



Finding Jesus at San Damiano

December 2023 | 0003

"Bands of Fathers" — at Your Service

"It was the best of times... it was the worst of times..." observes Charles Dickens in his opening of "A Tale of Two Cities." Looking at our headlines these days, I am sure there are not many who would describe the "2020's" as "the best of times!"

It is, however, the calamitous times that produce the greater number of heroes (and heroines). Looking back over 2000 years in the history of our Church, it is obvious that times of heresy and scandals, plagues and confusion, produce great saints like Augustine and Catherine of Siena, Ignatius and Philip Neri.

In our own challenging times, I see these currents forming and forging men of courage and selflessness who are willing to respond to Christ's call to the priesthood. In our Diocese of Arlington, it is encouraging to note the quantity and quality of the men who stand forward and say "Yes" to Jesus' call to a life of service as priests.

Contemplating this band of brothers about me I am filled with hope (and humility!) as I see their gifts and their fervor. Since San Damiano is not run by a religious order, but is a **diocesan** retreat center, it certainly makes sense that we involve, in a systematic way, our own Arlington priests in the endeavor to bring our sisters and brothers to the feet of Christ in prayer on retreat.

The majority of our retreats at San Damiano will be led by priests who are brothers in the "Band of Fathers" who serve our diocesan family. We are also planning a series of retreats based on Jesus' method of sending His disciples out "two by two" (Mark 6:7). In February, our first "2X2 Team," Fr. Ed Guilloux and Fr. Stephen Vaccaro are offering a retreat for couples, **"Praying with the Saints."** For more information on this and other retreats, please visit our site on the Diocesan webpage www.arlingtondiocese.org/retreat



What is Spirituality?

by *Father John Riley*

Spiritual Director

San Damiano Retreat Center

A wise old priest once observed, "Life is to get close to Christ; the rest is details." But how? Mass. Confession. Living a moral life. Reading and "breathing" the Scriptures — and especially "the Gospels." But like the Rich Young Man we often find ourselves asking, "What more can I do?" (Mat 19:16ff). Our Lord calls us all to "put out into the deep" and seek Him by increasing our time in prayer.

There are many ways of praying. The Rosary... Litanies... Novenas... a few quiet words whispered in the silence before Jesus in the Tabernacle in a darkened church. These are all wonderful ways to raise our mind and heart and soul to God. Is one way of praying better than all the rest?

Well... the best definition for "Prayer" is found in the New American Translation of the Gospel of St. Luke: *"Communion with God"* (Lk 6:12). The Human Person, created in God's "Image and Likeness" is called to pray... constantly in this life and Forever and Eternally in Heaven. But because of Fallen Human nature, and of many distractions offered by the world and the opposition of the devil, prayer is difficult. The Catechism of the Catholic Church even refers to it as a "battle" (CCC #2725).

Spirituality is the manner in which we are led as unique individuals to seek Christ in prayer. Over the centuries since Our Lord ascended into heaven, many traditions and "schools of spirituality" have risen in our Catholic experience: Desert fathers drawn to solitude... St. Benedict's Brothers singing the Liturgy of the Hours in monasteries from the rising of the sun to its setting... Dominican scholars seeking Truth in their studies... Franciscan Friars wandering

UPCOMING RETREATS

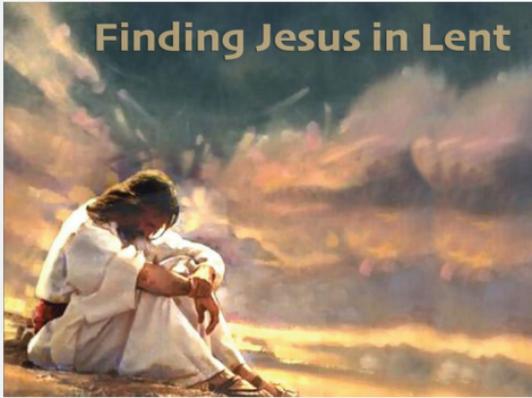


Women's Silent Retreat Feb 23th – 25th

As we enter Lent, join FR. Morey for a walk through the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Holy Rosary. Treasure and ponder the sufferings and Sacrifice of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and the abiding presence of His Mother along the way.

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Men's Retreat: February 9th – 11th



For 40 days our Lord retreated into the desert to fast, pray, and to endure temptation. Join a band of brothers as we gather to pray and to ponder how to become men after Christ's own heart.

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about joyful and poor even as they serve the poor... Jesuit martyrs... wise Salesians... and of course our treasured contemplative Nuns praying for all the world.

At our Arlington Diocese's San Damiano Retreat Center we are making a concerted effort to offer retreats representing a number of different schools of spirituality that are a part of our rich Catholic Tradition. Over time and intentionally we have been and shall continue to offer retreats that reveal the lives and minds and hearts and souls of great saints and Doctors of the Church, their followers, and the religious orders they founded. Please keep us in your prayers as we strive to help you find Jesus in prayer with the wisdom of the great saints.

2 by 2 for 2



A Retreat for Married Couples

March 8-10, 2024. Join Fr. Stephen Vaccaro and Fr. Ed Guilloux as they lead couples through the lives and teaching of the Saints. This retreat will focus on aiding married couples to incorporate a deeper, spiritual life into their vocation.

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