



## FINDING JESUS IN THE GOSPELS

February 2025 | 0008

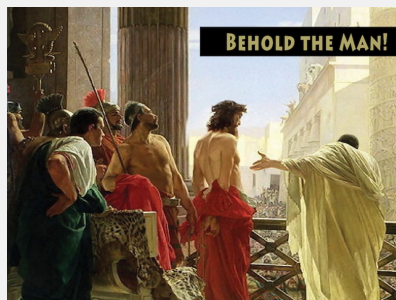
### Palm Sunday Retreat

As a lad I remember my father often left town on business trips, and we always welcomed him joyfully when he returned home. But once each year he embarked on a different sort of trip: a retreat.

Mom explained that a retreat was a place where men went to pray, they stayed in a building like a big church with sleeping rooms, "and they don't talk for three days." I remember being particularly fascinated by the idea of going three days without speaking at all. To me it seemed impossible.

The afternoon of Palm Sunday is when Dad returned—for his retreat was always that same weekend leading into Holy Week—and he was different. He would bring us little religious gifts... statues or prayer books or rosaries, and speak to us of some of the things he had heard during those three days of silence. In a way it prepared us all for the holiest week of the year—and as a family we entered into the drama of the days ahead.

This year, for the first time at San Damiano, we will offer a **Men's Silent Retreat** the weekend of **Palm Sunday, April 11th-13th**. Gathering together as a band of brothers—with Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament—we will immerse ourselves in the Gospels and contemplate the Passion of our Lord as we savor the silence and listen in prayer. For more information, or if you would like to join us, please contact me at [john.riley@arlingtondiocese.org](mailto:john.riley@arlingtondiocese.org)



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**Women's Silent Retreat: May 2**

#### Mary & the Rosary

Catholics certainly recognize the power and preeminence of the Rosary in our Spiritual tradition. But most of us also have a great deal of difficulty praying the Rosary, and often feel as if we are just "going through the motions."

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### Our Diocesan Retreat Center

Many spirituality centers offer an experience that consists of libraries stocked with a wide barrage of self-help books, conferences on various eastern philosophies, and gift shops offering a varied assortment of "new-agey" paraphernalia—together with a place to spend the night—like "slightly-spiritual Holiday Inns".

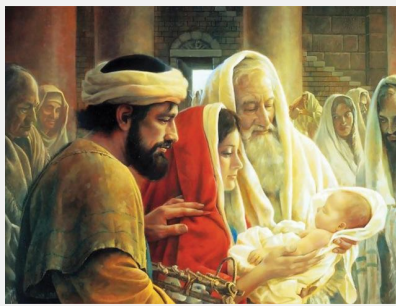
Sounder and safer options are offered by centers served and staffed by members of religious orders like the Jesuits or our good Trappist monks in Berryville. Although there is definitely a "Franciscan flair" at the Diocese of Arlington's **San Damiano Retreat Center**, our spirituality is "decidedly Diocesan."

Nearly half a million Northern Virginia Catholics are seeking Christ in parishes stretching from the "burbs of Beltwayland, far to the south "on the road to Richmond" and westward into the Shenandoah Valley. Caught up in a culture and lifestyles that are usually preoccupied and hyperextended, they long for the elusive simplicity and silence that we all need to hear the quiet Voice that speaks in the gentle breeze (1 Kings 19:12).

Parish priests serving in the realm of Arlington live in the midst of this manic milieu and must work hard them-selves to maintain their own interior life and intimacy with Christ. The constant effort needed for diocesan priests to integrate prayer time with over-packed schedules requires a certain degree of resourcefulness and even cleverness (**Matthew 10:16**). Finding and making time for "pockets of prayer" and "minute retreats" during days that are quite full is a basic and necessary element of a "Diocesan Spirituality" that can be shared with their parishioners — and others who seek Jesus in daily meditation and quiet contemplation.

At San Damiano we have been increasing our invitations to priests of our own diocesan family to lead our retreats. For decades the Diocese of Arlington has been blessed with a bounty of vocations—quantity *and quality*—and many of our brothers have a particular gift for teaching and preaching in a manner that will effectively engage our very receptive retreatants.

Although this approach poses a number of challenges, we hope that most months we will be able to offer silent



**A Silent Retreat for Seniors: May 9**

**The Wisdom of Years**

Isn't it a challenge, living in the midst of our "throwaway culture," for those who are "full of years" to understand our place in the world—and in our Church? Join Fr. John Riley, Spiritual Director at San Damiano, as we search the Scriptures, pray with Jesus in the Gospels, and consider the Crosses and the Consolations of our Senior Years.

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retreats for men and for women. We also offer "mixed retreats" for men and women, for married couples, and retreats for seniors and young adults. Our hope in the year ahead is also to offer a unique retreat experience for our brothers and sisters with Special Needs.

Please check out our docket of retreats below. Consider any offerings which may interest you, consult your schedules, and bring the matter to quiet prayer. Hopefully sometime soon you may be able to head out to the Arlington Diocese's San Damiano Retreat Center to **"come aside and rest awhile."** (Mark 6:32)



**Couples Silent Retreat: July 18**

A retreat for married couples to contemplate the gift of the Sacrament. We will pray individually and together, pondering the graces of Marriage and reflecting on God's promises and Presence in the life of a family.

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**Silent Men's Retreat: July 11**

**Finding Jesus with St. Joseph**

Retreat with a Band of Brothers to pray, and to learn from the example of "the Quiet Man" how to serve Christ as men after His Own Heart.

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**Silent Women's Retreat: August 9**

**St Catherine of Siena**

Fr. Hudgins will lead retreatants as we work our way through St. Catherine's 3 Steps to Spiritual Growth: Servile fear, imperfect love, and purified love (or union.)

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**Silent Women's Retreat: Sept. 19**

**Obedience & Spiritual Union**

Meditating on the nature of a woman's receptive power.

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**Young Adults Retreat: October 10**

**Pier Giorgio Frassati**

Scale the peaks and navigate the troughs of the spiritual life.

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