

# IGNIS



*Newsletter of the Ignatian Spirituality Institute*

*Volume 13 Number 2*

*November 2015*

## CONGRATULATIONS, CLASS OF 2015!

After two years of concentrated study and companionship, the class of 2015 received their certificates of completion of the ISI program on Sunday, August 30. 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 eleventh class of the ISI pose after the ceremony. From left to right: Terri Preskar, Julie Graham, Emma Krueger, George Shunk, Maria Green, Rose Kaval, Carla Robison, Raul Botha, Megan Sheehan, Brenna Davis, Patrice Nerone and Jamie Schmotzer.

## Letter from the Director

As I reflect on the events and ceremonies that accompanied the last weekend of ISI events for this year of 2015, the word “blessed” rings in my ears, as it did for Kathy Haag, our certification speaker this year. Indeed “blessed” very well describes the mood of each member of the class of 2015, which impressed me as I read through their final reflections on their practicum experience. They feel blessed, as do I, in the companionship of their classmates, in the wisdom and helpfulness of their supervisors, and in the grace of accompanying others in their spiritual lives. The record of these blessings is reflected through the pages of this issue of *Ignis*.

In her address to the graduates, Kathy reminded us that each phase of the *Spiritual Exercises* is blessed. She cleverly linked each of the eight beatitudes in Matthew’s gospel to the movements of the *Exercises*, concluding:

**Why do I title the talk “Blessed Are the Spiritual Directors”?** Certainly you are called to live the beatitudes, to be transformed in Christ, to be united with Christ. But how privileged and fortunate you are – how blessed you are – to be able to accompany others as they live the beatitudes. You are blessed to witness the power of God in the lives of those you direct, and you are blessed to share your own deep love of God, the creator of all. Blessed are you, spiritual directors, for you shall know God.

May you all be blessed, indeed, class of 2015, as you move farther into this blessed ministry!

Blessed may you be, Carol Polish!

This issue of *Ignis* requires that we also pray that deep and abundant blessings accompany someone who has been such a blessing to us for the past five years. This September sadly marked the departure of Carol Polish from her post as ISI Administrative Assistant. We said goodbye with a thanksgiving party in her honor, gifting her with a Memory Book in which we recorded our individual blessings for her. May she be richly blessed as **she continues her life’s journey. And we hope that she will continue to bless us with her presence at ISI events in the future!**



### In this issue:

- ◆ Letter From the Director
- ◆ 2015 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 2015-2016



Peace and all good things, Joan



The weekend of August 28 to 30 found the class of 2015 at the Jesuit Retreat house, assembled for their last ISI Opening Retreat. They met with each other on Friday evening to share their plans for the future. On Saturday they **participated in two workshops led by Joan Carney (ISI '07) and Rich Jerdonek (ISI '06) on Ongoing Spiritual Direction and on Peer Supervision.** Saturday evening they hosted the incoming interns for a question and answer session on what to expect for their practicum year.



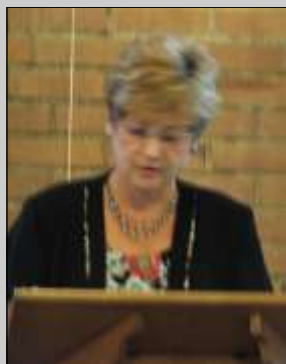


On Saturday evening the class of 2015 gathered for the annual wine and cheese social, together with the classes of 2016 and 2017. It was a repast beautifully prepared as usual by Carol Polish. We welcomed back many ISI alums who joined in the celebration.



## Sunday Morning Liturgy

On Sunday morning the ISI assembled in the chapel at JRH for its annual liturgy closing the Opening Retreat weekend. Rev. Matt Roche, SJ was our celebrant, and Marty Hoehler provided accompaniment to our singing. Each member of the class of 2015 remembered their two years in the ISI with a brief reflection. At the end of the liturgy all assembled raised their hands in blessing over the new spiritual directors, sending them forth for their mission of service to others.



