



## Franciscan Spirituality Center

*Dedicated to anyone seeking God,  
meaning and wholeness.*

VOLUME 23 • NUMBER 3

MAY/JUNE 2015

# At the Center

## In this Issue:

- *Journey Toward Wholeness*
- *The Gift of Birth*
- *Into the Heart of the Word*
- *Icon retreats: A storied history*
- *In the Heart of Compassion*



CELEBRATING

30 years

REGISTER TODAY

30<sup>th</sup>  
Annual Conference

May 1-2, 2015

*Open to everyone*



*With keynote speaker*

**Thomas Ryan, CSP**

*Writer, poet, retreat leader  
and interfaith advocate*

The Franciscan Spirituality  
Center presents:

# Living your Life AS SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

*You are invited to this special 30th anniversary conference. Father Tom will demonstrate how to integrate the mind, body and spirit—the sacred and the secular—drawing on ancient and new Eastern and Western traditions.*

## Friday Workshops:

Yoga for Christians: Addressing the  
Fears, Experiencing the Possibilities

*with Thomas Ryan, CSP*

We Can Be Spiritual  
AND Religious

*with April Ulring Larson,  
Bishop Emeritus,  
La Crosse Area Synod, ELCA*



When Outer Became Inner:  
The Beginnings  
of Contemplative  
Consciousness

*with Tom Roberts*



Gospel Spirituality in  
Spiritual Direction

*with John McHugh*



**To register, please visit: [www.FSCenter.org](http://www.FSCenter.org) or call: 608-791-5295**

Friday workshop sessions, book signing and evening social will take place at the Franciscan Spirituality Center, 920 Market Street, La Crosse  
The Saturday keynote address will take place at English Lutheran Church, 1509 King Street, La Crosse.



Franciscan  
Spirituality Center

Celebrating 30 years of open doors to anyone seeking God, meaning and wholeness.

**At the Center** newsletter is published six times a year on earth-friendly paper with a higher recycled content. Find us on Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest.



#### Franciscan Spirituality Center

920 Market Street, La Crosse, WI 54601  
608-791-5295  
FSCenter@fspa.org • www.FSCenter.org

#### Identity

The Franciscan Spirituality Center is a sacred place that welcomes everyone. We are rooted in the Gospels and sponsored by the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration.

#### Mission

The Franciscan Spirituality Center is dedicated to supporting anyone in their search for God, meaning and wholeness.

We live this mission because we believe:

In each of us lives the Sacred.

We need each other to recognize and honor that part of ourselves.

Responding to spiritual hunger is necessary for growth, healing and peace.

As we grow in wholeness, we contribute to the healing of all creation.

#### Core Values

In keeping with the tradition of our Franciscan founders, we hold these core values:

**Sacredness:** Believe that in every person and all creation lives the Sacred.

**Respect:** Acknowledge the dignity, diversity and worth of each person as a unique image of God.

**Community:** Through prayer, empathy and sharing, create a safe, peaceful place.

**Hospitality:** Welcome all with compassion, acceptance and celebration.

**Professionalism:** Commit to competence, quality, trust and personal spiritual development.

#### What We Do

The Franciscan Spirituality Center guides and directs processes for prayer and offers personal presence to anyone on their sacred journey as co-creators of a just and peaceful world. The Center offers individual and group spiritual direction, guided and preached retreats, daylong programs and events. Staff is available for off-site workshops, presentations and programs.

# At the Center

VOLUME 23 • NUMBER 3

MAY/JUNE 2015

#### Articles

- 2 Director's Column
- 3 Journey Toward Wholeness
- 9 Seeking the Holy Spirit in your birthing
- 10 Get into the heart of the word
- 11 Icons invite us into spiritual transformation
- 12 Exploring the heart of compassion



**3**  
Journey  
Toward  
Wholeness

#### March/April Offerings

- 4 Body, Mind & Spirit
- 5 Spiritual Living
- 6 Program & Retreat Offerings

#### News & Happenings

- 8 Compassionate Listening
- 10 Group spiritual direction

**11**  
Icon  
writing



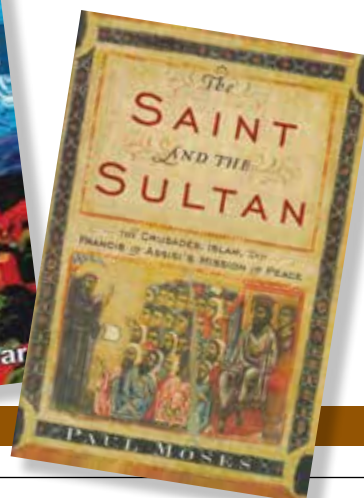
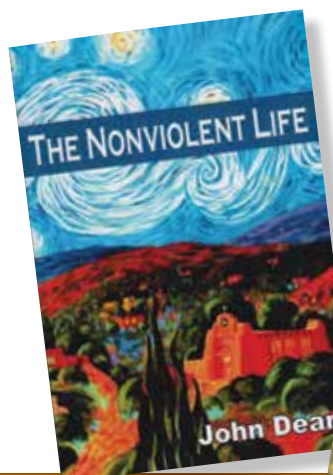
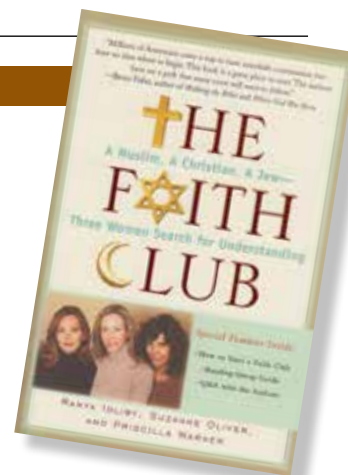
#### AT THE SOPHIA BOOKSTORE

**Marcia Bentley, FSC spiritual director, offers praise for these reads:**

*The Faith Club: A Muslim, a Christian, a Jew—Three Women Search for Understanding*  
by Ranya Idliby, Suzanne Oliver and Priscilla Warner

*The Nonviolent Life* by John Dear

*The Saint and the Sultan: The Crusades, Islam, and Francis of Assisi's Mission of Peace* by Paul Moses



# All are welcome here



Audrey Quanrud  
FSC Director  
Program Coordinator

I don't usually make New Year's resolutions, but this year I knew I wanted to go on a retreat. It had been a whirlwind of a year, and I needed time to reflect and rest. I found a weeklong retreat late in February at a Franciscan retreat center and made the commitment.

