

IGNIS



Newsletter of the Ignatian Spirituality Institute

Volume 12, Number 3

December 1, 2014

CONGRATULATIONS, CLASS OF 2014!

After two years of concentrated study and companionship, the class of 2014 received their certificates of completion of the ISI program on Sunday, August 24. This issue of *Ignis* celebrates them and their achievements. Included are memories of their last Opening Retreat at the Jesuit Retreat House, their commissioning at the liturgy on Sunday, the script of the certification ceremony, and summaries of their practicum experiences.



Newly certified members of the tenth class of the ISI pose after the ceremony. Bottom row from left: Mary Senechal, Jenny Leiter, Betsy Hamm and Joe Gibbons. Middle row from left: David Feldman, Jeff Nelson, Elyse Berry, Aida Mandapat and Mark Salchak. Top row from left: Bob Linton, Sharon Seyfarth Garner, Bob Meyer and Paul Barbins.

Letter from the Director

Dear Folks,

At the risk of being repetitive, since I already sent this message once this season (but then, we all **recognize the value of “Ignatian repetition”**), I want to reiterate the state of my spirit as we approach this holiday season. It is one of profound gratitude for all that the ISI has been and all that has been shared. To all of you I voice the words of St. Paul to his friends in Philippi:

I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart, for all of you share in God's grace with me. . . . And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight to help you to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God (Philippians 1:3-11).

Since this is their special issue, I send this sentiment especially to our most recent graduates, the class of 2014, as you begin your spiritual direction ministry in earnest. The Spirit truly united this class **“from the first day until now.”** May the community you experienced continue, now together with the rest of the ISI family, as your paths continue to cross in the years to come.

All who have completed the ISI come away with a new identity, forged through study and prayer and ministry and companionship with one another in Christ. Joan Carney, the ISI commencement speaker this year, spoke of this new identity eloquently. She turned around Jesus' question of Mark 8:1 to our asking Jesus **“Who do you say that I am?”** Beginning with the gospel story of the friends who lowered the paralytic through the roof to be healed by Jesus (Mark 2:1-12), Joan identified Jesus' response to their need (and to our question) as example of how we need to respond in the ministry of spiritual direction. In Joan's words:

This story speaks to me on many levels. I can picture Jesus sitting in his home, perhaps the home he has shared with Mary. I imagine he is hoping to spend a quiet day with his mother. Whatever his plans for the day, as we see in so many of the Gospel stories, Jesus' hope for rest will have to wait. What Jesus already knows and embraces is that God's plan for him requires his openness and flexibility. In your life and in your spiritual direction practice, maybe you've been called to this same sort of openness and flexibility. I certainly have a sense of that being God's desire for me. So Jesus is fully present to the moment. His agenda, whatever that might have been, is now his Father's agenda. When friends and neighbors start to arrive, seeking his words of wisdom, I imagine him drawing energy from their desire to hear more about God's kingdom. I can see the packed “standing room only” house, the crush of people in the heat of the day . . . the sights, the sounds, the smells, the mood, the conversations.

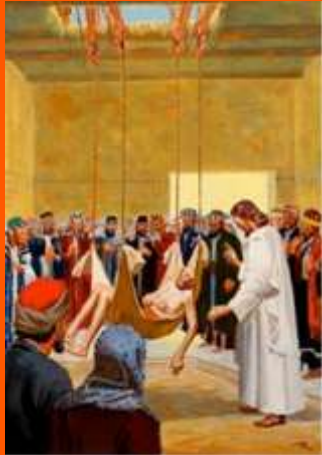
Joan then proceeded to “unpack” how Jesus responded, and how we respond, in our spiritual direction ministry. Our identity is to be friend to our directees, “helping others to appreciate their privileged place at the feet of Jesus.” Our identity is to be open and flexible, to allow our assumptions to be challenged, our creativity tested: “When the front door is blocked, do I head for the roof?” Our identity is to trust that God will manifest God's plan for the person before me. Our identity is to have faith that we are called to play a small role in people's experience of God. Our identity is to receive the experience of God's healing and life-giving presence for ourselves as well as for those to whom we minister. Our identity is to recognize and acknowledge our need for God. Living in the story of the paralytic before Jesus, Joan completed her meditation by saying,

I sit with Jesus and ask the question: “Who do you say that I am?” And I hear the answer: You are a face of Christ, meeting and being present to people as they search for God. You are a friend to the paralytic, a compassionate companion, called to openness, radical trust, and greater faith. You are the paralytic. You have a deep need for God who can be found in all the experiences of your daily life. Of course, this greater self-awareness, this knowing “who we are” before God is one of the many gifts of the gospel contemplation Ignatius encourages in our beloved Spiritual Exercises.

I return now to my sentiment of gratitude: my heart is full of thanksgiving that what Joan spoke of so movingly is the story of every one of us who engages in this beautiful ministry. Thank you, Joan; thank you, all. Thanks be to God who makes it possible!

