

SPRING 2014

Holy Spirit Center

News

CATHOLIC RETREAT HOUSE MINISTRIES, INC.

We are the church

For young adults, this is sometimes a difficult statement to believe. Where and how do we fit into this community? After spending the first 18 years of our lives going through CCD, attending Catholic school, and participating in youth group, it suddenly dawns on us that we have a choice. Our parents don't go to college with us. Our parents don't follow us as we settle into our first apartment, our first jobs, or develop our community of friends. We have a choice about whether or not we will attend Mass. More importantly, we have a choice about how we will form our grown-up relationship with God. Eagle Eye ministries are attempting to fill this gap by offering the young adults of Alaska a retreat directed specifically for them.

The first few years found the Eagle Eye group meeting for retreat in a parishioner's house in Girdwood. This house created an intimate atmosphere for prayer, teaching and reflection. It reflected our connection with the early Christians who would meet in the homes of disciples. Praise God, this Eagle

Eye young adult retreat continues to grow every year. Participants are beginning to come from all over Alaska and the lower 48. However, the group clearly had outgrown the house in 2012 and began to pray for a new retreat space.

Last year the didactic part of the retreat took place at our new home here at Holy Spirit Center. There were 27 participants and religious who met over 4 days. The days began in the intimacy of Holy Spirit chapel with silent prayer and laudes. Meals were taken in the main dining room and philosophy and theology classes in Loyola conference room. The participants followed as Father Nathan led them through an evening procession of the Stations of the Cross. Days were finished with evening vespers and all night adoration. Sunday morning found the group joining the parishioners of Holy Spirit Center at a final mass in Resurrection Chapel.

Eagle Eye is a retreat for 20-35 year olds. The retreat is from July 19th- July 27th. Priests and religious from the Community of St. John come to — **continued on inside**



— Eagle Eye Retreat continued from front cover

Anchorage to provide formation on a weeklong retreat. The retreat starts with a hike of Crow Pass, complete with participation in Liturgy of the Hours, Mass, and prayerful dialogue along the trail. The retreat continues locally at Holy Spirit Center with further formation in lectio divina, philosophy, and theology. Whether we are single, married, or religious, this ministry is extremely important. This year's theme, *True Friendship- A Sacrifice or a Gain* highlights Pope Francis's call to a deeper, personal relationship with Jesus.

Encouraged by the example of Saint Pope John Paul II and then continued in the writings of Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel), evangelization is that easy. Young adults are asking to be



noticed and included in ways that make sense to them. They want to continue their faith formation in the church. Eagle Eye Ministries is helping to open that door in Alaska. For further information about the retreat please contact: Rachel and David Andrews, eagleeyealaska@gmail.com, 907-349-1258 or go to the website: www.eagleeyeministries.org.

This year, these ministries

will be connecting the retreat priest with local Catholic dads. Father Michael Therese of the Community of St. John will be joining the local priests and dads for the annual Father's

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Hike. Father Michael Therese will also be giving an evening diocesan renewal ministry talk on this year's Eagle Eye theme, *True Friendship- A Sacrifice or a Gain*. It will be followed by the sacrament of reconciliation. The talk is on Thursday July 17th 6:00- 8:00pm. at Our Lady of Guadalupe. It is open to everyone in the diocese. ✠



Forgiveness – A Movement of the Heart



Forgiveness – asking, granting – with God, a family member, within a community or a nation, or with another nation. And reconciling with that other person or group – must we, should we, can we? What if we just cannot bring ourselves to forgive or reconcile? Where does justice fit in the picture?

When one hears those words “forgive, reconcile”, we expect a straightforward approach. But as participants in the HSC Lenten series “Go First and be Reconciled” soon discovered, forgiveness and reconciliation are not an easy path and no formula works in every case. (Well, unless we truly follow Jesus’s command to love our neighbor unflinchingly.) One participant noted that the topic was much more complex than what she first came with. Listening to the experiences and wisdom of others within the group was most beneficial. Participants left much more aware of how they now personally could approach forgiveness. Many found themselves looking differently at the daily news that involved stories in which forgiving or reconciling could play a role.

Our search to understand forgiveness led us on visits to tragedies within our country and other parts of the world, and how those involved dealt (or could not deal) with asking or granting forgiveness. A Muslim’s son killed by a Baptist’s grandson, and how the two of different faiths joined together to teach children that hate and revenge were not

the answers. The long tortuous path of a woman who abetted the killing of a police officer, and how she long excused herself by defensively saying “Yes, I did it, but”

Countries around the world continue internecine warfare and cycles of hate and vengeance among ethnicities. Several countries broke through this cycle. Twenty years ago this spring, the Christian nation of Rwanda was a killing field with over a million slaughtered, often by their next door neighbor. But through a deliberate process of seeking and admitting the truth about what happened, and not seeking vengeful retribution, the country today is more at peace. South Africa followed a similar approach.

On a personal level, we will struggle when we have done something wrong and know we need to admit our wrongs. The sacrament of reconciliation can bring us inner peace. The beginning of forgiveness is the willingness to begin to think differently about a wrong committed against us. Through time we can replace the unhealthy bitterness and anger within us with compassion for the perpetrator. The person will still be subject to civil justice. But as Jesus frequently said to His followers “Peace be with you”; and it will, if we allow the balm of forgiveness and reconciliation to reach into our souls.