I told everyone I was going on a retreat and joked about having to keep silent for a whole week. But as the departure date grew near, I realized how much I was craving solitude. I wanted to be alone to read, pray and just think.

After the first day, I decided I was wrong to say I was *going* on a retreat. I was *making* a retreat. It was up to me to make the most of this week. One important choice for me was to disconnect from my cellphone and email. My co-workers will tell you I am always firing off emails, so I thought this would be hard for me to do, but it really helped create the solitude I was seeking.

Francis of Assisi spent about half his time in active service and half in solitude, and he recommended this practice to his followers. A retreat can provide an experience of solitude that is hard to find in the noise and demands of modern life.

Francis and his followers went to caves for their solitude. We are lucky here in the U.S. to have many fine retreat centers, so we don't need to find a cave. My sojourn made me realize what a jewel we have right here in La Crosse. The FSC has historic charm and beauty, a wonderful bookstore and library, large and comfortable bedrooms, two beautiful chapels and hospitality second to none.

In this issue, you will see that there are many summer retreat opportunities at the FSC. We also offer Journey Toward Wholeness, a great way to build retreat times into your schedule with four weekends planned next year. If you haven't been on a retreat lately, take a look. Perhaps this spiritual practice is calling you, too.

Peace and all good,

*Audrey*

## ASSOCIATE PRESENTERS



John McHugh



Bernice Olson-Pollack



Tom Roberts



Kristy Walz

## FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY CENTER

### Staff



Barb Kruse  
Spiritual Director



Linda Kerrigan  
FSPA Affiliate  
Spiritual Director



Steve Spilde  
Spiritual Director



Marcia Bentley  
Spiritual Director



Rose Elsbernd, FSPA  
Spiritual Director



Stacey Kalas  
Communications &  
Marketing Coordinator



Zoua Vue  
Receptionist & Hospitality




Laurie Swan  
Office Manager



Jane Finucane  
Hospitality



Erin Flottmeyer  
Bookkeeper & Receptionist



A N N O U N C I N G

# Journey toward Wholeness

2015-16

## SPIRITUALITY FOR YOUR WHOLE LIFE

A one-year program for personal growth, renewal and transformation. Four weekend retreats include presentations, prayer and spiritual enrichment opportunities.

Attention to spiritual practices that emphasize:

- Experiencing God through the people, places and events in our daily living.
- A holistic spirituality that integrates head, heart and body.

Led by the retreat staff of the Franciscan Spirituality Center with special guest presenters.

Participants attend four weekend retreats  
(Friday evening-Sunday noon)

**October 2-4 & December 4-6, 2015**  
**February 19-21 & April 1-3, 2016**

### INVESTMENT

Experience a full retreat by staying overnight in the peace and quiet of the Franciscan Spirituality Center: \$750. A commuter rate of \$500 is also available.

A nonrefundable \$50 deposit is required with your registration and will be applied toward the total fee. The balance may be paid in three installments. If the total investment is beyond your means, financial assistance is available.

### HOW TO REGISTER

- Download an application from the *Journey Toward Wholeness* page at [FSCenter.org](http://FSCenter.org). Send it with your \$50 deposit to the FSC, 920 Market St., La Crosse, WI 54601.
- Or request an application by calling the Franciscan Spirituality Center at 608-791-5295 or emailing [FSCenter.org](mailto:FSCenter.org).
- Registration deadline is August 1, 2015.

MAKING A THOUGHTFUL  
COMMITMENT TO THE  
FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY CENTER

# Spirited Friends



## Q. Who are Spirited Friends?

**A.** *Spirited Friends* make a monthly gift to help sustain the ministry of the Franciscan Spirituality Center.

## Q. How does this giving program work?

**A.** You decide on a monthly gift amount that fits your budget. You authorize your bank to transfer this amount from your checking account directly to FSPA for the FSC.

*Spirited Friends* is an easy and efficient way for you to make a monthly gift and provide reliable support that is vital to the Franciscan Spirituality Center. Your monthly gift will help the Center live out our Franciscan mission to provide for those who seek support. Each year, we give scholarships to those in need for spiritual direction, programs and retreats at the FSC. By enrolling in the *Spirited Friends* program, you make a significant contribution all year without the need to write checks, find envelopes, buy stamps and make a trip to the post office. Become a *Spirited Friend* and help others on their path to connecting with God, meaning and wholeness. For a brochure and enrollment form, visit [www.fscenter.org](http://www.fscenter.org).

*Thank you  
for your ongoing support.*

### Planned Giving:

Please remember the Franciscan Spirituality Center in your will. FSC is part of the FSPA, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Our tax ID# is 39-0806386.



## Tai Chi - Level 1

**Session 3:** Mondays, March 30, April 6, 13, 20, 27 and May 4

**Time:** Noon-1 p.m.

**Investment:** \$48/6 classes or \$10/drop-in

Tai Chi is an internal style of Chinese martial arts. This basic class teaches 12 forms to help promote better health and balance. Often referred to as “moving meditation,” Tai Chi places emphasis on the steadiness of the breath and body with quiet concentration. Graceful and circular movements are performed with a relaxed and slow tempo. Tai Chi is credited with improving coordination, flexibility, easing pain and stiffness, and promoting better sleep and overall wellness.

## Tai Chi - Level 2

**Session 4:** Mondays, May 11, 18, June 1, 8, 15, 22 (No class on May 25, Memorial Day)

**Time:** Noon-1 p.m.

**Investment:** \$48/6 classes or \$10/drop-in

This class is a more challenging sequel to improve coordination and Tai Chi skills. Participants in Level 2 should have a good understanding of the first 12 forms practiced in Level 1.