Peace and all good things,

Joan



*“I say to you, stand up, take your mat and go to your home.”
(Mark 2:11)*

In this issue:

- ◆ Letter From the Director
- ◆ 2014 Opening Retreat
- ◆ Saturday Evening Wine & Cheese Social
- ◆ Sunday Morning Liturgy
- ◆ Certification Ceremony
- ◆ Celebrating our Graduates
- ◆ Spotlight on the Newly Certified Spiritual Directors
- ◆ Important Events of 2014-2015

On the weekend of August 22 to 24, the class of 2014 assembled for the last time at the Jesuit Retreat House for the ISI Opening Retreat. On Friday evening they gathered to share with each other their plans for the future. On Saturday, they were treated with two workshops by Joan Carney and Rich Jerdonek: on ongoing spiritual direction and on peer group supervision. On Saturday evening they met once again with the incoming interns to share with them their experiences of the practicum year.



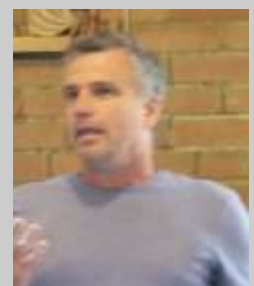


Saturday ended with a gala wine and cheese social. The evening happily welcomed many ISI alums who came to celebrate with the certification class along with members of the incoming class and the new interns. It was a lovely event of convivial companionship.

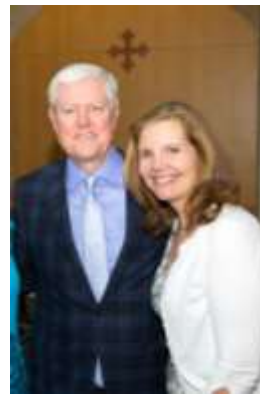




The ISI assembled in the chapel on Sunday morning to celebrate the Eucharist at the close of the retreat weekend. Rev. Matt Roche, SJ was our celebrant, and Marty Hoehler was piano accompanist. In lieu of a homily, each member of the class of 2014 gave some reflections on what their two years of the ISI had meant to them. At the end of the liturgy, those assembled raised their hands in blessing over those to be certified.

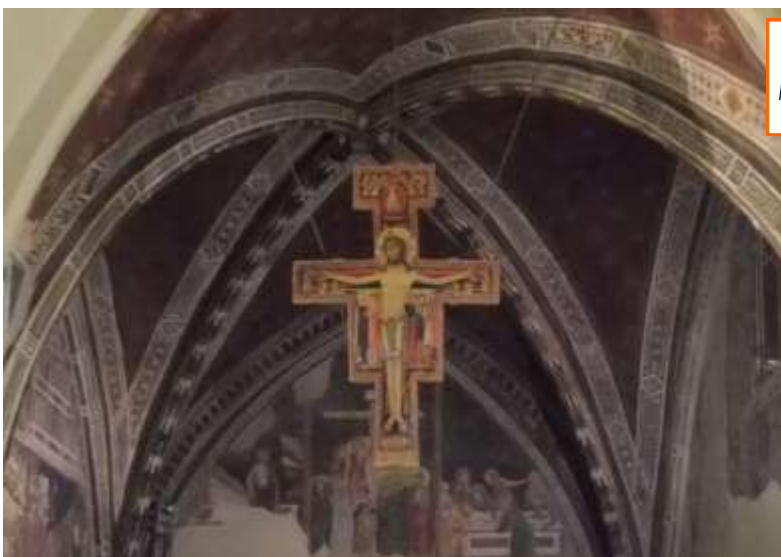


On Sunday afternoon, August 24, the class of 2014, together with their family and friends, gathered in Donahue Auditorium at John Carroll University for the ISI's tenth annual certification ceremony. Ed Peck (ISI '06) led the opening prayer. Joan Carney (ISI '07) addressed the assembly **with a reflection entitled "Who Do You Say That I Am?"** Joan Nuth, ISI director, distributed the certificates; her script is reproduced on the following pages. Margaret Balewski (ISI '11) gave the final blessing. Afterwards all enjoyed a reception in the Atrium of the Dolan Center.



What follows are the remarks made by Dr. Nuth as she presented certificates to the class of 2014. Her remarks are based on what the interns wrote in appreciation of each other. Each begins as a kind of riddle, and then something is said to identify each person. Dr. Nuth also provided a scripture quotation appropriate for each one, together with a photograph which corresponds to the scripture passage. The pictures were taken during Dr. Nuth's recent pilgrimage to Assisi and Rome.

Having one's "ducks in a row" was an important theme for the class of 2014. Appropriately, at the end of the ceremony, attendees were treated to a video of ducks leaving the nest. To watch it, go to youtube.com and search for "Ducklings leaping from nest very high up." Enjoy!



Words describing this intern: thoughtful, always listening carefully, keenly perspective yet modest.