## The Certification Ceremony and Reception

The ISI held its eleventh Certification Ceremony honoring the class of 2015 on Sunday afternoon, August 30 At JCU in Donohue Auditorium. Rosemarie Carfagna, OSU led the **Opening Prayer.** **Kathryn Haag (ISI '09)** addressed the assembly with a reflection entitled **“Blessed Are the Spiritual Directors.”** **Joan Nuth, the ISI director,** delivered the certificates with a brief remembrance of each intern (the script is reproduced on the following pages). Carol Polish presented each one with a gift (a book and an ISI lapel pin). Eileen Novotny (ISI '07) gave the final blessing. All proceeded to the Atrium for a celebratory reception.



What follows are the remarks made by Dr. Nuth as she presented certificates to the class of 2015. 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 retreat at Gethsemani, KY last June. Enjoy!



Words describing this intern: engaging personality, enthusiastic, creative and inspiring.

One who listens with the ear of the heart, this intern is described by his classmates as a caring person who was **concerned about everyone in class. This one's openness** to new ideas inspired others to think outside the box, and to remain open to new ideas even when one felt skeptical. **This one's face would light up with enthusiasm whenever** talking about spiritual direction. This one also has an ability to integrate learning with practical application for spiritual direction. Several commented that this one reminds them of a wide-eyed child exploring the world, delighting in everything found. But this one is actually

farmer, gardener, horseman, soldier, minister, and spiritual director rolled into one, as well as father, husband and chemist. **Classmates love his direct honesty and practicality and see him as a "no fuss, no muss," very good man.**

George Shunk, because of how you praise God through music, your scripture is:

*"Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come into his presence with singing. Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture" (Ps 100:1-3).*

Words describing this intern: good-natured, outgoing, thoughtful, considerate.

This intern is described as a friend to all, with a genuine concern, **sincerely expressed, for everyone. Classmates appreciate this one's** laid-back humor and bright smile, as well as the sensitivity, intuition and creativity brought to every task and to interactions with others. **One described this intern as the "social glue" of the class, always** trying to find ways to create deeper community, connection, and **peace within the group. All appreciate this one's generosity** in spending the time it took to create the first ever video for the ISI, which now graces our website. The class has rejoiced in knowing and companioning this Romanian immigrant and young father whose lively faith in God will make him an excellent spiritual director and guide.

Raul Botha, honoring your great desire for community, I give you the following scripture passage:

*"Now the whole [community of believers] were of one heart and soul. . . . With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. There was not a needy person among them, for . . . they laid [their possessions] at the apostles' feet, and [they were] distributed to each as any had need" (Acts 4:32-35).*





*Words describing this intern: inner peace, calm, wisdom*

A great teacher and explainer of complex concepts, this one embraces humanity with huge generosity and nobility of heart, making self constantly available for listening, reflection and **spiritual discernment**. **This one's comments were always** intelligent and well-placed in class discussion, delivered with a gentleness and humility that never made others feel their ideas were not respected. This one was able to simplify things so that the most abstract ideas would become understandable, **and thus was the "go-to guy" for many in the class when a** clearer explanation was needed. This one is described by classmates as the archetypal thinker, the philosopher, and the **theologian par excellence**. **This one's knowledge and** intelligence are undeniable, but this one is also very down-to-earth, hilariously funny, and able to mesh sophisticated theology with classic rock, smoking and good food.