## Vinyasa Yoga

**Session 3:** Mondays, March 30, April 6, 13, 20, 27 and May 4

Wednesdays, April 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 and May 6 (No Wednesday classes are offered in Session 4)

**Session 4:** Mondays, May 11, 18, June 1, 8, 15, 22 (No class on May 25, Memorial Day)

**Time:** 5:30-6:30 p.m.

**Investment:** \$48/6 classes or \$10/drop-in; \$86/both Monday and Wednesday (12 classes)

Vinyasa Yoga is a flowing sequence of postures that are coordinated with a comfortable breathing rhythm. Yoga can enhance mental focus, flexibility and strength. Practicing yoga brings together physical, mental and soulful balance. Wednesday sessions also will include postures to improve strength.

## Golden Yoga

**Session 3:** Tuesdays, March 31, April 7, 14, 21, 28 and May 5

**Time:** 11:15 a.m.-Noon

**Investment:** \$36/6 classes or \$8/drop-in

Golden Yoga provides a safe approach to improved flexibility, strength and balance. Traditional yoga poses are modified with the use of a chair so that participants do not need to get down on the floor.

**Optional:** For those who are comfortable getting down on the floor, an additional 15 minutes will be offered at the end of the class.

**Bernice Olson-Pollack** brings together several of her professional disciplines in her work as a health and wellness educator. She is a lifestyle coach, certified personal trainer through the American Council on Exercise, registered Yogafit instructor and Arthritis Foundation-trained Tai Chi instructor.



# Spiritual Living

Spiritual Living programs at the FSC are open to everyone at any time and do not require registration (except The Sound of Bowls); simply stop by the front desk to check in with the receptionist.

## Centering Prayer

Every Tuesday, 5:30-6:15 p.m.

**Facilitators:** Barb Kruse and Marcia Bentley

Centering Prayer is a Christian prayer of silence, in which we consent to the presence and action of God within. It is a surrendering, a temporary letting go of all the external noise and our internal thoughts. While Christian meditation has existed for centuries, Centering Prayer is an updated, modern form that began in a Trappist monastery in Massachusetts. All are welcome as we experience the stillness of community prayer with one another as we seek a deeper part of ourselves. If you are new to this practice, we will happily guide you.

## Richard Rohr Discussion Group

**May 11 & June 8** • Mondays, 5:30-7 p.m.

**Investment:** Freewill offering

This group meets monthly to explore Richard Rohr's teachings on Franciscan spirituality. Using his books and other media offerings, we'll examine the ways his ideas can apply to our daily lives and nurture our spiritual growth. For information on upcoming topics, please contact Jane Finucane at [jfinucane@fspa.org](mailto:jfinucane@fspa.org) or call the FSC office at 608-791-5295. Come join the conversation the second Monday of the month!



## The Sound of Bowls

**May 12** • Tuesday, 5:30-6:30 p.m.

**Facilitator:** Tom Roberts

**Investment:** Freewill offering

Traditional historic Tibetan singing bowls produce sounds that invoke deep states of relaxation, naturally assisting one in entering expanded states of consciousness and meditation. Individual bowls are rung, and their unique resonance invites you to connect to the importance of deep and quiet listening. You are welcome to wear comfortable clothes, as you may sit or lie on the floor as you prefer.



## Enneagram Study Group

**May 13 & June 10** • Wednesdays, 5:30-7 p.m.

**Investment:** Freewill offering

The Enneagram is a personality theory that describes nine different ways we view the world. This discussion group is for anyone who is interested in using the Enneagram to explore their spiritual life and relationships with family, friends and co-workers. Meetings are the second Wednesday of the month. For more information, please contact Jane Finucane at [jfinucane@fspa.org](mailto:jfinucane@fspa.org) or call the FSC office at 608-791-5295.

## Drumming Circle

**May 14 & June 11** • Thursdays, 5:30-6:30 p.m.

**Facilitator:** Rosalie Hooper Thomas

**Investment:** Freewill offering

Drums draw individual energies into a powerful unified prayer. All are invited to this gathering the second Thursday of each month for drumming and reflection. Bring your favorite drum and join our circle. All types of drums are welcome.



## Divorce Recovery

**May 21** • Thursday, 5:30-7 p.m.

**Facilitator:** Diane Withers

**Investment:** Freewill offering

**Topic:** *How will I live my new life?*

This group offers friendship, support and healing for the wounds of separation and divorce. Whether you are just beginning this new journey of singleness, or have been on it for some time, you are invited to come hear words of wisdom, share with others who understand, and experience fresh insights and healing. This session will include a short presentation by a guest speaker or a member of the group, discussion with two or three others on the topic, sharing of responses and questions, as well as casual conversation and refreshments to conclude the evening.

## Groups that meet at the FSC

**Conversations that Matter** is a men's group that provides the opportunity to dialogue with other men on issues that matter in their lives. Meets biweekly (alternating Tuesday and Wednesday evenings) from 7-9 p.m. To see whether the group meets your needs, call Vince at 608-386-7551. Freewill offerings are appreciated. Suggested offering: \$5.

**Depressed Anonymous** is a 12-step group for those dealing with depression to generate positive energies, form friendships and find support. Meets on Mondays from 5:30-6:30 p.m. Questions? Call Vince at 608-386-7551. Freewill offerings are appreciated.

**Saturday Morning Men's Group** enjoys coffee and muffins while discussing a current book related to spirituality. Meets on the third Saturday of the month (May 16 and June 20) from 9-11 a.m. Call Vince at 608-386-7551 for book information. Suggested offering: \$7.

**Mindful Meditation** allows you to find support, energy and discipline for your meditation practice in a group setting. The group starts with 20 minutes of sitting in silence, followed by five minutes of walking meditation, and then another 20 minutes of sitting. The session concludes with a short reading and time for sharing. No previous experience is necessary, and facilitator Shirley Morrissey, FSPA, is happy to provide an introduction to meditation if you are new to it. Meets Tuesdays from 5:30-7 p.m. and Saturdays from 8-9:30 a.m. Call Sister Shirley at 608-787-8313 or email [smorrissey@fspa.org](mailto:smorrissey@fspa.org) with questions.