This intern is described as introspective. One classmate described this intern's demeanor as having an easy smile and gentle spirit but being able to speak passionately about deeply held beliefs. An introvert, often quiet in class, this intern speaks only after having deeply reflected on the content; thus what this intern says is usually something of significance. This intern's native seriousness is balanced by a warm and compassionate nature and infectious sense of humor and playfulness. Classmates applaud this one's desire to provide spiritual direction to clergy, who are so often caregivers and not care recipients. They admire his commitment to family above all and to the church community he leads, and his ability to transition through different careers, from running a health care facility to

pastoring an ethnic Baptist congregation. PAUL BARBINS, your scripture is from the book of Isaiah: "Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights, I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations" (Isaiah 42: 1). The photograph is the actual Byzantine icon through which Christ said to Francis at San Damiano, "Do you not see that my church is falling down? Build it up again." The icon is presently in the Basilica of St. Clare.

Words describing this intern: always generous with hugs, smiles and easy laugh.

This intern has the gift to see God's peace, grace and strengthening presence in all things.

This one is described as a wonderful blend of mental and emotional intelligence, open to learning new approaches to prayer and life. This one's passion and excitement about new learnings radiated through class sharing, providing a stimulation that was contagious for others. Many commented on this one's deep faith which enables endurance and trust in God even during challenging times. Classmates felt cared for through this one's generous graciousness, listening ear, encouragement, wisdom and understanding. One classmate shared with this one the difficulty of being directionally impaired, as they needed to help each other find their cars in the parking lot after class. Without a doubt, she also makes the best flan we have ever eaten! AIDA MANDAPAT, your scripture is Psalm 23: "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul" (Ps 23:1-3). Your picture is of the pastures in the Assisi valley.





This intern is described by one classmate as “a gem.” Another used this list of words: “softly, kindly but clearly outspoken, with a healthy dose of cynicism, not afraid to challenge authority, compassionate, empathetic, kind, honest, thoughtful, ethical, not a wimp, whiner or complainer, a fighter.” Always generous in sharing support, encouragement and insights, this one came to the ISI with the desire to pursue truth and expand horizons. This came across in class through exploratory dialogues that were somewhat quirky and ironic, yet with openness. The dry one-liners that came from this one’s mouth were usually right on! This one’s perseverance and graciousness inspired class members to keep asking the challenging questions and embrace all who are on the journey of spiritual

Words describing this intern: inspirational, charming and disarming, fun and impish.

discovery and physical healing. This one is both humble and courageous with a will and faith to follow God’s call in spite of challenges and setbacks. Classmates appreciate that, in spite of his physically challenging journey this year, he was committed to being together with all of us, no matter how difficult it was for him to get here. JOE GIBBONS, your scripture is from Psalm 18: “The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer, My God, my rock in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold” (Ps 18:1-2). The photo is of the Rocca Maggiore, the ancient fortress which guarded the town from the top of Assisi’s hill.

Words describing this intern: compassionate, deeply caring, courageous, thoughtful.

This intern is described as the class’s passionate empathizer, absolutely unafraid to share true feelings. This one is a healer at heart, both physically and spiritually, having profound insight into people’s pain. Well-spoken and a great story teller, this one’s sharing made class topics more understandable and humanly meaningful. This one’s genuine sharing of personal life struggles helped create the unique dynamic of this class which made it safe for others to risk sharing from their heart’s depths, even

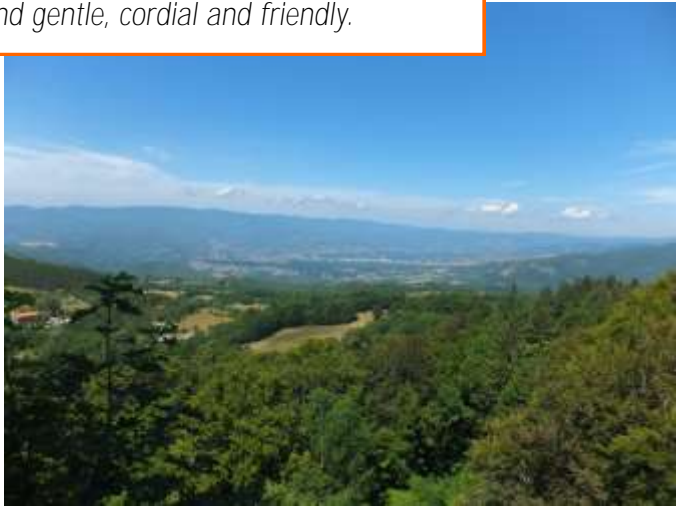


things that were hard to admit. Her own experience of frustration with institutional policy in the health field reveals her to be one who wants to help people unshackled by the limitations often placed upon her. MARY SENECHAL, your scripture is from John’s gospel: Jesus said, “I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture” (John 10:9). The photo is of the gate through which the young Clare fled her home in the middle of the night to join Francis in his ministry.



Words describing this intern: eloquent, charming, warm and gentle, cordial and friendly.