Jamie Schmotzer, because of your love for liturgy I give you the picture of Gethsemani's chapel and the scripture passage:

*"One thing I asked of the Lord, that I will seek after: to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple" (Ps 27:4).*

*Words describing this intern: whimsical, genuine, eager, energetic.*

Filled with excitement, this intern expresses joy in life in a fun-filled way. Her bubbly personality and warm smile are contagious, making her a joy to be around. In a more serious vein, she is described as showing up authentically on every occasion, and embracing vulnerability in the interests of personal and spiritual growth. Classmates appreciate her intuition, genuine curiosity, and eagerness to learn. If one word could describe this intern, one classmate **said, it would be "grace"** – a grace with which she speaks, smiles, participates in class, and performs on the ballroom dance floor. As one classmate put it, Maria dances her spirituality and spiritualizes her **dance**. She truly **"greens" her surroundings**, and the class has benefitted from her presence.



Maria Green, your scripture is:

*"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 23:1-2).*



*Words describing this intern: Gentle, Kind, Nurturing*

This intern is someone who has freedom, deep **discernment, faith in God's call, and a continued enthusiasm** for the adventure of spiritual growth. Classmates appreciate how participative in class and how enthusiastic she was about the knowledge being gained. Classmates also found her to be a calm and grounding presence in class with comments that were insightful and practical, but also one who can laugh with joy even in trying circumstances. Classmates have benefited from learning about her holistic approach to wellness, both spiritual and physical. They admire her greatly for giving up her whole life in Cleveland to pursue her dream of a Masters from Loyola Chicago. We all wish her *bon voyage*.



Patrice Nerone, because you are stepping out once again into the unknown, I offer you this scripture passage:

***“In hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience” (Rom 8:24-25).***

*Words describing this intern: humorous, playful, energetic, honest*

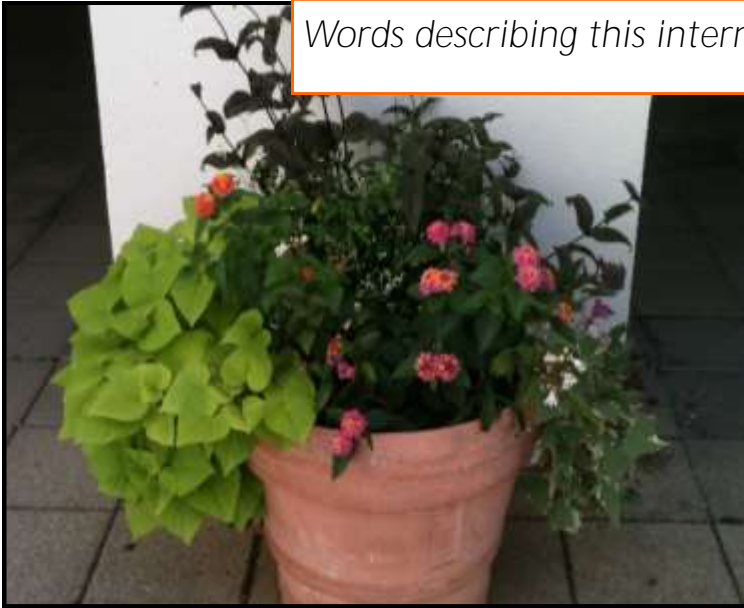


This intern is described as a free-spirited pilgrim, a passionate, questioning, determined fighter for justice. Many commented on her enthusiasm, liveliness and joy, which she brought to every discussion and task. Classmates also appreciate her courage, strength, openness, transparency, and vulnerability exhibited in **sharing her life's struggles and joys. Her desire to reach out to others in need to give them understanding and encouragement is admirable. With this intern, it is true that “what you see is what you get.” Her sincerity and genuineness are without question.**

Julie Graham, because of your feminist instincts, I give you this passage in which Wisdom, female image of God, speaks to us:

***“The Lord created me at the beginning of his work. . . . Ages ago I was set up, at the first, before the beginning of the earth. . . . Then I was beside God, like a little child, and I was daily his delight, playing before him always, rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the human race” (Proverbs 8:22-23, 30-31).***

Words describing this intern: *mature, self-confident, strong*



This intern was always “point-blank” in expressing opinions, but also tolerant and forgiving; giving insight surrounded by love. Classmates find her the type of person you stop to listen to because her comments are rooted in genuine life experience, stories of both success and frustration, which were shared honestly with great observation and patience. Three words to describe this intern are steady, dependable, and colorful. Steadiness and dependability were indicated by her presence in every class with homework completed and reflections always ready for class discussion. Her colorfulness is exhibited not only in her name, and the colorful clothing she wears, but in her colorful and lively spirit.

