. I have developed several friendships initiated at the water cooler.

Whether it is gathering at the water fountain, praying for rain to fall on parched land, or enjoying a swim on a hot, sunny day, water calls people together at the level of our most basic human needs. When Jesus took a noonday break by a well in Samaria, it was inevitable that someone would come by to draw water. He also knew that anyone braving the blazing sun to draw water at such an inopportune time of day was probably a good candidate to engage in spiritual conversation. When a Samaritan woman shows up at the well, she enters a most unexpected and unconventional dialogue with a Jewish man, a stranger with whom she was culturally discouraged from associating. Little did she know that this chance encounter with Jesus will turn her life around.

When Jesus offers God's living water to the Samaritan woman, she immediately knows in her heart that a dry and parched thirst is being quenched. As Jesus recounts her story, she senses that this man, whom she later comes to know as the Messiah, sees her not in relation to her present life circumstances and past relationships; his vision awakens the vital life



*"Christ and the Samaritan Woman" by Henryk Siemiradzki*

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*Do we not sometimes feel like stagnant, bottled water, trapped by past circumstances and inner voices that seem to diminish our potential for the future?*

force within her. If the human body is made up of about 60% water, we could say that Jesus has enabled this woman to access the wellspring within from which she can draw her deepest, loving God-given identity. Her response? To return to town and tell people. Through this remarkable spiritual experience, the woman becomes a source for others to taste the same living water.

Do we not sometimes feel like stagnant, bottled water, trapped by past circumstances and inner voices that seem to diminish our potential for the future? Perhaps this is how the Samaritan woman felt before she met Jesus in her daily humdrum existence and then sensed a release through her being seen and valued by him, perhaps for the first time in her life. How can we cultivate a culture of transformative encounters in our own lives?

# SPIRITUALITY



*Drawing from Jesus as a model, a spiritual companion is someone who listens and responds with reverence to help others uncover glimpses of the extraordinary at work in the ordinary fabric of their lives.*

One possibility is to seek spiritual accompaniment. Drawing from Jesus as a model, a spiritual companion is someone who listens and responds with reverence to help others uncover glimpses of the extraordinary at work in the ordinary fabric of their lives. If spiritual accompaniment is not an option, we can also strive to turn every encounter into an opportunity to go beyond our personal biases and preconceived ideas in order to engage in genuine conversations with others. And, while we may not meet Jesus at the well, we can imagine ourselves as the Samaritan woman, attuning our ears to an inner voice that speaks as lovingly as Jesus would, enabling us to draw from the deeper truth within us. May every sip of water remind us how we have been created with the innate and infinite capacity to live loving, joyous and meaningful lives.



Photo: Lawrence Jing, Unsplash



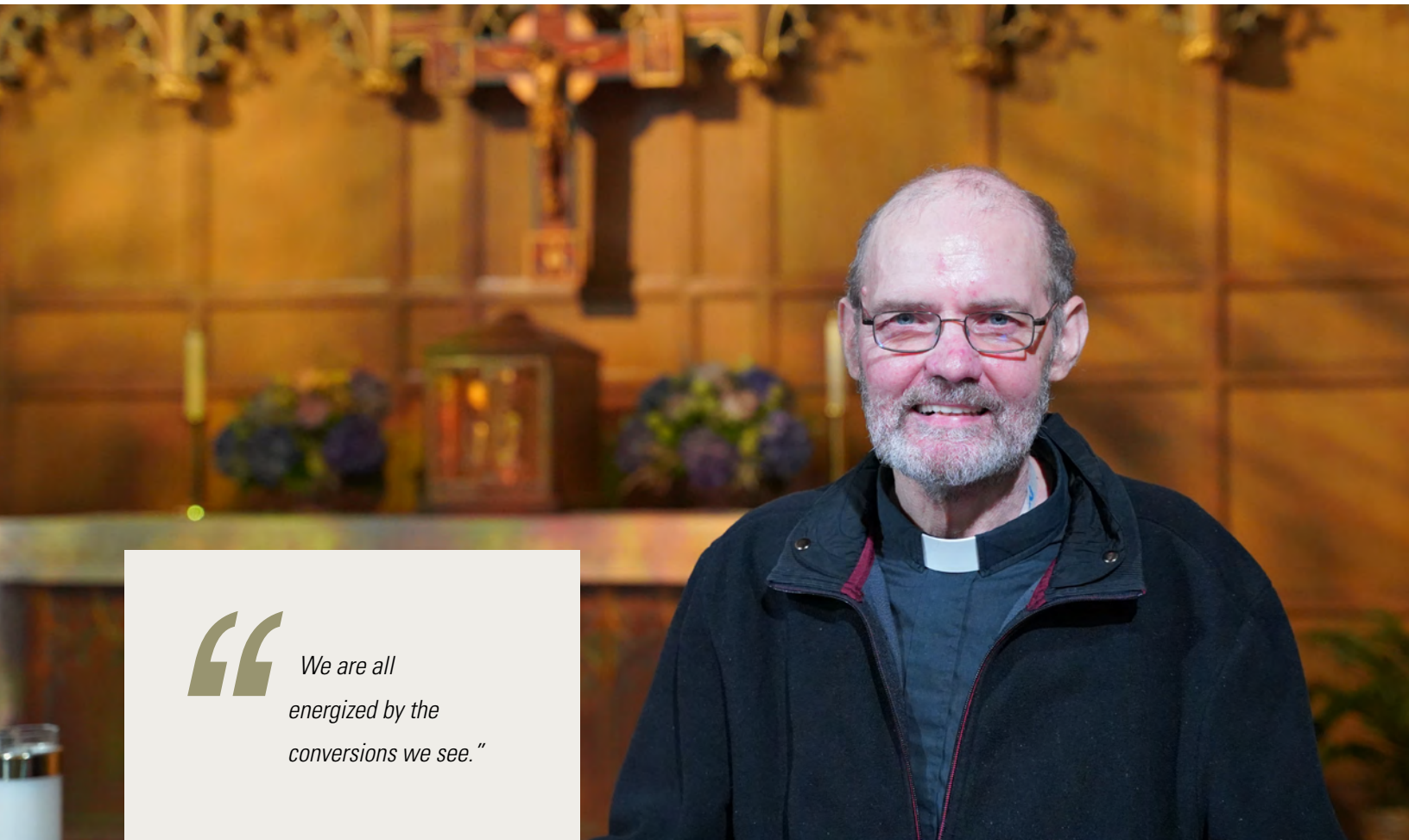
A life coach and spiritual director, **Lynn Barwell** is director of formation at the Ignatian Spirituality Centre of Montreal. A lifelong learner, her passion is to serve others by creating transformative learning environments where self-discovery can lead to cultivating more joy, harmony, and meaning in life. Visit [ignatiancentremtl.org](http://ignatiancentremtl.org) to learn more about the Ignatian Spiritual Centre of Montreal.