Thoughtful and analytic, balanced with compassion, caring and enthusiasm, this intern honors the presence of God in everyone. Empathetic and non-judgmental, honest and appreciative of others, **classmates appreciate this intern's willingness to be open to the direction of God's Spirit, in spite of the frustrations and challenges** that the stirring Spirit sometimes causes. Joyful, generous and intuitive, this one enthusiastically expresses amazement at the way God shows up in his life and in the lives of his directees. Classmates appreciate **this one's tried and true ability to ask evocative questions, doubtless** honed through his many years as a lawyer. And they rejoice that the one who was about to drop out midway through the first year now is in absolute awe at how God has been at work in helping him find his niche at the juncture between AA and Ignatian spirituality. BOB LINTON, your scripture is from Psalm 29: **"You have turned my mourning into dancing; you have taken off my sackcloth and clothed me with joy, so that my soul may praise you and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks to you forever"** (Ps 29: 11-12). The photograph is of the gorgeous Tuscan countryside from Mt. La Verna.



Words describing this intern: bright personality, bright face, bright faith, bold and brave, yet tender and consoling.

Profoundly insightful and spiritually perceptive beneath a carefree demeanor, this intern **affirms God's goodness with great energy** and passion, and is equally energetic and passionate about serving others, especially

those in most need. One said this intern seems able to heal another through a transparently loving gaze alone. This one is a healing balm for those who have been wounded and need intense love and affirmation. **One classmate shared that this one's kind and careful comment about his reserved mood helped him come out of his shell when he really needed it.** This intern has a gentle, affirming spirit that helps others see things **about themselves that they might otherwise miss. This one's comfort level in her own skin is inspiring, as is her deep, unquestioned faith in her "Lord."** JENNY LEITER, your scripture is from Psalm 34: **"I will bless the Lord at all times; God's praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul makes its boast in the Lord; let the humble hear and be glad. O magnify**

the Lord with me, and let us exalt God's name together" (Ps 34:1-3). The photo is of a display of geraniums at Greccio, where Francis erected the first Christmas crèche with real animals and people.

This intern exhibits a juxtaposition between quiet thoughtfulness and the ability to speak out quickly and forcefully in defense of deeply held beliefs. This intern is perceived as an introspective and deeply sensitive person who listens well. A consummate pastor, this one is dedicated to bringing spiritual wellness to the congregation he serves. A confirmed introvert, this intern was usually content to take everything in during class, but could share meaningfully when it was appropriate to do so. There is a quiet balance and steadiness in the way this one approaches life and ministry that is calming and serves others well. Classmates appreciated his ability to juggle so well his home life, his new job, and this program with a steady hand at the tiller. Even when sleep-deprived after the birth of his daughter, he rarely missed class. One classmate loved watching him approach the snacks and concluded that this is a guy who really likes to eat! JEFF NELSON, your scripture is from the book of Isaiah: **"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation"** (Is 52:7). The photograph is of a wooded path up Mt. La Verna.

Words describing this intern: knowledgeable yet modestly unassuming, gentle but firm.



Words describing this intern: *accessible, relevant, vibrant, fun and profoundly wise.*

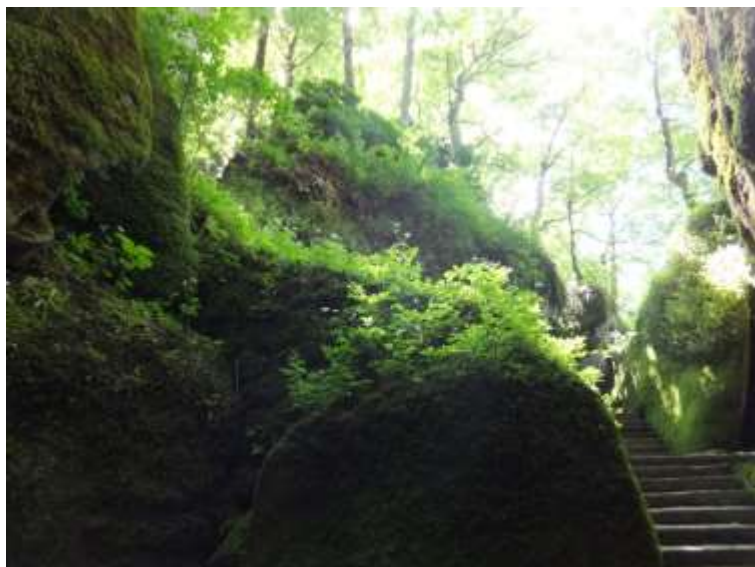


This intern lights up the room with energy and enthusiasm, possessing as well a deep, affective awareness, a strong intellect, and a humility that enables acknowledging and naming challenges in an emotionally and spiritually **transparent manner**. **This one's open, forthright manner** enabled others to open up similarly, helping to forge the deep trust that grew among members of this class. **Classmates admire this one's courage to stand by where God** is leading, despite strong objections from others. They also appreciate how good this one is at listening to, processing and assessing what someone says. One said that in the class role play, this intern, playing the spiritual director, made the encounter seem real, tapping into his pain and **confusion, listening and encouraging "Violet."** **Doubtless this one's experience with CPE and chaplaincy has enabled a helpful crossover to her new ministry of spiritual direction.** **Although this one's youthful perspective (as the baby of our class), helped us understand the younger generation's ways with technology and life in general, several have**