Rose Kaval, because you are firmly grounded in God’s steadfast love, your scripture passage is:

*“I trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation. I will sing to the Lord, because he has dealt bountifully with me” (Ps 13:5-6).*

Words describing this intern: *Jovial, considerate, mindful, humorous*

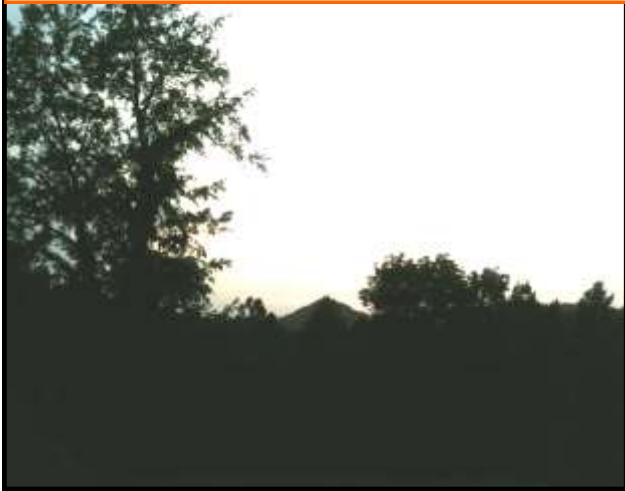
This intern is described as a joyful, thoughtful and humble spirit with an ability to put people at ease. Many classmates commented on her ability to be totally present to them and make them feel they are the most important person in the room. Classmates also **appreciate this one’s ability to frame statements and questions so** eloquently in class, working systematically through an idea or issue, showing us, step by step, how her mind works. In the process, clarity would emerge. She is described as bringing authentic care, reason and practical spirituality to every conversation. She lives and breathes the desire to nurture, develop, and celebrate other **people’s talents** – and ultimately to find God in all things.

Terri Preskar, your scripture passage is:

*“I am the true vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15:5).*



Words describing this intern: *Observant, careful, honest, loving*



This intern is described as thoughtful and dedicated to becoming a spiritual director. She is seen as someone who deeply appreciates life and its beauty and is able to see the good in everything. Many commented on her dedication and fidelity to learning her ministry. She cultivates patience to persevere in situations and people who produce stress, and also a patience with self that is admirable. Many also commented on her calmness, discretion and quiet demeanor. But one person **would like to remind us that “still waters run deep.”** Classmates appreciate how this intern’s character was honed by her many years of teaching young children. The qualities of such a teacher: warm, inviting, organized, with just the right amount of sternness, will serve her as spiritual director as well.

Carla Robison, your scripture is:

*“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid” (John 14:27).*

Words describing this intern: *gentle, sweet tempered, free spirit, beacon of joy*

This intern is most often described as kind, understanding and supportive, always having something nice to say to everyone, generous in sharing resources, and always willing to help. Many mentioned memories of being helped personally by her. A few classmates spoke admiringly of the care and attention she devoted to each direction session, offering a wide variety of prayer experiences and a well-tuned, God-sensing heart. A life-long learner, she pursues knowledge of the spiritual life without ceasing. Two people described her as the proverbial wise grandmother figure, both firm and kind. But she is also described as radiating a youthful energy, inspiring others to engage creative expression to renew vitality in life.

Emma Krueger, because of your Benedictine heart, I give you the picture of the entrance to the Trappist cloister at Gethsemani.