# 2015 Program & Retreat Offerings

**How to register:** Go online to [FSCenter.org](http://FSCenter.org). Payment for most events is due at the time of registration. To pay a portion now and the balance at the time of the event, please register by phone at 608-791-5295. **Deposits:** If indicated, the deposit is due at the time of registration and will be applied to the total fee. The balance is due two weeks before the start of the event. **Refund policy:** If you cancel at least 48 hours before the start time of the event, we will refund your payment. Deposits are not refundable. **Financial assistance:** If you would like to attend a program but cannot manage the entire investment, please call Laurie Swan, FSC office manager, at 608-791-5279. We are committed to serving everyone on their spiritual journey and will hold your request in confidence.

## May 1-2

Friday, 1-4:30 p.m. (book signing and social follows until 6 p.m.) and Saturday, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

**Keynote speaker:** Thomas Ryan, CSP

### Additional presenters:

Tom Roberts, April Ulring Larson, John McHugh

**Investment:** Full: \$95

Friday only: \$60

Saturday only: \$75



## 30th Annual Conference: Living Your Life as Spiritual Practice

You won't want to miss this milestone conference featuring four inspirational and dynamic speakers. **Thomas Ryan, CSP**, a writer, poet, retreat leader, interfaith advocate and certified Kripalu yoga instructor, will offer practical ways of integrating the emotional, physical and intellectual aspects of our busy and changing lives into a relationship with God during Saturday's program. His specific topics will include *Your Body and Your Spiritual Life: Friends or Foes, Friends and Mutual Support*, and *Living with an Awakened Heart*. During his Friday breakout session, he will discuss some of the questions, fears and concerns Christians may have about practicing yoga, and offer an experience of standing yoga prayer.

Other Friday sessions include ELCA Synod Bishop Emeritus **April Ulring Larson** showing why developing a personal spirituality is essential to being religious; mindfulness retreat leader **Tom Roberts** tracing the shift in human consciousness that allows us to look for divine wisdom within; and theology and leadership speaker **John McHugh** highlighting the Gospel stories that offer focus in spiritual direction.



## May 3-9

Sunday, 7 p.m. through Saturday, 10 a.m.

**Retreat Leader:** Phil Zimmerman

### Investment:

- **Full:** \$625, includes retreat, all meals and six nights' stay

- **Commuter:** \$505, includes retreat, lunch and supper

- Fee includes a non-refundable deposit of \$150

- Limited to 25 participants.

**Registration deadline:** April 13



## Icon Writing: Sacred Windows to the Divine

Icon writing is a meaningful prayer practice as well as a technical art form with a rich and inspirational history. Each icon will be written from start to finish in a step-by-step gradual process, ending with a beautifully completed icon varnished and ready to display. The icon to be written during this retreat is *The Annunciation*. All materials and supplies are included.

**Note:** Phil will return on July 5-11 to lead a similar retreat with the *Christ the Teacher* icon. Register for that retreat online at [www.FSCenter.org](http://www.FSCenter.org) or by calling 608-791-5295.

Noted iconographer **Phil Zimmerman** has been leading retreats at the FSC since 2002. Teaching people to write (or paint) icons has taken him all over the U.S., Canada and Europe. Icons produced in Phil's Pennsylvania studio are painted according to ancient guidelines and techniques, incorporating modern artist materials.

*Read more about this retreat on page 11.*



## May 6

Wednesday, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

**Retreat Leader:** Richard Rohr

**Investment:** \$10

**Registration deadline:** April 29



## Richard Rohr Webinar: Rediscovering the Wisdom of Early Christianity

Join viewers from the community as Richard Rohr, OFM, reintroduces us to the largely forgotten roots of our Christian faith—the Desert Fathers and Mothers and the Eastern Fathers of the Church. He helps us reclaim ancient teachings such as the prayer of quiet, the mutuality of Trinity, universal restoration and a simple spirituality of transformation into Christ.

**Richard Rohr** is a Franciscan priest and the founder of the Center for Action and Contemplation in Albuquerque, New Mexico. He is a popular speaker and the author of several spiritual books, including the newly published *What the Mystics Know: Seven Pathways to Your Deeper Self*.

**May 28**

Thursday, 6-9 p.m.

**Retreat Instructor:** Emily Alvarez of All Glazed Up!**Investment:** \$45, includes all painting supplies and refreshments

- Limited to 25 participants.

**Registration deadline:** May 14**Sip & Paint: Angels Among Us**

The FSC is teaming up with local studio All Glazed Up! to bring you this special event. Sip & Paint is an instructor-led, canvas painting class, and NO EXPERIENCE IS REQUIRED! For inspiration, we will begin with a visit to Mary of the Angels Chapel in St. Rose Convent to see the many angels in the art of that historic chapel. Then, Emily will lead you—step by step—through the painting of your very own angel masterpiece (shown here) to take home with you. Wine, snacks and all supplies are included.

**June 5-7**

Friday, 3 p.m. through Sunday, Noon

**Retreat Leader:** Heather Henry**Investment:**

- **Full:** \$180, includes retreat, all meals and two nights' stay
- **Commuter:** \$120, includes retreat, Friday supper and Saturday lunch
- Fee includes a non-refundable deposit of \$50

**Registration deadline:** May 5**Yoga Retreat: Grace From Within**

Whether you are beginning a yoga practice or deepening one, enjoy merging mind, body and spirit through this glorious heart-centered retreat. Encompassing postures and slow breath work, sacred sound and meditation, this retreat experience will support you in finding balance and aligning with nature's rhythms. Please bring a yoga mat and journal.

**Heather Henry** has been teaching heart-led yoga for 16 years and is a practitioner at Integrative Therapies. She looks to nature to connect with the rhythms that bring balance to our lives.

**June 8-12**

Monday, 6:30 p.m. through Friday, Noon

**Retreat Leader:** Janet Mallak, SSND**Investment:**

- **Full:** \$340, includes retreat, all meals and four nights' stay
- **Commuter:** \$200, includes retreat and lunches
- Fee includes a non-refundable deposit of \$50

**Registration deadline:** May 8**In the Heart of Compassion**

Every now and then, we meet someone who makes our day or life better. Often it is a compassionate person who is present in care and love. In the various stages of our life, we meet transitions, changing relationships, vulnerability and transforming grace. Compassion eases the journey. Through the eyes of mystics and scripture, we will ponder the call of compassion within ourselves and the world during this retreat.