# A JESUIT'S JOURNEY

from parenthood to priesthood

by Becky Sindelar



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*We are all  
energized by the  
conversions we see.”*

**Fr. Henk Van Meijel, SJ, has a unique vocation story: He's a father who raised his three children** before he became a Jesuit "Father" later in life. In this interview, he shares his unique journey to the Jesuit priesthood and the powerful conversions he's witnessed through Ignatian spiritual accompaniment. Fr. Henk highlights how Jesuit spirituality encourages us to live in the present moment and walk alongside one another on our diverse spiritual paths.

# PORTRAIT OF A CANADIAN JESUIT



*Fr. Van Meijel celebrates his final vows.*



*Fr. Arturo Sosa, Superior General of the Jesuits, meets with Fr. Van Meijel.*



*Our task is to make people more aware in order to live in the present moment, in the now. And Ignatian spirituality is very effective in this regard.*

## **YOU JOINED THE JESUITS LATER IN LIFE. CAN YOU SHARE A BIT ABOUT YOUR JOURNEY?**

I was a mechanic, I owned a repair business, and I raised three children. I was always active in the Church, and as my kids grew up, I became more active. I got involved in Church ministry, and slowly the business became less important. A friend of mine, and a good customer, said to me at one point, “It can’t go on like this.” What he meant was not that I wasn’t doing my work, but that I had lost interest in the business. Money meant nothing to me anymore.

So, changes were happening. And as I was praying the rosary one day, I heard a voice that told me to go look up the Jesuits. So, I went to my computer and did just that. A few weeks later, I talked to the associate pastor in our parish, and he said, “To be quite honest, Henk, you sound like a Jesuit.” I didn’t know what that meant, but things fell into place from that point on.

## **CAN YOU SHARE SOME OF THE GRACES YOU RECEIVE FROM YOUR MINISTRY?**

It’s the really deep conversions. Meeting people where they are and working with that. Once, a child who had died in a fire 15 years earlier appeared to his mother on a weekend retreat. She had been making her living on the streets of Toronto while her house burned down with her child inside. After all these years, the child came to console his mother.

One woman who was struggling with alcohol addiction came to make a weekend retreat, and something happened — something she couldn’t explain. Her desire for drinking simply vanished. And now she does a lot of work for the Church.

These are the things that keep me going. It’s not the finances or the meetings. It’s the same for the staff here. We are all energized by the conversions we see.



## WHAT DOES YOUR ROLE AS DIRECTOR AT MANRESA ENTAIL, AND WHICH PARTS ENERGIZE YOU THE MOST?

To put it simply: Whatever goes wrong is my fault! In many ways, I'm really an administrator these days. Besides being director of Manresa, I'm also currently the acting executive director of Rene Goupil House, our Jesuit infirmary. Plus, I'm the acting local superior of the Jesuit community. There's a fair bit of business to attend to: bills have to be paid, and people have to get hired. But if that were the extent of my work, I would have run away screaming long ago. I handle a lot of money, but that doesn't interest me. What gives me energy are the little and big conversions I witness here.

Although Manresa specializes in preached retreats, we also offer other types, such as 12-step retreats, mainly Alcoholics Anonymous and Al-Anon retreats. People have an opportunity to meet with a spiritual director and share their struggles. Every weekend things happen, and it's always amazing to learn about these experiences — sometimes big, big conversions, but usually small conversions. And I'm a witness to that.



*Ignatian spirituality is about meeting people where they are and allowing the Spirit to work.*

## WHAT ARE SOME OF THE GRACES OF IGNATIAN SPIRITUAL ACCOMPANIMENT?

First of all, discernment. People bring with them what they need to discern — it could be how to respond to a difficult marriage, it could be a career



*Fr. Van Meijel and his team work together to accompany people from all backgrounds.*

change or problems with in-laws, and usually what's most helpful to them is the experience of Ignatian discernment and being accompanied. This includes listening and clarifying and maybe making some suggestions or asking questions, but it all basically comes down to the Examen (a five-step prayer of reflection described by St. Ignatius). It's about living today, not getting stuck in what happened yesterday or in what might happen in the future.

Our task is to make people more aware in order to live in the present moment, in the now. And Ignatian spirituality is very effective in this regard.

## WHO ATTENDS RETREATS AT MANRESA?

Anyone can. There are Muslims, Hindus and people from all faith traditions who come to Manresa. People from different Protestant denominations come as well. All are welcome. Ignatian spirituality is universal.

On Sunday mornings, we have a sharing circle. People from the Islamic tradition have said, "Wow, it all spoke to me!" It relates to how much we have in common with one another.

# PORTRAIT OF A CANADIAN JESUIT

**ONE OF THE UNIVERSAL APOSTOLIC PREFERENCES OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS IS JOURNEYING WITH YOUTH. IS IT HARD TO GET YOUNG PEOPLE TO COME ON RETREATS? ARE THERE SOME RETREAT PROGRAMS THAT THEY SEEM TO RESPOND TO BETTER THAN OTHERS?**

It is a challenging group. Once a year we have a weekend retreat for young professionals that is led by Fr. John O'Brien, SJ. We also have a fair number of high school groups who come during the week.

People often start to come more frequently as they approach midlife, when they have a midlife crisis so to speak, but young adults also come, even some in their early 20s. There is a great hunger.

At midlife, questions come up: *Is this all there is to life? I've been working. I've made money. And now what?* That's usually when people who are in their 40s and early 50s start to come to retreats. And they continue to come. We even welcome people who are 90!

Ignatian spirituality is about meeting people where they are and allowing the Spirit to work.

**2022:** *Acting superior of the Jesuit community in Pickering*

**2020:** *Acting executive director of Rene Goupil House (Jesuit infirmary)*

**2018:** *Director of Manresa Jesuit Spiritual Renewal Centre, Pickering*

**2017:** *Master of Theological Studies at Catholic Theological College, Melbourne, Australia*

**2015:** *Part-time pastoral work at Immaculate Conception Church, Hawthorn, Melbourne, Australia*

**2012 – 2015:** *Pastoral ministry among the Anishinabek, First Nations in Ontario; Pastor at Wikwemikong*

**2012:** *Master of Divinity and Bachelor of Sacred Theology at Regis College, Toronto*

**1980 – 2006:** *Proprietor of Henk's Lawn and Garden Equipment, a landscape and construction equipment repair business*



**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.

# EMOTIONS,

a practical map for your inner journey

by José Sánchez



Created with Midjourney

**In a world that values** productivity, achievement and external success, it can be easy to lose touch with our inner selves. We may become so focused on achieving our goals that we forget to check in with ourselves, to listen to our inner movements and to be present with our emotions. However, the Jesuits remind us that analyzing a situation is not the be-all and end-all of a situation. What is more important is recognizing evidence of the presence of God, beyond us, bigger than us and infinite.