*“Be still, and know that I am God” (Ps 46:10).*



*Words describing this intern: sincere, great sense of self, calming*

This intern is admired for her perseverance and courage in **following God's call, and her description of her faith journey was** inspiring to many. She exudes calm, confidence and serenity. Her mild and gentle demeanor can quickly put people at ease. Her soothing presence creates a prayerful, energy-giving listener, ready to validate, encourage, and challenge directees when appropriate. Wise beyond her years, this new mother proudly brought Baby Grace to class via Face Time for the enjoyment of us all. Classmates are Impressed by her self-possession and her ability to juggle a new marriage, baby, city and M.Div. program, and at the same time complete her ISI internship! As one classmate put it, **"Talk about a well-directed young woman!"**

Megan Sheehan, the picture is of a rather unique statue on the grounds at Gethsemani entitled "Epiphany." Appropriately, your scripture is that of Mary's words:

*"My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, . . . for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name" (Luke 1:46-49).*

*Words describing this intern: unfailingly bright and cheery, youthful, solid*



We have one more member of the class to consider. Even though she will not complete her internship until next year, Brenna Davis belongs to this class and it is appropriate to celebrate her. Brenna is a multifaceted individual. On the one hand, her youth brought out maternal instincts in one classmate, who, a teacher herself, sympathized with the difficulty of combining a teaching profession with ISI training. On the other hand, she is described as funny, with an honest and edgy humor, and playful – quite a spark plug. She is also described as the kind of person who always greets you **like you are the best friend she hasn't seen for a long time**. Another thinks of Brenna as an anchor: grounded and not prone to being tossed about. There is something sincere and trustworthy about her that Inspires confidence. Another calls Brenna a gift, a most nurturing person with a great desire to spread

goodness. As one of the young set, Brenna is smart and respected for her technological skill. She is highly respected as well for her concern for the poor and disenfranchised. **And finally we all noticed Brenna's delight in being Grace's godmother. Her eyes sparkled whenever she talked about Megan or the baby.**

Brenna Davis, because your future life is right now a mystery, I give you the following scripture passage:

*"Teach me your way, O Lord, that I may walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart to revere your name" (Ps 86:11).*

May your way be lined with golden lilies!



RAUL BOTHA spent his practicum directing John Carroll students, one young man through the Nineteenth Annotation Retreat, and two young women through the 8-week retreat. He added one more woman (not a JCU student) for an 8-week retreat. Initially Raul felt a strong need to try to control the sessions, but as the weeks progressed, he relaxed and became a good listener with the ability to reflect back and provide appropriate prayer suggestions and guidance. He grew in self-awareness and in the ability to articulate his feelings regarding his direction sessions.

JULIE GRAHAM, accompanied an 87-year-old man through the 19<sup>th</sup> Annotation Retreat and a woman through an 8-week retreat which eventually evolved into ongoing spiritual direction. She also led a reflection group at Edna House, a sober living facility for women. **Julie reflects that through her practicum experience, “I have become a better listener and have begun to trust the silence that must sometimes fill the space within spiritual direction.” Julie finds it most helpful to remember that she “will never arrive but will always be God’s work in progress. Trusting that I am right where I am supposed to be, as I am [and that] God is working at God’s pace . . . are ongoing areas of growth for me.”**



MARIA GREEN accompanied two people, a man and a woman, through the 19<sup>th</sup> Annotation Retreat. **Maria realized through her direction experience “the importance of being natural or being myself as a spiritual director” which was challenging for her at first, but she found that “every session has improved.” Part of “being herself” meant learning to trust her intuition and acting on it when appropriate. She concludes, “By paying attention to [the directees’] words and using my imagination by putting myself into their shoes I was able to understand my directees, empathize with their situation, and act on the guidance of the Holy Spirit.”**