**Janet Mallak**, a School Sister of Notre Dame, lives in Mankato, Minnesota. She previously was on staff at the FSC and served on the Leadership Team of her religious community. Currently, Janet serves as aspiritual director and leads retreats and seminars.

*Read more about this retreat on page 12.*

**June 26-July 1**

Friday, 7 p.m. through Wednesday, 1 p.m.

**Retreat Directors:** Marcia Bentley; Rose Elsbernd, FSPA; Linda Kerrigan; Barb Kruse and Steve Spilde**Investment:**

- \$485, includes retreat, all meals and five nights' stay
- Fee includes a \$50 non-refundable deposit
- This retreat does not have a commuter option.
- Retreat is limited to 20 participants.

**Registration deadline:** May 26**Silent Directed Retreat**

Let go of your email, voicemail and other distractions, and come spend time in the quiet. During this silent retreat, there will be plenty of opportunities for prayer, contemplation, solitude, and if you would like, access to daily Mass and the St. Rose Adoration Chapel.

Enjoy nearby biking/hiking trails along the Mississippi River and bluffs and an outdoor labyrinth. During this retreat, participants will meet individually with a spiritual director for one hour each day.

*Read more about this retreat on page 8.*



Like us on Facebook for more information about these upcoming programs and events.

# The gift of a silent directed retreat

FSC spiritual directors offer you an opportunity for rest, reflection and solitude during our Silent Directed Retreat on June 26-July 1. It's a gift you give yourself, where distractions are minimized and noises are quieted, making it possible to hear the "small, still voice of God."

Why not take this opportunity to let go of the email, voicemail and other distractions in your busy life and meet your own needs, instead of the expectations and demands of others? Consider this your invitation to let go of life's "shoulds." Here you will find a safe, peaceful, hospitable environment, with plenty of opportunities for prayer, contemplation, solitude, individual spiritual direction and if you wish, access to daily Mass and the St. Rose Perpetual Adoration Chapel.

Meeting daily with your spiritual director will offer you an opportunity to journey with a soul friend—someone who listens with compassion and understanding, and without

judgment. Your spiritual director will encourage you to trust how and when you experience God/Spirit/Mystery and invite you to connect with your own inner wisdom.

Most people have a specific gift or grace that they wish to receive during a silent retreat. By intentionally naming it, they may be able to better focus their thoughts, prayers and activities during the retreat. It also can help them go deeper into themselves day by day as they journey with their spiritual director each day.

This retreat is limited to 20 participants. Your investment is \$485, which includes all meals and private bedroom. Other amenities include prayer spaces, lending library, Sophia Bookstore, beautiful courtyard adjacent to St. Rose Convent,

nearby Mississippi River and bluffs, walking labyrinth and biking/hiking trails. Please register by May 26 by calling 608-791-5295 or visiting [www.FSCenter.org](http://www.FSCenter.org).

Enjoy the quiet and beauty of nature in La Crosse, nicknamed "God's country."

## FSC Spiritual Directors



**Linda Kerrigan, FSPA Affiliate**  
lkerrigan@fspa.org  
608-791-5276



**Barb Kruse**  
bkruse@fspa.org  
608-791-5612



**Marcia Bentley**  
mbentley@fspa.org  
608-791-5603



**Rose Elsbernd, FSPA**  
relsbernd@fspa.org  
608-791-5268



**Steve Spilde**  
sspilde@fspa.org  
608-791-5297

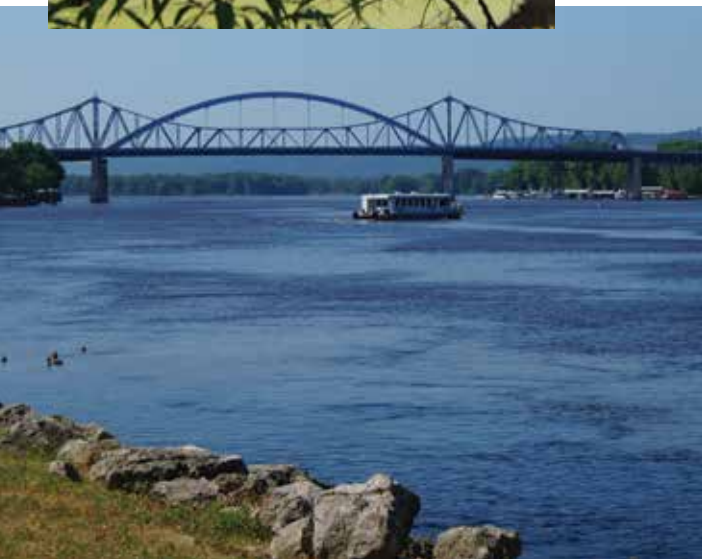
## WHAT TO EXPECT

When I went on my first silent directed retreat, I was actually scared. I knew that I would be paying attention to what was deep in my heart. But I wasn't sure what was in there, and I was a bit afraid to find out.

The retreat was like visiting a relative I didn't know very well. Without distractions of noise, activity and other people, I became acquainted with my heart. I started feeling emotions that had been locked away for years, if not decades. I started paying attention to disjointed memories. The memories became connected, and I saw patterns in my life I had never recognized before. Rather than fear my own company, I discovered I could enjoy myself in silence and solitude.

I became aware of God's presence in my life at a much deeper level. The days I spent on retreat were valuable, but the experience continued long after the retreat was finished. I discovered a part buried deep within myself that I had never known before. Now I can visit that part of myself much easier and more often. When the details of life become overwhelming, I can more easily enter into solitude and find a presence of peace deep within myself.

— Steve Spilde, FSC Spiritual Director



*“We cooperate with God’s initiative whenever we seek God’s voice, and turn the ear of our heart to the Holy Spirit’s song. This retreat gives us an opportunity to reflect on what that could look like for any given mother’s act of birthing.”*

—Susan Windley-Daoust



## *Seeking the Holy Spirit in your birthing*

Many women say giving birth was one of the greatest spiritual experiences of their lives. Others approach birthing with questions, uncertainty and fear.