In the Spiritual Exercises, St. Ignatius emphasizes the importance of recognizing what is stirring inside us. It can be new ideas, gut feelings or something else entirely. Whatever it may be, when those



thoughts stir something inside, we are to sit up and take notice. Ignatius invites us to name that feeling, to admit it for better or worse, and to have a conversation with God about it. Are they invitations or temptations? Are they of God or not of God? By doing so, we are able to gain insight into our own inner workings and identify how we are letting situations affect us.

For many of us, being analytical is second nature. We like to analyze situations, control or resolve them, and move on to the next challenge. However, it is important to remember that our emotions are an integral part of who we are. By acknowledging and naming our feelings, we are able to move beyond analysis and control and start identifying patterns in our emotions. We begin to see how our emotions affect our actions and how we can respond more authentically to the situations in which we find ourselves.

A cheat sheet of feeling words can be a helpful tool in recognizing and naming our emotions. You can find one here: [feelingswheel.com](https://feelingswheel.com). By keeping a list of feeling words in the back of our journal, we can use it during the Examen as a cheat sheet of sorts. Sometimes the right feeling word will jump out at us, stirring memories of where we felt it during the day. Other times, we may notice patterns in our emotions, recognizing that we have been feeling insignificant more often than we would like.

Identifying patterns in our emotions can become the launching point for our prayer. We can imagine our feelings as a big blob of something that we can look at and sit with. We can listen to what infinite love says about it, without feeling like we have to stamp it out, avoid it, embrace it or react to it. By simply naming our feelings and noticing them, we can

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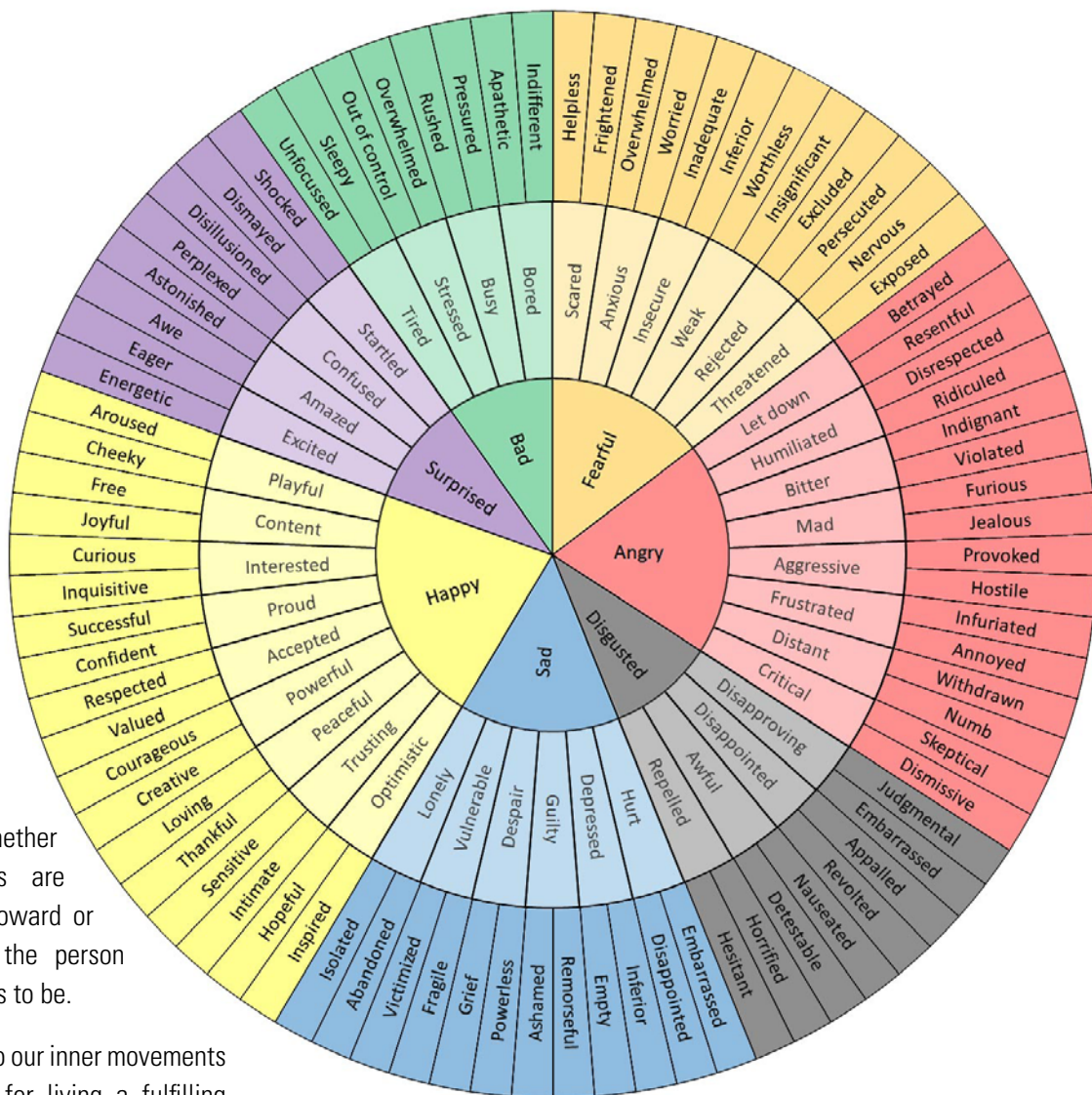
*Ignatius invites us to name that feeling, to admit it for better or worse, and to have a conversation with God about it.*



*Created with Midjourney*

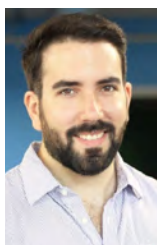


*Identifying patterns in our emotions can become the launching point for our prayer.*



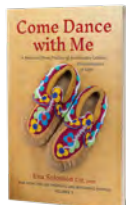
discern whether our feelings are moving us toward or away from the person God needs us to be.

Listening to our inner movements is essential for living a fulfilling life. It helps us stay grounded in the present moment, gain insight into our emotions and identify patterns in our lives. By accompanying ourselves on our inner journey, we can develop a deeper relationship with God and move toward the person we are called to be.