ROSE KAVAL accompanied one woman through the Nineteenth Annotation Retreat, another through the eight-week retreat, and met with four others for monthly ongoing spiritual direction. Rose **“was often amazed how the right words just ‘came to me’ after offering a silent prayer.” She also found that “each time I saw evidence of someone growing closer to God it brought me closer to God.” Rose feels she has developed certain skills such as “patience, deeper understanding of human nature, and the ability to sense when to speak and when to allow the silence.” All in all, she found her practicum year “extremely positive,” one she will never forget.**





EMMA KRUEGER accompanied three women through the Nineteenth Annotation Retreat. She also conducted an all-day retreat on discernment and a few in-services at a Lutheran Church. **Emma believes “I met my directees where they were, accepted their strengths and weaknesses and grew with them, [and] learned the value of ‘leaving the creature to God’ with love and hope for the future.”** Emma had set the goal to “listen with the ear of her heart,” following the Rule of St. Benedict. **On this she confesses, “My mouth likes to engage! I make a conscious effort to listen. I believe this may be a life-long challenge!”**

PATRICE NERONE accompanied two individuals through the Nineteenth Annotation Retreat and one through the 8-week version of the Exercises. One of **Patrice’s goals for her directees was to help them focus on God’s presence in their prayer and lives, something that proved rather difficult with some directees, demanding a good deal of patience and perseverance on Patrice’s part.** Another challenging issue was self-doubt, which Patrice has learned to live with as part of her own growth in self-knowledge without **“fussing about it too much.”** She believes she has grown in humility, which is sufficient.



TERRI PRESKAR accompanied one woman through the Nineteenth Annotation Retreat and another through the 8-week retreat. She also led several group retreat experiences through the *Joyfully Gifted* spiritual gifts discernment program for women at several parishes. Terri was delighted to find that over the course of her **practicum she could “decrease the voice and frequency of the inner self-critic” and replace it “with feelings of awe at the Spirit’s workings.”** Terri also gained **“an inner confidence that has me speaking my faith, my relationship with Christ in an emboldened manner.”** She has **“become more keenly aware of my feelings and addresses them more openly and honestly.”** She considers this **“one of my favorite take-a-ways from this experience.”**

CARLA ROBISON accompanied two women through a Lenten 8-week retreat and met with four others for monthly ongoing spiritual direction. **Carla reflects, “I feel I learned a lot about myself during my practicum. Working with my directees helped me to become more patient and a better listener. I also feel I am not as anxious about things.”** Her practicum also helped her to remember **“that God is in control.”** Carla realized that through preparing for and spending time with her directees her own prayer life has grown as well, since she herself prayed with the materials she gave her directees. She also found her supervisor extremely helpful, providing good insights into spiritual direction and many helpful suggestions and resources.



JAMIE SCHMOTZER led one man through a ten-day retreat and met for ongoing spiritual direction with four others, two men and two women. Through the practicum Jamie says he learned **“to think about spiritual direction in more Ignatian terms.”** He **“gained confidence”** in himself as a spiritual director and still needs to become more familiar with resources and have a better sense of how and when to be flexible to match the needs of the directee. He learned that **“simply being present to each directee was enough. I did not need to ‘control’ where things went.”** What Jamie appreciated most about the practicum were the supervision sessions, **“which forced me to focus on my own interior movement during [direction] sessions.”**



MEGAN SHEEHAN had a rather unique practicum experience, since she was living in Boston and attended classes via Face Time. For her practicum she accompanied two women through the Nineteenth Annotation Retreat via Skype and met with one woman for ongoing spiritual direction. **Megan began by “over-planning” her sessions, and then worrying if she had done everything “right,” wondering if she had said too much or too little. She soon learned the need to be more open to the fact that God’s Spirit can do good work without her help!** As a thinker, Megan also needed to learn to pay more attention to her affective responses to her directees. Megan is most grateful for her supervisory experience, finding it very helpful.