An upcoming retreat at the FSC will give women a spiritual “tool kit” to bring to their birth experience and help them see that giving birth—whether the birth is easy or challenging—is a privileged opportunity to grow closer to God.

**Susan Windley-Daoust**, a mother of five (four through birth, one by adoption), author, associate professor of theology at Saint Mary’s University of Minnesota and graduate of the FSC’s Spiritual Direction Preparation Program, will lead this exciting new offering for women who are pregnant or anticipate becoming pregnant. This retreat is not limited to first-time moms; all are welcome! The retreat will focus on learning how to perceive God’s work in our lives—to see life with what Susan refers to as “spiritual lenses.”

“The spiritual life is not some disembodied pie in the sky, nothing in Christianity argues that,” says Susan. “But we seem strangely reluctant to connect very bodily realities—like giving birth—to the spiritual life.”

Women can open themselves up to the work of the Holy Spirit through prayer and by recognizing that they have been called to motherhood. “God is placing one of His most vulnerable, beautiful creatures in your arms for love and care. God is present and cares for you and your child beyond your imagining. Each step of giving birth is an opportunity to recognize God’s providence and discern next steps.”

Participants will spend time sharing stories as is comfortable, journaling, praying, exploring the Jewish and Christian scriptures on childbirth, breaking bread together and creating a spiritual birth plan. An optional pregnancy massage will be available for an additional fee.

Susan will share from the perspective of giving birth without medical interventions and also talk about how to prepare for the most common interventions in case they are needed. “Everyone is welcome. We are interested in creating a safe space to invite the Holy Spirit into a meaning-filled time of our lives,” she says.

**The Gift of Birth:**  
**Seeking the Holy Spirit in Your Birthing**  
 From 7:30 p.m. Friday, July 31,  
 through 11 a.m. Sunday, August 2.  
 Your investment is \$190 for full retreat or  
 \$110 for commuter rate. Please call  
 608-791-5295 or visit [www.FSCenter.org](http://www.FSCenter.org).





## Get into the heart of the word

We are thrilled to welcome **Theresa Washburn** back to the FSC for a very special writing retreat, *Into the Heart of the Word*, July 18-21. Theresa served as the FSC communications and marketing coordinator from 1997 to 2011, and organized the popular *Awakening the Soul of the Writer* conference. Currently, she is director of communications for Green Power Generation and a founding member of Women Writers Ink. She has been using writing in her work and for personal growth for the past 25 years. In advance of her retreat, we asked Theresa a few questions:

### When did you first know you wanted to be a writer?

Probably in fifth grade, when I wrote a little book of poetry called *Theresa's Teasers*, but unfortunately I had a bad habit of comparing my writing to those around me and determined that they were better. It was journaling that really drew me back to the passion and joy of writing.

### You've described writing as being able to inspire and transform. How has writing changed your life?

Writing, be it journaling, novel writing, memoir or poetry, allows the human person to release feelings and thoughts on the page. Through this release, one can reflect anew on the spinning thoughts in the mind. Writing can transform us because, through the act of letting thoughts and feelings flow on to the page, we can move past them and allow new growth to arise from the terrain of old stories. Some of the toughest times of my life, through loss, through change, writing has been like a friend

and counselor helping me to deeply explore and then release the raw emotions. My writing has also humbled me, because when I am honest it reveals my shadow, and it's not always pretty.

### What kind of writing will we do on this retreat?

Each participant will bring their favorite style of writing to the retreat. Emphasis will be on the way we enter into the writing experience rather than what or how we write. In this retreat, we will learn to quiet the critical voice and allow the heart to express itself leading to more authentic writing with a stronger voice.

### What are some of the techniques you'll share to help writers reach the heart of what they want to say?

We will combine some meditation practices I have been developing with a variety of free writing exercises. We will sprinkle in delightful word play to arouse the muse and keep the process fun.

### Where do you find inspiration for your writing?

Nature, the journey of spirit, relationships of all kinds, the longing for connection and, dare I say, the realm of darkness and mystery.

### Do you ever get writer's block? And how do you overcome it?

Oh, yes, I was blocked for a year when I was trying to force myself to write something. My ego attached to the outcome rather than the beauty of the process. As a writer, you have to love the process and accept that 99 percent of what you write is for you and if you get some of it out to the world—well, that is wonderful, like frosting on a tasty cake.



## Group spiritual direction offers support, encouragement

Spiritual direction as a practice is almost as ancient as the Christian Church itself. A trained spiritual director listens to you as you talk about your history, the current events in your life, your feelings and emotions, your search for God's presence in your life and your desire to discern God's leading.

Spiritual direction is an intense experience of listening. Your spiritual director will listen to you carefully, patiently, intently and compassionately. Together, you will listen for the internal voice or promptings of God's Spirit. And as you tell your story, you will listen to yourself in a new and deeper way.

### What is the difference between individual and group spiritual direction?

Group spiritual direction is a similar intense experience of listening and seeking God's presence, but the process is done within a group. Participants listen to each other and are guided by a spiritual director who serves as a facilitator. Many people find it healing to share their story with a group. Participants also learn more about themselves as they recognize similar experiences in the stories of others.

### What are the benefits of one versus the other?

Some people find individual spiritual direction to be a more intimate experience. They appreciate the one-to-one focus they receive from their spiritual director.

Other people enjoy the support and encouragement they find in a group. Extroverts may appreciate the opportunity to develop their skills of listening to others. Introverts may appreciate the opportunity to share their stories in a safe and nurturing environment.

### If you are interested in participating in group spiritual direction...

Spiritual direction groups are typically formed over the summer and start meeting in the fall. If you are interested, now is a good time to register as a potential participant. Prior to the fall, a spiritual director will meet individually with all new group participants. At this meeting, you will receive an orientation to the group process and the director will be happy to answer any questions you might have.

If you are interested in group spiritual direction, call Steve Spilde, Marcia Bentley or Rose Elsbernd, FSPA, at 608-791-5295.