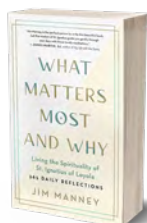
**José Sánchez** is the Director of Communications for the Jesuits of Canada. Of Venezuelan origin and with a decade of experience in communications, journalism and new business ventures, he is now completing a master's degree in theological studies at Regis College, University of Toronto.

# PUBLICATIONS



### **“COME DANCE WITH ME” BY DR. EVA SOLOMON**

In this book, which explores the interculturalization of Anishinaabe Roman Catholic faith, Sr. Solomon offers readers an invitation to a profound transformative journey of reconciliation and healing rooted in Anishinaabe spiritual tradition and worldview.



### **“WHAT MATTERS MOST AND WHY: LIVING THE SPIRITUALITY OF ST. IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA” BY JIM MANNEY**

The richness and practical nature of Ignatian spirituality ground this book’s 365 daily reflections which focus on responding to pressing questions about satisfaction in work and relationships. It guides us through the great challenge of life — finding God and finding our place in God’s world.



### **“SEEING WITH THE HEART: A GUIDE TO NAVIGATING LIFE’S ADVENTURES” BY KEVIN O’BRIEN, SJ**

Fr. O’Brien invites us to recognize the opportunities to uncover meaning and purpose as we navigate life. The book weaves together the author’s personal experiences, the 16th-century wisdom of St. Ignatius, and the insights of sages, poets, artists, and storytellers through the ages.

# ONLINE RESOURCES

## **A GUIDE TO MAKING GOOD DECISIONS**

In this downloadable guide, “What Should I Do? Making Good Decisions, Individually and in Groups,” Sr. Laurence Loubières shares time-tested steps from Ignatian spirituality for making good choices.

Download the guide at <http://ow.ly/Lu0P50N7FkA>

## **CLIMATE CRISIS: FINDING HOPE THROUGH A TRINITARIAN VIEW OF CREATION**

In this presentation by Fr. John McCarthy, SJ, we learn about contemplative ecology and how our faith can inform our relationship with the natural world.

Watch the video at: [youtube.com/watch?v=C2BdA36EG80](https://youtube.com/watch?v=C2BdA36EG80).





# EVENTS

## CAMP EKON SUMMER CAMP ROSSEAU, ONTARIO

Camp Ekon's summer camp registration is open for youth ages 8-16 for the July and August 2023 camps. Campers create lifelong friendships, learn respect for the natural environment and gain an appreciation for others. Through activities led by staff in the Jesuit tradition, participants will grow in mind, body and spirit.

Visit [www.ekon.ca](http://www.ekon.ca) for more information and to register.

## MARTYRS' SHRINE PILGRIMAGES MIDLAND, ONTARIO

Martyrs' Shrine, a national holy and historic space that honours the lives of the Canadian martyrs, has a range of one-day pilgrimages — including family, walking and biking pilgrimages — scheduled from July through October 2023.

Visit [martyrs-shrine.com/events](http://martyrs-shrine.com/events) to view the full calendar of events and register.



## ATTEND A RETREAT

Many of our Jesuit retreat houses are offering both online and in-person retreats. To find the latest opportunities, visit:

[jesuits.ca/events](http://jesuits.ca/events)

## Stay Connected with the Jesuits of Canada for More Resources

For more Ignatian resources, events and publications, follow us on our social media channels and subscribe to our weekly e-newsletter, *In All Things*.



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From “no” to “yes”:

# THE STORY OF RAJ VIJAYAKUMAR

by Rachel Moccia

## **A symphony of voices and footsteps**

echoed in the hallowed halls of the Martyrs’ Shrine, as over 12,000 souls with diverse beliefs journeyed together in pilgrimage. Among them, a young Tamil Canadian, Raj Vijayakumar, would find himself ensnared in a divine dance of accompaniment that would ultimately lead him to the Jesuits. Today, as a spiritual director, Raj walks with others along their own unique paths, opening their hearts to the profound and transformative presence of God in their lives.

## **TELL ME HOW YOU FIRST ENCOUNTERED THE JESUITS.**

I’m Tamil, from Sri Lanka, and Tamil Canadians have an annual pilgrimage that they take to the Martyrs’ Shrine. It’s the biggest pilgrimage that happens there with over 12,000 people from a variety of backgrounds — Hindus, Buddhists, Christians — going up to the Martyrs’ Shrine on a single day. So, my family would go to the Martyrs’ Shrine once a year, and it was through that experience that I first came into contact with the Jesuits.


## **HOW DID YOU DISCERN YOUR VOCATION?**

My story is very funny when I look back on it. There was a lot of back and forth in my discernment. I had considered entering the



*Raj Vijayakumar, SJ during his first vows ceremony at Regis College*





Jesuits for a while and ended up entering the Jesuits for the first time in 2013. Then in about 2018, toward the end of my regency, I left. There's something about religious life, and all vocations, that invites you to a bit of "death to self." I was coming face-to-face with that reality and in the moment, I just said no.

I feel like my vocation story is a bit like Jonah's — God is inviting Jonah to go somewhere, and Jonah just wants to go in the opposite direction. At the same time, there was something deep in my heart, telling me that God is calling me to this vocation.

### HOW DID YOU END UP DISCERNING YOUR WAY BACK TO THE JESUITS?

After I left, I did a few different things, but the year I spent working at L'Arche was really my conversion moment. I was working closely with a man who faced a lot of challenges — he had cerebral palsy, he couldn't speak, and he would have seizures. I became good friends with him, and as I walked alongside him, I realized that although he was going through so many difficulties, his life was very healing for everyone around him. He was fruitful in a very deep, spiritual way. And that changed how I understood God's work in the world.

### HOW DID THAT ENCOUNTER CHANGE YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF GOD?

When I left the Jesuits, I had thought that God could never expect that path of me because it was just too difficult. But after accompanying this man, I realized that God's desires are much bigger than what I think or even understand. I realized that faith means putting myself into His hands, not knowing what's going to happen, and that the suffering I'm going to encounter may surpass my understanding. But at the same time, there's a sense that I'm doing what God wants. Despite the fact that there are challenges around me, there's a sense that God is really there, working with me and through me. That's what led me back to the Society.

*The prophet Jonah before the walls of Nineveh (circa 1655) drawing by Rembrandt*



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*There's something about religious life, and all vocations, that invites you to a bit of "death to self." I was coming face-to-face with that reality and in the moment, I just said no.*



*Raj collaborated with the team at the Ignatian Spirituality Centre of Montreal*

## **YOUR EXPERIENCE OF ACCOMPANIMENT AT L'ARCHE HAD A HUGE IMPACT ON YOUR JOURNEY! MORE RECENTLY, YOU'VE BEEN ACCOMPANYING PEOPLE THROUGH SPIRITUAL DIRECTION. TELL ME ABOUT THAT.**

I learned the ins and outs of spiritual direction from Fr. Kevin Kelly, SJ, at Villa Saint-Martin. He really helped me grow into the vocation of spiritual direction. To be honest, I'm a terrible listener because I'm always in my head, analyzing things and breaking them down. And listening is about 90% of the job of a spiritual director! At the Villa, I not only learned skills and tools for spiritual direction, but I also grew as a person. I learned how to really listen to another person and not make assumptions. It was a huge personal and spiritual development for me.