nonetheless described her as an "old soul" with a depth of wisdom that belies her years. We all enjoyed sharing her joy over her wedding. ELYSE BERRY, your scripture is from Jeremiah: *"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; . . . I appointed you a prophet to the nations. . . . Do not say, 'I am only a youth,' for you shall go to all to whom I send you"* (Jeremiah 1:5-6). The photograph is of a very small, bright orange flower I saw growing between the flagstones in the piazza on Mt. La Verna. I was impressed by its simple courage.

Words describing this intern: *brilliant, inquisitive, absolutely sincere.*

This intern was always digging deeper, seeking for more, desiring greater insight, open to what might be found, and soaking up everything like a sponge. This one always asked the best questions, causing similar questioning to occur to the rest of the class. One said that this one, because of his professional background, could have acted like Dr. Know-It-All. Instead **this one's honest sharing, by analyzing**



personal difficulties with life, profession and ideas, made all of us feel at home with our own issues. This one regarded every part of what we did as a class as an opportunity to learn. Classmates appreciate his open-mindedness, ability to connect the dots between psychiatry and spirituality, and his integration of eastern and western religions, all very refreshing and intellectually stimulating. DAVID FELDMAN, your scripture is from the Wisdom of Solomon:

"Therefore I prayed and understanding was given me; I called on God, and the Spirit of Wisdom came to me. I preferred her to scepters and thrones, and I accounted wealth as nothing in comparison with her" (Wisdom 7:7-8). The photograph is of the wooded Mt. La Verna, a place of mystical contemplation for Francis and his companions.



Words describing this intern: *practical and down to earth, humble, open.*



This intern has a low tolerance for frivolous or superficial conversation. This one's honest engagement with life is inspiring. One classmate said that this is the one you want in your foxhole when the battle begins. This one's sense of humor and willingness to let it show brought a light-heartedness to classroom moments, whether good or more challenging. One said she couldn't remember a class where this one wasn't amused by something, creating infectious laughter with those sitting nearby. Also appreciated by classmates is this intern's honest wrestling with finding where the call to ministry is leading, and the venue in which this might occur. So far, this one's ministry to young people has made her an ardent advocate for them and all who are struggling in life. BETSY HAMM, your scripture is from Psalm 25: *"Make me to know your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth, and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all day long"* (Psalm 25:4-5). The paths are on Mount Subasio, where Francis frequently retired for contemplative prayer.

Words describing this intern: *caring, tolerant and compassionate with a dash of humor.*

This intern is described as a joyful discoverer of truth, amazingly enlightening and able to bring new illuminating information into any conversation. Classmates are inspired by the life journey this one has walked – full of joys and many challenges. This one often shared humbly and with awe the new learnings class provided, along with how these were life-transforming. A bit of a performer, this intern is **learning to turn his salesman skills into advocating for God's work in the world.** Classmates appreciate his ability not only to care about those who are marginalized, but also to be gifted in communicating with and understanding them with a love tempered by realism. Classmates rejoice with him over his new job, where he can truly share his gifts in an area that seems tailor-made for him in the juxtaposition of AA and Ignatian spirituality. MARK SALCHAK, your scripture is from Psalm 40: *"I waited patiently for the Lord, who inclined to me and heard my cry. He drew me up from the desolate pit, out of the miry bog, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure. He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God"* (Ps 40:1-3). The photograph is of a statue of Francis and his first companions in Rome across from St. John Lateran Cathedral, where Francis met with the pope, securing permission for the establishment of his order.



Words describing this intern: *warm, friendly, thoughtful, transparent, playful and fun.*



There is gentleness and an easy approachability about this intern, a good humor and positivity, which makes it easy to **respond and be communicative**. This one's honesty is refreshing and grounded in a good humor that is attractive and appealing. Underneath is a depth honed by this one's gift to use whatever life deals out as fertile soil to grow into a more authentic self, and to then use that growth for the greater good. One classmate regards this intern as one of the funniest people she has met, citing his ability to take spiritual matters seriously enough, but not so seriously that he couldn't find the humor and hope in life's difficulties. One classmate who car-pooled with him calls him her "pastoral care on wheels," having been the recipient of his wisdom on their drives to and from class. BOB MEYER, your scripture is from the gospel of Mark: **Jesus said, "The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how"** (Mark 4:26).

The photo is of the ubiquitous olive trees on the hills surrounding Assisi, and, beyond them, the fields in the Umbrian valley.