# Icons invite us into spiritual transformation

Sister Joan Weisenbeck's interest in icons started when she was gifted with an icon of Mary on her Silver Jubilee, marking 25 years as a Franciscan Sister of Perpetual Adoration.

"That interest grew in me," she says. "Something about that icon drew me inward, to a deeper place. Icons draw me into the mystery of the event or persons that are represented. You understand it from the inside out. These are images of heavenly presence."

So, when Marlene Weisenbeck, FSPA, her biological sister, happened to meet a Sister from a Byzantine Catholic order who wanted to re-introduce iconography to post-Communist Eastern Europe in the late 1990s, Sister Joan was intrigued.

It wasn't long before a group of Sisters, including the Weisenbecks, from seven different countries traveled to Hungary for an iconography workshop under the leadership of Pennsylvania-based master iconographer Phil Zimmerman. "It was a wonderful experience," Sister Joan recalls. "We were working with different cultures. Everything we said had to be translated into three languages."

A trip to Slovakia followed, and eventually another to Romania. Along the way, Sister Joan and Phil had become friends, and Sister Joan was getting really excited about iconography.

The FSC offers two opportunities to learn how to write (or paint) icons each year under the direction of Phil Zimmerman.

*May 3-9: The Annunciation*

*July 5-11: Christ the Teacher*

Please see page 6 for registration details



Joan Weisenbeck, FSPA, works on *The Nativity* icon.

When she started working at the FSC in January 2001 as retreat coordinator and spiritual director, she not only brought with her a love of the "sacred windows in heaven" but also the connections and experience to start offering iconography retreats.

Phil, an accomplished artist in the Eastern Orthodox tradition, offered step-by-step instruction in the art of "writing" or painting

the icons, and Sister Joan researched the icons and provided the meditations. "Prayer and meditation on icons are a part of each day," she explains. "Phil (who travels the country teaching iconography) told me this is the only place that does that."

By 2005, the iconography retreats had become so popular, the FSC started scheduling two sessions, one in May and another in July.

"There was tremendous interest, and that interest has continued," Sister Joan says. "It's always been a mix of Orthodox, Roman Catholic, clergy and women religious, and lay folk. Participants were coming from all over the country. The group became its own community. It's like knitting friends. Some people come back every year. And there are always new people."

Retired since December 2012, Sister Joan continues to write icons, both at the FSC retreats and on her own. She has finished at least 30 icons and counts *Mary, Seeker of the Lost*, *The Woman at the Well*, *The Nativity* and *Mary Magdalene Meeting Jesus at the Tomb* among her favorites.

"I'm not a professional artist, but I have a great interest in the beauty of icons and how they invite us into spiritual transformation. You really don't have to be an artist. You just have to have the desire to do this," she says, adding with a laugh: "And the ability to follow directions." Beginners and advanced students are welcome. "We help each other," she says.

"It has really amazed me. Why are people interested? One of the reasons, I think, is we need images. We need images to inspire us, to draw us in."



Iconographer Phil Zimmerman leads each retreat group through the process of finishing an icon step-by-step. All skill levels are welcome.



As we celebrate our 30th anniversary, we continue to welcome back to the FSC some old friends. Janet Mallak, SSND, said goodbye to the FSC in 2009 after seven special years on staff here to take a leadership role in her community, the School Sisters of Notre Dame, but we are lucky to have her present programs from time to time and supervise students in the FSC's Spiritual Direction Preparation Program. She will offer the retreat In the Heart of Compassion from June 8-12.

## Exploring the heart of compassion



Janet Mallak, SSND

*“Compassion is the radicalism for our time.”* – Dalai Lama

When **Janet Mallak, SSND**, read that sentence for the first time, it kept coming back to her.

“I knew it was true,” she says. “Compassion for me suggests a presence, a vulnerability and a knowing that we are all human. In compassion, we walk in another person’s shoes. In that process, we experience another’s thoughts, feelings and inner strength. Often, answers or solving a problem is not possible. However, if we are present and listen to their story, maybe there will be new strength, insight, peace and possibility in their life.

“In the Gospels, it was through love that Jesus often saw a person. That person became visible and was seen. For that person, that might be the first healing miracle. Then Jesus offered the healing they desired. I believe this is the call of compassion. What if every person near us could be heard in compassion?”

Through compassion, we give and receive many gifts such as wisdom, hope and wonder. During this retreat, we will visit the many aspects of compassion. Through the eyes of mystics and scripture, we will ponder the call

of compassion within ourselves and the world. Each day of the retreat will include meditation and prayer, silence and conversation, time for rest and journaling in many forms.

Sister Janet brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to this retreat. After 20 years of teaching, she began her ministry in spiritual direction and retreat work. She has a master’s degree in ministry from Creighton University and a certificate in spiritual direction.

**Please see page 7 for registration information.**

## 5 reasons to volunteer at the FSC

1. The FSC is a great place to make new friends and enjoy the peaceful environment.
2. Volunteering is convenient; shifts are as little as one hour, primarily evenings and weekends.
3. Volunteering is easy; no special skills are needed.
4. Volunteers receive 20 percent off all FSC programs and retreats.
5. Volunteers are recognized with an annual appreciation party.

**Interested?** Please contact Marcia Bentley at 608-791-5603 or by email at [mbentley@fspa.org](mailto:mbentley@fspa.org)

### FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY CENTER

## Board of Directors

**Dorothy Lenard**, Chairperson  
**Joan Weisenbeck**, FSPA, Secretary/Treasurer  
**Helen Elsbernd**, FSPA, FSPA Liaison

Emilio Alvarez	Dan Henderson
Sharon Berger, FSPA	Mike Hesch
Patricia Boge	Laurice Heybl, FSPA
Karen Dunn	Michael Krueger
Ken Ford	John McHugh

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

### Registration Process

Please visit the Franciscan Spirituality Center's website at [www.FSCenter.org](http://www.FSCenter.org) to register for each session. We accept PayPal for all online registrations and require payment in full at the time of registration. If you would like to pay in installments or register by phone, please call 608-791-5295 or by email at [FSCenter@fspa.org](mailto:FSCenter@fspa.org). We accept credit cards, personal checks and cash for all registrations not completed online. Payment must be made in full prior to the start of the program to be a confirmed participant.