## **WHAT DO YOU THINK THE VALUE OF SPIRITUAL DIRECTION IS IN OUR CURRENT MOMENT?**

I think spiritual direction is the most effective way to help someone because it involves both human and divine elements. If the director is doing their job, they're helping the directee to open themselves up to God, and they're allowing God to be the active agent.

The other special thing about spiritual direction is that it's an encounter that's unlike any other in our daily lives. It's a relationship that you enter simply as two humans at the same level, without assumptions, and as the director, you have to allow the directee to build who they are right in front of you. As the director, I'm not there to teach you something or make you do something. I'm here with you as another human being, connecting with you. Spiritual direction is about being willing to listen to the other person, to be changed by them, their story, and how they think about the world.

## **YOU TALK ABOUT ALLOWING YOURSELF TO BE CHANGED BY YOUR DIRECTEES. CAN YOU SHARE ABOUT AN EXPERIENCE THAT HAD AN IMPACT ON YOU?**

When I was working at a prison, I met an inmate who was so kind; he was always helping the other inmates and taking care of them. As I got to know him, I learned that he was in prison for murder. He shared that at a certain point he had decided that he wasn't going to hurt people anymore and he was going to start doing good. His witness was incredible. Here is someone who has done probably one of the worst things you can imagine, and you see that God is not holding that over him. God is deeply in relationship with him and working through him.

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*I think spiritual direction is the most effective way to help someone because it involves both human and divine elements.*

#### HOW DO YOU CULTIVATE THE KIND OF OPENNESS THAT ALLOWS FOR THESE TRANSFORMATIVE ENCOUNTERS?

There's an obvious answer for me and it's simply praying for the grace to be humble. In addition to praying for humility I try to practice it by resisting the temptation to enter into power games with people, even if they're trying to play power games with me. That involves not only a willingness to not play into those games but also an acceptance that I might get hurt; but I know that if I enter into these games, I lose myself and I lose that openness to genuine encounter.



**Rachel Moccia** is the director of the Office of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation for the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul USA. She holds a Master of Divinity and is passionate about supporting faith communities in their work for justice.

**2013:** Entry into the novitiate

**2015:** First perpetual vows

**2017:** Master of Theological Studies at Regis College

**2017 – 2018:** Teacher at St. Bonaventure's College, Newfoundland

**2018:** Left the Society

**2019:** L'Arche Canada

**January 2020:** Genesee Abbey – Trappist intern

**Sept 2020:** Villa Saint Martin, Retreat Leadership Team

**January 2022:** Entry into the novitiate (second time)

**February 2023:** First perpetual vows and now studying at Regis College for the Master of Divinity



# CHRIST, COMPASSION AND ACCOMPANIMENT

by Fannie Dionne



*Norbert Piché leading the activity "A journey into exile," in support of refugees*

**The call to religious life is not the only vocation to which one can aspire.** For Norbert Piché, director of the Jesuit Refugee Service - Canada (JRS), his vocation is to accompany, and be accompanied by, persons who are refugees. His story is one of great trust in God and of working to defend and accompany people who have been marginalized, as Jesus taught.



## HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT THE JESUITS?

I used to be a teacher in Manitoba. But I knew that it wasn't my calling, and so, I started to look elsewhere. I talked to my parish priest about it. He gave me the book "Opportunities to Serve", with descriptions of various missionary works, as well as a brochure that was about the Jesuit Volunteers. What I read in the brochure was exactly what I was looking for: work, social justice and a simple life in community within a faith context.

I sent in my application, and even before I knew whether or not I had been accepted, I submitted a request for a leave of absence without pay and put my house up for rent. But since the brochure I had read wasn't current, my application turned out to be late, and the director told me that he didn't know whether or not he would be able to accept me. After I hung up, I called my sister in tears. A few days later, the director called me back to say that I had a spot. What he told me later was that there was actually no place available, but he thought, "If this young man can trust in God, so can I."

## AND HOW DID YOU COME TO WORK WITH REFUGEES?

I started to volunteer with refugees in 1994 in Toronto at Romero House, a shelter for asylum seekers. It somehow became a vocation for me.

The first family I met was from Rwanda. It was during the genocide. The parents, who had three children, told me about their experience. What struck me was that during their escape through the jungle, the woman gave birth to their last child. They named her Ingabire, which in Kinyarwanda means "gift of God."

It was striking that they could be aware of the closeness of God even in such a situation. After hearing that, I asked myself: Would it be possible for me to consider each and every refugee who I meet to be a gift from God and not a problem?



*Hugo Ducharme, from JRS, welcomes refugees*



*The Jesuit Refugee Service team*



*After hearing that, I asked myself:  
Would it be possible for me to  
consider each and every refugee who  
I meet to be a gift from God and not a  
problem?*

## PORTRAIT OF A PARTNER IN MISSION



Norbert Piché and the JRS team at a protest

### YOU HAVE ACCOMPANIED REFUGEES, BUT HAVE YOU ALSO BEEN ACCOMPANIED BY THEM?

Refugees are people who have lost a lot. Here, they have to rebuild their lives and it is not always easy. To be able to be with them during this time is a privilege. It teaches me how human beings can be both resilient and fragile at the same time, and how much we need each other. And it's not just the refugee who needs the citizen. It goes in the opposite direction as well because it shows us our own humanity. How all of a sudden — bang! — our lives can easily change.

I'll tell you a story. At one time in Romero House, the refugees who came from French-speaking Africa started calling me "le grand brûlé." I didn't understand why. One man told me that when a black person is burned, his skin becomes whiter. I realized that they considered me part of their community. If I'm able to live with them, share their story, and spend time in community, then I am accompanied by them as well. By listening to them, their stories become part of me, too. I am no longer the Norbert Piché I was before. Accompaniment is about being mutually enriched.

### AND ULTIMATELY YOU BECAME DIRECTOR OF THE JESUIT REFUGEE SERVICE?

Yes, at one point I heard that the position of director of the Jesuit Refugee Service was opening up here in Montreal. I thought it was very interesting because, first of all, it meant working with the Jesuits, and secondly, it meant working with refugees.