The personification of sincerity and compassion, this intern approached every aspect of learning with great intentionality and authenticity, putting her whole heart, mind, vulnerability, and energy into her vocation as spiritual director. This one **asked questions when something wasn't clear or needed to be challenged**, but always with an open mind. Several mentioned **how helpful it was when she shared her problem with "Jesus-talk"** as foreign to her and which she approached with suspicion because of past prejudices. Classmates appreciate her willingness to let us in on her inner life with God. They rejoice to have witnessed her growth in freedom and faith.

Words describing this intern: *willing to share doubts and fears, along with joys and blessings.*

Every member of the class was the **recipient of this one's special attention**, whether through a thoughtful card or organizing snacks so we were well fed for each class. She helped us all to keep our ducks in a row. One called her an inspiration as a woman finding her way in professional ministry. She has found

her way out of the belly of the whale onto the shores of Ninevah to answer God's newest call to her. SHARON SEYFARTH GARNER, your scripture passage is from the book of Jonah (where else?): **"The Lord God appointed a bush, and made it come up over Jonah, to give shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort"** (Jonah 4:6). The photograph is of a statue of Francis looking out from the grounds of San Damiano, the church he restored and the first permanent residence of the Friars Minor.





Paul Barbins began his practicum year directing three Nineteenth Annotation retreats. Unexpectedly, one of these ended with the death of the directee, and Paul experienced the consolation of knowing that his direction had helped this man find peace in drawing closer to God prior to his death. Paul subsequently added two eight-week retreats for John Carroll students. Paul **says of his experience, “With each session my confidence as a spiritual director has grown. I began to notice more easily subtle changes in each directee and could sense a growing nearness to God and a depth to their faith. . . . As the practicum year continued I sensed an expanding depth in my own relationship with God and a growing appreciation for the Exercises and spiritual direction. . . . I found that [the eight-week retreats with students] helped greatly in building the skills I that I sought. . . . It was here that I most learned to trust in the movement of the Spirit.”**

Elyse Wagner Berry accompanied a woman colleague through the Nineteenth Annotation retreat, saw another for ongoing direction, and organized and led a retreat day for the spiritual care volunteers at Fairview Hospital. Elyse used a stethoscope as an image of being a spiritual director: **“It checks for vital signs, congestions, clarity, etc. But it does not cure: it is an instrument in the healing process.”** She continues, **“Something that I feel I learned as the process went on was recognizing and understanding my directee’s unique experience and relationship with God that is different from my own. . . . That is probably what I appreciated the most from this experience, feeling like our meetings were not just talking about God but that God was there with us, and I saw how God interacted with my directee as well as how God interacted uniquely with me. . . . Prior to each session I would pray to God to be a vessel of God’s love, peace, mercy, compassion, light, and to be able to notice God’s movement in my directee and in myself.”**



David Feldman directed one man through the Nineteenth Annotation retreat, and saw another for ongoing direction. Through his experience, David says, **“I have become more receptive and able to respond to the presence of grace. I am more aware of the presence of God in all people and have some experience of helping others to develop their awareness of God’s presence in all things. . . . I have learned . . . that we live with a God of surprises and that it is not possible to anticipate or control the course of a directee’s experience. I am less likely to come between a directee and the Creator.”** David notes that **“a quiet time before each direction session was very helpful to settle into an awareness of God’s presence.”** Finally he comments, **“The supervision experience was wonderful; I typically left the sessions with a sense of joy and resolution of my fears, doubts and desolations. . . . It was a profound affective experience to have feedback from such a graced perspective. The experience exceeded my expectations.”**

Sharon Seyfarth Garner employed a variety of spiritual direction scenarios for her practicum year. She directed one person through the Nineteenth Annotation retreat, one student through the Busy Student retreat, two John Carroll students through the eight-day silent retreat, five people in a six-week Lenten retreat which combined group meetings with individual direction, and four people through Companions in Christ, a 28-week group spiritual formation program developed for the United Methodist Church. Sharon had three goals for her practicum: **“to gain confidence that God is in control of the spiritual direction sessions, to gain familiarity with some of the Spiritual Exercises resources available, and to find effective ways to explain the benefits of spiritual direction.”** She believes she accomplished the first two, especially being **“keenly and wondrously aware of God’s presence in the spiritual direction sessions.”** Of the third, she says, **“I still struggle with how to describe adequately the benefits of spiritual direction, but I am getting much better at this. . . . [I want to] convey the power behind the spiritual direction process and why folks would benefit from taking part in this very meaningful ministry opportunity.”**





Betsy Hamm spent her practicum directing young people, accompanying two young adult women in the Busy Student retreat at Ashland, directing a JCU female graduate student in the Nineteenth Annotation retreat, and directing two young men, JCU undergraduates, in the eight-week retreat. **As her goal for the practicum year, Betsy says, “I wanted to come to a deeper awareness of God moving within myself, and I believe I have gotten better at recognizing . . . the affective movements we’ve talked about so much these last two years. . . . [This] has helped me not only in direction but also in my personal relationships. I think my biggest challenge . . . was trusting that God was present in my sessions. . . . More often than not, this presence was not revealed to me until later reflection, often through writing my verbatim.”** As a result of her practicum experience, Betsy says, **“I have learned . . . that I really like the young adult age group. I believe young people . . . are in desperate need of mentors in their lives, especially [those] who are away from home for the first time. Because of this, I would like to remain involved in campus ministry.”**