### Refund Policy

Some of our programs require deposits. If indicated, the deposit is due at the time of registration and will be applied to the total fee. The balance is due two weeks before the start of the event. If you cancel at least 48 hours before the start time of the event, we will refund your payment. Deposits are not refundable.

### Registration Deadlines

Many programs/retreats now have a registration deadline. This will help us make important decisions regarding the status of the program/retreat. Many programs fill quickly; early registration is recommended to guarantee placement. Prompt registration also helps reduce the possibility that a program or retreat might be cancelled due to insufficient enrollment, an issue that inconveniences participants and presenters.

### Scholarship Information

In the spirit of Francis and Clare, we honor and respect everyone in their search for spiritual healing, growth and renewal and will not turn anyone away because of inability to pay. Our scholarships are based on need and the type of program or retreat. We give scholarships to anyone who asks for financial assistance for spiritual direction and partial scholarships for programs or retreats. Please contact us for more detailed information about scholarships and payment options for specific retreats and programs. We do not offer scholarships for bedrooms or hermitages. Contact Laurie at 608-791-5279 or by email at [lswan@fspa.org](mailto:lswan@fspa.org), or visit us online at [www.FSCenter.org](http://www.FSCenter.org) for more information.

### Meeting Rooms

The Franciscan Spirituality Center offers a wide variety of rooms to fit the needs of your group for conferences, meetings and training sessions. We offer eight meeting rooms that accommodate two to 90 participants. Each room is bright, attractive, comfortable, quiet and can be tailored to meet the needs of your group.

In addition, we provide free WiFi connection and a wide range of audio/visual equipment at no additional charge. Refreshments and catering are also available.

Call 608-791-5295 or email [FSCenter@fspa.org](mailto:FSCenter@fspa.org) to reserve a room today for your group's next meeting.



## HELP US REACH OUR GOAL

Our \$30,000 fundraising goal will help:

- Provide scholarships to ensure everyone has access to our programs, retreats and spiritual direction
- Continue to bring in the very best in spiritual thinkers, writers and presenters
- Offer programs vital to healing at no cost to participants.



Donations of any amount are appreciated and help us continue our mission. Please use the enclosed envelope from this newsletter or donate online at [www.FSCenter.org](http://www.FSCenter.org).

## Sophia Bookstore

Tucked away inside the Franciscan Spirituality Center, the Sophia Bookstore is a treasure waiting for your discovery. Full of books, scarves and interesting gifts, it is a wonderful, quiet place to sit and enjoy the quiet hum of life and energy within. The room has two tables, comfy chairs for curling up with a book, free WiFi and complimentary coffee.

Open Monday-Friday from 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

**Please stop by to browse!**



## Solitude Ridge Hermitages

Three individual hermitages are built on the edge of a woodland and provide the peace and quiet of a rural setting. These small buildings were designed to provide a space for the silence and solitude necessary for a deeper experience with God. Hermitages are \$50 per night. Email or call the FSC to make your reservations today.

Telephone: 608-791-5295

## Where to find us

Franciscan Spirituality Center is just west of Mayo Clinic Health System-Franciscan Healthcare and one block north of Viterbo University at 920 Market Street. The Franciscan Spirituality Center shares the building with St. Rose Convent.



**Franciscan  
Spirituality Center**



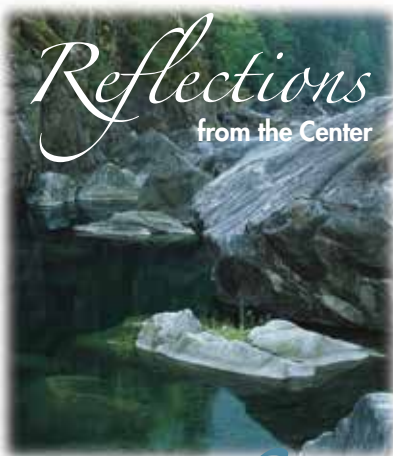
Telephone: 608-791-5295 • Email: [FSCenter@fspa.org](mailto:FSCenter@fspa.org) • On the web: [www.FSCenter.org](http://www.FSCenter.org)



## Franciscan Spirituality Center

FSPA • 912 Market Street  
La Crosse, WI 54601

Non-Profit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
La Crosse, WI  
Permit No. 535



Each Monday, we send a poem, short essay or other peaceful prayer meditation from a voice in our community to more than 2,000 email subscribers. If you would like to receive *Reflections from the Center*, please visit [www.FSCenter.org](http://www.FSCenter.org) and select the "Join Our Email List" tab, or email a request to [fscenter@fspa.org](mailto:fscenter@fspa.org). You also will find past reflections on our blog at [www.atthecenterreflections.blogspot.com](http://www.atthecenterreflections.blogspot.com). We are always interested in hearing from new writers. If you would like to submit a reflection for publication, please email Stacey Kalas at [skalas@fspa.org](mailto:skalas@fspa.org) or call her at 608-791-5296 for more information.

## THE Joyful Mystery

By Beth M. Erickson

The world wends its way uphill,  
past the whispers of worshipping oaks  
and the occasional sound of descending limbs.  
The sounds ground me on this pilgrimage  
and remind me of what I carry.

As I go, I gather nuts the squirrels left behind,  
filling my pockets until I reach the crown  
where I pull them out one by one—  
rubbing them smooth with worry,  
depositing each to the ground at "Amen,"  
until my fears are laid to rest  
in her exquisite arms.

### COMING SOON IN JULY & AUGUST



#### *Icon Writing Retreat: Christ the Teacher*

July 5-11: Phil Zimmerman

#### *Into the Heart of the Word*

July 18-21: Theresa Washburn

#### *The Gift of Birth:*

#### *Seeking the Holy Spirit in Your Birthing*

July 31-August 2: Susan Windley-Daoust

#### *Transitions: Challenges & Opportunities*

August 28-30: Joyce Heil & Carl Koch

Follow us on :