GEORGE SHUNK led an 8-week group retreat, accompanied two John Carroll students individually through the 8-week retreat, and met for ongoing direction with a variety of individuals. George is pleased to say that he gradually learned how much **of his own experience to share and how much could get in the way of the directee’s** experience. He learned to curtail his tendency to preach or teach. Through his experiences of direction and supervision, **“I learned that God has blessed me with talents and abilities that I never would have known.”** Of all the skills practiced during his internship, two stand out for George: the ability to ask evocative questions, and that of becoming more intuitive with respect to **“sensitive areas in the directee.”**



BABY GRACE SHEEHAN spent her practicum year attending class via Face Time **on her mother Megan’s lap. Early on she was very quiet, emitting only a hiccup or two.** As we were able to watch her grow through the first few months of her life, she became more active, exploring what she was seeing with her amazingly beautiful eyes. She certainly fulfilled her practicum goal to be a delight to all of us. She attended the closing liturgy and Certification Ceremony with her mom, continuing to delight all present. **She has indeed been a “grace” and blessing to the class of 2015.**

## There's class and community life after ISI!

Fall 2015 Course on Thomas Merton: This past semester 28 signed up for a continuing education course designed for ISI graduates. Entitled "Thomas Merton: Monk, Mystic, Poet, Prophet," the course met on Monday evenings for some and Tuesday afternoons for others, the two time slots chosen to meet people's preference and convenience. We spent time getting to know this intriguing Cistercian monk through his autobiography, journals, essays, poetry, prayer, and photography.



### UPCOMING EVENTS

#### SPRING 2016 COURSE: "Cultivating Christ Consciousness: Christology for Spiritual Directors":

According to many ISI grads, learning about Jesus was one of the most fruitful experiences of their ISI coursework. This coming semester we will build upon and deepen that experience with a more thorough exploration into Christology, especially addressing how the historical Jesus became the Christ of faith, and why experiential knowledge of the Risen Christ is crucial for the development of our own spirituality and that of our directees. Beginning the week of January 19, the class will follow the same schedule as last semester: either a Monday evening or a Tuesday afternoon option, throughout the spring semester at JCU. More information and registration procedures will be forthcoming very shortly: Watch for the announcement!



#### ISI ANNUAL REUNION AND REFLECTION DAY: "Art as Prayer: An Art Journaling Retreat"

Our annual reunion day this year will be held on Saturday, March 12 from 10 am to 4 pm. It will be conducted by Mary Coffey (ISI '13) who invites you to experience how and why praying with images can enhance your prayer life and bring you and your directees into a deep, authentic relationship with God. Learn how to pray with art materials to express your spirituality in an exciting, creative way, and then journal about your experience. No artistic talent required! At the conclusion of the retreat, you will be asked to respond to a questionnaire which will provide data for incorporation into the essay requirement for Mary's Master of Arts in Theology at John Carroll



University. More information will be forthcoming – watch for it and save the date!

#### ISI WEEKEND ANNUAL RETREAT: "Christ Consciousness: Carmelite and Ignatian Spiritualities in Dialogue"

facilitated by Constance Fitzgerald, OCD and Brian McDermott, SJ at the Jesuit Retreat House, Friday May 6 (7-9 pm) and Saturday May 7 (9 am–4 pm). This year our retreat will provide a special "treat" for you: a chance to hear two well-known spiritual directors and contemplatives reflect upon two giants of Christian spirituality, Ignatius of Loyola and Teresa of Avila, in dialogue with each other, and how their legacies can inform our own spiritual life.

More information will be forthcoming –save the dates!



AND

Back by Popular Demand: ISI PRACTICUM IN DIRECTING THE 8-DAY SILENT RETREAT: We will repeat in summer 2016 the highly successful practicum held last summer at the Jesuit Retreat House: both the opportunity to make the 8-day retreat personally and the opportunity to participate in the practicum. Dates will be determined shortly after the new year. Watch for the announcement and application procedures.

Photo by Jean Sullivan



IGNIS is published on an as-needed basis by:

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