Jenny Leiter directed one person through the Nineteenth Annotation retreat and another through ongoing spiritual direction. She also led two ten-week group retreats at Akron Pregnancy Services and created two group retreat days, one at Fairview Hospital, and one for staff and volunteers at Akron Pregnancy Services. Jenny says, somewhat tongue-in-cheek, **“I find that I have missed the boat 99.9% of the time (in all honesty) but GOD has been in this 100% of the time. God is the Spiritual Director . . . the Holy Spirit ministers through me. Therefore I have learned to trust that God is in this and to listen.”** She also acknowledges, **“I have come to know myself better and am more aware of the nuances that exist in my spirit. The gift of ‘teacher’ is one expression; the gift of ‘spiritual director’ is another. And sometimes they mingle and at other times they do not. Wisdom is in knowing the difference.”**



Bob Linton led four men through the eight-week retreat, and saw another for ongoing direction, most of whom are in a twelve-step recovery program. **Bob comments, “I find Ignatian spirituality to dovetail seamlessly with the spiritual principles behind the twelve-step program, including the examen which is embodied in the tenth step to continue to take a personal inventory each day.”** Bob also serves as the local director for the Ignatian Spirituality Project; during his practicum he organized two weekend retreats and monthly meetings for this group. **Bob says of his experience, “[It] brought me closer to God and improved my spirituality. . . . I felt I had a front row seat to some of the most intimate moments in my directees’ lives. . . . I could unmistakably see and experience the presence of God in their lives as they shared. The most important skill I learned was how to be present and listen, being comfortable with the silence, . . . being present for them and their stories. I found this carried over to all aspects of my life, allowing me to be present for others, and listen – really listen.”**

Aida Mandapat accompanied two women through the Nineteenth Annotation retreat and a JCU freshman and a woman from her parish through the eight-week retreat. **Aida says, “What I appreciated most about the experience is how it has made me more aware of my lifelong need for ongoing conversion. As I knew on a much deeper level that I am God’s beloved, very precious in God’s eyes, I learned more about myself. I started ISI with a lot of head knowledge. Actually doing the practicum with all it entailed made it possible for that knowledge to traverse the long distance from my head to my heart. Grace, pure grace – God initiates and I simply receive. Indeed, God cannot be outdone in generosity.”** She continues, **“When things did not go as planned, I felt stuck in a hole. I prayed for the guidance of the Holy Spirit and somehow, I came up with the ‘right’ words. . . . As time went on, I welcomed silence as a sacrament of God’s presence and spent most of it praying for the directee.”**





Bob Meyer accompanied one man through a Nineteenth Annotation retreat and met with a young woman pastor for ongoing direction. He also served as spiritual director for students during the **Busy Student Retreat at the College of Wooster**. **Bob realizes that “as a pastor I have been doing spiritual direction in many ways for decades; however, this experience of formal spiritual direction affirmed for me some gifts and abilities I have, and helped me sharpen areas where I need more growth or training. An area I continue to need to develop is a clearer working knowledge of the spiritual rhythms and resources of the Spiritual Exercises.”** **Of his supervisory experience, Bob says he found it “totally positive. [My supervisor] did a wonderful job coaching me about issues that arose in the spiritual direction sessions, how to guide the directee, and moving me to reflect on what was going on emotionally and spiritually with me in the sessions. . . . My time with her couldn’t have been more helpful.”**

Jeff Nelson guided a pastoral colleague through the Nineteenth Annotation retreat and provided eight-week individually-directed retreats for five members of his church community along with two who met as a couple. **Particularly concerned about spiritual nourishment for pastors, he “became aware of the difficulty people in ministry may have in contemplating suggested biblical texts due to their familiarity.”** **He addressed this by asking his directee “how she heard God speaking to her personally through them.”** **He also wanted to spend his practicum learning how best to lead congregation members into deeper prayer. He found that most “expressed an unfamiliarity and at times discomfort with the basics of prayer. . . . Most also took a fairly cerebral approach to the material, making imperative statements about ‘what this means we should do.’ All of this together helped me . . . better prepare accordingly for future directees. I [learned to] invite them to think about who God and Jesus are for them apart from what they’ve been taught.”** **Jeff was surprised to find that his goal of remaining “self-differentiated” from his directees “and allow for their journey to remain theirs” was the easiest for him to realize.**