*By listening to them, their stories become part of me, too. I am no longer the Norbert Piché I was before. Accompaniment is about being mutually enriched.*

For me, being director of the Jesuit Refugee Service is putting into practice Ignatian spirituality, discernment, and seeing where God is present in the midst of everything, in my own life and also in the lives of refugees.

### **YOU HAVE RECENTLY SET UP A PROJECT FOR THE SPIRITUAL ACCOMPANIMENT OF REFUGEES — WHY?**

During the beginning of the pandemic, I went on a retreat that led me quite far on my personal journey.

The idea of spiritual accompaniment for refugees came from the desire to understand each other better, to discover where God is in our lives despite the losses we may experience. The refugee goes through an incredible upheaval, having had to flee from home, arriving in a new society. How does one live this on a spiritual level? We started with a one-day retreat in a retreat centre, and we will soon continue this journey in a parish.

### **HOW CAN WE PRESERVE A SENSE OF HOPE WHEN WE, AS A SOCIETY, OFTEN ERECT WALLS RATHER THAN WELCOME PEOPLE?**

When I was a volunteer in 1995, the Conservative government decided to cut social assistance by 20%, which greatly affected refugees. The minister responsible had said that people on welfare could simply eat more tuna fish.



*We're doing it because it's the right thing to do. Not because it's necessarily going to change something, but we do it because it's the right thing to do.*

At Romero House, we decided to hold a 24-hour vigil from Thursday to Good Friday in front of the legislative building in Toronto. We bought cans of tuna, opened them, made tuna rolls and nailed the empty cans to a cross. We made the national news during the day. But by midnight, we were practically the only ones there. I asked the Jesuit priest who accompanied us: "Nobody sees us! What are we doing here?" And what he said has stayed with me till now: "We're doing it because it's the right thing to do. Not because it's necessarily going to change something, but we do it because it's the right thing to do."

And that's what keeps me going. We welcome everyone — whether it's people who cross Roxham Road or the Mediterranean. We welcome them because it's the right thing to do. Until things change, we will continue to do the right thing, as Jesus taught us.



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





*The aftermath of the earthquake in Syria and Turkey. Photo: Antuan Ilgit, SJ*



*Through its staff and volunteers, JRS Romania provides shelter and basic necessities to people fleeing Ukraine. Photo: Sergi Camara/Entreculturas*



*Matteo Ricci. Photo: Society of Jesus*

## **“NOT ONE MORE DEATH”: JESUITS IN PERU CALL FOR AN END TO VIOLENCE**

Peru experienced some of its worst political violence in decades when President Pedro Castillo was imprisoned after he tried to dissolve the parliament. In January, after 49 people lost their lives in clashes with law enforcement during demonstrations, the Jesuits of Peru issued a statement saying that they rejected “the disproportionate use of violence by the State in the containment of the protests that have arisen in different parts of the country.” They also asked those in authority “to make decisions to find a consensual solution to the crisis, and to always put respect for life, God’s supreme gift according to our Christian convictions, first and foremost.”

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## **JESUITS RESPOND TO THE EARTHQUAKE IN SYRIA AND TURKEY**

After the devastating earthquake on February 6, 2023, that struck Syria and Turkey and killed more than 47,000 people, the Jesuit network responded to the bleak situation. In Aleppo, Syria, the community of three Jesuits fled their home after the first earthquake. The next day, the Society of Jesus opened up its building in Aziziyé, Syria, to people looking for shelter.

Shortly after the earthquake, Fr. Tony O’Riordan, SJ, director of Jesuit Refugee Service Syria, said: “Sustaining life and health is our immediate priority. Helping people to remain resilient mentally will be a second priority.” After the first phase of response, JRS began food distribution, targeting around 2,000 families in Syria to cover their urgent nutritional needs for about a month.

## **JESUIT REFUGEE SERVICE CONTINUES TO SERVE IN UKRAINE**

With millions of people forced to flee their homes, the war in Ukraine has caused one of the world’s fastest and largest displacement crises. Since the start of the conflict in February 2022, Jesuit organizations have served and accompanied more than 56,000 people fleeing violence.

With the conflict now into its second year, the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), along with its partners, continues to accompany and serve forcibly displaced people through emergency aid, shelter, psychosocial support, education and integration. Together with the Xavier Network, JRS is coordinating the implementation of the One Proposal, a structured plan to receive, protect, promote and integrate forcibly displaced Ukrainians across Europe for the next three years.

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## **ITALIAN JESUIT MISSIONARY MATTEO RICCI ON THE PATH TO SAINTHOOD**

Recognizing that 16th-century Italian Jesuit missionary Matteo Ricci “lived the Christian virtues to a heroic degree,” Pope Francis has officially put the famous missionary to China on the path to sainthood. Pope Francis described Fr. Ricci as a “champion” of the “culture of dialogue” and “a man of encounters.”

In his missionary work, Fr. Ricci adopted the Chinese style of life and became fluent in the Chinese language. He spent the remaining 27 years of his life in China. He was the first European to enter China’s Forbidden City, and the Chinese recognize Fr. Ricci as a bridge builder between East and West.



Lebanese Jesuits tend the invisible wounds

# OF THE LEBANESE PEOPLE

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by Clara Atallah







*Preparing to help the Lebanese people.*

**It is hard to imagine the trials that** the Lebanese people have endured in recent years. In 2019, a political crisis and a wave of insurrections paralyzed the land of the cedars. The country had already been hit hard by a devastating economic crisis and a sharp devaluation of the Lebanese pound, which lost more than 97% of its market value. The health crisis related to the COVID-19 pandemic only worsened the situation. Finally, the crowning touch: On August 4, 2020, at 6:07 a.m., the explosion of 2,750 tons of ammonium nitrate, which was stored in warehouse number 12 in the port area, caused massive human and material damage throughout the city.

Is there a way to accompany these people who are suffering so much? Is there a way to bring a ray of hope to a devastated people? Fr. Gabriel Khairallah, SJ, a teacher at Saint Joseph University (USJ) in Beirut and at Sciences Po Paris, as well as director of the Cercle de la Jeunesse Catholique (CJC) in Lebanon, shares his experience.

The explosion caused the destruction of countless homes and the displacement of more than 300,000 families. Given this disastrous situation, something had to be done. The first thing the Society of Jesus did



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*My work was mainly accompanying people and listening. People needed to talk.”*

was provide funds to distribute emergency meals. “When we saw the total absence of the state in the management of the crisis, we decided to support the young volunteers of the association Offre Joie by giving them emergency meals to distribute, as they were rebuilding their city with their own hands. They did this for about three months,” Fr. Khairallah explained.