Sidenote: HSC held this Lenten series off campus at St. Benedict Parish. Please contact us if you would like a future program at your parish.✝

Ignatian Circle

What is the Ignatian Circle? Let's look back to our roots, to the Jesuit based Holy Spirit Retreat Center and our rich history with the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. The circle was established to support the Center's mission "To Provide a sacred space to accompany people as they seek to find God in all things."

It is often easier to see a need and strive to fill it when the need is physical, such as feed the hungry, cloth the naked, and give shelter to the homeless. As a community, we have very good programs in place to help meet these needs. What makes the Ignatian Circle special is that it fills needs that are not easily visible. The interior of a human, the spirit of our brother and sister in Christ, has needs just like the physical body. Through the generous donations of our community to the Ignatian Circle we can tend to those spiritual needs.

The goal is to allow access to all the programs, retreats, and services, such as spiritual direction, that the center has to offer and to keep them available to everyone regardless of financial ability to pay. Often individuals are able to afford a portion of a retreat or program, but not the entire cost. The Ignatian Circle steps in and provides scholarships to cover the balance, thus allowing an individual to start or continue on their journey of spiritual growth. Also, the Ignatian Circle can offset costs of retreats allowing for prices to be kept at a reasonable level and accessible to a larger number of people.

As we look to the basic points of The Spiritual Exercises: Call to Conversion; Conversion to Mission; and Christ Living in the Church; it is easy to see where the Ignatian Circle fills a need. Please pray about a donation to the Ignatian Circle. Contact Alan Muise (346-2343) if you wish to establish a monthly credit card donation.✝

Lenten Retreat

A silent Lenten prayer weekend was held in March at the Holy Spirit Retreat Center. The weekend was a huge success and was led by Fr. David Guzman, O.C.D. who is the associate pastor at St. Therese, a Carmelite parish in Alhambra California. The participants found the retreat to be a valuable addition to their Lenten journey. This is the third year a Carmelite priest has traveled from St Therese to lead a retreat at the Holy Spirit Center during Lent and plans are being formed to continue the annual visits for another silent Lenten retreat in 2015.

The retreat provided a wonderful time for Spiritual reflection while finding Christ in the depth of contem-

plative prayer. Time was provided for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, Adoration, and Mass. A beautiful healing ceremony completed the weekend. Fr. Guzman taught the methods the Carmelite Saints use to deepen prayer and experience the fullness of God's presence, love and beauty. The retreat was enriching, leading all to better experience the depth of God's love.

Over 3000 people come annually to experience diverse programs at the Holy Spirit Center which provide the Anchorage community with numerous opportunities to learn and grow. Contact Alan Muise the director of the HSC to find more information on quiet prayer weekends or other Spiritual programs.✝

Outdoor Stations of the Cross



I want to share a wonderful place of reflection. For me it has been a place to deepen my faith and have personal encounters with our God. Holy Spirit Center offers a unique link to God. Winding through the beauty of Alaska's nature, there is a path to the Stations of the Cross. A place to "Be Still and know I AM" a place meditate and experience the journey Jesus took out of love for us.

During autumn I often reflect on all that is dead or sinful within me and pray to let it go, just as the dried leaves fall from the trees. The winter snow hides the decaying autumn leaves, I can relate to this as the sin in my life being covered with a bright smile. But I desire to live an authentic life – the one Jesus wants for me. So as I walk along the path and pray about all Jesus did for me, I ask for forgiveness and guidance, and marvel at his infinite love. I see the death of winter and the promise of life that is Spring and the Resurrection in the buds of nature, a chance to emerge as something new. Summer offers an abundance of light, and animals busy with activity.

Once again I can reflect on how God cares for all our needs - he knows what the birds and I need. I invite you to come and experience renewal during a walk around the Stations of the Cross located at Holy Spirit Center. Dress for the weather. Park in the lower lot – and begin your journey along the path with Jesus by your side (there are places to sit and rest). I think you will be really glad you did. ✚

HOLY SPIRIT CENTER ONLINE

For more information, to register for retreats and other programs or to make a donation, go to
www.holyspiritcenterak.org

CONTACT US



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UPCOMING EVENTS

July 11-15, 2014
Centering Prayer Retreat

September 5-7 2014
12-Step Retreat

October 31-November 2, 2014
Fall Retreat

Holy Spirit Center

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Holy Spirit Center Overview

During the past 18 months the Board of Directors of Holy Spirit Center and the long term planning committee, a group of highly dedicated individuals, were led through a S.W.O.T. analysis by Dan Meddleton. Dan deserves much thanks and praise for his leadership throughout this process.

With a common vision that we believe Holy Spirit Center is vital to our Christian community, we took on the task of evaluating our S. (Strengths) W. (Weaknesses) O. (Opportunities) and T. (Threats). This process has helped us define our Core Values, Vision, and Mission which gives us the basic road map to identify goals and create an action plan to meet our goals. It has taken us over a year of praying for guidance from the Holy Spirit, and truly looking hard at

the services we provide, deciding if we just want to maintain the ministry we have or if we want to expand that ministry.

A basic evaluation of the physical facility, maintenance, and possible expansion or replacement of buildings revealed some challenges. We have also brainstormed about our niche in the Christian community and about underserved groups of people and how we can reach them. Last, but not least, we also discussed dreams for the future of the center.

We will be meeting with friends of the Holy Spirit Center and presenting the work we have done. We are looking for feedback from the community on opportunities and the future direction of Holy Spirit Center. ✝