Mark Salchak met with a total of 27 directees for ongoing direction, using a modified Eighteenth Annotation retreat. He also co-facilitated an Ignatian Spirituality Project retreat with monthly follow-up meetings and alone facilitated a second such retreat and meetings. **Mark says of his experience, “My personal goals of becoming a more attentive and present listener have greatly improved. . . . I have become much more open-minded towards variations of spiritual expression and I feel a personal growth and maturity towards the spiritual . . . able to step outside of the ‘black and white’ mentality. . . . My sensitivity to the more subtle affective experiences, both in myself and simultaneously in my seekers has greatly improved over the past year. . . . The biggest gift [to] me through my supervisor was to learn to recognize God’s grace even in experiences that did not feel like graces, but were hidden from my perception. The ability to find grace in all things, good and bad, has been a breakthrough for me. I have been able to point out God’s grace and presence to directees even when they are faced with what appear to be negative circumstances.”**

Mary Senechal accompanied one woman through the Nineteenth Annotation retreat, and another through part of one. She also met with one woman for ongoing direction. **Mary sees her practicum year as having fulfilled the words of 2 Corinthians 5:17 – “So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!”** **She explains, “This practicum year brought me into situations and internal explorations that deepened my self-understanding and relationship with God. I feel like a ‘new creation.’”** **She continues, “I came to understand that to be contemplative means to listen deeply and immerse oneself in the God who is present in everyday life. The repeated prayer said at the outset of our classes -- “to the one in whom we live and move and have our being” – reminds me that out of this immersion in God and deep listening comes a contemplative life. . . . As the year progressed I found myself weekly uttering thanks to God as I witnessed divine presence and movement within a session. I don’t think that God suddenly just showed up; I think I learned to trust, to listen and then to let go and allow God to be at the helm. I am learning how I can as a spiritual director cooperate with God rather than trying to fix or find solutions.**



NEW ISI FAMILY MEMBER: Grace Isabella Sheehan came into the world on Monday, October 13 in Boston, Massachusetts at 5:05 am, weighing eight pounds and measuring 20.5 inches. She has been attending ISI classes ever since on the lap of her mom Megan, who participates in her second year classes via Face Time. She is a remarkably quiet baby during class, except for an occasional sigh or bout of hiccups.



The ISI held its Eighth Annual Reunion and Reflection Day for Alumnae/i and Friends on March 1st from 10 am to 4 pm, lunch included. Janice Bachman, OP, spiritual director and Jungian analyst, presented the topic **“Working with Dreams in Spiritual Direction.”** Attendance was 42, the highest we have ever had for this day. The program was enthusiastically received. None of us will ever forget how Elaine Fechko (ISI '09) had her real-life dream analyzed by Janice!



UPCOMING EVENTS



LEADING CONTEMPLATIVE GROUP PROGRAMS AND RETREATS

Have you ever been asked to lead a retreat day or day of recollection for your parish, place of work, or other venue? How would you go about it? Do you feel called to this sort of spiritual ministry? This new offering may be for you! This one-semester internship, offered jointly by Joan Nuth of the Ignatian Spirituality Institute, JCU, and Martha Campbell of the Lay Leadership Program, JRH, aims to prepare participants to plan and deliver short contemplative prayer programs based on the Ignatian *Spiritual Exercises*. The program begins with a silent retreat day at JRH on Sunday, January 25 (9 am – 4 pm) with sessions continuing at JCU on Thursday evenings from 7 to 9 pm: January 29, February 12, 19, 26, March 5, 19, 26, April 9, 23, 30. The program is able to accommodate only eight participants. For further information, contact Joan at jnuth@jcu.edu or Martha at campbellmarthal@gmail.com. For an application, contact Martha. Application Deadline has been extended to Monday, January 5th.

ISI ANNUAL QUIET RETREAT

This year the ISI's Annual Quiet Retreat will be held Friday evening April 10 through Saturday afternoon April 11 at the Jesuit Retreat House. Its theme, *Embracing the Mystery: A Deepening Experience of Life in Christ*, invites one into deeper participation in the life, death and resurrection of Christ. Presented by ISI grads Karen Broer ('06) and Joan Carney ('07), this retreat is the culmination of a larger program of the same name. Earlier sessions will be held on Saturdays January 10, February 14, and March 14 from 9 am to 12 noon at the Franciscan Center in Garfield Heights. For further information, contact Karen at karenbroer@sbcglobal.net or Joan at patjoanetc@hotmail.com.



REGISTRATION FOR THE ENTIRE PROGRAM is through JRH at www.jrh-cleveland.org or 440-884-9300 x310. Early discounted registration by December 3; registration deadline by December 10.

REGISTRATION FOR THE RETREAT ALONE will be announced in the spring and will be handled through Carol Polish at ISI: cpolish@jcu.edu or 216-397-1599.



IGNIS is published on an as-needed basis by:

Ignatian Spirituality Institute
John Carroll University
1 John Carroll Boulevard
University Heights, OH 44118

Joan M. Nuth, Ph.D.
Director
216-397-1678
jnuth@jcu.edu

Carol Polish,
Administrative Assistant
216-397-1599
cpolish@jcu.edu



Visit our website:
sites.jcu.edu/isi

Photographs in this issue were taken by Rob Wetzler, of Wetzler's Photography, Raul Botha, Joan Nuth and from the ISI archives.