In addition, Fr. Khairallah responded to the request of the parish priest of Mar Mikhael (a region that borders the port) to visit families in the Karantina neighbourhood, which had been greatly affected by the explosion. For a whole year,

“

*The people were completely overwhelmed and exhausted. They needed a sign of hope.”*

this group of religious men and women faithfully visited these vulnerable households, regardless of religion. “My work was mainly accompanying people and listening. People needed to talk, especially the elderly persons who had not left their homes. They looked forward to the visits and to receiving communion, and they worried whenever I was away.”

He was particularly struck by the depression of the people and their desire for a sign of hope, which was expressed in a form of popular piety. “The house is in ruins,” one woman told Fr. Khairallah, “but the statue of the Virgin Mary is still standing.” Fr. Khairallah stressed the importance of their involvement: “The people were completely overwhelmed and exhausted. They needed a sign of hope. Their faces were sad, but when they received communion, their faces softened and they began to cry. They needed to be comforted.”

As often as possible, Fr. Khairallah and the others tried to respond to this need for hope and consolation. “In the first months after the explosion, we went every day to visit the families. After a while, though, I started to experience







mental exhaustion. I have a psychiatrist friend who recommended that I spread out my visits and spend weekends in the country to rest and replenish my energy. And that's when I realized how fortunate and privileged I was to be able to leave from time to time and go to the Jesuit residence outside of Beirut (or even to travel to France to teach!), unlike the inhabitants of the Karantina neighbourhood who had the port and the destroyed silos in front of them every day." Beirut was unlivable at that time; death was everywhere.

"But despite the fatigue, we couldn't allow ourselves to stop! The energy of the volunteers from Offre Joie, who even came from abroad to support us, gave us a lot of strength. So, if I went to the countryside every once in a while to renew my energy, it was with the aim of continuing this mission of accompaniment!"

Now the Jesuits continue to support the impoverished population through food aid, the daily distribution of hot meals, and medical assistance through their dispensary.

### FR. KHAIRALLAH PRAISES THE ENTHUSIASM OF THE CJC VOLUNTEERS

In Beirut, volunteers cook and distribute 250 hot meals and 700 food packages per month.

### **An example of commitment within the CJC**

*Issam, a volunteer at the CJC, speaks of having witnessed situations of extreme poverty. But he has also been deeply touched by the way that those who are poor share their goods with others, despite their difficult situation. "When an elderly woman in need is given a ration of food, she is quick to share it with her neighbor who does not have enough to eat." Issam's commitment not only has taught him to focus on the essentials and thank the Lord for all his graces, but also gives him the strength he needs in everyday life.*

In Zahle (in the mountainous and poor region of the Bekaa), 220 meals are distributed per day, four times a week, and 150 food packages are distributed per month, as well as diapers and milk for children. Fr. Khairallah personally goes to Zahle once a week to distribute the boxes and to visit the families with the volunteers.

The beneficiaries are identified through a network of parishes and local organizations, assisted by social workers who assess the individual situations. The households consist mainly of single elderly people or families that include persons with severe disabilities.

The Jesuits are committed to supporting the population as long as they have the means to do so. "The challenge now is to be able to sustain this work over time. With the war in Ukraine and the recent devastating earthquake in Syria and Turkey, we are uncertain about the sustainability of our activities," says Fr. Khairallah.

### **A recent video on the work of the CJC:**

<https://www.instagram.com/reel/CorowTTrtZQ/?igshid=NmE0MzVhZDY%3D>



Trained in economics and management, **Clara Atallah** has worked mainly in communications and marketing. She enjoys working on digital projects as much as making lattes in her café in Beirut. Since January 2023, Clara has been a marketing campaign specialist with the Jesuits of Canada.



# CHANGING THE WORLD FROM WITHIN

and the impact of Ignatian spirituality today

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by Eric Clayton



*Created with Midjourney*

**Throughout history, Ignatian spirituality has undergone** significant changes and adaptations, driven by the evolving needs and circumstances of the world. In Canada, two Jesuits, John English, SJ, and Gilles Cusson, SJ, played a critical role in this process. They widened its reach and accessibility and introduced novel perspectives and practices. Today, their legacies continue to influence our engagement with Ignatian spirituality, empowering us to respond to contemporary challenges related to social justice, femininity, ecology and more.

### THE ONGOING EVOLUTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF IGNATIAN SPIRITUALITY

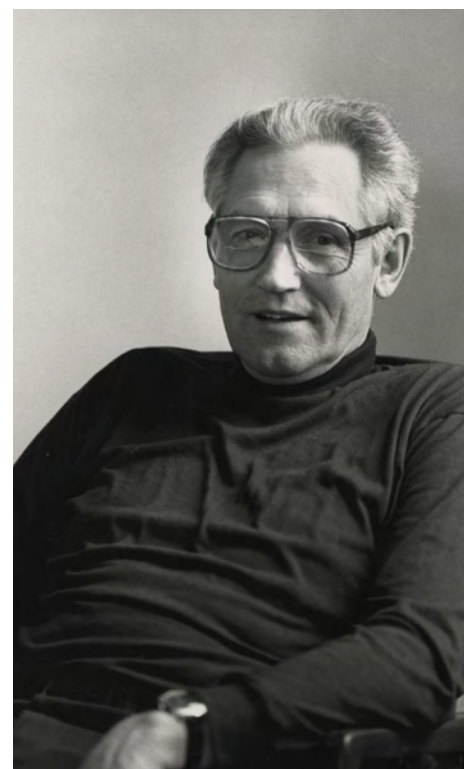
Ignatian spirituality as we know it today was not handed down fully formed by its namesake. While St. Ignatius of Loyola did write what is arguably the most essential text in Ignatian spirituality during his lifetime — his *Spiritual Exercises* — unpacking, implementing and continually reflecting upon that foundational text is an evolving task that necessarily responds to the signs of the times.

How is it that key elements of Ignatian spirituality were nearly unheard of less than a hundred years ago — elements that so many of us today have come to understand as essential to the practice of our faith?

“What is now called *Ignatian spirituality* is fundamentally faithful to the original inspiration of the Society and, paradoxically, is at the same time new,” write Jesuit historians Timothy W. O’Brien, SJ, and the late John W. O’Malley, SJ.

For O’Brien and O’Malley, there is a direct link between how the earliest companions of Ignatius understood their spirituality and the Jesuits of the modern era. “Were this not the case,” they argue, “the phenomenon now called *Ignatian spirituality* could have neither emerged nor been validated.”

In 1894, the first collection of primary Jesuit texts was published in Madrid: The *Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu*. This was a watershed moment within the Society, an invitation to return anew to the way of proceeding marked by the earliest Jesuits. “By the 1930s, the growing corpus of sources available about Ignatius and the earliest Society ... began to yield more comprehensive biographical studies of the founder.” And thus, new insights into the spiritual practices that bear his name.



*Portrait of John English, SJ. Reference number: BO-0198.4.1.  
Photo: Jesuit Archives in Canada*

“

*John [English] was convinced that the Church needed to recapture the art and skill of spiritual direction and that this should not be the preserve of a clerical class.”*



Portrait of Gilles Cusson, SJ. Reference number: BO-0466.4.3\_Ph-1.9.  
Photo: Georges Kokinski / Jesuit Archives in Canada



*In his doctoral thesis, [Gilles Cusson] expressed especially how to translate for our time the 19<sup>th</sup> Annotation — the retreat in daily life.”*

John English and Gilles Cusson were born into this moment, in 1924 and 1927, respectively. This period saw “the emergence of the academic discipline of spirituality — a development that began to take notable shape in the 1920s,” write O’Malley and O’Brien.

Despite the changes afoot in the field of spirituality, both English and Cusson received the traditional Jesuit formation of the day, and their experience of the Spiritual Exercises likely looked very different from how we experience them now.

“The full Exercises were only being given to vowed religious,” says Gilles Mongeau, SJ, socius for the Jesuit’s Canada Province. “The retreat master would give a conference in the morning and then you were on your own with the points that he had given you. He might visit you during the day, but no more than 10 minutes.”

These preached retreats, as they were called, had been the predominant way in which Jesuits gave the Exercises for nearly the entirety of the Society’s existence. Nevertheless, both English and Cusson were drawn to engage with the Exercises in a new way.

## INSIGHTS FROM TWO CANADIANS

For English, his tertianship — the final stage in Jesuit formation — proved pivotal. He went to Saint Beuno’s in Wales where he encountered a different way of receiving the Exercises: the personally directed retreat.

“It was a revelation,” reflects Mongeau. “He brings that back to Canada and starts mulling over: How do we do this? How do we share this experience of the Exercises not just with religious but with everybody?”

“John was convinced that the Church needed to recapture the art and skill of spiritual direction and that this should not be the preserve of a clerical class,” writes J. Veltri, SJ. “He was also convinced that the Spiritual Exercises could be used to help faith-filled people with appropriate natural gifts ... to become spiritual directors.”

For his part, Cusson was heavily influenced by the work of the French Jesuit Maurice Giuliani. Giuliani “showed how the gift of Ignatius to the Church was more than a school of prayer. It was, rather, an apostolic ‘way of proceeding’ in which service and ‘the help of souls’ was central,” according to O’Malley and O’Brien.



Cusson, who studied in Rome from 1963 to 1965, was interested in the spiritual and mystical tradition of the Church. He wrote his doctoral thesis on the pedagogy of the Spiritual Exercises and later taught spirituality at the Pontifical Gregorian University.

“Gilles tried very early to formulate his comprehension of Ignatius’ ‘spirit,’” reflects Bernard Carrière, S.J. “In his doctoral thesis, he expressed especially how to translate for our time the 19th Annotation” — the retreat in daily life.

By 1965, both English and Cusson were well-established Jesuit priests, the Second Vatican Council had concluded, and the encyclical “Perfectae Caritatis” had been published, instructing religious orders to return to their roots. Importantly, as O’Malley and O’Brien note, “This gave the Society’s [31st general] congregation the impetus to make operative on a corporate level the fruit of the return to the sources that had been underway for the previous six decades.”

In short, this was the moment to concretize the spiritual insights both English and Cusson had been praying and practicing.

## THE LEGACY OF GILLES CUSSON AND JOHN ENGLISH

In 1969, English started a program called the Institute on Practical Asceticism at the Guelph Centre of Spirituality. “This was the very first experience of the 30-day Spiritual



*Fr. John English, SJ with Paul Sullivan, then CBC producer. Photo: ignition.ca*



*Portrait of Gilles Cusson, SJ. Reference number: BO-0466.4.3\_Ph-1.21. Photo: Jesuit Archives in Canada*

Exercises given by a team in a retreat house setting using the silent, personally directed retreat method with a large group of persons,” writes Veltri. They began with 39 women who were in formation with various religious congregations — and it grew from there.

For English, seeing one's life within the scope of salvation history was essential. "Life is an experience of graced history," English writes. "It is from the perspective of being the beloved of God that we can approach all of our life as graced history."

In 1976, Cusson founded the Manresa Spirituality Centre (*Centre de spiritualité Manrèse*). From the start, the Centre pursued new insights into the Exercises with intellectual rigor, committed always to bringing the Ignatian tradition into dialogue with contemporary culture.

The 19<sup>th</sup> Annotation — the "Exercises in Daily Life" or EVC in French — plays a central role in the Centre's work, allowing for, as the Jesuit Curia notes, "a certain democratization of the Spiritual Exercises, making the Ignatian journey and the ministry of spiritual accompaniment more accessible to all of God's people and especially to lay people." Cusson's work has mainstreamed — and made available — the Exercises in ways that were unimaginable a century ago.

As for English, his early interest in ecology, his commitment to engaging women in the Exercises, and his understanding of communal spirituality continue to have an impact in Canada and around the world. "This critical reflection under John's influence helped us to develop the personally directed retreat modality in a multiplicity of ways ... that coalesce into what John has called 'Communal Spirituality,'" Veltri reflects. "For John, this term came to include societal perspectives with social justice, feminine and ecological aspects.



Photo: Rolf Blicher Godfrey, Unsplash

"Since sinful social structures are complex communal realities, only communally generated decisions can be the carriers of grace for change of these structures," Veltri continues.

Fortunately, thanks to the legacies of Gilles Cusson, SJ, and John English, SJ — the increased availability of the Exercises and a deepening understanding of their radical potential for change in our lives and the world — Ignatian spirituality can equip us to address these necessary challenges.



**Eric A. Clayton** is the author of "Cannonball Moments: Telling Your Story, Deepening Your Faith" and the deputy director of communications for the Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States. He lives in Baltimore, Maryland, with his wife, two young daughters and their cat, Sebastian. Learn more about Eric at [ericclaytonwrites.com](http://ericclaytonwrites.com).





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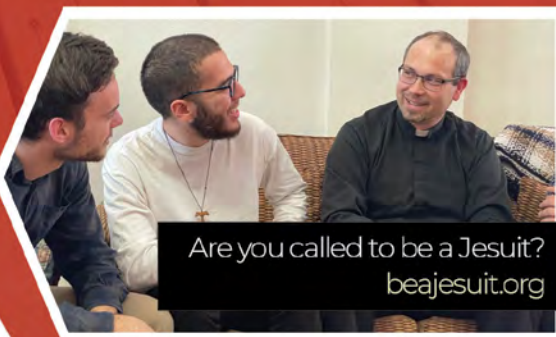
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“Come  
follow me...”

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





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